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Travel Policy

Reference #

TBD

Document Category

Policy

Content

Contains policy that applies to travel and its associated expenses.

Owner

Executive Director, Compensation and Benefits

Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Sponsor

Chief Human Resources Officer

Issue Date

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Summary of Major Changes

This policy and its supporting materials supersede the September 2015 edition of Handbook F-15, Travel and Relocation.

Summary of Major Changes:

- Streamlined approval authority and roles and responsibilities.
- Updated to reflect use of eTravel for managing travel expenses and clarified expense report requirements.
- Updated international travel policy and streamlined information into a single chapter.
- Provided policy on travel and lodging expenses for non-conventional lodging and delivery services, and strengthened language for per diem and reimbursable expenses.
- Updated reimbursement and distance limits.

Availability

This document is available for Postal Service employees at http://blue.usps.gov. Copies are available to the public via the Postal Bulletin.

Questions

Address questions about this policy to the Owner.

Contents

1 Purpose

This policy provides travel directives for all United States Postal Service (USPS or Postal Service), United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), and Office of Inspector General (OIG) employees who travel while conducting official business on behalf of the Postal Service. Title 39 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 410 gives the Postal Service the authority to establish such policy.

This policy outlines expenses and actions allowed for traveling and lodging. The Postal Service is committed to conserving energy and reducing travel costs whenever possible. Traveling to another site to conduct official business must be considered only as a last resort. Every reasonable effort must be made to conduct business by using mail, telephone, fax, e-mail, video conferencing or another equally less costly, less time-consuming method.

2 Scope

This policy is intended for all individuals traveling and/or managing or approving travel on behalf of the Postal Service.

Much of the information applies uniformly to both bargaining and nonbargaining employees. However, some policies may affect each group differently. Any differences in applicability are noted as they occur.

USPIS employees must follow additional instructions issued by the Chief Postal Inspector. OIG employees follow additional instructions issued by the Inspector General.

2.1 Deviations

The Postal Service allows deviations from this policy only in extreme circumstances. The Postal Service does not consider requests for deviations where specific allowance parameters are presented in this policy. Ignorance of this policy does not justify a deviation.

A deviation request will be considered only if both of the following apply:

a. An unusual situation arises that is not directly addressed in this policy.

b. The case is unique as determined by the approving official.

2.2 Relocation

Travel expenses during relocation are taxable and cannot be paid through eTravel. Relocation expenses are paid through a contracted Relocation Management Firm. Refer to F-15-A, F-15-B, or F-15-C Relocation Policies and Procedures, as appropriate.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

Each individual must make every diligent attempt to utilize the method of transportation and lodging that is the most advantageous to the Postal Service. This includes taking the most direct route and utilizing the least expensive transportation and lodging services available to meet the travel need.

Role	Responsibility
Postmaster General (PMG)	▪ Approve official international travel (OIT) for Officers.

Role	Responsibility
Deputy Postmaster General (DPMG) *Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO)*	▪ Approve OIT for non-Officers.
Vice President	▪ Approve detail assignments exceeding 1 year involving travel and associated expenses. ▪ Approve OIT for non-Officers prior to request being routed to DPMG or CHRO for final approval.
Executive Director, Compensation and Benefits	▪ Ensure travel reimbursements are handled as required by law.
International Postal Affairs (IPA) *USPIS Global Security (GS)*	▪ Obtain passports and visas for personnel on OIT. ▪ Ensure all necessary documents are prepared prior to departure.
Approving Official	▪ Ensure efficient and judicious allocation of all Postal Service resources. Travel must only be approved when no other method of conducting official Postal Service business is considered satisfactory. ▪ Certify that all travel and lodging expenses are the most advantageous to the Postal Service and comply with Postal policy. ▪ Verify that all abnormalities within a report are given a reasonable explanation by the traveler and all information entered by the traveler is accurate. ▪ Protect and safeguard the Centrally Billed Account (CBA) against improper and unauthorized use and maintain proper controls. ▪ Notify travelers in writing of any outstanding advance and instruct them to repay the amount owed.
Travel Card Coordinator	▪ Assist employees in obtaining or replacing an Individually Billed Travel Card. ▪ Close accounts upon employee separation. ▪ Monitor travel card activity and account delinquencies. ▪ Submit hierarchy changes to the card provider.

