

UNCLASSIFIED

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Reference: [19 GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES 2700](#)
Subject: Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel Claims: What is New for the 2019 Transfer Season and Reminders on Frequently Encountered Questions

Following 19 GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES 2700 Dated 28 May 2019 Sent Action MESSAGING COMMUNICATION OFFICE WASHINGTON DC Info SECSTATE WASHDC, DEPT OF AGRICULTURE USD FAS WASHINGTON DC Being Repeated For Your Info.

QUOTE

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Pass Line: MCO REPEAT TO ALDAC POSTS INCLUDING MINIMIZED FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OFFICERS, DEPARTMENT FOR AF/EX, WHA/EX, EAP/EX, NEA-SCA/EX, EUR-IO/EX
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Subject: Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel Claims: What is New for the 2019 Transfer Season and Reminders on Frequently Encountered Questions

SUMMARY: The Bureaus of the Comptroller and Global Financial Services (CGFS), Human Resources (HR/EX) and the Bureau of Administration's Transportation and Travel Management (A/LM/OPS/TTM) and Allowances (A/OPR/ALS) would like to remind travelers of certain factors to consider before commencing PCS travel and to highlight changes that have occurred since last summer.

We would also like to remind travelers to use the "[My PCS Travel Claim](#)" application ([CGFS Knowledge Base \(KB\) Article 35554](#)), which is required for PCS voucher submissions for those with access to OpenNet. We recognize that the transfer from one duty location to another can be challenging and there are many policies and regulations that govern PCS travel. To the extent we can clarify these rules and streamline these processes while maintaining strong controls over limited travel/transfer dollars, the more efficient the PCS process will be for everyone. We are committed to making these improvements and assisting travelers in making informed decisions regarding their travel and travel claims. END SUMMARY.

Key Highlights for the 2019 transfer season:

- The POV mileage rate has increased from 18 cents per mile in 2018 to 20 cents per mile in 2019. This rate is specific to PCS relocation travel only. Other types of travel such as TDY travel have different rates.
- Public Law 115-97 known as the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017" expanded relocation expenses that are subject to taxes. This change currently applies only to Civil Service employees performing a domestic relocation.
- When claiming Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA) Subsistence Expense, please be reminded that only actual expenses for meals, laundry, and dry cleaning may be claimed. Estimates or averaged amounts for expenses are not authorized. Additionally, travelers should exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds.
- The Department's new seat selection policy (SSP) applies to all travel that takes place on or after May 9, 2019. [14 FAM 567.2-1](#) contains details.

1. YOUR TRAVEL ORDERS AND IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

- A. **Read your orders** - First and foremost, it is imperative that you read fully and understand the authorized expenses and entitlements listed on your PCS orders. Additionally, the amounts listed on your orders are estimates based on your projected travel and the actual amount reimbursed may change based on your actual travel and expenses. In general, employees/posts need not contact HR/EX to increase these estimated amounts if the actual costs of their airline tickets or shipments exceed these amounts. The exception is when the actual airfare for the authorized itinerary is both 20% and \$1,000 per passenger greater than the estimate on the travel order. Posts should seek additional funding from HR-EX-ASKPAT@state.gov in these airline ticket situations. Authorized HHE shipments that exceed cost estimates on the travel order do not require funding modifications. Note that individual agencies may draft their own implementing guidance, which can be more restrictive than the Federal Travel Regulation and the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR). Some entitlements that are authorized in the regulations may be further restricted or not authorized. We remind employees that all questions/issues should be addressed/resolved prior to departure from the losing post. Questions regarding your PCS orders should be addressed to your HR assignments technician whose name appears on your TM1 Assignment Notification. You can also find the name of your HR technician under the "Assignment Technician portfolio" link on the International Domestic Support Division (IDSD) homepage at:

<http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/offices/EX/Divisions/AdministrativeDivision/Pages/default.aspx>.

- B. **Rest Stops** - Rest stops are only authorized in advance and are only reimbursed if

specifically included in the travel authorization, so make sure you ask for them in your "My Itinerary" proposal well before your orders are prepared. It is recommended that you request a rest stop authorization if your travel exceeds 14 hours as your orders cannot be amended for this item. Travelers are reminded that the point of interruption for a rest stop should be at any normally scheduled transit point or stop along the direct route between the authorized origin and destination. Reimbursement for commercial lodging or day rooms is authorized for lengthy daytime delays when a rest stop is authorized. Additionally, rest stops are not authorized when indirect travel is performed.

Key Points:

1. Rest stops must be authorized in advance.
2. Expenses during a rest stop may only be reimbursed if specifically included in the travel authorization.
3. Point of interruption for a rest stop should be at any normally scheduled transit point along the direct route between the authorized origin and destination.
4. Reimbursement for commercial lodging or day rooms is authorized for lengthy daytime delays when a rest stop is authorized.
5. Rest stops or day passes to a business-class lounge are not authorized when indirect travel is performed.
6. Ref: [14 FAM 584.4](#) Rest Stop or Day Pass for Business-Class Lounge and [KB Article 33654](#)

- C. **Pre-Departure Subsistence Expense** - Please be aware that HR has included a remark in the Travel Authorizations restricting the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) guidance for the Pre-Departure Subsistence Expense (PDSE) portion of Foreign Transfer Allowance. This allowance is applicable to costs incurred for temporary lodging, meals (including tips), laundry, dry cleaning and pressing for up to 10 days after moving out of permanent quarters and before departure from the employee's post of assignment in the United States or non-foreign area to a post in a foreign area. The updated remark reads **"Reimbursement for such claims will not be authorized for any location other than the losing post of assignment, or the point of hire for newly hired employees."** A distance of fifty miles or less from the duty station or point of hire for newly hired employees transferring to their first duty station is generally considered in the proximity of the losing post or point of hire for newly hired employees. Please be aware that the reimbursable per diem rate is based on the lodging location and that the lodging location may have a rate that is lower than the duty station. The Department provides reimbursement of PDSE using the **Partial Flat Rate method** for all claims submitted. This alleviates the need to track individual meal costs, laundry and dry cleaning, and does away with the requirement for employees to provide a certified statement of actual daily expenses. For reimbursement of Pre-Departure Expense, the only receipt requirement will be for lodging. (Lodging tax will continue to be separately reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense as part of PDSE). The flat MI&E rate for pre-departure will be paid at the losing duty station's locality rate.

Key Points:

1. The Department/your authorization restricts PDSE, DSSR 242.3.c, to be reimbursable only while occupying temporary quarters within the proximity of the losing duty station, or the point of hire for newly hired employees.
2. Please be aware that the reimbursable per diem rate is based on the lodging location and that the lodging location may have a rate that is lower than the duty station.
3. The Department allows reimbursement of PDSE using the Partial Flat Rate method.
4. Receipts and proof of payment are required only for lodging. No receipts or tracking of expenditures for meals, laundry or dry cleaning are required.
5. Ref: [DSSR 242.3](#) Pre-Departure Subsistence Expense and [KB Article 11149](#).

D. Travel Advances and Personal Credit Card Fees - Travelers should have and use their government-authorized individually billed travel charge card for PCS travel-related expenses and to obtain cash instead of requesting a travel advance. Per 4 FAH-3 H-466.2, U.S. citizen direct hires who currently travel or expect to travel more than two times a year must apply for and use the Government-issued travel charge card. To apply for the Travel Card, visit the Travel Card website at <http://rm.m.state.sbu/TravelCardProgram/Pages/Home.aspx> or email the Travel Card Program organization mailbox at TravelCH@state.gov. Generally, travelers are notified of PCS assignments well in advance of travel and, therefore, are not authorized to receive a travel advance in lieu of receiving the card. Travelers can obtain a travel card on an expedited basis (within 3-5 business days) by completing a paper application. In the rare cases when an advance is necessary, the maximum amount allowed is limited to 80% of the eligible period of per diem up to a maximum of 45 days of lodging and M&IE. Rare circumstances are defined as follows:

1. Employee or family member has a medical emergency and employee does not have a travel card. Employee will be directed to apply for a travel card for future use.
2. Employee is issued orders less than 5 days before date of travel and travel orders include a request for a travel advance. Employee will be directed to apply for a travel card for future use. However, if employee has an existing outstanding travel advance balance, employee will not be issued a travel advance.
3. Per [4 FAM 463.3-2](#) any travelers in possession of a travel card and still requiring an advance must submit written justification for an advance to the Bureau of Comptroller and Global Financial Services or the Management Officer at post for approval. If authorized, travelers must request a travel advance prior to starting travel. Travel advances will not be issued to travelers who have an outstanding balance on a previous travel advance. Outstanding travel advance balances must be paid prior to requesting a new travel advance. Please note that advances for and

payment of the Actual Subsistence Portion of HSTA are computed using the Standard CONUS Per Diem Rate for CONUS assignments and the applicable locality rate for non-foreign areas. Current 2019 Standard CONUS Rate is \$149 (\$94 lodging and \$55 M&IE).

