

First Class Travel Report October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008



**Prepared by the Office of Governmentwide Policy
Office of Travel, Transportation and Asset Management
General Services Administration**

Introduction

Employee travel is an important component of successfully accomplishing a Federal agency's mission. In an atmosphere of increased transparency and accountability, agencies' travel expenditures are being evaluated closely to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely. One aspect of Federal travel that receives much scrutiny is the use of first class travel accommodations, as use of such accommodations is the exception rather than the rule during the standard course of business.

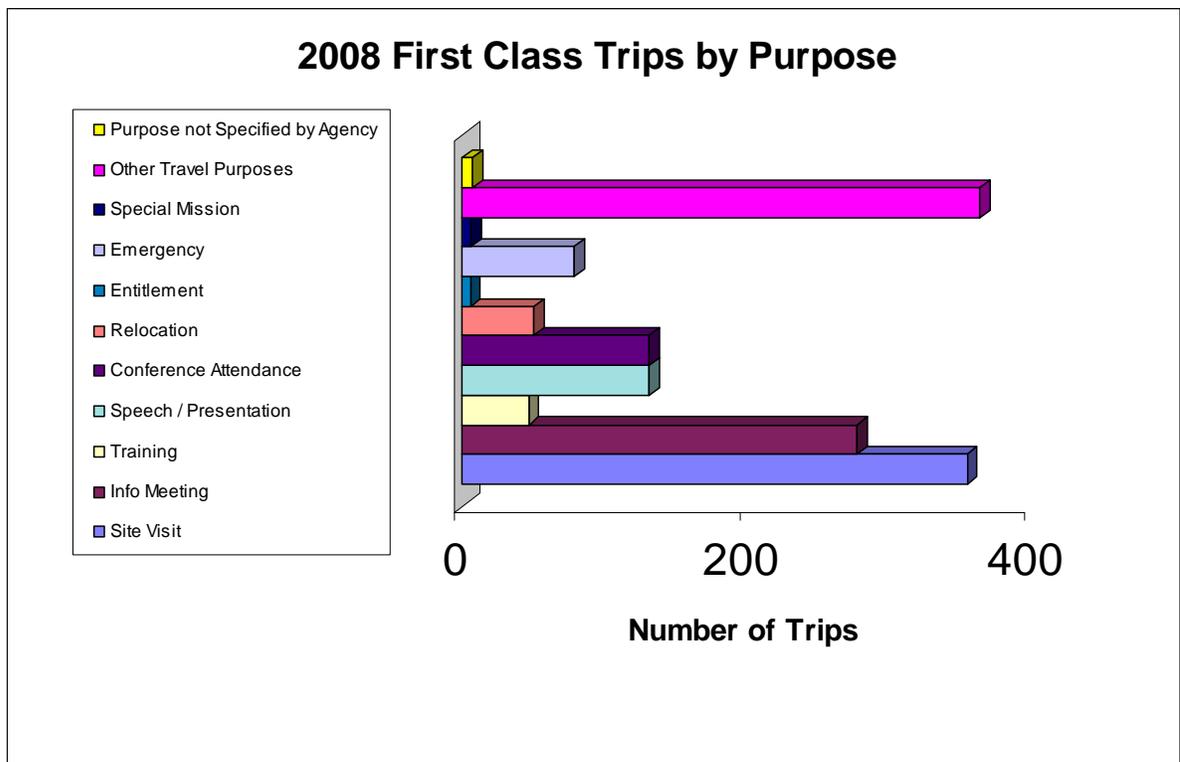
To achieve the goals of greater accountability and transparency for this category of travel, Chapter 301-70.100 of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) requires Federal agencies to annually submit to the General Services Administration (GSA) data regarding the usage of first class travel accommodations by their travelers. GSA is pleased to share this First Class Travel Report covering the use of first class travel during Fiscal Year (FY) 2008. In future years, reports will include business class data, and the First Class Travel Report will be renamed the Premium Class Travel Report.

