United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

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Policy Memorandum 13-01

To: All Employees

From: Director Jonathan B. Jarvis

Subject: Official Travel Driving Policy (Revised)

Purpose

This memorandum establishes an updated policy for National Park Service (NPS) employees driving on official travel. Due to the nature of the NPS mission, employees face situations where extended travel times are required. This policy maintains the current 10-hour daily maximum driving limit while providing expanded flexibility to allow employees to safely reach their destinations. A maximum 12-hour travel day has been established to allow employees greater latitude to combine work and travel time in the same day. This policy only applies to employees who are in official travel status and driving. For the purposes of this policy, "official travel" is defined as any NPS employee driving while on an approved travel authorization using government, rental, or personally owned vehicles. This memorandum supersedes the previous policy issued May 10, 2012, and is effective immediately.

Background

In 2011, an NPS employee was killed after driving several long days across country between duty stations. The accident investigation revealed that the NPS lacked a clear policy addressing how long employees may drive while on official travel in single day. A scientific study conducted in 2011 by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) showed a direct correlation between the length of time spent driving a motor vehicle and associated traffic accidents. Specifically, the study showed the highest risks occurred in the 11th hour of driving (USDOT, May 2011).

Policy

- All employees will take the appropriate steps to reduce fatigue related driving and will consider factors such as physical condition, weather, length of trip, and road conditions to determine reasonable travel times within this policy's limits (see attached risk factors on fatigue and managing long drives).
- Supervisors will work with employees to prevent excessive driving on official travel, making every effort to ensure that they have discussed and mitigated potential risks in accordance with this policy.
- No employee will exceed a total of 10 hours of driving time behind the wheel while on official travel in a duty day.

- Once the 10-hour driving threshold has been reached, the employee may not drive again until having a minimum of 8 hours of off-duty time. Example: an employee on a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) move drives from noon to 10:00 p.m. and stops to check into a hotel. The employee cannot begin driving again until being off duty for a minimum of 8 hours (6:00 a.m. in this example).
- Employees embarking on travel after working a partial shift or attending training, are limited to a maximum total work/driving period of 12 hours. Examples: an employee works for 6 hours in the office prior to departing on official travel. The employee may then drive for 6 more hours. Or, the employee attends training for 8 hours; the employee may drive for 4 more hours.
- Employees traveling by common carrier (e.g., air, rail, bus) may only drive the remaining time period up to the 12-hour work/driving limit once they reach their destination. This 12-hour limit may be exceeded for the employee to drive to local area accommodations (close proximity to the airport). Examples: if an employee travels for 6 hours (including travel to airport, flight time, layovers, etc.) the employee could drive an additional 6 hours after landing. Or, if the flights, layovers and general travel time took a total of 12 hours, the employee could drive the distance necessary to reach local accommodations.
- Vehicles with multiple drivers may drive up to a combined total of 12 hours with no person exceeding 10 hours behind the wheel.
- Employees on official travel may be exempted from the minimum driving distance outlined in the Federal Travel Regulations and established by DOI/NPS (350 miles/day) if they feel their health and safety would be jeopardized by continuing to travel. To receive reimbursement, approval is authorized in accordance with *41 CFR 302-4.403.*

Exceptions

- Exceptions to the timeframes outlined in this policy may be made in rare circumstances in order to accomplish immediate and critical operational objectives and/or address special needs such as emergency incidents.
- Exceptions require supervisory approval based on a discussion between the supervisor and employee using the principles of Operational Leadership. Both will consider mission urgency and risk factors such as hours worked prior to travel, familiarity with route, length of trip, weather and road conditions, fatigue, and overnight stops. The decision must be documented by a supervisor as soon as practicable.
- NPS employees assigned to wildfire or prescribed fire incidents will follow driving standards found in the current year's *Interagency Standards for Fire* and *Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book- Chapter 7).*

This memorandum will be posted on the Office of Policy's InsideNPS site and incorporated into applicable NPS policies relating to occupational health and safety, travel, and relocation.

The attached documents contain information on fatigue and managing long drives in addition to a list of frequently asked questions. For questions or clarifications, contact the NPS Office of Risk Management at 202.513.7225.

Attachments