Reminder – USG credit cards are issued to employees for the entirety of their Department of State service. Credit cards should be transferred from one assigned post to the gaining post and should never be turned in upon transfer. **Once you have arrived at your gaining assignment, please log into [Citibank's website](#) to update the address on file. For specific instructions on how to update your address, please see [KB article 42007](#).**

Fees incurred when using a personal credit card are not reimbursable for PCS travel. Reimbursement of commissions for conversion of currency and fees for travelers checks, money orders and certified checks are reimbursable expenses. Transaction fees for use of automated teller machines ATM and other vendors such as hotels **when using a U.S. Government contractor-issued charge card** are reimbursable and do not require specific authorization.

Key Points:

1. U.S. citizen direct hires who currently travel or expect to travel more than two times a year must apply for and use the Government-issued travel charge card.
2. Travel cards can be obtained on an expedited basis (within 3-5 business days) by completing a paper application
3. You should use your Government Travel Card for expenses and to obtain cash through an automated teller machine (ATM) instead of requesting a travel advance.
4. In the rare instances of travel advances issued per the guidance above, the maximum travel advance allowed is limited to 80% of 10 days for Pre-Departure Subsistence Expense (PDSE) and 45 days Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA) for lodging and M&IE for allowances; and estimated travel per diem. Travelers must request a travel advance prior to starting travel.
5. Interim PCS vouchers may be completed in order to keep reimbursements timely as per individually billed travel card account payment cycles.
6. Advances for the Actual Subsistence Portion of HSTA are computed using the Standard CONUS Per Diem Rate for all domestic travel. The locality rate is used for non-foreign transfers. Individually billed travel credit cards are monitored to ensure charges are not in excess of amounts eligible for reimbursement. Individually Billed Account (IBA) cards are accepted at grocery stores. If a cardholder has their card declined, we ask they reach out to us so that we can ensure the Merchant Category Code is added to our approved template.

7. Ref [4 FAM 463.3-1](#) (Amount of Advance and When to Apply), [4 FAM 463.3](#) (Approving [Granting] of Advances) and [KB Article 35004](#) and [KB Article 9251](#). Travel Card Sharepoint site - <http://rm.m.state.sbu/TravelCardProgram/Pages/Home.aspx>.

E. **Immunizations, Passport and Visa Expenses-** Travel immunizations should almost never be charged to your PCS orders. Official travelers (including family members) should obtain travel immunizations necessary for entry into the country of the gaining post at MED while on consultations in Washington. If the travel involves a direct-transfer, with no Washington consultations, then travel immunizations necessary for entry to the gaining post should be obtained at the losing post at a USG federal dispensary at no cost to the employee. Travelers must obtain written authorization in advance to use private/public medical treatment facilities if they cannot receive immunizations at MED or post. This authorization will be included as an amendment to the PCS travel orders. For yellow fever inoculations, there is no requirement for prior authorization for reimbursement.

Passport fees, photos and shipping costs are reimbursable expenses on the travel voucher. Travel costs associated with obtaining a Diplomatic visa/passport are not a PCS expense and should not be authorized or charged to your PCS order. If travel is direct transfer, official travelers (including family members) should obtain visas prior to departure. If the regional bureau determines that travel must be authorized to obtain the visa, the regional bureau must fund this expense either by issuing a separate TA/fund cite, or when possible, by reimbursing HR/EX and requesting an amendment to the PCS order to cover the additional travel/per diem expenses.

Key Points:

1. Official travelers (including family members) should obtain travel immunizations necessary for entry into the country of the gaining post at MED while on consultations in Washington D.C.
2. If the travel involves a direct-transfer, with no Washington consultations, travel immunizations necessary for entry to the gaining post should be obtained at the losing post at a USG federal dispensary at no cost to the employee.
3. Travelers must obtain written authorization in advance to use private/public medical treatment facilities if they cannot receive immunizations at MED or post. This authorization will be included as an amendment to the PCS travel orders.
4. Passport fees, photos and shipping costs are reimbursable expenses on the travel voucher.
5. Travel expenses related to obtaining a Diplomatic visa/passport are not a PCS expense. If the regional bureau authorizes this expense, they must fund it separately.
6. Diplomatic visas, passport photos and courier fees in mailing passports should not be charged to your PCS orders. The gaining post / bureau is responsible for these costs.

7. Ref: [KB Article 33652](#).

- F. **Self-Purchased Tickets** – USG-funded travel must be procured from an authorized Travel Management Center (TMC). The option of personally purchasing travel is limited to instances when, for example, a TMC is unable to book travel to a required destination or using a particular airline. If the traveler procures common carrier transportation with a personal form of payment in excess of \$100, he or she must submit a request for a reimbursement as soon as possible to the Transportation and Travel Management (TTM) office after completion of travel and fully explain the reasons the TMC was not used. Travelers are highly advised to consult with their post management or travel officer before purchasing tickets in order to minimize purchases that cannot be reimbursed. Please do not assume that you can or should make a ticket purchase with personal funding, especially for permanent change of station travel.

Key Points:

1. USG-funded travel must be procured from an authorized TMC.
2. If a traveler personally procures common carrier transportation in excess of \$100, he or she must submit a request for a reimbursement audit before filing their travel voucher, by following the “Reimbursement Request Instructions” available on the Travel A-Z page on the [Travel intranet site](#).
3. Reimbursement to travelers who used personal funds may not exceed the cost that would have been properly chargeable to the U.S. Government had the traveler used a U.S. Government-provided payment resource.
4. Travelers are strongly encouraged to obtain an estimate of the lowest cost U.S. Government airfare available from the TMC prior to travel to support their request for reimbursement.
5. Ref: [14 FAM 542](#) Travel Management Centers, [14 FAM 545](#) Using Cash to Procure Transportation, and [KB Article 33658](#).

- G. **Salary Advance** - A salary advance when transferring to a foreign area is not related to your PCS travel claims.

Key Points:

1. [5 U.S.C. 5927](#) provides that up to three months’ pay may be paid in advance to an employee upon assignment to a post in a foreign area. The advance will be paid by American Payroll and will be paid along with your salary payment and reflected on your Earnings & Leave (E&L) Statement.
2. The advance may not be paid prior to the issuance of travel orders and not more than 45 days prior to the employee’s scheduled departure to, or not more than 60 days after arrival at the assignment abroad. Contact your post’s payroll liaison to request a salary advance.
3. Ref [4 FAH-3 H-536](#) – (Advance of Pay). ([KB Article 33660](#))

2. EN-ROUTE TRAVEL

- A. **Cost-Construct travel** – When the traveler deviates from their authorized routing (cost-construct travel), the traveler is personally responsible for costs that exceed the amount the USG would have paid for travel on the authorized routing. Travelers are not eligible for government fares when cost constructing. Additionally, rest stops or day passes to a business-class lounge are not authorized when indirect travel is performed. Please be aware that leave will be charged for excess travel time. The cost-construct basis is limited to the contract fare or the lowest cost, unrestricted direct fare on non-contract routes between authorized origin and authorized destination. If the TMC books your cost-construct travel, you are personally responsible for paying any related TMC fee.

