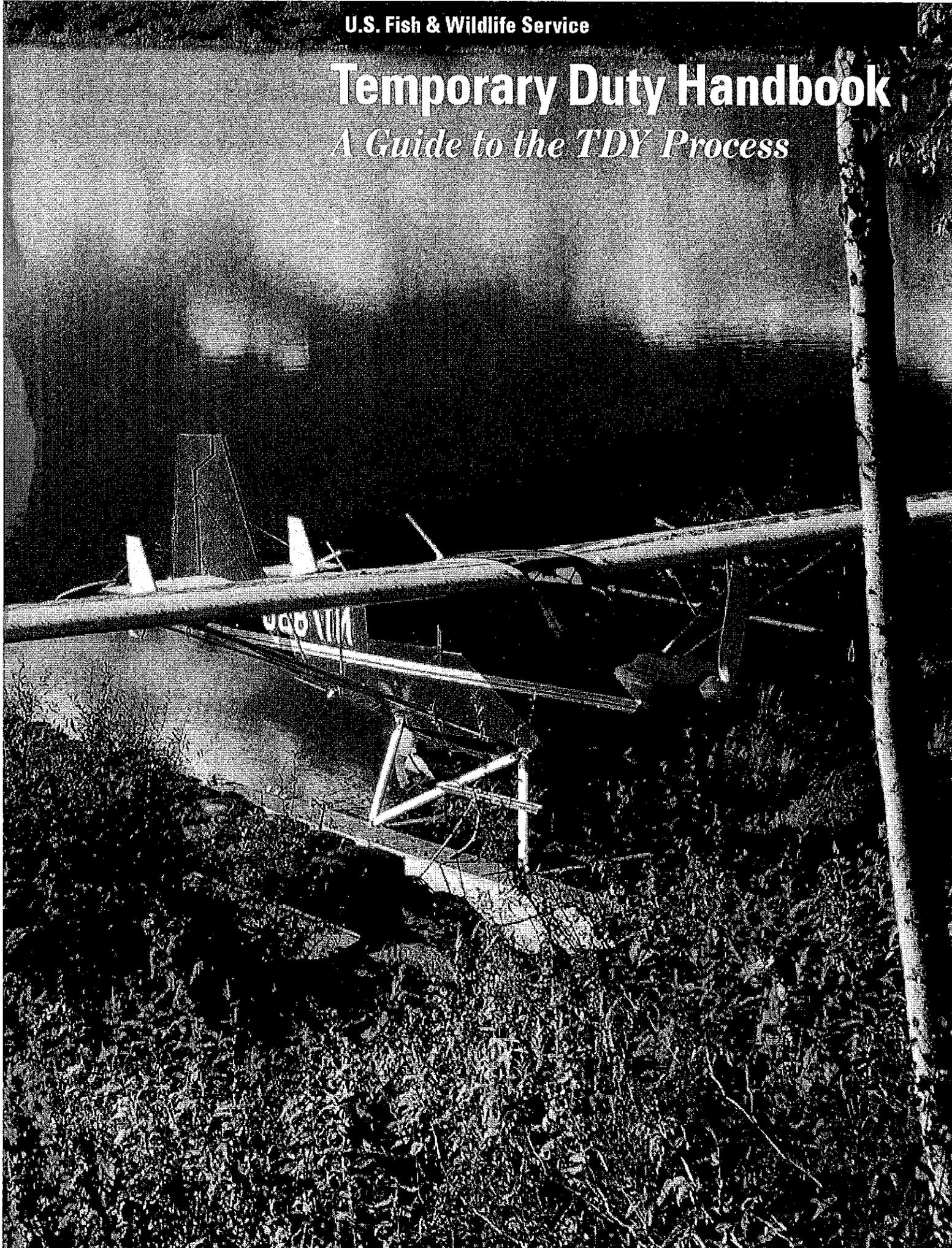


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Temporary Duty Handbook

A Guide to the TDY Process



5.2.1 Commercial Air Service

The Service considers travel by commercial air service to be the most advantageous mode of transportation for conducting official business over 250 miles. It is the traveler's responsibility to select flights that comply with Service policy and are cost effective and efficient. This almost always means traveling by a direct route on a contract carrier in coach or economy class. The following section includes guidance on locating and booking allowable flights, as well as exceptions to the requirement to purchase coach or economy accommodations on city-pair flights.