Role	Responsibility
eTravel Coordinator	▪ Serve as the local eTravel system expert and troubleshooter for the assigned office. ▪ Enroll bargaining employees without access to a computer into the eTravel system if the requesting office is unable to do so. ▪ Serve as a liaison between their local office and the eTravel-related groups. The groups are Back Office Processing at the St. Louis Accounting Service Center (ASC) and the Travel and Relocation Office. ▪ Submit temporary reactivation requests in eTravel for terminated employees still owed travel reimbursement. ▪ Provide key setup and administrative support for Postal Service travelers who use the eTravel system. This includes submission of eTravel name and address change forms to Accounts Payable Supplier Maintenance Group at the St. Louis Satellite Office.
eTravel Web Alias	▪ Assist travelers within the manager's jurisdiction in creating and submitting an expense report in eTravel as a delegate for other employees without eTravel access.
eTravel Delegate	▪ Create an electronic expense report for an Officer or Postal Career Executive Service (PCES) manager using eTravel. The eTravel Delegate may not submit electronic expense reports on the behalf of others.
Travelers	▪ Represent the Postal Service by performing all duties in a professional manner, with care and prudence. ▪ Set an itinerary with the minimum investment of time and expense, utilizing the method of transportation most advantageous to the Postal Service, taking the most direct route, and using the least expensive services available that still meet the business needs. ▪ Claim reimbursement only for allowable expenses and settle travel advances promptly. ▪ Complete and submit travel expense reports electronically to the assigned approving official. ▪ Obtain and submit all required receipts over $50 with the expense report. ▪ Submit the eTravel expense report as soon as possible after travel is completed, but no later than 30 days after completed travel. When traveling for extended periods, it may be necessary to file an expense report more frequently.

4 Travel Management

All travel, transportation, lodging, and associated expenses must be approved by the appropriate approving official.

The traveler's immediate manager must notify the traveler of an upcoming trip. The traveler must prepare and submit their itinerary to their approving official, and have the trip approved before the scheduled departure.

4.1 Issues That Affect Travel Policy

Travel policy varies depending upon the following issues:

a. Duration of the trip. Travel policy varies depending upon whether the trip lasts more or less than 12 hours, is overnight, between 30 and 180 days, or more than 180 days.

b. Destination. Policy varies according to whether a destination is considered local travel, domestic travel, or international travel.

c. Purpose of the trip. Travel policy might be affected depending upon whether the trip is for attending meetings or conferences, training, serving as a witness, serving as a juror, relocating, or conducting official business for the Postal Service.

d. Traveler's relationship to the Postal Service. Travel policy varies according to whether an employee of the Postal Service is a bargaining employee or nonbargaining employee. Travel policy also varies according to whether a nonemployee of the Postal Service is a potential employee of the Postal Service, expert consultant, outside contractor, member of an advisory council or board, or spouse of an employee of the Postal Service. See section 7 Authorized Travelers.

4.2 Travel Management Company

The Postal Service has a contractual arrangement with a specific travel management company (TMC) to provide domestic and international travel and lodging services, such as reservations and ticketing, for all official travel, regardless of the traveler. All travel transportation and lodging must be arranged through the TMC and approved by the approving official.

4.3 eTravel

Each eligible traveler must be enrolled in the eTravel system in order to be approved for travel or to receive any reimbursement for travel expenses.

4.3.1 eTravel Web Alias

Only a traveler without access to a computer, or otherwise designated by their manager to use a Web Alias, will be allowed to have a Web Alias to create and submit expense reports as a delegate for them.

Individuals who are approvers will not be given Web Alias access.

4.4 Centrally Billed Account

4.4.1 Permitted Users

Only the following persons may have travel booked for them using the CBA:

a. Bargaining employees who do not have Individually Billed Travel Cards.

b. Postal employee spouses, under certain circumstances.

c. Special guests of the Postal Service.

d. Expert consultants, except contractors.

e. Witnesses.

