

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE INSTRUCTION 1-204

MARCH 31, 2023

**Administration and Management
Delegation of Authority, NWSPD 1-2**

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY FOR TRAVEL

NOTICE: This publication is available at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/>

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS: This directive supersedes NWSI 1-204, “*Delegation of Authority for Travel*,” dated November 21, 2017. Content changes include the following:

- Updated the contact for DUSO approval (CDR Rebecca Waddington, (rebecca.waddington@noaa.gov))
- Added “Per the March 2021 NWS-NWSEO Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), the use of a third-party relocation services company (RSC) is not allowed” under section 3.2.

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Delegation of Authority for Travel

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1 Introduction

This directive prescribes delegation of authority for domestic, foreign, and permanent changes of station travel for the National Weather Service (NWS). Special circumstance travel such as Invitational Travel and Actual Expense Travel is addressed in item 3. This directive documents delegations for all types of travel as specified in the NOAA Travel Handbook, Federal Travel Regulations, and Department of Commerce specific travel regulations.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

Per NOAA Travel Regulations (NTR 2017 Edition), located at:
<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/TR.NOAAreg.html>

2.1 Employees

Employees are individuals employed by NOAA, regardless of status or rank, and are responsible for the following when performing official temporary duty (TDY) travel:

- Knowledge of the [Federal Travel Regulations \(FTR\)](#), Department of Commerce (DOC) Travel Regulation, and the [NOAA Travel Regulations \(NTR\)](#);
- Performing official travel that is advantageous to the government and does not directly nor personally benefit the employee;
- Exercising prudence when incurring travel expenses;
- Cancelling reservations when official travel has been cancelled and seeking a refund when possible;
- Ensuring all necessary official expenses are authorized in advance of travel on an official travel authorization or an approved amended travel authorization post-travel is granted;
- Submitting a legitimate travel claim within five (5) business days upon completion of TDY travel or every thirty (30) days while performing extended TDY; and
- Paying their Government issued travel card bill, if applicable, within twenty-five (25) days of the statement date.

2.2 Invitational Travelers

Invitational Travelers are defined as individuals who are not being paid a fee for their services and are performing official TDY travel for the government. Invitational travel can only be authorized for conference or meeting purposes, and cannot be authorized for training. For additional details on invitational travelers, refer to NTR Chapter 1.2 Invitational travelers.

2.3 Intergovernmental Personnel Agreement Employees

Intergovernmental Personnel Agreement Employees are defined as travelers employed by other Federal Government agencies and are on loan to NOAA.

2.4 Cost-Reimbursable Contractors

Cost-Reimbursable Contractors cannot be issued travel authorizations since they receive a fee for services rendered to NOAA. In addition, travel authorizations cannot be issued to individuals who have received a grant, and are using the grant.

2.5 Authorizing Officials

Authorizing Officials are responsible for approving the obligation of funds as well as the validity of all travel expenses on the travel authorization. They serve as the final approver on the travel authorization and have the authority to approve **all types** of travel, with exception of premium class travel, subject to the limitations established in chapter 2 of the NTR. NOAA's authorizing officials are required to be the equivalent of a GS-14 or higher. (*Note: there is no longer a list of travel delegations by title.*) In addition, authorizing officials are responsible for:

- Determining whether the travel required, is in the interest of the government, and complies with the overall travel plans of the organizational unit;

- Approving itineraries which will most effectively serve program needs at the least cost, but within the rules of the NTR;
- Approving transportation that is advantageous to the government, by the most expeditious means practicable, and commensurate with the mission at hand;
- Approving appropriate per diem rates, i.e., reduced per diem, actual subsistence, etc.;
- Scheduling employee's travel within their regular workweek to the maximum extent possible;
- Ensuring the travel authorization is properly prepared and includes where necessary:
 - A valid justification when a government fare is not used;
 - An acknowledgement statement when special fares will be used where change/cancellation fees may be charged;
 - The dates of any authorized leave points. Note, while leave dates must be shown on a travel authorization, leave points (locations) should not be included as part of the traveler's itinerary; and
 - The location of an authorized rest stop;
- Ensuring a CD-334, Request for Approval for Other than Coach-Class Accommodations (<https://connection.commerce.gov/forms-and-surveys/request-approval-other-coach-class-accommodations>) is completed and signed in Block 17 by the employee's authorizing official. After the CD-334 is completed and signed, it must be scanned into E2 Solutions (E2) and routed with the travel authorization to NOAA's Deputy Under Secretary's Office (DUSO) for final approval.
- Ensuring a CD-210 Record of Gifts or Bequest (<https://connection.commerce.gov/forms-and-surveys/record-gift-or-bequest>) and Form SF-326, Semiannual Report of Payment Accepted from a Non-Federal Source (<https://app.gsagov.prod.rdcgwaajp7wr.s3.amazonaws.com/SF326-98.pdf>), (if payment exceeds \$250) are completed, signed and scanned into E2 whenever gift or bequest travel is authorized.
- Ensuring a Foreign Flag Justification Statement is included whenever a foreign carrier is used. See FTR, Chapter 301-10 for foreign flag justifications (<https://www.gsa.gov/policy-regulations/regulations/federal-travel-regulation-ftr?asset=90794#wp1088896>);
- Ensuring a comparative trip is processed in E2 whenever the employee chooses to drive instead of fly to their TDY location;
- Ensuring their back up authorizing official(s) are normally at the same grade or higher than they are. Back-up authorizing officials should limit approval of travel authorizations when the designated authorizing official is not physically available to approve the travel authorization. Under no circumstances can administrative assistants/secretaries or non-management personnel approve travel authorizations.