Overview

The 2008 First Class Travel report contains information from 61 Federal departments, agencies, or other Federal entities. During FY 2008, 30 organizations reported 1,454 first class trips, while 31 organizations submitted “negative” responses indicating that first class travel accommodations were not used by their employees during the fiscal year.

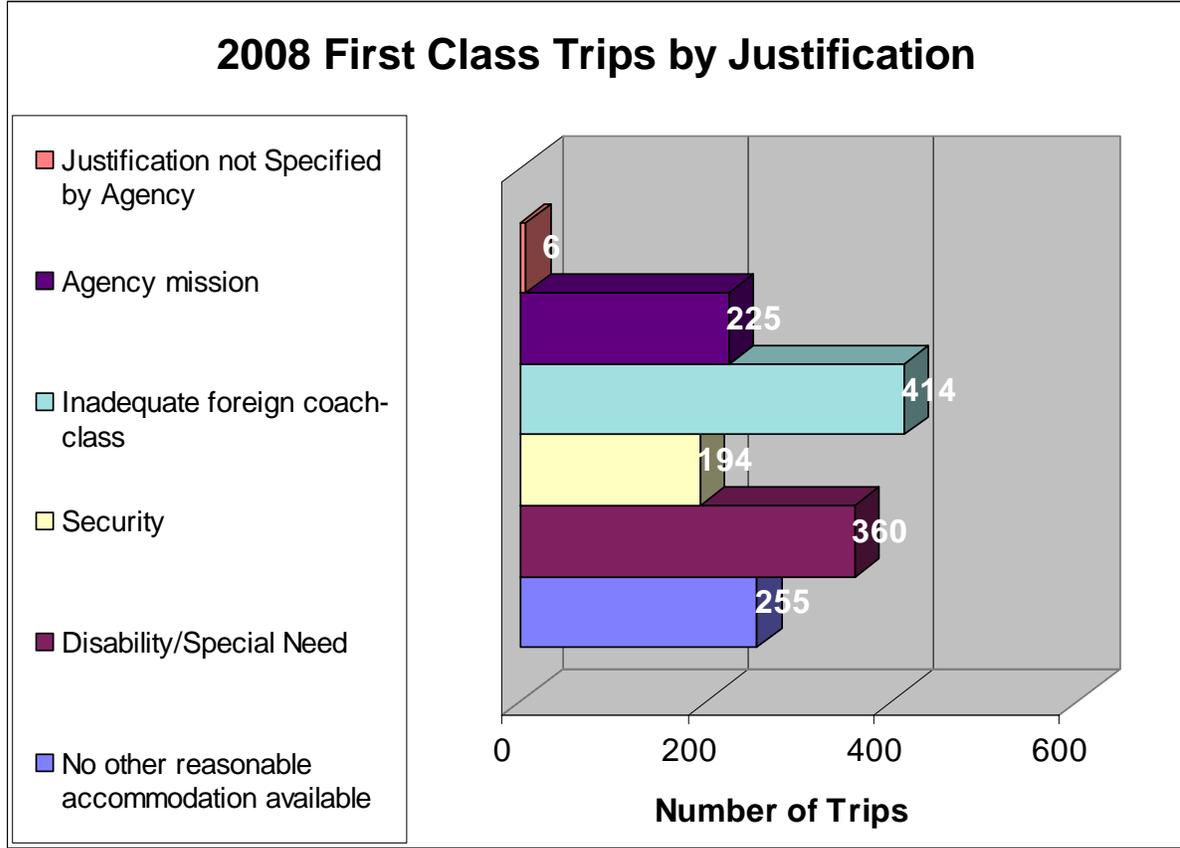
Trip purpose

The most identified trip purpose for 2008 was “other travel purposes,” used by 10 agencies for 363 trips, with the Department of State using it the most, while “entitlement travel” was the least identified, used by the Department of Commerce for 6 trips.