4.5 Individually Billed Travel Cards

An Individually Billed Travel Card may be used for the following:

a. Transportation, lodging, and other travel-related expenses when traveling on official business for the Postal Service.

b. Travel of employee's immediate family members due to employee permanent relocation. See section 2.2 Relocation. The traveler is responsible to pay the card provider directly in accordance with policy.

Individually Billed Travel Cards may not be used for personal business and may not be used to pay for the travel expenses of others, except as provided in section 4.5(b).

4.5.1 Permitted Users

A bargaining employee designated as a frequent traveler by the facility manager should request an Individually Billed Travel Card for official travel.

A nonbargaining employee must have an Individually Billed Travel Card. An Individually Billed Travel Card is the only way that a nonbargaining employee can obtain government-rate travel tickets and lodging arrangements.

4.5.2 Cardholder Responsibilities

Each Individually Billed Travel Cardholder is accountable for all charges made with the card. A Cardholder must always do the following:

a. Protect the card against unauthorized use.

b. Complete eTravel reports so that payments will be issued to the Individually Billed Travel Card vendor on a timely basis.

c. Pay the portion of monthly travel card bill not directly reimbursed to the Individually Billed Travel Card vendor through eTravel in a timely manner.

4.5.3 Cancellation and Reinstatement

4.5.3.1 Voluntary Cancellation

An Individually Billed Travel Card must be voluntarily cancelled by the employee when retiring or terminating employment with the Postal Service.

4.5.3.2 Cancelled Card

An Individually Billed Travel Card can be cancelled for the following reasons:

a. Repeated suspensions in a 12-month period.

b. Payments of undisputed charges that are delinquent for 120 days.

c. Payment by nonsufficient funds (NSF) checks; accounts that have been charged off or closed due to three returned payments in the life of the account will not be eligible for reinstatement or issued a new card account.

Once an account has surpassed 180 days of non-payment and is charged off, the cardholder will be ineligible to apply for a new travel card. Exemptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If an Individually Billed Travel Card is canceled, the employee will only be reimbursed up to the government rate for their travel expenses. The employee is responsible for any additional costs incurred beyond the government rate.

5 Approval Authority

The PMG and Chief Executive Officer has delegated authority to certain management staff positions to approve travel expense reports and travel advance requests. The management positions that have been delegated this authority, subject to higher level approval, are known as approving officials and include:

1. Headquarters and Headquarters Field Units:
   a. Officers.
   b. PCES executives.
   c. Non-PCES managers who are direct reports to vice presidents or PCES executives.
2. Field:
   a. Officers.
   b. PCES executives.
   c. Non-PCES managers who are direct reports to vice presidents or PCES executives.
   d. Plant managers.
   e. Postmasters Level 18 and above.
   f. Executive and Administrative Schedule (EAS) Level 17 and above employees who supervise other employees.

5.1 Approving Officials

An approving official is authorized to delegate authority to someone acting in their place when they are absent or to someone else who is acting in a vacant approving official position. Further delegation is not authorized.

Approving officials have the authority to approve the following:

a. Official travel for the Postal Service.

b. Travel arrangements and travel advances for bargaining employees.

c. All tickets issued through the CBA for bargaining employees who do not have Individually Billed Travel Cards.

d. All tickets issued through the CBA for nonemployees, such as expert consultants, guests of the Postal Service, or employment candidates.

e. Expense reports.

f. Any special travel situations referenced in this policy (e.g., travel by a nonemployee of the Postal Service or a traveler's need for leased lodging).

5.1.1 Authorizing Travel

Approving officials may approve travel to attend training, meetings, and conferences, within or outside the Postal Service. Approving officials should ensure travel has been scheduled within the regular workweek, whenever possible. Approving officials must notify the traveler as soon as possible of impending travel.

5.1.1.1 Detail Assignments in Excess of 1 Year

There must be a critical need to extend an employee's detail assignment away from the permanent duty station beyond 1 year.

