

Federal Travel Regulation
GSA Bulletin FTR 13-03

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Promoting Efficient Travel Spending

1. What is the purpose of this bulletin? This bulletin emphasizes to agencies the requirements of recent Executive Orders and Directives related to travel spending and encourages agencies to act as careful stewards of taxpayer dollars, ensuring that Federal travel and conference related funds are spent appropriately and are cost effective.
2. What is the background of this bulletin? The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued Memorandum M-12-12, "Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations" to the heads of executive departments and agencies on May 11, 2012. The memorandum outlined a series of policies and practices related to travel and conference activities and expenses that agencies should take to improve operations, increase efficiency, and cut unnecessary spending. One specific OMB policy is that beginning in FY 2013 through FY 2016, each agency should be annually spending at least 30 percent less on travel expenses than in FY 2010.
3. What should agencies do as a result of this bulletin? Before and/or after authorizing travel and/or conference related expenses, agencies should:
 - a) Ensure and justify that travel is necessary to accomplish the agency mission;
 - b) Consider the use of technologies (teleconferencing, video conferencing, webinars, etc.) in lieu of travel;
 - c) Consider all viable transportation options which will result in a lower total trip cost to the Government. While Federal civilians travelers generally are required to use the City Pairs Program, restricted fares may be used instead if a non-contract carrier offers a lower fare to the general public that, if used, will result in a lower total trip cost to the Government. Agencies should also consider associated time and mission needs when acquiring transportation services and assess any risks associated with lower transportation costs;
 - d) Ensure that controls are in place to collect all refunds for unused or partially used airline tickets for Federal employees who have purchased airfare, consistent with existing requirements in the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) and the Federal Management Regulation (FMR);
 - e) Encourage travelers to become familiar with local transit systems that are available between meetings, lodging and other locations where business is being conducted. Public transportation should be the first option for local transportation at a Temporary Duty (TDY) location;

- f) Increase Federal employee sharing of rental automobiles and taxis when public transportation is not available;
 - g) Encourage employees to evaluate all available lodging options in the agency ETS system that are at or below established per diem rates;
 - h) Evaluate reduced per diems for extended TDY assignments (greater than 30 days), and evaluate cost effectiveness of a Temporary Change of Station for TDY assignments greater than 180 days;
 - i) Direct immediate savings achieved through these reductions toward investments that improve the transparency and accountability of Federal spending. Investments should include activities necessary to provide more robust tracking and public reporting of Federal spending. Examples of these kinds of investments can include implementation of ETS2 prior to October 1, 2014.
4. With the increased emphasis on conference spending, has OMB issued any guidance specifically on conference spending? OMB has indicated the following requirements for conference planning and spending:
- a) A senior level official must review all planned conferences and approve all future conference expenses in excess of \$100,000 to ensure that the conference expenses and activities comply with Executive Orders, Directives, FTR, and Federal Acquisition Regulation requirements;
 - b) Expenses in excess of \$500,000 on a single conference are prohibited, unless the agency head provides a documented written waiver from this policy;
 - c) All conference expenses in excess of \$100,000 must be reported publicly on the agency's official website each year beginning January 31, 2013, for the previous fiscal year. Total conference expenses incurred, date, location, total number of individuals whose travel and/or conference expenses were paid for by the agency and an explanation of how the conference advanced the agency mission must be posted.
5. What is the effective date of this bulletin? This bulletin is effective the date it is signed and posted on our web site (www.gsa.gov/ptr).
6. Whom should I call for further information? For clarification of content, please contact Ms. Chris A. Scott, Office of Government-wide Policy, Office of Asset and Transportation Management, at (202) 501-4744 or by e-mail at travelpolicy@gsa.gov.

By delegation of the Acting Administrator of General Services,


Kathleen M. Turco
Associate Administrator
Office of Governmentwide Policy