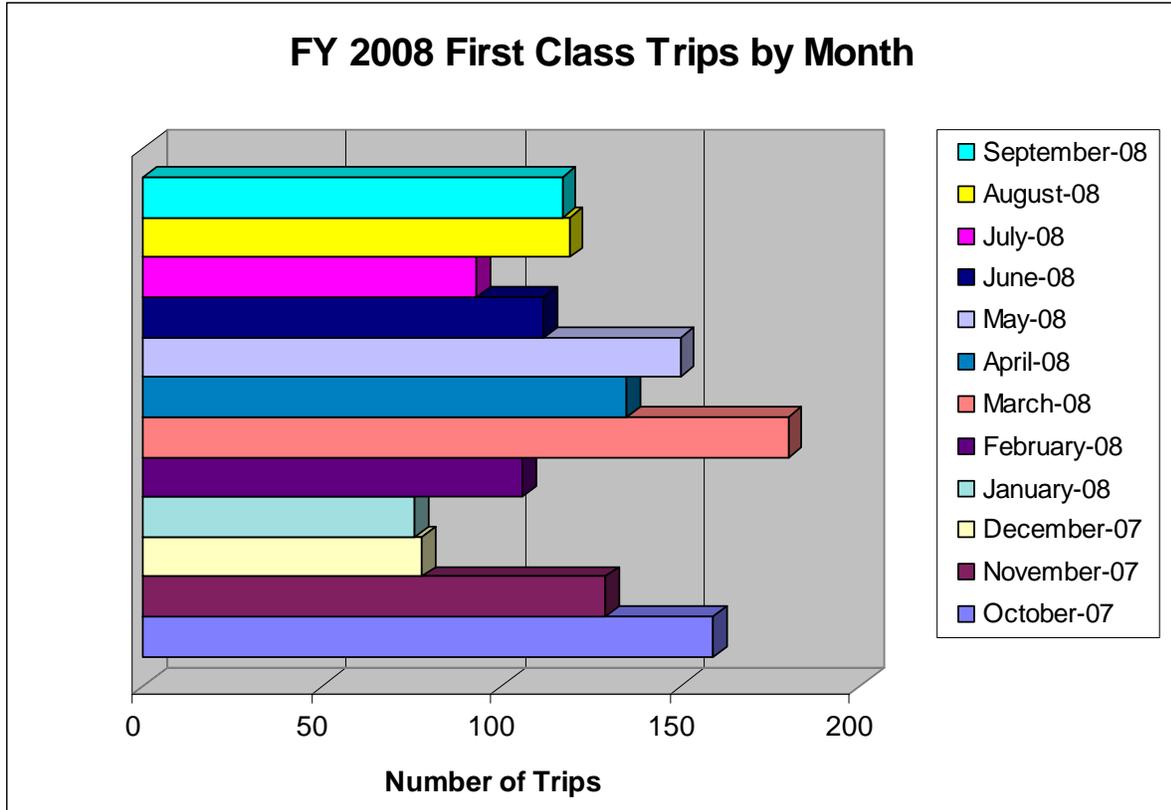
Trip justification

Of the justification categories, “disability/special need” was used most often to justify the use of first class travel during FY 2008. Twenty-two (22) agencies used this justification for 360 trips, with the Department of Health and Human Services using it the most, while “agency mission” was used least often. Nine agencies used this justification for 225 trips, with the Department of Defense using it the most.



Number of trips by month

March 2008 recorded the most first class trips (180), followed by October 2007 (159) and May 2008 (150). January 2008 (76) and December 2007 (78) saw the fewest number of first class trips.



Five-Year Trend Analysis

Decreasing from a high of 2,115 in 2004, the number of trips via first class accommodations has held fairly steady from 2005 through 2008 at approximately 1,500 per year.