Key Points:

1. Travelers are not eligible for government fares when cost constructing.
 2. The U.S. Government-issued travel card may not be used to procure cost-construct travel tickets.
 3. If a traveler elects to use a restricted fare, the traveler is responsible for any ticket change or cancellation penalties.
 4. You may be personally charged for a TMC service fee when purchasing cost-construct transportation tickets. The cost-construct fee charged by the TMC is not reimbursable by the USG.
 5. Ref [14 FAM 546](#) Arranging and Procuring Indirect Travel, [14 FAM 511.3](#) Definitions - Cost constructed travel, [14 FAM 585.2](#) Indirect Travel, [14 FAM 584.4](#) Rest Stop or Day Pass for Business-Class Lounge, [Department Notice 15542](#): Travel Authorization versus Cost-Constructed Travel and [KB Article 9416](#), [KB Article 38069](#) and [KB Article 33950](#).
- B. **Fly America Act** - All USG-funded, official travel must comply with the Fly America Act (including when tickets are self-purchased - see section 1 F above). The Act generally requires use of a U.S.-flag carrier for any flight that touches U.S. soil (i.e. takes off from or lands in the U.S.). Carrier nationality is determined by the airline code and flight number on the traveler's booking, not necessarily by the nationality of the airline operating the flight. Codeshare flights operated by a foreign-flag carrier but booked using the codeshare flight number of a U.S.-flag carrier comply with the Act. Refer to the U.S.-E.U. Open Skies Air Transport Agreement (Open Skies Agreement) for an exception to the Fly America Act that allows use of EU air carriers under certain conditions. Other exceptions to the Act are extremely nuanced and limited. Because it is a law, the Department does not have the authority to grant "waivers" to the provisions of the Act. Less expensive fares, more convenient routings, the desire to accommodate pet travel, and traveler airline preferences are not valid exceptions to the Act.

Key Points:

1. Travel must comply with the Fly America Act, which requires use of a U.S. flag carrier (defined by the airline code and flight number) for any flight that touches U.S. soil.
2. Refer to the U.S. - E.U. Open Skies Air Transport Agreement (Open Skies Agreement) for an exception to the Fly America Act that allows use of EU carriers under certain conditions.
3. Ref [14 FAM 581.4](#) Using U.S.-Flag Air Carriers, [State Cable 10826](#) dated 4 Feb, 2013: CLARIFICATION: Using EU Carriers and "Open Skies", and [KB Article 13180](#).

C. **Luggage fees** - Each traveler is authorized to check two (2) bags that weigh up to 50lbs (23kg) each and which conform to the operating airline's size restrictions. This allowance constitutes "authorized luggage" and applies to all segments of the authorized itinerary. It is a distinct concept from what an airline considers your "free" checked luggage allowance, which may be different. For example, if the airline allows one free bag up to 50lbs, you would be allowed reimbursement for one additional bag up to 50lbs. If the airline allows 2 free bags up to 40lbs each, you may be reimbursed the charge for the additional 10lbs for each bag. Any fees charged by airlines to check authorized luggage are reimbursable directly on the travel voucher and do not need to be specifically authorized on the PCS orders. **The traveler must submit the paid receipt for all luggage charges with his or her travel voucher.**

Charges for checked luggage exceeding the weight or quantity of authorized luggage or exceeding the airline's size restrictions are considered excess luggage and are not authorized for PCS. When a traveler elects to engage in cost-constructed travel, the total amount that may be reimbursed by the U.S. Government for checked luggage fees is limited to the sum of expenses that would have been incurred to transport authorized luggage along all segments of the direct route.

Key Points:

1. Each traveler is authorized to take two (2) bags that weigh no more than 50lbs (23kg) each on all segments of their authorized itinerary.
2. Don't worry about what the airline considers your "free" luggage allowance. You may pay whatever the airline charges to transport two 50lb (23kg) bags and will be reimbursed if you remember to include paid receipts when filing your travel voucher.
3. When cost-constructing travel, luggage fees may only be reimbursed up to the amount that would have been paid on the authorized routing.
4. Charges for luggage exceeding the weight, size, or quantity limit for "authorized luggage" are not reimbursable.
5. Ref [14 FAM 568](#) Airline Luggage Allowance, [TTM Checked Luggage Allowance FAQ](#), <http://lm.a.state.gov/travel/traveltips/>, and [KB Article 16240](#).

- D. **Seat Assignment Fees** – The Department’s new Seat Selection Policy (SSP) applies to travel that takes place on or after May 9, 2019. SSP replaces the previous Extended Economy Seating (EES) program with a less complicated, more broadly applicable policy.

Key Points:

1. For PCS travel, SSP expenses may be authorized up to \$300 per person per origin/destination pair on the TMFOUR.
2. Reimbursement for SSP expenses is not permitted for travel that has been cost-constructed, either in routing or class of service.
3. Ref [14 FAM 567.2-1](#).

- E. **Authorized travel time** - Travel to and from an authorized per diem location(s) must be arranged to minimize the per diem required in accordance with [14 FAM 513](#) Official Travel Expenses. The Department will reimburse travel per diem not to exceed arrival one day prior to and departure the day after the authorized training/consultation period. Any additional days spent in the area before commencement of training/consultations (unless a rest stop is authorized in accordance with 14 FAM 584.4), or upon completion of training/consultations will be at the traveler’s personal expense and will not be reimbursed on the travel voucher. Since most posts strongly discourage weekend arrivals, employees should avoid departing training/consultations on days that would lead to a weekend arrival in their country of assignment. Consequently, employees should plan the consultation days in order to arrive at post on a weekday. Travel performed on a non-workday is not compensated as overtime nor does it count towards Law Enforcement Availability Pay (LEAP) hours. This replaces what was commonly known as the two day early arrival rule. Flight itineraries or e-tickets must be included with the travel claim to allow for proper calculation of per diem and accounting of official travel time.

Key Points:

1. Travelers should schedule their arrival for the day prior to the commencement of training or consultations and to depart the day after the training/consultation period.
2. Additional days before arrival and/or departure will be at the traveler’s personal expense. Plan use of consultation days carefully to support a workday arrival at the new post of assignment.
3. Travel performed on a non-workday is not compensated as overtime nor does it count towards Law Enforcement Availability Pay (LEAP) hours.
4. Flight itineraries or e-tickets must be included with the travel claim to allow for proper calculation of per diem and accounting of official travel time.
5. Ref: [14 FAM 513](#) Official Travel Expenses and [KB Article 33946](#).

- F. **Awaiting Transportation** - Short, unplanned travel disruptions and overnights en route while awaiting onward flights inevitably happen and can be accommodated within your

PCS orders.

Key Points:

1. Per diem is allowed when interruptions occur on an official trip due to an authorized stopover, or because of circumstances beyond the control of the traveler.
2. Delays of travel that would require payment of 2 days or more of per diem are considered inordinate delays. No per diem is payable for such a delay without adequate justification as determined by the office or authorizing official who approves travel (HR/EX).
3. Ref: [14 FAM 574.3](#) Delays and Interruptions En-Route and [KB Article 33656](#).

G. **POV Travel** - All authorized and allowable use of privately owned vehicles (POV) while on PCS is reimbursed at the GSA PCS rate which includes POV usage to and from airport and consultations. If POV is not authorized on PCS orders, POV reimbursement will be the lesser of: mileage at the GSA PCS rate and related per diem; or the constructive cost of the authorized U.S. Government air fare on a direct route listed on the orders plus related per diem and other expenses (e.g., local transportation costs to and from the terminals). The current PCS rate is 20 cents per mile effective January 1, 2019. Allowable travel time is based on the United States average normal driving distance of 360 miles per day. For an OCONUS relocation involving authorized POV usage, the Department may reimburse employees for certain actual expenses set forth in 41 C.F.R. [§301-10.304](#).

Key Points:

1. All authorized and allowable use of personally owned vehicles (POV) while on PCS is reimbursed at the GSA PCS rate.
2. Allowable travel time is based on the United States average normal driving distance of 360 miles per day.
3. The current PCS rate is 20 cents per mile effective 1 January, 2019.
4. If POV is not authorized but used during PCS transfer, reimbursement will be the lesser of: mileage at the GSA PCS rate and related per diem; or the constructive cost of the authorized U.S. Government fare on a direct route plus related per diem and other expenses. When the point of departure has multiple airports, (ex. Washington Dulles, Reagan National and Baltimore) the lowest city-pair fare among all is used.
5. Ref: [14 FAM 566](#) Travel by Privately Owned Vehicle or Privately Owned Conveyance, [Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 302](#) -- Relocation Allowances, [IRS Standard Mileage Rates for 2019](#) and [KB Article 5770](#).