City-Pair Airfares

The Service participates in the General Services Administration's (GSA) City-Pair Program. Air carriers under contract with GSA for the City-Pair Program offer considerable discounts on certain airfares, called city-pair fares. In addition to discounting airfares, contract carriers offer the following features on city-pair fares that provide travelers flexibility when planning official travel:

- Fares priced on one-way routes to support multiple destination trips.
- No advance purchase required.
- No minimum or maximum length stay required.
- Tickets fully refundable.
- Real-time information on seat availability.

Travelers are generally required to take city-pair fares whenever they are available. This requirement is the incentive for airlines to participate in the City-Pair Program and provides carriers the business volume necessary to offer discounted rates. Choosing not to use a contract carrier because of personal preference is a violation of the contract. City-pair fares are color-coded green or yellow in GovTrip so that travelers can easily distinguish these fares from other available tickets. The screenshot below shows city-pair fares that a traveler located using the GovTrip search tool.

Figure 5-1 - Flight Search Screen in GovTrip

Air - Outbound		Air - Return	
Select up to 10 flight(s) to price.		Select up to 10 flight(s) to price.	
DCA - Washington, Dc (Usa) (National Apt) to PHX - Phoenix, Az (Usa) (Sky Harbor Apt)		PHX - Phoenix, Az (Usa) (Sky Harbor Apt) to DCA - Washington, Dc (Usa) (National Apt)	
<input type="button" value="Price Flight(s)"/> <input type="button" value="Return To Search"/>			
Sort By: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Government Policy <input type="radio"/> Non-Stop & Direct <input type="radio"/> Departure Time <input type="radio"/> Arrival Time <input type="radio"/> Elapsed Time		Sort By: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Government Policy <input type="radio"/> Non-Stop & Direct <input type="radio"/> Departure Time <input type="radio"/> Arrival Time <input type="radio"/> Elapsed Time	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check to price this flight \$599.00 - GSA City Pair		<input type="checkbox"/> Check to price this flight \$599.00 - GSA City Pair	
10:15AM Depart DCA - Washington, Dc (Usa) (National Apt) 12:27PM Arrive PHX - Phoenix, Az (Usa) (Sky Harbor Apt) Flying Time 4h 12min Equipment 319 Ticket Type ETR OPERATED BY US DEPART Time Window: 75 Sequence Number 029	US Airways 602 Wed 18-Mar-09 Duration: 4h 12min Elapsed time: 4h 12min	8:45AM Depart PHX - Phoenix, Az (Usa) (Sky Harbor Apt) 3:56PM Arrive DCA - Washington, Dc (Usa) (National Apt) Flying Time 5h 07min Equipment 319 Ticket Type ETR OPERATED BY US RETURN Time Window: 11 Sequence Number 020	US Airways 44 Fri 20-Mar-09 Duration: 5h 07min Elapsed time: 5h 07min



Travelers should be aware that SATO does not use GovTrip and does not color-code flights. Travelers should refer to flights by flight number, rather than color, when speaking with a SATO agent.

Other Airfares

When a city-pair airfare exists, and air travel is the most cost effective mode of transportation, there is a very limited set of circumstances in which a traveler may travel by non-contract carrier. Approving Officials may only authorize fares offered by non-contract carriers in the following situations:

- The scheduled city-pair service would require the traveler to incur an overnight lodging expense.
- The contract carrier's schedule is inconsistent with the Service's policy of scheduling travel to the maximum extent practical during normal working hours.
- The non-contract carrier offers a fare in GovTrip or through SATO that will result in a lower total trip cost to the Government than any city-pair or other fare offered by the contract carrier.
- Space on the scheduled service of the contract carrier is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of the travel.