Trip purpose codes

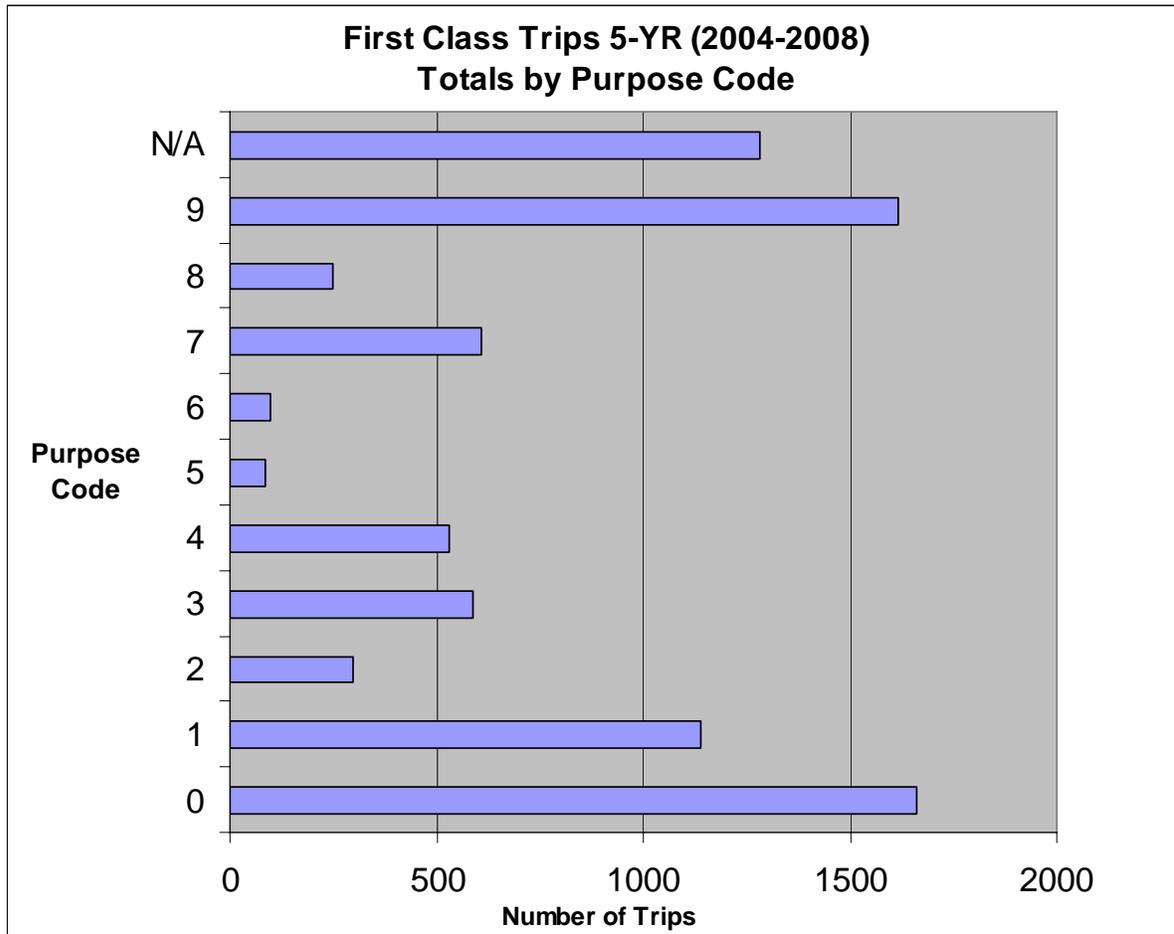
On an aggregate basis from 2004 to 2008, the most popular trip purpose code identified by reporting agencies is “no other reasonably available accommodation,” closely followed by “other travel purposes.” The least used trip purpose codes for this time period are “relocation” and “entitlement travel.” However, looking at trip purpose code use on a year-to-year basis, from 2004 to 2008, use of the following codes appears to be holding steady with no apparent directional trends:

- No other reasonably available accommodation
- Training attendance
- Conference attendance

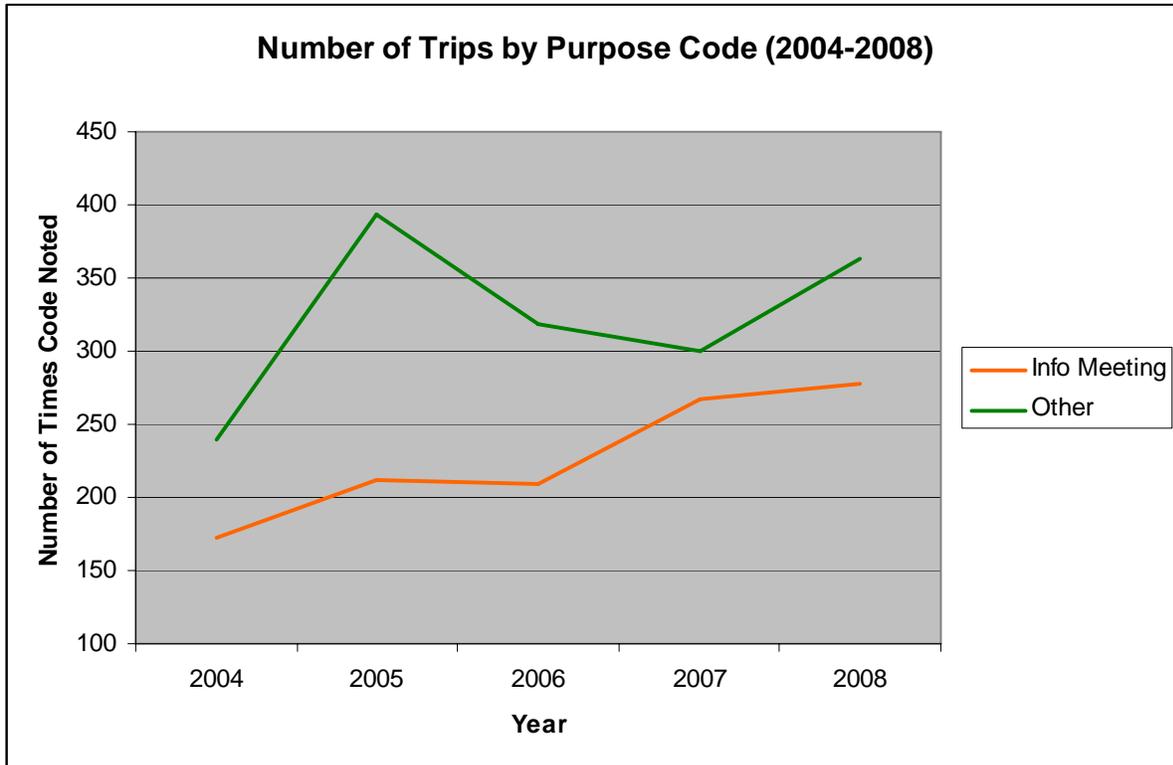
- Relocation
- Entitlement travel

The following chart shows the totals of first class trips by purpose code. The purpose code key is as follows:

- 0 - Site visit
- 1 - Information meeting
- 2 - Training attendance
- 3 - Speech/presentation
- 4 - Conference attendance
- 5 - Relocation
- 6 - Entitlement travel
- 7 - Special mission travel
- 8 - Emergency travel
- 9 - Other travel purposes



Use of trip purpose codes “2 – training attendance,” “7 – special mission travel,” and “8 – emergency travel” appear to be trending downward from 2004 to 2008. In addition, the number of trips for which a trip purpose code was not identified by agencies is trending downward, primarily due to more complete trip purpose information from reporting agencies. Finally, the use of trip purpose codes “1 – information meeting” and “9 – other travel purposes” appears to be trending upward from 2004 to 2008. The upward trend for “9 – other travel purposes” also appears to be the result of more complete trip purpose information from reporting agencies.