H. **Travel via Cruise Ship** - Through [14 FAM 581.2\(c\)\(5\)](#), the Department has made a policy determination that “travel by vessel may be permitted, provided travel expenses (including per diem, incidental expenses, fare, and travel time) are limited to those which would accrue by authorized air travel. Leave is charged for excess travel time.” The

Department has further determined that a foreign flag vessel may be used when “U.S.-flag vessels do not operate between the ports servicing the points of origin and destination which are reasonably accessible by adequate surface transportation.” The ship must provide transportation between two points; round-trip cruises that start and end at the same port are not considered to have provided transportation.

Key Points:

1. Travel by vessel may be permitted, provided travel expenses (including per diem, incidental expenses, fare, and travel time) are limited to those which would accrue by authorized air travel.
2. Excess travel time will be charged as annual leave.
3. A foreign flag vessel may be used when U.S.-flag vessels do not operate between the ports servicing the points of origin and destination which are reasonably accessible by adequate surface transportation.
4. The ship must begin and end at different points in order to have provided transportation.
5. Ref: [14 FAM 581.2\(c\)\(5\)](#) and [14 FAM 582.2-1\(b\)\(1\)](#)

- I. **Rental Cars** - Rental car expenses are never authorized for en-route PCS travel. For cost-construct purposes, reimbursement for using a rental car to travel from the losing post to the gaining post for personal convenience will be the lesser of: mileage at the GSA PCS rate plus related per diem; or the constructive cost of the authorized U.S. Government air fare on a direct route listed on the orders plus related per diem and other expenses (e.g., local transportation costs to and from the terminals). Please note that for multiple day trips, the standard CONUS rate is used as the maximum daily per diem.

Key Points:

1. Rental car expenses are never authorized for en-route PCS travel.
2. If a rental car is used for personal convenience, the amount reimbursed will be the lesser of: mileage at the GSA PCS rate plus related per diem; or the constructive cost of the authorized U.S. Government fare on a direct route plus related per diem and other expenses.
3. For multiple-day en-route trips, the standard CONUS rate is used as the maximum daily per diem.
4. Ref: [14 FAM 566.3-2](#) Use of Rental Vehicle and [KB Article 33659](#).

- J. **Travel to/from transportation terminals and place of work/quarters** - Reimbursement is authorized for usual taxicab fares and/or Transportation Network Company (TNC) (e.g. Uber/Lyft) expenses to/from common carrier transportation terminal to either the employee's quarters or place of business. When common carrier transportation service is available for all or part of the distance involved, such as limousine or bus facilities between cities and airport terminals, such service should be used to the maximum extent

practicable.

Taxicab or TNC reimbursement in excess of \$75.00 plus tip must be supported by a paid receipt.

The allowable amount of the tip is 15 percent of the reimbursable fare.

When a TNC is used, the lowest-cost, non-shared ride offering a vehicle of suitable size may be used (for example, Uber XL to the airport to accommodate luggage).

Unnecessarily luxurious TNC products (such as Uber Black, Lyft Premier, etc.) will not be fully reimbursed, per 14 FAM 561.2.

Key Points:

1. Reimbursement may be authorized for usual taxicab and TNC fares, plus tip
2. When common carrier transportation service is available for all or part of the distance involved, such as limousine or bus facilities between cities and airport terminals, such service should be used to the maximum extent practicable.
3. Use of unnecessarily luxurious TNC products will not be fully reimbursed.
4. Ref: [14 FAM 562.2](#) Transportation Expenses.

- K. **Travel Time Limitations** - The family and effects may accompany, precede (must have post approval prior to travel), or follow the employee on PCS Travel. However, after the employee completes travel pursuant to the authorization, unless the time limitation is extended, the actual departure of all members of the family and the shipment of all effects may not be deferred more than 12 months for both international and domestic travel. Travel authorizations may be extended up to an additional 6 months for a maximum of 18 months. Requests for extensions must be supported by a justification acceptable to the Bureau of Human Resources, Office of the Executive Director.

Key Points:

1. The family and effects may accompany, precede, or follow the employee on PCS Travel.
2. Unless the time limitation is extended, the actual departure of all members of the family and the shipment of all effects may not be deferred more than 12 months from the employee's first day at the new duty station for both international and domestic (stateside) travel.
3. Family members acquired (birth, adoption, etc.) after the employee's arrival at the new post of assignment do not change the entitlement to the miscellaneous expense allowance from the "without dependents" rate to the "with dependents" rate.
4. Ref: [14 FAM 584.2-1](#) Appointment, Transfer, or Leave at U.S.

Government Expense and [KB Article 36893](#).

- L. **International Dateline** - Per diem for travel crossing the International Date Line (IDL) is based on elapsed hours in travel rather than calendar days traveled.

Key Points:

1. Per diem for travel crossing the International Date Line (IDL) is based on elapsed hours in travel rather than calendar days traveled.
2. When traveling West across the IDL, if the elapsed time is 24 hours or less, one day of per diem is paid although travel crosses two calendar days. Two days of per diem are paid when elapsed time is more than 24 hours when traveling East across the IDL, although travel consists of one calendar day.
3. Ref: [14 FAM 573.3](#) Crossing the International Date Line and [KB Article 33644](#).

3. YOUR ALLOWANCES

- A. **Transporting Pets** - The Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA) and Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA) permits reimbursement of expenses for transporting pets as part of the Miscellaneous Expense Allowance ([DSSR 241.2a\(7\)](#) and [DSSR 251.2a\(7\)](#)). Relative to this provision of the government-wide DSSR, the Department strictly limits expenses that are reimbursed for transporting pets, and excludes the quarantine costs that [DSSR 241.2a](#) and [DSSR 251.2a](#) allows agencies to reimburse. Employees are reminded that only the costs of transportation for the direct routing from airport at PCS origin to airport at PCS destination are reimbursable. All other costs are non-reimbursable and are at personal expense. Non-reimbursable expenses such as kenneling, quarantine fees, customs fees, veterinary costs, transportation to/from the airport, etc. may not be used in a cost-comparison with commercial shipping costs for pets. If your pet is traveling with you to Home Leave and/or training, you will be reimbursed on a cost-construct basis for the post-to-post transfer cost. Please provide a quote for the direct routing when you submit your claim.

When pets cannot be transported as accompanied baggage, the traveler may use the government rates of a non-contract airline that will accept the pet as checked baggage. This exemption to mandatory use of a contract carrier is in addition to exceptions allowing travelers to use excursion or other low fares offered by various carriers. If the contract carrier does allow the pet to be checked as baggage, this exemption does not apply and the traveler must use the contract carrier.

The exemption applies to all airlines participating in the City Pair Program (CPP). All exemptions to the CPP must be documented on the DS-4022 prepared and self-certified by the traveler in myData. If confirmed space for pets as checked baggage is required and unavailable, the details of the contract carrier's inability to meet mission requirements

should be noted on the form. Travelers must pay any difference in cost between the CPP fare and that of the non-contract carrier in advance to include the cost of moving the pet because there can be no increased travel cost to the U.S. Government. This expense is ineligible for reimbursement and may not be itemized as part of the Foreign Transfer Allowance.

Note that there is no exception to the Fly America Act to accommodate pet travel.

Key Points:

1. Only the costs of transportation for the direct routing from airport at origin to airport at destination are reimbursable.
2. All other costs are personal, including quarantine. Non-reimbursable expenses such as kenneling, quarantine fees, customs fees, veterinary costs, transportation to/from the airport, etc. may not be used in a cost-comparison with commercial shipping costs for pets.
3. When pets cannot be transported as accompanied baggage; the traveler may use the government rates of a non-contract airline (that still complies with the Fly America Act) that will accept the pet as checked baggage.
4. Travelers must pay any difference in cost between the CPP fare and that of the non-contract carrier in advance to include the cost of moving the pet.