Travelers may not make cost comparisons based on "ME2" fares (flights that non-contract carriers offer exclusively to Government and military personnel performing official business that must be purchased with a Government charge card; YDG, MDG, WDG, VDG, and other similar fares). These flights are color-coded blue in GovTrip. These fares may change between the time the traveler reserves a seat and the airline issues the ticket, and may include fees added by the airlines (e.g., fuel surcharge) that do not apply to city-pair fares.

In order to qualify under the "lower total trip cost" exception, travelers must compare the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, and related expenses. Travelers may not consider rental cars in cost comparisons. The traveler must meet all qualifying restrictions associated with the non-contract fare, and should consider any penalties associated with non-refundable tickets, reservation changes, minimum or maximum stay lengths, and blackout dates to be flight-related expenses.

When a traveler qualifies to use a non-contract airfare under one of these exceptions, he / she must document the exception on the travel authorization by selecting one of the reason codes in the GovTrip Pre-Audit screen, as shown below.

Figure 5-2 - Pre-Audit Reason Codes in GovTrip

This is a list of Pre-Audit reason codes that apply to NON-CONTRACT FARE.

Select	Reason Code & Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	C0 - Contract Fare not available: Contract Fare does not exist.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C1 - Scheduled contract fare flights are not available in time to meet mission requirements or use of contract service would require the traveler to incur unnecessary overnight lodging cost which would increase the total cost of the trip.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C2 - The contractor's flight schedule is inconsistent with explicit policies of individual federal departments and agencies where applicable to schedule travel during normal working hours.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C3 - A non-contract carrier offers a lower fare available to the general public, the use of which will result in a lower total trip cost to the government to include the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals and related expenses. NOTE: This exception does not apply if the contract carrier(s) offers a comparable fare and has seats available at the fare, or if the lower fare offered by a non-contract carrier is restricted to government and military travelers on official business and may only be purchased with a GTR or government travel card, e.g., YDG, MDG, QDG, VDG and similar fares.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C4 - Rail service available and cost effective.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C5 - Smoking is permitted on the contract flight and the nonsmoking section of the aircraft for the contract flight is not acceptable to the traveler.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C6 - Contract Fare not available: Contract Fare sold out or time of flight does not meet the mission.

Use this option when contract airfare is not available. Authorization is conferred by one of the following actions:

- Approving Official approves the travel authorization that includes reason code C0.
- Approving Official addresses use of penalty fares on the traveler's Limited Open Travel Authorization.
- Approving Official signs FWS Form 3-2388 (autobook is enabled; penalty fares not addressed on the Limited Open Travel Authorization).

C3 is not a valid reason code for a ME2 (blue) flight. C0, C1, and C6 are all valid reasons for taking a ME2 flight.



Non-contract airfares are coded **blue** or **red** in GovTrip, depending upon the restrictions associated with the fare. The blue airfares are "ME2 fares," which are fully refundable Government fares that may be higher or lower than city-pair fares. The red airfares are penalty fares, which generally offer travelers less flexibility than other available fares.

Other Airfares

When a city-pair airfare exists, and air travel is the most cost effective mode of transportation, there is a very limited set of circumstances in which a traveler may travel by non-contract carrier. Approving Officials may only authorize fares offered by non-contract carriers in the following situations:

- The scheduled city-pair service would require the traveler to incur an overnight lodging expense.
- The contract carrier's schedule is inconsistent with the Service's policy of scheduling travel to the maximum extent practical during normal working hours.
- The non-contract carrier offers a fare in GovTrip or through SATO that will result in a lower total trip cost to the Government than any city-pair or other fare offered by the contract carrier.
- Space on the scheduled service of the contract carrier is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of the travel.



Travelers may not make cost comparisons based on "ME2" fares (flights that non-contract carriers offer exclusively to Government and military personnel performing official business that must be purchased with a Government charge card; YDG, MDG, WDG, VDG, and other similar fares). These flights are color-coded blue in GovTrip. These fares may change between the time the traveler reserves a seat and the airline issues the ticket, and may include fees added by the airlines (e.g., fuel surcharge) that do not apply to city-pair fares.