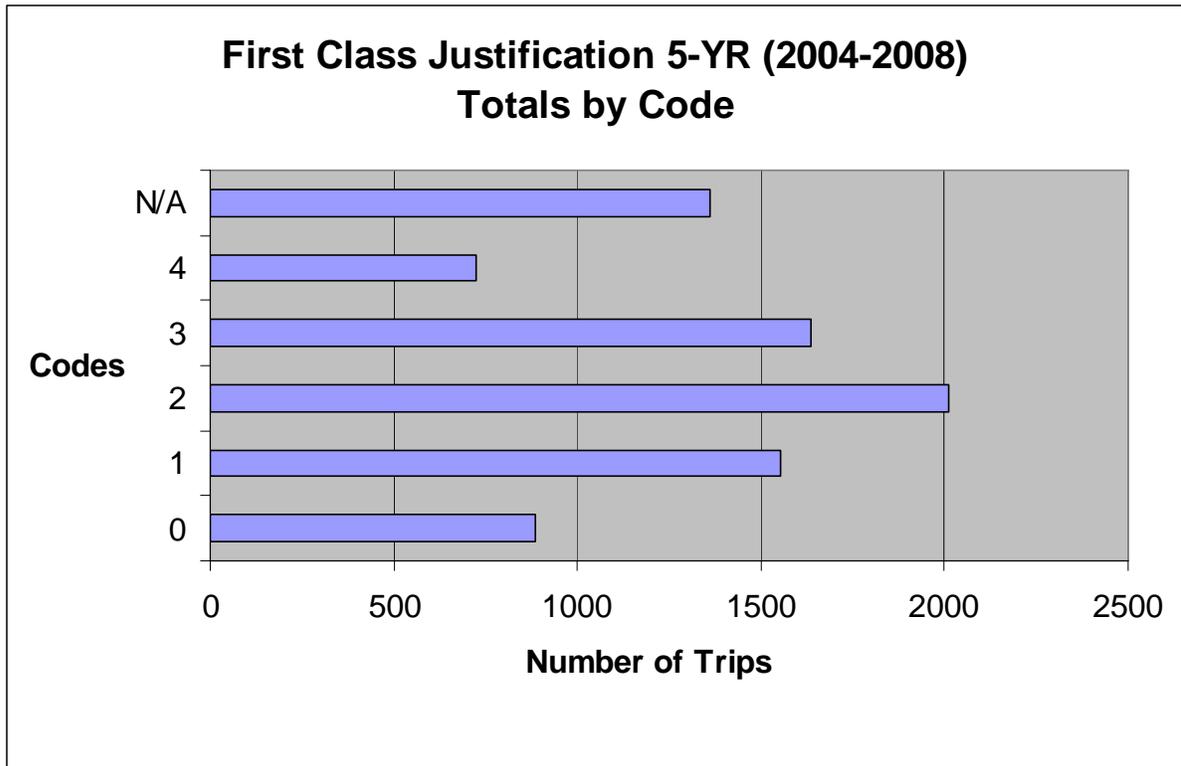


First Class Justification Codes

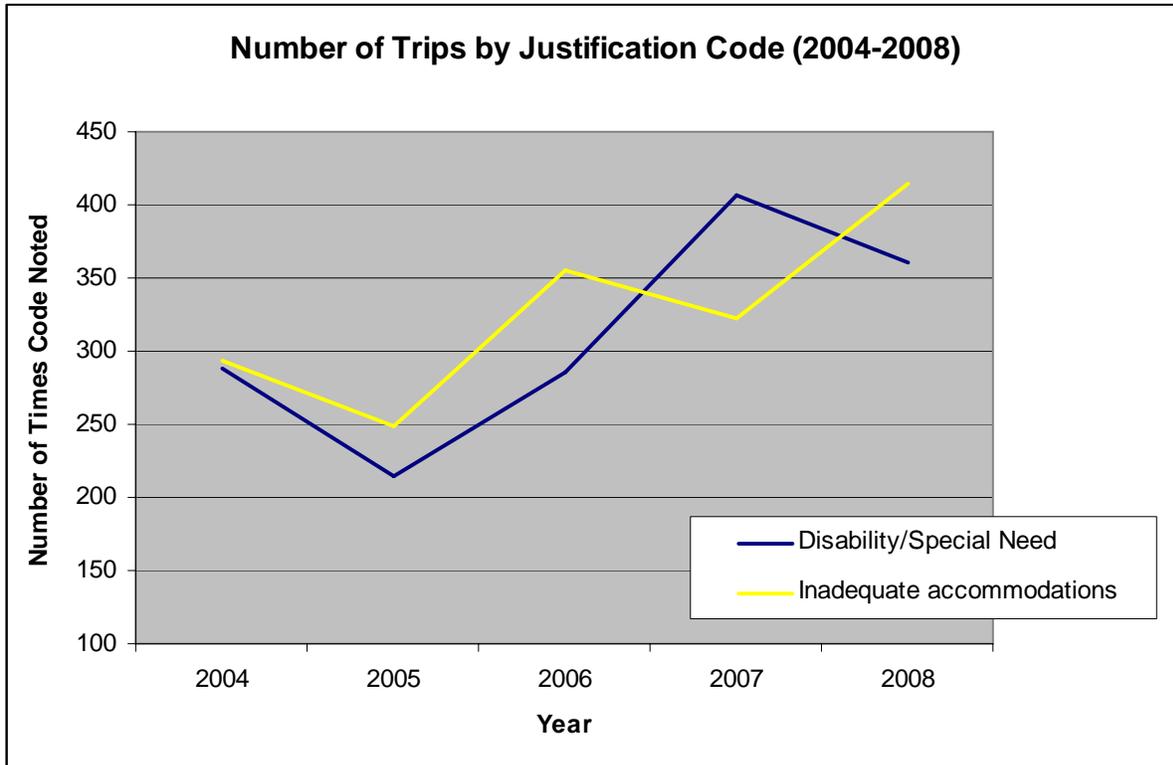
With regards to justifying the use of first class accommodations, the most popular justification is “security” on an aggregate basis from 2004 to 2008. “Inadequate foreign coach-class train accommodations” is the second most used justification from 2004 to 2008. The least-used justification from 2004 to 2008 is “agency mission.”

The key for the justification codes in the chart below:

- 0 - No other reasonably available accommodations
- 1 - Disability/special need
- 2 - Security
- 3 - Inadequate foreign coach-class train accommodations
- 4 - Agency mission
- N/A – Justification not specified by agency



The review of justification data on a year-to-year basis reveals that the use of the justification “no other reasonably available accommodation” is holding steady with no discernable directional trend. Furthermore, data regarding the use of the justifications of security and agency mission fluctuate enough from year to year to make identification of a definite directional trend impossible, although it appears that use of these justifications could be trending upward. Finally, the data indicate that use of justifications disability/special need and inadequate foreign coach-class train accommodations is trending upward.



Conclusion

The number of agencies submitting positive responses to our First Class Travel data call continues to be smaller as compared to the number of reporting agencies in the past (a decrease from 77 agencies in 2003 to only 61 in 2008). However, the number of responding agencies has been slowly increasing over the years. In addition, those agencies that do report consistently appear to be submitting more complete data (e.g. fewer trips are missing trip purpose codes, justification codes, or costs). As GSA works to automate the reporting process, it is expected that more agencies will submit data in the future.

The trip purpose “other travel purposes” is not only the second most used purpose from 2004 through 2008, data indicate that agencies are increasingly using this code. In addition, agencies appear to be increasingly using a similar catch-all code, “agency mission”. Consequently, to enhance the value of this report, GSA may need to consider refining the definition of these codes to better capture their application by the agencies. Greater detail in the data will allow for more sophisticated analysis, and thus greater understanding of the travel purposes and justifications that have necessitated first class travel. A better understanding will lead to better policies in the future.