5. Ref:

FSI Transition Center Traveling With Pets Page:

<http://tc.fsi.state.gov/Default.aspx?ContentId=6702>

[State Cable 15410 dated Feb. 17, 2016](#): Traveling with Pets 2016.

[State Cable 46236 dated 8 May, 2012](#): Traveling with Pets 2012,

[State Cable 47775 dated 10 May, 2012](#): Using Discount Government (DG) Fares When Justified by The Shipment of Pets,

[Department Notice 16818](#): New Options for Using Non-Contract Carriers When Travelling with Pets.

[State Cable 32126 dated Apr 3, 2012](#) - PET TRAVEL: NEW OPTIONS FOR USING NON-CONTRACT CARRIERS

[State Cable 161226 dated Dec 2, 2013](#) - Changes to DS-4022 for Employees Transporting Pets on Official Travel

[14 FAM 543](#) Contract Carriers

[KB Article 33950](#)

[KB Article 9387](#)

- B. **Miscellaneous Expense Allowance** - The Miscellaneous Expense portion of FTA or HSTA cannot be paid in advance to the traveler. It is payable only upon arrival at the new post of assignment. [4 FAH-3 H-464.1](#) Processing of Transfer Advances. Miscellaneous Expense Allowance may be paid under either the flat-rate method or actual expense method. The amounts payable for Miscellaneous Expense Allowance are:

Flat-Rate method:

1. For an employee without family - \$650 or the equivalent of one week's pay, whichever is the lesser amount.
2. For an employee with family - \$1,300 or the equivalent of two weeks' pay, whichever is the lesser amount.

Actual Expense Method:

1. For an employee without family - an amount based on actual allowable itemized expenditures not to exceed one week's salary for the employee or one week's salary for an employee at GS-13, step 10, whichever is the lesser amount.
2. For an employee with family - an amount based on actual allowable itemized expenditures not to exceed two week's salary for the employee or two weeks' salary for an employee at GS-13, step 10, whichever is the lesser amount.

Please note that there is no entitlement to the “dependent rate” Miscellaneous Expense Allowance for family members acquired after arrival at the gaining post of assignment.

Key Points:

1. The Miscellaneous Expense portion of FTA or HSTA cannot be paid in advance.
2. Miscellaneous Expense Allowance may be paid under either the flat-rate method or actual expense method, not both.
3. There is no entitlement to the “dependent rate” Miscellaneous Expense Allowance for family members acquired after arrival at the gaining post of assignment.
4. For an itemized list of reimbursable expenses allowed when using the actual expense method see [DSSR 241.2](#) and [DSSR 251.2](#).
5. Ref: [4 FAH -3 H-464.1](#) Processing of Transfer Advances, [DSSR 241.2](#) and [DSSR 252.1](#) Miscellaneous Expense and [KB Article 23875](#).

- C. **Temporary Quarters Subsistence** – The Subsistence Expense Portion of the Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA) for transfers from foreign areas to the U.S. and non-foreign areas and Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expense (TQSE) for domestic CONUS-to-CONUS; non-foreign to CONUS; CONUS to non-foreign; and non-foreign to non-foreign transfers are designed to help offset actual costs of meals, laundry and dry cleaning of clothes and lodging in a hotel, pension, or other transient-type quarters. You and/or your immediate family may occupy temporary quarters at Government expense **within reasonable proximity** of your old and/or new CONUS or non-foreign official stations. A distance of fifty miles or less from the official station is defined as reasonable proximity. There is no entitlement to reimbursement of lodging costs when lodging with friends or relatives, with or without charge. If you do stay with friends or relatives, you may be reimbursed for additional costs your host incurs in accommodating you only if

you are able to substantiate the costs and your agency determines them to be reasonable. Employees may be on annual leave, home leave or temporary duty and may still be able to claim expenses as long as the expenses are incurred at the new post of assignment. The HSTA/TQSE allowance is intended to reimburse an employee reasonably and equitably for subsistence expenses incurred when it is necessary to occupy temporary quarters.

Temporary quarters should be used only if, and only for, as long as necessary until the employee and/or his/her immediate family can move into permanent residence quarters. Please be reminded that the maximum reimbursement rate for HSTA/TQSE in CONUS locations is the Standard CONUS rate, not the locality rate. Current 2019 Standard CONUS Rate is \$149 (\$94 lodging and \$55 M&IE). For transfer purposes, non-foreign areas are Alaska, Hawaii, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and territories and possessions of the United States. For non-foreign areas the locality per diem rate applies. The daily actual subsistence expenses required to be itemized under DSSR Section 252.3c will be totaled for each 30-day time period to permit a comparison with the maximum allowable (combined total of the Standard CONUS Rate daily lodging plus M&IE) for the particular period. If less than thirty days is authorized or used for a period, the maximum allowable amount will be based on the number of days authorized, or used, multiplied by the applicable daily rate.

Key Points:

1. Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA) Subsistence Portion and Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expense (TQSE) are designed to help offset actual costs of meals, laundry, dry cleaning and lodging while in temporary quarters.
2. You and/or your immediate family may occupy temporary quarters at Government expense within reasonable proximity of your old and/or new CONUS or non-foreign official stations. A distance of fifty miles or less from the official station is defined as reasonable proximity.
3. Employees may be on annual leave, home leave or temporary duty and may still be able to claim expenses as long as the expenses are incurred at the new post of assignment.
4. Temporary quarters should be used only if, and only for, as long as necessary until the employee and/or his/her immediate family can move into permanent residence quarters.
5. HSTA/TQSE maximum reimbursement is based on the standard CONUS rate for CONUS locations and the locality per diem rate for a non-foreign area.
6. The daily actual subsistence expenses required to be itemized under DSSR Section 252.3c will be totaled for each 30-day time period to permit a comparison with the maximum allowable (combined total of the Standard CONUS Rate daily lodging plus M&IE) for the particular period. If less than thirty days is authorized or used for a period, the maximum allowable amount will be based on the number of days authorized, or used, multiplied by the applicable

daily rate.

7. Ref: [DSSR 252.3](#) (HSTA) Subsistence Expense Portion for transfers from a foreign area to the U.S. or a non-foreign area; and 14FAM/FAH (TQSE) for domestic relocations and [KB Article 23875](#), [KB Article 37419](#).

D. Lump-Sum Wardrobe Allowance – For the wardrobe allowance, posts are grouped into three zones according to climate, and employees into three family sizes. Eligibility for reimbursement is based on transfers from zone 1 to 3 or 3 to 1. Reference [DSSR 241.2b](#) and [DSSR 251.2b](#).

E. Lease Penalty Expense – Lease Penalty is designed to help offset the expense of unavoidable lease penalties in the U.S. or a foreign area for the early termination of a residence quarters lease due to transfer required by a Federal agency. Lease penalty expense must be included in your travel authorization and is subject to strict conditions. Please consult the DSSR 242.4 for details. Reference [DSSR 241.2d](#) and [DSSR 251.2d](#).

F. Residence Transaction Allowance - Foreign Service personnel who are transferred from a domestic duty station to a location abroad and who, after completing one or more assignments abroad, are assigned from a location abroad to a domestic duty station that is at least 50 miles away from the previous domestic duty station are eligible for Residence Transaction Allowance. The provisions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), 41 CFR 302-11, pertaining to items covered, amounts allowed, title requirements and procedures apply to Foreign Service personnel, except that allowable expenses for the sale and/or purchase of a residence may be claimed only if the employee meets the following five criteria:

- (1) Owned a residence at the former domestic duty station;
- (2) Occupied such residence when assigned to the former domestic duty station;
- (3) Commuted to and from work on a daily basis from such residence;
- (4) Retained ownership of such residence while assigned abroad until receipt of a permanent change-of-station travel authorization for travel to the new domestic duty station; and
- (5) Signed a continued-service agreement prior to authorization of this allowance.

Note - Sale of a residence at the former domestic duty station is not required in order to claim allowable expenses for the purchase of a residence at the new domestic duty station.

Authorization for Residence Transaction Allowance must be included in your PCS orders. Contact your HR Assignments Technician for further information.

Key Points:

1. Foreign Service personnel who are transferred from a domestic duty station to a location abroad and are subsequently assigned to a domestic duty station that is at least 50 miles away from the previous domestic duty station are eligible for Residence

Transaction Allowance.