2.6 Approving Officials

Approving Officials are required to have full knowledge of the employee's activities and are responsible for approving reimbursement of travel expenses on travel vouchers. They are required to ensure:

- The claim is properly prepared in accordance with the NTR;
- The types of expenses claimed are authorized and allowable expenses;
- When a POV / GOV is authorized, safe travel may not exceed 300 miles per calendar day, without an overnight stop and includes all associated costs associated with the overnight delay;
- When accounting applied is not from the authorizing FMC that documentation be added to the TA from the appropriate funding official to ensure compliance with the NWS Appropriations Reference Manual (ARM);
- The amounts claimed are accurate and within prescribed rates;
- Receipts for expenses over \$75 and all lodging receipts are scanned into E2 and submitted with the travel voucher for reimbursement. A valid receipt is required to show settlement of the traveler's account, the amount(s) charged and a valid form of payment;
- A Foreign Flag Justification Statement is included whenever a foreign carrier is used;
- An approved [CD-334](#) is scanned into the E2 system whenever premium class travel is authorized;
- A [CD-210](#) and [SF-326](#) is scanned into the E2 system and submitted with any applicable receipts upon voucher submission whenever gift or bequest travel is approved; and
- Lease agreements executed for extended TDY lodging rentals are scanned into the E2 system and submitted with any applicable receipts **each time** a travel voucher is submitted (every 30 days) for reimbursement.

3 Special Circumstance Travel

3.1 Evacuation Travel Allowances

Evacuation Travel Allowances are allowances that may be paid to an employee's dependents in the event of an officially-ordered evacuation, in accordance with 5 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 550, Subpart D (<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/5/part-550/subpart-D>).

3.2 Permanent Change of Station

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) is approved at the FMC Director level. Per [the March 2021 NWS-NWSEO Collective Bargaining Agreement \(CBA\)](#), the use of a third-party relocation services company (RSC) is not allowed.

3.3 Actual Expense

Actual Expense is limited to lodging. It is approved by the same authorizing officials who authorize travel. The TA is required to reflect in remarks one of the four justifications shown in the [DOC Travel Policy Handbook Section 3.9.1](#) (FTR 301-11.300 and FTR 301-70.201);

3.4 Foreign Travel

Foreign Travel is approved per the NWSI 1-901 Foreign Travel Order procedures, [NTR Chapter 306](#), and [NOAA Foreign Travel web page](#);

3.5 Group Travel

Group Travel includes groups of employees from the same Line/Staff Office, including invitational travelers, traveling to the location or event, and is required to be approved using the [NOAA Group Travel Request Form](#) by NOAA's Deputy Under Secretary (DUS);

- Domestic group travel consists of fifteen or more employees;
- Foreign and non-foreign group travel consists of eight or more employees;
- For additional information visit, [NOAA's Group Travel Website](#).

3.6 Conference Travel

Conference Travel requires certain levels of approval, depending on the expected overall total cost. For more information on the approval process, please visit [NOAA's Conference Travel Website](#);

3.7 Premium Class Travel

Premium Class Travel authorizations and [CD-334s](#), Request for Approval for Other than Coach-Class Accommodations, in accordance with [FTR, Chapter 301- 10](#) will be approved by NOAA's DUSO.

4 Approval Documentation

4.1 DUSO Approval

Employees requesting premium class travel approval will route their travel authorization and completed [CD-334](#) to the DUSO by scanning it into E2 for final approval. Please note, the authorizing official who approved the TA is required to sign block 17 of the CD-334 and the CD-334 is required to be completed in its entirety. Please see [CD-334, Instructions](#) for the proper way to complete the CD-334. The NOAA DUSO will sign block 18a of the CD- 334 if premium class travel is approved. Contact the Executive Director for the DUSO (CDR Rebecca Waddington, rebecca.waddington@noaa.gov) for approval status.

4.2 Authorizing Official Approval

Employees requesting choice/premium seating are required to include one of the exceptions listed in the [FTR, Chapter 301-10](#) in the Remarks section of the travel authorization. A [CD-334](#) is not required for choice/premium seating.

4.3 Other FMC Funding

As outlined in the NWS ARM, fiscal rules prohibit disbursement of funds without proper authority. Employees or Travel Arrangers must include supporting documentation in the form of a memorandum, email, or other appropriate reference as an attachment to the travel authorization to satisfy the ARM requirements.