In order to qualify under the "lower total trip cost" exception, travelers must compare the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, and related expenses. Travelers may not consider rental cars in cost comparisons. The traveler must meet all qualifying restrictions associated with the non-contract fare, and should consider any penalties associated with non-refundable tickets, reservation changes, minimum or maximum stay lengths, and blackout dates to be flight-related expenses.

When a traveler qualifies to use a non-contract airfare under one of these exceptions, he / she must document the exception on the travel authorization by selecting one of the reason codes in the GovTrip Pre-Audit screen, as shown below.

Figure 5-2 - Pre-Audit Reason Codes in GovTrip

Select	Reason Code & Description
<input type="checkbox"/>	C0 - Contract Fare not available: Contract Fare does not exist.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C1 - Scheduled contract fare flights are not available in time to meet mission requirements or use of contract service would require the traveler to incur unnecessary overnight lodging cost which would increase the total cost of the trip.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C2 - The contractor's flight schedule is inconsistent with explicit policies of individual federal departments and agencies where applicable to schedule travel during normal working hours.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C3 - A non-contract carrier offers a lower fare available to the general public, the use of which will result in a lower total trip cost to the government to include the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals and related expenses. NOTE: This exception does not apply if the contract carrier(s) offers a comparable fare and has seats available at the fare, or if the lower fare offered by a non-contract carrier is restricted to government and military travelers on official business and may only be purchased with a GTR or government travel card, e.g., YDG, MDG, QDG, VDG and similar fares.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C4 - Rail service available and cost effective.
<input type="checkbox"/>	C5 - Smoking is permitted on the contract flight and the nonsmoking section of the aircraft for the contract flight is not acceptable to the traveler
<input type="checkbox"/>	C6 - Contract Fare not available: Contract Fare sold out or time of flight does not meet the mission.

Use this option when contract airfare is not available. Authorization is conferred by one of the following actions:

- Approving Official approves the travel authorization that includes reason code C0.
- Approving Official addresses use of penalty fares on the traveler's Limited Open Travel Authorization.
- Approving Official signs FWS Form 3-2388 (autobook is enabled; penalty fares not addressed on the Limited Open Travel Authorization).

C3 is not a valid reason code for a ME2 (blue) flight. C0, C1, and C6 are all valid reasons for taking a ME2 flight.



Non-contract airfares are coded **blue** or **red** in GovTrip, depending upon the restrictions associated with the fare. The blue airfares are "ME2 fares," which are fully refundable Government fares that may be higher or lower than city-pair fares. The red airfares are penalty fares, which generally offer travelers less flexibility than other available fares.

A traveler may book a blue or red airfare when he / she qualifies to use a non-contract carrier and meets all qualifying restrictions associated with the fare. Blue fares may not be booked under the "total lower trip cost" exception. When a traveler books a blue or red airfare, he / she must ensure that the fare is ticketed as soon as possible, so that the ticket price does not increase or become unavailable.

Travelers using autobook should change the ticket date to the date that they are digitally signing the travel authorization to avoid any increases in airfare.

If the traveler is not using autobook, the formal pre-authorization to use a non-contract fare is the Approving Official's electronic approval of the GovTrip authorization that includes the appropriate reason code. If an Approving Official is reviewing a travel authorization that includes non-contract airfare and needs clarification on the request or feels that the justification selected is not appropriate, he / she should electronically return the travel authorization to the traveler. The Approving Official should include a note with the authorization explaining how the traveler can best address the issue.

If the traveler is using autobook, he / she may be conducting travel under a Limited Open / Unlimited Open Travel Authorization that addresses the use of non-contract fares, in which case supplemental approval is not required. Otherwise, the traveler must document the request to book a non-contract fare on FWS Form 3-2388, obtain his / her Approving Official's signature on the completed form, and include a copy of the signed FWS Form 3-2388 with the receipt packet.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Secure Flight