2. The provisions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), 41 CFR 302-11, pertaining to items covered, amounts allowed, title requirements and procedures apply to Foreign Service personnel.
3. Allowable expenses for the sale and/or purchase of a residence may be claimed only if the employee meets the criteria detailed in 14 FAM 632.2.
4. Ref - [14 FAM 632.2](#) Residence Transaction Allowances, Federal Travel Regulation [302-11](#).

G. Long-Term Training Per Diem – Per diem during long-term training, consultations and other temporary duty in one location is subject to reductions of the per diem rate in accordance with [14 FAM 575.3](#) Maximum Rates in the United States. For training/TDY exceeding 60 days, the 61st through 120th day of temporary duty may be reimbursed at a daily locality rate not to exceed 50 percent of the lodging and 50 percent of the M&IE per diem rate. For the 121st day and succeeding day(s) of training/TDY, the employee may be reimbursed at the daily locality rate not to exceed 25 percent of the lodging and 25 percent of the M&IE per diem rate. This reduction in per diem prompts some travelers to enter into sliding-scale or “front-loaded” leases. Front-loaded leases, in which rent is higher in the early periods and lower in later periods, are not prohibited, but must specify actual rent for each period. Please be reminded that reimbursement of lodging during periods of long-term training is based on the terms of the lease and proof of payment. Per the Federal Travel Regulation, when you obtain lodging on a long-term basis (e.g., weekly or monthly) your daily lodging rate is computed by dividing the total lodging cost by the number of days of occupancy for which you are entitled to per diem. Addendums to a lease which describe payment terms must ensure that the total of the payments do not exceed the total amount of rent detailed in the lease.

Please be aware of 14FAM 561.2 when procuring quarters: “An employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.”

Key Points:

1. Per diem during long-term training is subject to reductions of the per diem rate in accordance with [14 FAM 575.3](#) Maximum Rates in the United States.
2. Front-loaded leases, in which rent is higher in the early periods and lower in later periods, are not prohibited, but must specify actual rent for each period.
3. Reimbursement of lodging during periods of long-term training is based on the terms of the lease and proof of payment (itemized

- receipt, cancelled check or credit card statement).
- 4. Addendums to a lease which describe payment terms must ensure that the total of the payments do not exceed the total rent detailed in the lease.
- 5. Ref: [14 FAM 575.3](#) Maximum Rates in the United States and [KB Article 35020](#).

H. **Tandem Couples** – Please note that no duplication of travel, benefits, or allowances will be authorized as a result of tandem status. If both members of a tandem couple are transferring to the same location, only one may choose "with family" status for travel and allowance purposes. If there are no additional family members each employee may claim the 'employee without family' rate. For cases in which both members of a tandem couple are returning to Washington for long-term training, both members of the couple must be in the same status: TDY or assignment to Washington. If one member of the tandem is assigned to Washington, the other member does not have the option of choosing TDY status. Additionally, for HR/EX-funded orders, employees with an active military duty spouse or foreign diplomat en-route to the same duty station, the spouse is not included on the State Department employee's travel authorization. Tandem couples are reminded that separate leases for the same property are not allowable. Separate leases by tandem couples for the same property violate the "duplication of benefits" rule established by Human Resources in HR/CDA Standard Operating Procedure A-11a.

Key Points:

- 1. No duplication of travel, benefits, or allowances will be authorized as a result of tandem status.
 - 2. If both members of a tandem couple are transferring to the same location, only one may choose "with family" status for travel and allowance purposes.
 - 3. If both members of a tandem couple are returning to Washington for long-term training, both members of the couple must be in the same status: TDY or assignment to Washington.
 - 4. For HR/EX-funded orders, employees with an active military duty spouse or foreign diplomat en-route to the same duty station, the spouse is not included on the State Department employee's travel authorization.
 - 5. Ref: [HR/CDA SOP A-11a](#) and [KB Article 9373](#).
- I. **Exercising Care in Incurring Expenses** - Please be reminded that per [14 FAM 561.2](#) (Exercising Care in Incurring Expenses) "An employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for

personal preference or convenience”.

Key Points:

1. An employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds.
2. Employees will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.
3. Ref: [14 FAM 561.2](#) Exercising Care in Incurring Expenses and [KB Article 12450](#).

4. YOUR TRAVEL CLAIM

- A. **Administrative Approval** - All PCS travel claims require administrative approval except travel claims where the final destination on the itinerary is an overseas location. For PCS travel where the final destination is an overseas post, the employee's Arrival Notice (TM-Eight) message transmitted from post to the Department (to verify travel has occurred) will serve to meet the current "administrative approval" standard, as stated in [4 FAM 465.3](#) (Approving Official's Responsibility) for only the Travel portion of the PCS vouchers. Please include the TM-Eight message or Administrative Approval with your voucher submission. All transfer allowance claims (form SF-1190) require administrative approval for transfers to both overseas and domestic locations. The approver is normally the traveler's supervisor.

Key Points:

1. All PCS travel claims require administrative approval except travel claims where the final destination on the itinerary is an overseas location. The approver is normally the traveler's supervisor.
2. The employee's Arrival Notice (TM-Eight) message transmitted from an overseas post to the Department will officially serve as "administrative approval" for only the Travel portion of the PCS vouchers for PCS travel to an overseas post.
3. For allowances on form SF-1190, administrative approval is still required for all travel.
4. Include the TM-Eight message or Administrative Approval with your voucher submission. See paragraph 4P if you are using the PCS travel Claim system to file your claim.
5. An updated TM-Eight and SF-1190 should be included with travel claim for any family members included on orders that arrive at post on a subsequent date
6. Ref: [4 FAM 465.3](#) Approving Official's Responsibility and [KB Article 37595](#), [KB Article 36305](#).

- B. **Verification of Arrival**- Employees are reminded to check with the HRO at your gaining

assignment post to ensure the TM-Eight message is created immediately after your arrival. The TM-Eight is the first step in the process to start your post related allowances. Employees arriving in the U.S. for a domestic assignment must fill out DS-1707 in HROnline.

Key Points:

1. Check with the HRO at your gaining assignment post to ensure the TM-Eight message is created immediately after your arrival.
2. Employees arriving in the U.S. for a domestic assignment must fill out DS-1707 in HROnline.
3. The TM-Eight is the first step in the process to start your post related allowances.
4. Ref: [4 FAM 465.3](#) Approving Official's Responsibility and [KB Article 36305](#).

- C. **Travel Payments** - PCS claims result in two separate payments -- one for actual travel costs incurred and the other for transfer travel allowances. When using the PCS Travel Claim software to submit your PCS claim, you must submit two claims – your PCS travel claim (form DS-189) and your transfer allowance claim (form SF-1190).

Key Points:

1. PCS claims result in two separate payments -- one for actual travel costs incurred and the other for transfer travel allowances.
2. When using the PCS Travel Claim software to submit your PCS claim, you must submit two claims – your PCS travel claim (form DS-189) and your transfer allowance claim (form SF-1190). See Paragraph 4P.
3. Ref: [KB Article 33651](#) and [KB Article 36319](#).

- D. **Claiming reimbursement for self-purchased shipment for POV** - Travelers who have paid out-of-pocket for POV shipments and have requested permission from Transportation and Travel Management (TTM) to qualify for reimbursement will receive a TTM approval memo that provides the following claim submission instructions:

Your request for reimbursement should be submitted on a completed SF1164 form and signed by your gaining Post authorizing officer. If your Permanent Change of Station (PCS) transfer is to the United States (U.S.) or a U.S. territory, please forward the completed and signed claim package to Employee Claims Charleston (gfcwoec@state.gov) for payment. If your PCS transfer is to a Post abroad, please provide package to Post Financial Management Center for processing. Include a copy of the applicable travel orders, payment receipt, and the approval memo. POV claims should be processed outside of the PCS system and can be processed within E2 if the post is using E2 for employee reimbursements.

- E. **Travel per diem for short transfers between domestic assignments, a domestic assignment and a post abroad or between two posts abroad (without days for**

training/consultations or HL on the PCS order) - If the total travel time for the PCS transfer is less than 12 hours in total, no travel per diem is reimbursable (14 FAM 573.1 c).