Detail assignments exceeding 1 year involving travel and associated expenses require approval in writing and in advance from a vice president (for field detail assignments) or the functional Officer (for detail assignments to a Headquarters position). The approving official must notify the Executive Director, Compensation and Benefits, of the approval to ensure that travel reimbursements are handled as required by law.

As soon as it becomes known that a detail to a geographic commuting area will exceed 1 year, all travel reimbursements must be reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as compensation. Taxes will be withheld, and the reimbursement will not be grossed up.

Documentation must be annotated as being for a long-term detail and submitted to the Eagan ASC for processing. The eTravel system cannot be used to claim reimbursement for details in excess of 1 year.

5.1.2 Authorizing Transportation

Approving officials may approve the use of a privately owned vehicle (POV) or commercial rental vehicle only after determining that no vehicle owned or leased by the Postal Service is available. Approving officials must approve the use of a POV or commercial rental vehicle before expenses are incurred.

The Postal Service allows employees to rent vehicles such as automobiles, boats, aircraft, or other vehicles for travel on official business within or outside the designated duty station, if this is advantageous to the Postal Service. The vehicles rented should provide the least costly type of transportation available.

5.1.3 Authorizing Lodging

5.1.3.1 All Travelers

When considering lodging rates, approving officials must:

a. Take into consideration the traveler's efforts to secure less costly housing.

b. Fully assess the cost of lodging by analyzing the distances from lodging facilities to the work assignment and the related transportation costs.

5.1.3.2 Travelers Needing Leased Lodging

The approving official must:

a. Approve the use of leased lodging *before* expenses are incurred.

b. Ensure that the total leased charges will be less costly than the total of daily rental charges, such as a hotel.

c. Ensure that the total leased charges are not offset by local transportation expenses, commuting time, and similar costs.

5.1.4 Reviewing and Approving Expense Reports

Eligible items over $50 will only be approved for payment by the approving official if they are:

a. Purchased with an Individually Billed Travel Card and populated in the expense report from the Card Transactions in eTravel, or

b. Supported by receipts

6 Authorized Travel

6.1 Local Travel

The Postal Service reimburses for local travel actual expenses. A traveler is not eligible to claim per diem for local travel.

For local travel, an employee is entitled to the following:

a. Meals that the employee is required to attend as part of an official business session. The employee is not reimbursed for meals that are part of a normal workday, such as a typical lunch break.

b. Telephone charges necessary for conducting official business.

c. Miscellaneous expenses, such as renting equipment for training sessions or meetings.

For local travel, a traveler is entitled to be reimbursed for mileage. When it is advantageous to the Postal Service, the traveler may be authorized to depart directly from and return directly to the primary residence. The Postal Service may reimburse the traveler for any mileage that exceeds the distance between the primary residence and the permanent duty station. If the mileage is less than that between the primary residence and the permanent duty station, the traveler may not claim a mileage reimbursement. The traveler may claim out-of-pocket expenses such as tolls, parking, etc.

Daily commuting between the traveler's primary residence and permanent duty station is not considered local travel and mileage will not be reimbursed. Getting to work is the responsibility of the employee.

6.1.1 Overnight Stays

If the travel destination is within a 50-mile radius of an employee's permanent duty station and overnight stay is required, the trip is considered domestic travel, not local travel. Approving officials may use discretion to determine if an overnight stay is required.

6.2 Domestic Travel Within the Contiguous United States

Daily expenses for domestic travel within the continental United States (CONUS), including any overnight trips within a 50-mile radius of the permanent duty station, are reimbursed at the per diem rate for that area.

6.3 Trip Duration

6.3.1 Travel Completed Within 12 Hours During the Same Day

Per diem is not authorized for a traveler in travel status for less than 12 hours during the same calendar day.

6.3.2 Travel Lasting More Than 12 Hours but Less Than 24 Hours With or Without Lodging

An employee in a travel status between 12 and 24 hours without lodging is reimbursed 75 percent of a full day's per diem at the rate listed for the travel destination. An employee in a travel status between 12 hours and 24 hours over a 2-day period where lodging is required is reimbursed 75 percent of the 2-day per diem at the rate listed for the travel destination.