As of August 2009, TSA requires additional identifying information from all individuals traveling by commercial air carrier. The Service is coordinating with Northrop Grumman to ensure that travelers' names, genders, and birthdates are stored in GovTrip in the format required under the TSA Secure Flight initiative. In order to comply with TSA Secure Flight and avoid interruptions or delays in air travel, each Service traveler must verify the information stored in his / her GovTrip profile against the information on the Government-issued photo ID that he / she uses to travel (e.g., driver's license). If the traveler identifies a discrepancy between his / her GovTrip profile and photo ID, the traveler must resolve the issue by updating his / her GovTrip profile as follows:

- If the traveler must adjust his / her first name, middle initial, date of birth, or gender, he / she may make these changes directly in GovTrip. The traveler should contact the Northrop Grumman help desk with any questions related to making these changes.
- If the traveler must adjust his / her last name, the traveler may **not** make the change in GovTrip. The traveler must contact his / her Regional FATA for assistance in making this change. The Regional FATA will adjust the traveler's name in GovTrip and ensure that Northrop Grumman adjusts the traveler's identifying information in Oblix. The traveler should also verify that his / her last name on the Government charge card matches his / her last name in GovTrip and on the photo ID used to travel. GovTrip checks for a match between the last name in the traveler's profile and charge card before charging costs to the traveler's Government charge card⁷.



Each traveler must select "male" or "female" in his / her GovTrip profile. If the gender field is left as "N/A," GovTrip will not transmit any of the Secure Flight information to the airline.

⁷ This match is not performed when a Region uses a corporate card to pay for an invitational traveler.

First Class and Business Class Accommodations



This section provides guidance on when travelers may fly in first class or business class at the expense of the Government. A traveler may upgrade official air travel to first class or business class at his / her personal expense without requiring any additional approval. The traveler must use a personal credit card or other personal form of payment to cover the cost associated with the upgrade. Any time a traveler uses a Government charge card to cover the cost associated with travel in first class or business class, he / she is subject to the requirements and approval process outlined in this section.

Service policy prohibits the purchase of first class and business class tickets at the expense of the Government, except under extremely limited circumstances and then only with specific advance written authorization. The Department of the Interior is required to report all instances of first class and business class air travel at the expense of the Government to GSA on an annual basis. As a result, requests to fly in first class or business class are scrutinized. The traveler must submit a written request for approval (e.g., FWS Form 3-2388) prior to traveling in first class or business class, and must include a copy of the approved request as part of his / her receipt packet.

A traveler may request approval to fly in first class or business class at the expense of the Government only if he / she qualifies under one of the following exceptions:

- Premium accommodations are required for a disabled or otherwise physically impaired traveler to conduct official travel.
- Space is not available in coach or economy class on any scheduled flight in time to accomplish the purpose of the official travel, which is so urgent that it cannot be postponed.
- Premium class accommodations are required for security purposes, or other exceptional circumstances make the accommodations essential to the successful performance of the mission.
- The use of premium class accommodations will result in a lower total trip cost to the Government than awaiting availability of coach or economy accommodations.

Additional information on requesting, approving, and documenting first class or business class travel for each of these exceptions is included below.

Scenario 1: Premium accommodations are required for a disabled or otherwise physically impaired traveler to conduct official travel

The traveler's request must be supported by a current statement issued by a competent medical authority. This certification must be updated annually, unless the physical impairment is a lifelong impairment. The traveler must obtain approval from the individuals listed below.

For first class travel:

- His / her supervisor
- Regional Safety Officer
- Director, DOI Office of Financial Management
- DOI Assistant Secretary of Policy, Management, and Budget (PMB)

For business class travel:

- His / her supervisor
- Regional Safety Officer
- Regional Director / Assistant Director



Approving Officials may authorize additional travel-related costs for travelers with special needs (e.g., wheelchair rental, travel of an attendant), as required. See Chapter 7, Section 7.1.2 *Travel of an Employee with Special Needs* for additional information on this topic.

Scenario 2: Premium accommodations are required because space is not available in coach or economy class on any scheduled flight in time to accomplish the purpose of the official travel.

The traveler's request must include an explanation of why the matter is so urgent that it cannot be postponed and how delaying the trip would endanger the mission. The explanation must describe when the travel requirement became known and when travel was scheduled, including reasons for any failure to make advance travel arrangements. The traveler must obtain approval from the individuals listed below.