- F. **Documentation to Include with Vouchers** - Ensure proper documentation is included with the Travel Voucher(s). Documentation should include travel orders, paid hotel receipts, airline itinerary or E-ticket receipt, baggage receipts (baggage receipts required regardless of cost), TTM approval for any self-purchase ticket reimbursement in excess of \$100 and receipts for taxis and other miscellaneous expenses exceeding \$75. For HSTA Subsistence Expense Portion and Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expense (TQSE), employees are required to complete a Monthly Meal and Laundry Matrix form for each 30-day period of TQSE, and a 12-Month Service Agreement. The Meal and Laundry Matrix requires the traveler to enter individual daily meal amounts as well as laundry and dry cleaning expenses. The matrix, including instructions, is provided to the employee by the Travel Service Center or Employee Claims staff. Transportation expenses for FTA, HSTA or TQSE claims are not allowed. For HSTA/FTA Lease Penalty Expense, employees must complete section 6 of the FTA or HSTA worksheet (DSSR Section 960) and submit copies of the lease and receipts.

Key Points:

1. Documentation submitted for en-route travel reimbursement must include Travel Orders, paid hotel receipts, airline ticket receipts showing your travel itinerary, TTM approval for any self-purchase ticket reimbursement in excess of \$100, luggage receipts (receipts required regardless of amount) and receipts for taxis, TNCs, and other miscellaneous expenses exceeding \$75.
 2. For HSTA and TQSE, employees are required to complete a Monthly Lodging, Meal and Laundry Matrix form for each 30-day period of TQSE.
 3. If you are using the PCS Travel Claim system see Paragraph 4P.
 4. Ref: [DSSR 240](#) Foreign Transfer Allowance, [DSSR 250](#) Home Service Transfer Allowance and [KB Article 33651](#).
- G. **Continued Service Agreement (CSA) for PCS Travel** – Whether or not an employee must sign a Continued Service Agreement (CSA) for the purposes of PCS travel is closely related to the type of transfer. However, newly-appointed employees traveling to their first duty assignment regardless of location do not need to sign a CSA, as they signed one during initial Department in-processing. Employees who have already completed their first assignment should see the breakdown below to determine if they are required to sign a CSA in order to be eligible for PCS relocation benefits and allowances.

Domestic-to-Foreign and Foreign-to-Foreign transfers:

No CSA required. Employees transferring from a domestic assignment to a foreign one or from a foreign post to another foreign post do not need to sign a CSA.

Foreign-to-Domestic transfers:

CSA required for some. Employees transferring from a foreign post to a domestic duty station that is in a different city at least 50 miles from the employees' previous domestic duty station must sign a CSA. For example, an employee transferring from London to Charleston, SC, would need to sign and submit a CSA, unless his or her previous domestic assignment had been Charleston. A CSA is not required for an initial assignment to Washington, D.C.

Domestic-to-Domestic transfers:

CSA required. Employees transferring from one domestic duty station to another domestic duty station in a city at least 50 miles away from their previous duty station must sign and submit a CSA.

Employees who are required to sign a CSA for the purposes of PCS travel should use HR/EX form "Agreement - Relocation Allowances," dated 3/10/15. The form can be found under the title "Continuing Services Agreement" on International/Domestic Support Division's Documents and Forms SharePoint page at

<http://intranet.hr.state.sbu/offices/EX/Divisions/AdministrativeDivision/Pages/Documents-and-Forms.aspx>. Once signed, employees should email a scanned copy to HR-EX-IDSD@state.gov or send it via fax to (202) 663-0449.

Key Points:

1. Employees traveling to their first post of assignment or transferring from one foreign post to another foreign post do not need to sign a CSA.
2. Employees transferring from a domestic duty station to another domestic duty station must sign CSA form "Agreement - Relocation Allowances," dated 3/10/15. Employees traveling from a foreign post to a domestic duty station that is in a different city than their previous duty station must also sign CSA, "Agreement - Relocation Allowances," dated 3/10/15.
3. REF: Section 901 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 ([22 U.S.C. 4081](#)), [Federal Travel Regulations chapter 302](#), and [14 FAM 630 Domestic Transfers](#).

- H. **Unused Tickets** - Notify your gaining post if you have unused travel tickets (including eTickets) or Government Transportation Requests (GTRs).

Key Points:

1. Any unused travel tickets or GTRs must be returned as part of your voucher processing.
2. Ref: [4 FAM 471.2](#) Traveler's Responsibility, [4 FAM 472.2-1](#) Redemption Action, [14 FAM 517.2](#) Submission of Unused Tickets or Carrier Refund Applications for Exchange Tickets and [KB Article 9216](#).

- I. **Retention of Documentation** - Please remember that you should retain all documentation related to your post assignment travel for 6 years and 3 months. (Travel Authorizations, receipts, airline itineraries, and any other applicable documents). Please note that receipts or other documentation may be requested for expenses under \$75 to support claimed expenses.

Key Points:

1. Retain all documentation related to your post assignment travel for 6 years and 3 months. (Travel Authorizations, receipts, airline itineraries, and any other applicable documents).
2. Receipts or other documentation may be requested for expenses under \$75 to support claimed expenses.
3. Ref: [4 FAH 3 H-465](#) Travel Claims and [KB Article 31582](#).

- J. **Travel Advances** - Travelers are reminded to identify any travel advances they received so they may be properly applied to the final travel voucher computation. Interest, penalty, and administrative charges may be assessed on travel advances outstanding more than 30 calendar days after travel completion.

Key Points:

1. Identify any travel advances received so they may be properly applied to the final travel voucher computation.
2. Interest, penalty, and administrative charges may be assessed on travel advances outstanding more than 30 calendar days after travel completion.
3. Ref: [4 FAH 3 H-463](#) Travel Advances and [KB Article 33662](#).

- K. **Vouchers During Long-Term Training and Arrival at Post**- Submit all travel claims to the servicing TDY location every 30 days while in extended training and within 5 days of arrival at your new post. Online submission is mandatory via the PCS Travel Claim Software. Manual submission is accepted via E-Mail in rare cases where an employee does not have access to OpenNet using the standard travel claim form (DS-0189) scanned to OverseasPATClaims@state.gov for overseas travel or EmployeeClaims@State.gov for

domestic travel.

If there are other TDY orders and/or trainings that are not part of the PCS orders, please include the vouchers and/or separate travel orders filed outside of the PCS system as an attachment within the PCS travel claim system. These travels funded outside of PCS (HR/EX) frequently impact PCS per diem travel claims.

Key Points:

1. Submit all travel claims to the servicing TDY location every 30 days while in extended training.
 2. Attach all travel orders/vouchers funded outside of PCS (HR/EX) during the PCS transfer period within the PCS travel claim system.
 3. Online submission is mandatory via the PCS Travel Claim Software. Manual submission is accepted via E-Mail in rare cases where an employee does not have access to OpenNet using the standard travel claim form (DS-0189).
 4. Submit all travel claims within 5 days of arrival at your new post.
 5. Overseas posts and domestic bureaus will use the PCS Travel Claim system. See paragraph 4P for FSI implementation and modified procedures.
 6. Ref: [KB Article 33662](#).
- L. If you have access to the OpenNet you will be submitting your travel claims through the PCS Travel Claim Software. You can access the system through HR Online at <https://hrweb.hr.state.gov/prd/travelvoucher/default.aspx>. See paragraph 4P for more information.
- M. The PCS Travel Claim SharePoint site at: http://rm.m.state.sbu/sites/GFS/CST/PCS_Travel/Pages/GFSPCSTravel.aspx includes user guides, cheat sheets, software demos, recorded webinars and other helpful resources to assist you in preparing your claim. Additionally, the following PCS Travel Claim system documentation site: <http://hrprd.hr.state.gov/prd/travelvoucher/Tutorial.aspx?Topic=Documentation> contains links to the Knowledgebase and the Post Support Unit SharePoint page. The Knowledgebase contains detailed articles on PCS scenarios (KB Article 33828) which contains travel guidance, including PCS Travel Processing Rules and PCS Travel Scenarios.
- N. You will be contacted directly by email from CGFS Employee Claims or Post Support Unit if there is a question about your claim. ([KB Article 33653](#))
- O. The traveler is ultimately responsible for the accuracy of his or her claim. If the traveler is on multiple orders (PCS, Medevac, TDY, Bureau-funded TDY) during PCS process, then there should be no overlapping dates between claims, and any gaps should be explained. The DSSR governs allowances and benefits available to U.S. Government civilians assigned to foreign areas. The DSSR is NOT specific Department of State policy. Note

that because individual agencies may draft their own implementing regulations, which can be more restrictive than the DSSR, you may not be eligible for all of the allowances listed in the DSSR. Employees should check the DSSR, their travel authorization, their agency's travel guidance and implementing regulations for direction on a specific allowance. Employees of the four Foreign Affairs Agencies (State, Foreign Commercial Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, and USAID) should refer to volumes 3 and 14 of the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) and volume 3 of the Foreign Affairs Handbook (FAH) for more guidance. Please forward any inquiries regarding travel to the following E-Mail addresses: OverseasPATClaims@state.gov for overseas travel or EmployeeClaims@State.gov for domestic travel.