7 Authorized Travelers

The following individuals may be authorized to travel and may be reimbursed for certain costs:

1. Postal Service employees including:
   a. Postal Service employees representing employee organizations. Travel must pertain to one of the following:
      i. Activities of joint employee-management cooperation committees when the activity is primarily in the interest of the Postal Service — for example, preventing accidents, reducing absenteeism, improving communication, ensuring equal employment opportunity, or maintaining employee productivity and morale.
      ii. Special consultation or special negotiation sessions when called by Postal Officials. Travel to attend regularly scheduled negotiation sessions is not authorized.
      iii. Internal employee-organization business — such as attending meetings, conferences, or training — sponsored by an employee organization when these activities meet the needs of the Postal Service, and the Postal Service requires the employee to attend.
   b. Postal Service employees serving as members of advisory councils and boards.
   c. Postal Service employees attending meetings, conferences, and training sessions.
   d. Postal Service employees serving as a witness, juror, or at the request of another Postal Service installation or government agency.
2. Nonemployees of the Postal Service including:
   a. Consultants.
   b. Potential Postal Service employees. The travel must pertain to employment interviews.
   c. Spouses of Postal Service employees.
   d. Other nonemployees, including contractors. Travel must pertain to one of the following:
      i. To confer with Postal Officials on official Postal matters.
      ii. For the benefit of the Postal Service.

7.1 Postal Service Employees

7.1.1 Attending Meetings, Conferences, or Training Sessions

Approving officials may approve travel to attend meetings, conferences, and training sessions, within or outside the Postal Service. The employee is reimbursed for travel expenses as if travel was to a temporary duty station.

7.1.2 Witnesses

Allowable expenses vary according to the reasons an employee is traveling to serve as a witness.

7.1.2.1 While on Court Leave

An employee serving as a witness while on court leave may keep any money received for travel and subsistence expenses.

7.1.2.2 While in an Official Duty Status

An employee serving as a witness while in an official duty status is entitled to compensation from the Postal Service for actual allowable expenses (travel and subsistence) equal to that of regular travel. The employee may accept authorized witness fees and expense allowances but may keep only an amount equal to actual allowable expenses. If the witness fee exceeds allowable expenses, the employee must remit the excess amount to the Postal Service. If the witness fee does not cover actual allowable expenses, the employee may submit an expense report to cover the balance.

7.1.2.3 While in Another Status

An employee serving as a witness who is not entitled to be on court leave or in an official duty status may keep any fees or other compensation received for serving.

7.1.3 Jurors

An employee on court leave must follow the directives set forth in the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM).

7.1.4 At the Request of Another Postal Service Installation

Allowable travel expenses for an employee traveling at the request of another Postal Service installation for official business, meeting(s), or an interview, must be paid by the requesting installation.

7.2 Nonemployees of the Postal Service

A person not employed by the Postal Service, who is traveling on official Postal business, may be reimbursed for travel expenses while away from the home or regular place of business.

A nonemployee, except for a contractor, must charge all travel expense to the CBA. The most recent General Services Administration (GSA) contract for commercial airline government rate fares prohibits the following:

a. Issuing government rate fares to a contractor.

b. Using CBA to purchase tickets for a contractor.

7.2.1 Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee

A member of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee is eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses for actual expenses for transportation and lodging. The member will be reimbursed at the per diem rate for each day away from the place of business. Daily expenses may not exceed the daily GSA rate for each calendar day or fraction of a day.

Reimbursement is only permitted if the member's business address is outside of the District of Columbia metropolitan area or beyond a reasonable commuting distance from the meeting site.

7.2.2 Contractors

The Postal Service reimburses a contractor for travel expenses according to the contract and instructions from the contracting officer.

7.2.3 Spouses of Postal Service Employees

The Postal Service pays for the round trip transportation costs for a spouse of an employee on extended detail, or training assignment who would rather have their spouse accompany or visit them than take intermediate trips home. The spouse is not eligible to receive per diem.