For first class travel:

- His / her supervisor
- Director, DOI Office of Financial Management
- DOI Assistant Secretary of PMB

For business class travel:

- His / her supervisor
- Regional Director / Assistant Director

Scenario 3: Premium accommodations are required for security purposes or other exceptional circumstances make the accommodations essential to the successful performance of the mission.

The traveler's request must include an explanation of the situation, including the reason that coach or economy class accommodations are insufficient to successfully perform the official travel. The traveler must obtain approval from the individuals listed below.

For first class travel:

- His / her supervisor
- Chief, FWS Office of Law Enforcement
- Director, DOI Office of Financial Management
- DOI Assistant Secretary of PMB

For business class travel:

- His / her supervisor
- Chief, FWS Office of Law Enforcement
- Regional Director / Assistant Director

Scenario 4: The use of premium accommodations will result in a lower total trip cost to the Government than awaiting availability of coach or economy accommodations.

The traveler's request must include a cost comparison of the available tickets. The traveler must consider additional per diem, overtime, and lost productive time that would accrue while awaiting availability of coach or economy accommodations. The comparison must be based on contract air service, where available, and travel by the most direct route. The traveler must obtain approval from the individuals listed below.

For first class travel:

- His / her supervisor
- Director, DOI Office of Financial Management
- DOI Assistant Secretary of PMB

For business class travel:

- His / her supervisor
- Regional Director / Assistant Director



Under coach class seating upgrade programs (e.g., "Coach Elite," "Coach Plus," "Preferred Coach") a passenger pays a fee to obtain a more desirable seat in the coach class cabin. Generally, the use of upgraded / preferred coach seating options is a traveler's personal choice and the traveler may only incur a seat choice fee at his / her personal expense.

These coach upgrade options are not considered a new or higher class of accommodation, and are not subject to the approval process required for first class and business class accommodations. However, an Approving Official may only authorize the seat choice fee when the coach upgrade is in the interest of the Government. A coach upgrade may be in the interest of the Government if the ticket is the last available seat on the flight, or if the passenger may use a coach upgrade when first class or business class accommodations would otherwise be required. A seat choice fee must be specifically addressed within the travel authorization in order for a traveler to claim the expense on his / her travel voucher.

Airline Loyalty Programs

The Service encourages travelers to participate in airline loyalty programs to earn benefits that defray the cost of travel. A traveler should add any loyalty program memberships to his / her GovTrip profile in order to earn loyalty program benefits when conducting official travel. Travelers may upgrade official air travel to first class or business class by using a "free upgrade" earned through participating in a loyalty program without requiring any additional approval. Travelers should contact SATO to book flights for official travel using rewards earned through airline loyalty programs. Travelers may also retain loyalty program benefits earned when conducting official travel for personal use.



Travelers should visit <https://dfm.fws.gov/Travel/index.html> and refer to User Guide 1.2 *Creating and Updating a Travel Profile* for information on entering loyalty program account numbers into GovTrip. Travelers must use the drop-down menus in GovTrip and accurately enter account numbers; typos in loyalty program account numbers can cause errors in GovTrip.

After completing this process, the traveler's loyalty program account number will automatically populate in the Frequent Flyer field in GovTrip when the traveler selects a flight offered by an airline in whose program he / she participates. Travelers should check at the airport kiosk to ensure that the information was applied correctly.

Baggage

Travelers may travel with up to two bags that meet the airline's weight restrictions on a TDY trip at the expense of the Service. If the airline charges the traveler a fee for checking one or two bags, the traveler may charge the fee to his / her travel card. Since airlines have varying policies on fees for checking bags, travelers may be unaware of baggage fees prior to traveling. If a traveler incurs a baggage fee that was not included on the travel authorization, he / she should add the expense directly to the travel voucher. Since the Approving Official authorized use of the airline, the traveler is not required to re-submit the travel authorization for post-travel approval.