P. Procedures for travelers arriving at a post using the PCS Travel Claim software:

You can enter your claim electronically, scan required supporting documentation and submit the travel claim right from your desktop.

FSI has implemented the PCS Travel Claim system by Generalist and Specialist classes. Long term training students that used the PCS Travel Claim system prior to arrival may continue to use it. Students that have not used the system before should view the webinars and training materials on the SharePoint.

a. Administrative Approval. Please check the TM-Eight arrival date on the Itineraries screen Order Information section. If there is a date following the TM8 Arrival Date text, the software automatically has included the TM-Eight message for you.

b. The PCS Travel Claim software creates electronic versions of the DS-189 and SF-1190. You do not need to attach paper copies. If you want paper copies for your records, you can print the electronic versions.

c. Proper Documentation. Please click the Show Travel Order (TM4) link on the Attachments tab. If the software shows the travel order, then the traveler does not/need to attach the travel order. The most up-to-date approved amendment will be displayed.

Based on the information you entered, on the Finish tab there is a customized list of the documentation that must be attached to support your travel claim. If you have completed the Monthly Meal and Laundry Matrix, Foreign Transfer Allowance Worksheet and/or the Lease Penalty Expense using the software you do not/need to attach them. The software will provide them to the examiner. Reference [14 GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES 2152](#)

5. DOMESTIC TRANSFERS

A. **Domestic Transfers** - Domestic transfers are defined as transfers that are from a domestic

duty station to another domestic duty station in a different city that is at least 50 miles away from the previous domestic duty station. Additionally, non-foreign transfers are between: (1) U.S. posts and non-foreign areas; and (2) Two non-foreign areas.

- B. **House hunting trip** - Please remember that a house hunting trip in connection with a domestic reassignment from a domestic location must be completed prior to final departure from the losing duty station. Reminder: House hunting travel is computed using the standard CONUS rate and not the specific locality rate of the House Hunting location.

Key Points:

1. House hunting trips are only authorized for domestic to domestic transfers.
2. House hunting trips must be completed prior to final departure from the losing duty station.
3. House hunting travel is computed using the standard CONUS rate and not the specific locality rate of the House Hunting location.
4. The mileage rate used for travel via POV for house hunting is the same as the PCS mileage rate. The 2019 rate is 20 cents per mile.
5. Ref: [Federal Travel Regulation 302-5.13](#) and [KB Article 35009](#).

- C. **Residence Transaction Allowance** – Please be reminded that Residence Transaction Allowances for Domestic transfers are governed by 14 FAM 632.2. Although 14 FAM 632.2 addresses RTA for Foreign Service personnel who are transferred from a domestic duty station to a location abroad and who, after completing one or more assignments abroad, are assigned from a location abroad to a domestic duty station, these same provisions apply to domestic transfers

- D. It is important to note that travel claims guidance for domestic and non-foreign transfers (i.e. that do not include a transfer to, or from, a foreign location) do not fall under the authority of the DSSR. Travelers should consult [14 FAM 630](#) - Domestic Transfers and the [Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 302](#) - Relocation Allowances for further information.

- E. Public Law 115-97 known as the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017" expanded relocation expenses that are subject to taxes. Along with the current taxable travel, transportation and relocation expenses under Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), Chapter 302, the following reimbursements, direct payments, and indirect payments became taxable for relocation travel effective January 1, 2018:
- a. Lodging expenses for en-route travel to the new duty station;
 - b. Mileage for using privately-owned vehicle (POV) to travel to the new duty station;
 - c. Transportation using common carrier (e.g., airline) to the new duty station;
 - d. Shipment of household goods (HHG) to include unaccompanied air baggage (UAB) and professional books, paper, and equipment (PBP&E);
 - e. Temporary storage of HHG in transit, as long as the expenses are incurred within 30 calendar days after the day the items are removed from the old residence and before they

- are delivered to the new residence;
- f. Shipment of mobile home in lieu of HHG; and
- g. Transportation of a privately owned vehicle between posts within the continental United States.

Employees who are authorized relocation reimbursements under the FTR during the 2019 transfer season are affected by this change. This change currently applies only to Civil Service employees performing a domestic relocation.

Reference:

[GSA FTR Bulletin 19-02](#)

[GSA FTR Bulletin 18-05](#)

F. There is additional information regarding domestic transfers at the following sites:

1. "A Guide to Domestic Moves" available on the Transportation A_Z Household Moves intranet site.

6. Separation Travel - When an employee qualifies for separation travel, the actual departure of the employee, the departure of the employee's family, and the transportation of all effects must not be deferred more than 12 months from the employee's last day in pay status, for both international and domestic travel. Separation travel orders may be extended for up to an additional 6 months for a maximum of 18 months. Requests for extensions must be supported by a justification acceptable to the Bureau of Human Resources, Office of the Executive Director. If travel or transportation of effects is interrupted for personal convenience in connection with a separation, the final departure of persons and effects from any point(s) of interruption must take place within the time limitation specified in the separation order.

- A. For separation travel send the final travel voucher to CGFS Employee Claims via one of the following ways:
 - [HRPCS automated system](#) (**preferred**)
Note: Access to OpenNet required.
 - Overnight Deliveries Only:
1969 Dyess Avenue
Charleston, SC 29405
 - Regular Mail Only:

PO Box 150008
N. Charleston, SC 29415-5008

- Scanned and emailed:
GFSCWOEC@state.gov
If submitting by mail or email, make sure to include a printed and completed copy of the [DS-0189](#) that is required for reimbursement after arrival at your destination. The employee's signature is sufficient for authorization.

7. IMPORTANT CONTACTS

A. PCS Travel Claim System Documentation site:

<https://hrweb.hr.state.sbu/PRD/TravelVoucher/Tutorial.aspx?Topic=Documentation>

B. PCS Travel Claim Sharepoint site:

http://rm.m.state.sbu/sites/GFS/CST/PCS_Travel/Pages/GFSPCSTravel.aspx

C. PCS Travel Claim System:

<https://hrweb.hr.state.sbu/PRD/TravelVoucher/Default.aspx>

D. Manual Voucher processing contacts:

For overseas travel:

OverseasPATClaims@state.gov

For domestic travel

EmployeeClaims@state.gov

E. Domestic and non-foreign transfer information:

1. http://mmsweb.a.state.gov/asp/notices/dn_temp.asp?Notice_id=17386

2. <http://www.state.gov/m/a/c8026.htm>

F. Transportation and Travel Management
<http://lm.a.state.gov/travel/> <http://lm.a.state.gov/ops/householdmoves/> and
TransportationQuery@state.gov

G. Travel Card Program

<http://rm.m.state.sbu/TravelCardProgram/Pages/Home.aspx>

8. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED

Signature: Davisson

UNQUOTE

Signature: Pompeo

Requested By: CGFS/DEPUTY COMPTROLLER: DAVISSON, WILLIAM B

Cleared By: A/FO: HEATON, RICHARD B

WASHDC\BarnerC

Approved By: CGFS/DEPUTY COMPTROLLER: DAVISSON, WILLIAM B

Released By: DOM IRM_OPS_MSO:Barner, Chuckie

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