For an employee required to be away from the permanent duty station for more than 6 months, the Postal Service may pay the less expensive of the following:

a. Per diem.

b. The expenses for transporting the immediate family and household goods. This cost must be less than the estimated per diem for the entire period. Relocation policy applies and this option is only allowable with an approved exception from the Manager, Travel and Relocation.

For a bargaining or a nonbargaining employee, travel arrangements may be made for a spouse through the CBA. Approval of the spouse's travel and the use of the CBA must be made before the assignment begins.

7.2.3.1 Allowable Expenses for Employees Living in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or U.S. Possessions

An employee living in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or a U.S. possession who must attend courses at the National Center for Employee Development (NCED) in Norman, OK, or the Bolger Center in Potomac, MD, may be authorized to bring their spouse to Norman, Potomac, or to an intermediate point.

Total costs for both the employee and their spouse may not exceed round trip transportation and applicable per diem expenses for one person from the training site to the permanent duty station, based on the least expensive transportation normally used.

7.2.4 Other Nonemployees

The PMG, DPMG, or CHRO must preapprove, in writing, guest travel for special occasions. The preapproval documentation will contain allowable travel reimbursements to be extended to the guest.

8 Authorized Lodging

An employee must make a diligent effort to obtain lodging at a reasonable rate within the current lodging per diem rate. The Postal Service reimburses for actual expenses for lodging when the employee is in travel status for regular travel, extended duty assignments or details, or training only when reasonable attempts to obtain less costly lodging have been made. The Postal Service does not tolerate any capricious or nondiscretionary use of lodging facilities that charge exorbitant rates.

The approving official will disallow any exorbitant lodging rates that exceed the reasonable rate for the location.

The approving official will disallow any charges (regardless of the type of lodging) that are personal in nature. Personal expenses such as, pet fees, charges for damages, etc., are the employee's responsibility. Allowances for meals and incidentals are included in per diem.

The Postal Service allows for reimbursement for an employee in travel status on non-workdays that require lodging.

8.1 Staying With Family or Friends

An employee who stays in the residence of family or friends for any reason may not claim lodging expenses.

8.2 Leased Lodging

The Postal Service allows for a fixed-term lease for furnished lodgings or for unfurnished lodgings and the necessary furniture.

Whenever possible, the lease should be on a month-to-month basis. An employee may be reimbursed for the regular monthly lodging costs, consisting of rent plus any auxiliary items, and any required advanced payments. The employee will not be reimbursed for security deposits.

8.2.1 Auxiliary Items

The Postal Service pays for renting necessary auxiliary items not included in the rental, such as linens, pots, pans, dishes, a television set, one standard telephone and installation, and maid service.

8.2.2 Cancellations

An employee must make every effort to cancel the lease as soon as possible. The employee is reimbursed for the actual costs resulting from breaking the lease even if the employee does not remain at the temporary duty station for the anticipated length of time.

8.2.3 Home-Sharing (Non-Conventional Lodging)

Rooms for rent, or personally owned residences, may only be considered as a lodging option when there are no conventional lodging facilities in the area (e.g., remote areas), or when conventional facilities are in short supply.

As USPS employees on official business travel are required to use the contracted TMC for their nightly lodging needs, a pre-approved exception must be requested by the employee's manager and granted by management of the Travel and Relocation Office to allow the booking of non-conventional lodging. In such cases, the employee may be reimbursed the actual and necessary costs of lodging (up to the locality's per diem rate), but must assume responsibility for any excess costs, including service or booking fees, deposits, or penalties imposed by the property owner.

8.2.4 Lodging During Training

For in-service training or duty conducted away from a permanent duty station, the lowest per diem rate obtained becomes the maximum allowed for all participants, regardless of whether the employee utilizes the provided lodgings or chooses to stay elsewhere for personal reasons.