Finally, while we have attempted some trend analysis in this report, GSA needs a more robust tool with which to analyze data. To achieve this goal, GSA is working on two fronts. GSA’s Federal Acquisition Service is developing a comprehensive travel management information tool that will collect and aggregate Federal travel data from various sources, including the Government’s E-Gov Travel Service providers, travel charge card providers, and travel management centers. In addition, GSA is working with the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) to develop an on-line data reporting tool that agencies can use to submit their future premium class travel (both first class and business class) usage data. Both tools will offer more robust data analysis capabilities. With these tools, GSA is excited about the possibilities of turning this report into a valuable management tool for agencies.

Appendix A

The following agencies/commissions submitted information in the past, but did not forward any data to GSA for 2008:

Department of Homeland Security (10 trips reported in 2007)
Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (negative in 2004)
Federal Election Commission (negative in 2006)
Federal Housing Finance Board (negative in 2004)
Federal Mine Safety & Health Review Commission (negative in 2006)
Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (negative in 2004)
Government Printing Office (1 trip reported in 2006)
Legal Services Corporation (negative in 2004)
National Capitol Planning Commission (negative in 2006)
National Endowment for the Arts (negative in 2006)
National Endowment for the Humanities (negative in 2004)
Office of Special Counsel (negative in 2004)
Office of Thrift Supervision (negative in 2006)
U.S. Institute of Peace (negative in 2004)

Appendix B

Fiscal Year 2008 First Class Travel Report “Negative” Submissions

These agencies reported no use of first-class travel in Fiscal Year 2008.

Department/Agency/Bureau/Service

Administration for Children and Families
Anchorage ARTCC (FAA)
Arctic Research Commission
Commission on Civil Rights
Consumer Product Safety Commission
Department of Education
Department of Housing and Urban
Development
Farm Credit Administration
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Federal Highway Administration
Federal Labor Relations Authority
Federal Maritime Commission
Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
Federal Trade Commission
Government Accountability Office
Import-Export Bank of the United States
Inter-American Foundation
International Trade Commission
Merit Systems Protection Board
National Mediation Board
National Transportation Safety Board
Office of Personnel Management
Patent and Trademark Office
Peace Corps
Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation
Railroad Retirement Board
Securities Exchange Commission
Small Business Administration
Southeastern Power Administration
Tennessee Valley Authority
Trade and Development Agency

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Appendix

Agency/Commission	FY 2008 Justification for First Class Travel						Total Trips
	No other reasonable accommodation available	Disability/Special Need	Security	Inadequate foreign coach-class	Agency mission	Justification not Specified by Agency	
Agency for International Development					2		2
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board		4					4
Department of Agriculture	1						1
Department of Commerce	48	4			18		70
Department of Defense	142				170	3	315
Department of Energy		17	7		1		25
Department of Health & Human Services	18	224			15		257
Department of the Interior		2					2
Department of Justice	3	9	2	1			15
Department of Labor	3	2	3				8
Department of State			141	407	15		563
Department of Transportation	5	2			1	3	11
Department of the Treasury	4	2					6
Department of Veterans Affairs	9	4	1				14
Environmental Protection Agency		25	38				63
Executive Office of the President		1	2				3
Federal Communications Commission	2	2					4
Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	1	6					7
General Services Administration	5	2					7
Library of Congress					2		2
Millennium Challenge Corporation	1	6					7
National Aeronautics & Space Administration	2	34		6			42
National Archives & Records Administration		1					1
National Credit Union Administration	1						1
National Science Foundation	6	4					10
Nuclear Regulatory Commission	1	2					3
Overseas Private Investment Corporation		2					2
Smithsonian Institution	2	5			1		8
Social Security Administration	1						1
Totals:	255	360	194	414	225	6	1454

