

July 11, 2018

Federal Travel Regulation  
GSA Bulletin FTR 18-07

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Relocation Allowances – Waiver of certain provisions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) (Chapter 302) for official relocation travel of employees to locations in the United States (U.S.) Virgin Islands and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico impacted by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

1. What is the purpose of this bulletin? This Bulletin informs agencies that certain provisions of the FTR governing official relocation travel are temporarily waived for employees relocating to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico locations affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. In these affected locations, finding lodging facilities and/or adequate meals may be difficult, and distances involved may be great, resulting in increased costs for relocation per diem expenses.

2. What is the effective date of this bulletin?

a. Hurricane Irma

This Bulletin is retroactively effective for official relocation travel performed on or after September 7, 2017, the date of Presidential Disaster Declaration DR-4335, for locations in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and September 10, 2017, the date of the Presidential Disaster Declaration DR-4336, for locations in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico affected by Hurricane Irma. This FTR Bulletin will expire one year from the respective effective dates, unless extended or rescinded by this office.

b. Hurricane Maria

This Bulletin is retroactively effective for official relocation travel performed on or after September 20, 2017, the date Presidential Disaster Declarations DR-4339 and DR-4340 were issued for locations in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico affected by Hurricane Maria. This FTR Bulletin will expire one year from the effective date, unless extended or rescinded by this office.

A list of affected locations can be found at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) web site at <https://www.fema.gov/disasters>.

3. What is the background of this bulletin? As a result of the Presidential Disaster Declarations, agencies should consider delaying all non-essential relocations to the affected areas given the statutory limitation of 5 U.S.C. §5724a(c)(2) only authorizes

reimbursement for actual Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses (TQSE) of 120 consecutive days. Moreover, the ability to secure lodgings may have been compromised due to storm damage.

Due to ongoing recovery efforts from the lasting effects of the hurricanes and varying mission requirements, GSA understands that agencies may have a need to relocate employees to the affected locations. Thus, each agency may determine whether to apply the waivers set forth in this Bulletin to affected employees' relocation travel to areas that are impacted by these hurricanes.

4. What should I do as a result of this Bulletin? If relocation travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico locations affected by Hurricanes Irma and Mara cannot be delayed, then the following applies:

(a) TQSE

- i. FTR §302-6.9, which requires that temporary quarters be in reasonable proximity to the old or new official station, is hereby waived for employees relocating to the U.S. Virgin Islands and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico locations affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. The maximum limit of 120 consecutive days that TQSE may be authorized remains in effect pursuant to FTR §302-6.104.
- ii. For temporary quarters located Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS), FTR §302-6.102 limits the applicable per diem allowance under the TQSE reimbursement method to the OCONUS locality rate allowance. Under this Bulletin, for temporary quarters located within the U.S. Virgin Islands and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico locations affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, agencies may continue to authorize TQSE at the applicable locality per diem allowance under FTR §§301-11.100 to 301-11.102 or authorize actual expenses under FTR §§301-11.300 to 301-11.306.

(b) Househunting trips

- i. FTR §302-5.13 does not allow use of the actual expense method described in FTR §§301-11.300 to 301-11.306 for reimbursement of subsistence expenses. Under this Bulletin, in addition to the methods listed in FTR §302-5.13, agencies may authorize actual expenses for the reimbursement of subsistence expenses for employees conducting househunting trips to locations in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

5. Maximum Rates. Agencies may approve actual subsistence expense reimbursement, not to exceed 300 percent of the applicable per diem rate, without further justification for employees performing official relocation travel to locations in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Commonwealth of Puerto Rico affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

6. Whom should I call for further information? For further information or clarification of content, please contact Mr. Rick Miller, Office of Government-wide Policy (M), Office of Asset and Transportation Management (MA), at (202) 501-3822 or by e-mail at [travelpolicy@gsa.gov](mailto:travelpolicy@gsa.gov). Please cite to FTR Bulletin 18-07.

By delegation of the Administrator of General Services,

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