8.3 Corporate Housing Program

USPS's Corporate Housing Program may be utilized for detail assignments lasting more than 29 consecutive days. Utilizing the Corporate Housing Program is always preferred, as it allows the Postal Service to leverage significant savings and reduce local travel expenses.

Furnished apartments are provided at or under GSA nightly lodging rates. Leases must be limited to monthly renewals, and it is the employee's responsibility to end the lease timely by notifying the proper contacts, as designated in the lease.

8.4 Exemptions From Sales Taxes

The employee must obtain a tax exemption form for the location in which they have approved lodging. The tax exemption form should be utilized to request an exemption from state and local taxes, when allowed by state and local laws.

If the lodging location declines to honor a request for tax exemption, the employee must pay the tax. The Postal Service allows reimbursement for the amount of tax paid.

9 Authorized Transportation

The traveler must use the least expensive services available, balancing the need for efficiency in conducting business against their convenience, safety, and comfort. Nonstop travel is allowed. Government rates and discount contract fares set by GSA must be used.

A more expensive service is permitted if the least expensive fare causes unreasonable delay or inconvenience, substantial distress, or jeopardizes safety. However, the increased cost of the fare must be weighed against the other costs to the Postal Service, such as lodging or per diem.

9.1 Air Transportation

Flying business class is permitted on both domestic and international official travel only if:

a. The point of departure and return are the employee's regular duty station.

b. The flight is the most direct route possible to the destination.

c. The duration of the flight, including layovers to change planes, exceeds 10 hours.

Business class travel accommodations must be obtained from the TMC by contacting them directly; they cannot be obtained through online booking.

The traveler may upgrade their airline seating up to a maximum of $125 per domestic travel leg or $200 per international travel leg under 10 hours. The traveler must use their Individually Billed Travel Card for the upgrade purchase, and request reimbursement through eTravel for domestic seat upgrades. Airline mileage points used for seat upgrades are not reimbursable. Upgrades of class service, other than those that are specifically authorized solely for personal preference, must be paid by the traveler.

9.2 Postal Service, General Service Administration, or Commercial Rental Vehicles

A traveler must use a vehicle owned or leased by the Postal Service, as a first option, when traveling by automobile to conduct official Postal Service business. If none of these are available, the use of a POV or commercial rental vehicle may be justified, in accordance with 5.1.2 Authorizing Transportation. A cost analysis must be conducted to determine the appropriate mode of transportation.

9.2.1 Use of a Government Vehicle while on Official Travel

Employees authorized to use a government vehicle must possess a valid driver's license and operate the vehicle lawfully.

Government vehicles are authorized for official purposes which include transportation:

a. Between places of official business.
b. Between such places of temporary lodging when public transportation is unavailable or impractical.
c. Between places of official business and/or temporary lodging, to restaurants, pharmacies, personal grooming establishments, places of worship, laundry establishments, and similar places necessary for the sustenance, comfort, or health of the employee to foster the continued efficient performance of Postal Service business.

9.2.2 Use of a Commercial Rental Vehicle while on Official Travel

Employees using a commercially rented vehicle must possess a valid driver's license and operate the vehicle lawfully.

When rental vehicles are authorized, they must be reserved using the TMC. In addition:

a. The rental agreement must include unlimited mileage.
b. The traveler must use the least expensive car available that suits the business need.
c. The traveler must make arrangements to refuel the vehicle before returning to avoid excessive refueling fees charged by the vendor.
d. The vehicle may be used:
    1. Between places of official business.
    2. Between such places of temporary lodging when public transportation is unavailable or impractical.
    3. Between places of official business and/or temporary lodging to restaurants, pharmacies, personal grooming establishments, places of worship, laundry establishments, and similar places necessary for the sustenance, comfort, or health of the employee to foster the continued efficient performance of postal business.
e. Upgrades, additional driver fees, and refueling charges are not reimbursable. Young driver fees are reimbursable only when the traveler qualifies as a young driver per the policy of the rental agency.
f. The Postal Service does not reimburse for collision damage waivers or personal accident insurance offered in commercial contracts by rental vehicle agencies.

Exceptions apply only when collision damage waiver insurance is requested for a rented or leased vehicle in a foreign country.

