

From: Office of Foreign Service Human Capital/Foreign Service HR & Assignment Support

To: All Foreign Commercial Officers

FSHR&AS Policy and Procedures: ALFCO20120402

Subject: Pet Travel – New Options for Using Non-Contract Carriers

Effective immediately, when pets cannot be checked as accompanied baggage, the traveler may use the government rates of a non-contract airline that will accept the pet as checked baggage. If the airline does allow the pet to be checked as accompanied baggage, this exemption does not apply and the traveler must use the contract carrier. The new exemption applies to all airlines participating in the City Pair Program (CPP).

Travelers must still comply with the Fly America Act, and space available for pets is not an accepted exemption to that law. Travelers must use a U.S. carrier (including codeshares) if available. Some travelers may qualify for an exemption to Fly America under the Open Skies Agreement approved by the Department of Transportation (see [FTR Bulletin 11-02](#)) when the travel originates, transits, or terminates in an EU member country.

All exemptions to the CPP must be documented on the Justification Certificate for Using a Non-Contract Air Carrier (DS-4022), see the form attached. If confirmed space for pets as checked accompanied 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 to include the cost of moving the pet, as there can be no increased travel cost to the U.S. government.

The DS-4022 must be submitted to the following:

- 1) Travel Management Center (at Post or ADTRAV) so that they can book the noncontract fare;
- 2) NIST/Accounts Payable with your travel voucher;
- 3) The Office of Foreign Service Human Capital to be placed in your technical folder.

Policy:

The change to 14 FAM 543 a. (1) reads as follows:

“a. The use of contract air carriers offering discount (city-pair) fares between certain cities, contracted for by the General Services Administration (GSA), are considered advantageous to the U.S. Government, and their use by travelers and procurement officials is mandatory for authorized air travel between the city-pair except when:

- (1) Space on a scheduled contract flight (including a confirmed space for pets as checked baggage) is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of your travel, or use of contract service would require you to incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs which would increase the total cost of the trip;

NOTE: When pet movement is the determining factor for non-use of the contract carrier because there is no ability to move the pet as checked baggage on the same flight as the traveler under 14 FAM 543 exception a. (1) above, the traveler and not the USG is responsible for travel costs exceeding the most economical direct travel routing and for the airline cost of moving the pet.”

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Below are FAQs which may assist in clarifying what the changes to 14 FAM 543 mean, as well as, when and where this new policy would be applied.

Q1. Will I have to pay anything out of pocket?

A1. Travelers must pay any difference in cost between the CPP fare and that of the non-contract carrier to include the cost of moving the pet, as there can be no increased travel cost to the USG.

Q2. Am I still authorized a rest stop if my travel is over 14 hours?

A2. Yes, if you would have been authorized a rest stop on the contract carrier, you will be authorized a rest stop on the non-contract carrier with a valid DS-4022. Your PCS orders will need to reflect the rest stop location.

Q3. Can I use a -DG "me too" fare offered on another carrier?

A3. Yes, these fares can be used when the traveler has a valid DS-4022. When an air carrier doesn't win a city pair market, they will usually offer a competitive fare (-DG) to match the winning carrier as a way to earn revenue. These fares are offered only to the USG and have many of the same benefits as the contracted YCA fares such as having no restrictions and being fully refundable. However, these fares are prohibited, unless you have a valid DS-4022 using one of the reasons listed in the 14 FAM 543, because they undermine the contract in which we have guaranteed the contract carrier all of our volume on that route. Until this policy change, traveling with a pet was not a valid exception to 14 FAM 543 and thus -DG fares were not allowed.

Q4. Can I use a Foreign Flag carrier in cases where I'm excepted from using the contract carrier?

A4. The Fly America Act is the law and still applies in cases when the non-contract carrier can be used. Fortunately for some travelers, a recent amendment to the U.S.-EU Open Skies Agreement allows travelers who are ineligible for contracted fares to use an EU carrier if that carrier originates, transits, or terminates in an EU country. More information about this amendment can be found here.

Questions/Concerns:

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rita Anderson at Rita.Anderson@trade.gov or HROES@trade.gov.