An Approving Official may authorize a traveler to exceed the two bag limit or weight limit when he / she is carrying equipment or materials required for the official portion of the trip. If the traveler consistently requires special equipment to complete his / her official duties on TDY travel, the Approving Official may include this entitlement on a Limited Open Travel Authorization as "special equipment required to complete mission of travel." Otherwise, the traveler must include a description of the equipment or materials in the travel authorization or FWS Form 3-2388.

Generally, charges for transporting recreational equipment (e.g., golf clubs, skis) are not reimbursable, and a traveler may bring these items on a TDY trip only at his / her own expense. If a traveler believes such items are required for official use, he / she should contact the Regional Travel Coordinator for guidance on documenting the expense.

Fast Pass Memberships

Airport security fast pass memberships allow individuals at certain airports to use special lanes to expedite the security clearance process. Since these memberships are not necessary to accomplish official travel, fast pass membership fees are not reimbursable to the traveler. An Approving Official may not authorize a traveler to obtain a fast pass membership at the expense of the Government.

Taxi Fares and Airport Parking

An Approving Official may authorize a traveler to take a taxi to the airport or incur the cost associated with parking his / her POV at the airport for the duration of the TDY trip. The Approving Official must authorize whichever method is advantageous to the Government. The traveler must use shuttle service or courtesy transportation when provided for free or at nominal cost, unless doing so would adversely affect his / her travel or unduly extend the duration of the TDY trip.

5.2.2 Alternate Modes of Transportation

A traveler may travel by POV, rail, or bus only when it is advantageous to the Government and specifically addressed within the travel authorization. The traveler must document when he / she selects a mode of transportation for personal reasons and it is neither the most cost efficient mode of transportation nor specifically authorized as an exception to policy. When travel is conducted by POV, rail, or bus for personal reasons, the traveler must complete a cost comparison as described in section 5.5. The traveler will receive reimbursement for the total cost associated with the mode of transportation most beneficial to the Government.

In all of the following cases, travel by an alternate mode of transportation is considered to be for personal reasons:

- All TDY travel locations are adequately served by commercial airline, and the scheduled departure and arrival times would result in a more efficient trip than travel by POV, rail, or bus.
- Some of the TDY travel locations are adequately served by commercial airline, and the cost of combining air travel and use of a special conveyance (e.g., ferry) is less than the cost of travel by POV, rail, or bus.
- The traveler conducts personal travel in conjunction with an official TDY trip and travel by POV, rail, or bus is not otherwise beneficial to the Government.
- The traveler decides to travel by POV, rail, or bus based on a fear of flying that is not documented in a current medical statement issued by a competent medical authority.



In addition to POV, rail, or bus, the Service may also authorize travelers to use FWS-owned Government vehicles for TDY travel. It is the Approving Official's responsibility to inform a traveler when he / she is eligible to use a Government vehicle for TDY travel. It is the traveler's responsibility to add the use of a Government vehicle to the record of the TDY trip in GovTrip.

This mode of transportation must be added in the Other Transportation screen in GovTrip as a zero dollar expense, as shown on the following page, to clearly document that a Government vehicle was used and no other form of transportation is missing from the record.

Figure 5-3 - Documenting use of a GOV in GovTrip

After saving the zero dollar GOV expense, check the Trip Overview screen to ensure that the expense saved as part of the Trip Summary, as shown below.

Employees should contact the Contracting and General Services Office with any questions on the Service's fleet or TDY travel using a Government vehicle.

5.2.3 POV Mileage Reimbursement

For many TDY trips over 250 miles, the total trip cost for travel by POV will exceed that of a common carrier itinerary, due to increased per diem costs and lodging expenses. When developing an itinerary that includes travel by POV, the traveler must determine whether use of a POV is advantageous to the Government or is for personal reasons, as outlined in section 5.2.2 above.

GSA Mileage Reimbursement Rates

The Service uses two GSA mileage reimbursement rates to calculate reimbursement for travel by POV: a rate for travel by POV that is beneficial to the Government, and a lower rate when a Government-owned vehicle is available and the traveler uses a POV for personal reasons. GSA sets the mileage reimbursement rates based upon the incremental cost to a traveler when he / she uses a POV for official travel. These rates change frequently, and travelers should visit the GSA website