9.2.3 Allowable Expenses

The Postal Service allows reimbursement for the cost of the vehicle and for any costs associated with the vehicle, such as ferry, bridge, and road fees; tunnel tolls, toll collection devices; and airplane parking, landing, and tiedown fees.

9.3 Privately Owned Vehicles

Use of a POV is only allowed in the following circumstances:

a. A traveler is on a specific assignment, such as investigation and route examinations, customer service travel, or postal systems reviews.

b. A traveler is participating in civil defense tests and activities. An employee traveling for civil defense purposes to and from emergency locations is considered to be on official business and acting within the scope of their employment.

c. For personal convenience that is also advantageous to the Postal Service, with a cost comparison justification attached to an expense report.

9.3.1 Approval Criteria

The approving official's decision must be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

a. Whether commercial air, train, or bus service is suitable.

b. Whether Postal Service or GSA vehicles are available.

c. Whether the use of a POV would reduce the overall cost of travel, such as by saving on per diem or local transportation expenses.

d. Whether the use of a POV would save time, either travel time or overall work time.

e. Whether the use of a POV would be used extensively in the vicinity of the temporary duty station.

f. Whether the vehicle is required for civil defense travel.

9.3.2 Allowable Expenses

If no Postal Service or GSA vehicle is available, the traveler may be reimbursed for all mileage incurred during the approved use of a POV for official business. Reimbursement for mileage is allowed for the use of a POV between home and permanent duty station, or other designated points, if a traveler must use this permanent duty station or other point as a point of departure.

9.3.2.1 Supervisors

Supervisors are, at times, required to travel between facilities within the installation or to Remotely Managed Post Offices to perform tasks. These tasks are not just limited to supervisors, but also to Managers and Postmasters. These individuals will be reimbursed at either the daily rate or the standard mileage rate, whichever is greater, when approved for the use of a POV for the following assignments:

a. Supervising carriers.

b. Inspecting routes.

c. Motor vehicle service operations, supervising Postal Vehicle Service (PVS).

d. Airport ramp operations.

9.3.2.2 Airplanes

A traveler may be reimbursed for air mileage distance between the airport where the trip began and the airport where it ended during approved use of a POV for official business.

To receive reimbursement for additional air milage taken for detours taken due of adverse weather, mechanical difficulty, or other unusual conditions, the traveler must provide an explanation of circumstances.

If no commercial air service is available, the traveler may be reimbursed the amount equal to that of the mileage rate for airplanes (see Appendix A: Mileage Reimbursement) multiplied by the total mileage as shown on the charts issued by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

9.4 Taxis, Rideshares, and Public Transportation

9.4.1 Regular Travel

Expenses are allowed for the use of a taxi or rideshare between home and permanent duty station or other designated points if a traveler must use this permanent duty station or other point as a point of departure.

The traveler may claim taxi fare or the cost of rideshare service and a maximum 20 percent tip if one of the following applies:

a. No other less costly means of transportation is available because of the location or time of day.

b. The traveler has been approved to use a taxi or rideshare because it is advantageous to the Postal Service.

9.4.2 Transportation to Obtain Meals

Expenses are allowed for daily transportation to obtain meals when suitable meals are not available at or near the temporary duty station or temporary place of lodging.

Expenses are allowed for meal delivery service charges when suitable meals are not available at or near the temporary duty station or temporary place of lodging. The cost of the meal is not reimbursable.

9.4.3 Transportation To and From Inconvenient Lodging

When a traveler is lodged at a place that is further away from the official business than other lodging, the maximum the traveler is allowed to expense is the cost of transportation from the temporary duty station to the closest lodging.

9.4.4 Local Travel

Expenses are allowed for public transportation expenses, such as the local bus or subway.

10 International Travel

All international travel requests for USPS and USPIS personnel are managed through the International Travel Authorization Program (ITAP). International Postal Affairs (IPA) monitors ITAP for international travel requests for USPS personnel. USPIS Global Security (GS) monitors ITAP for international travel requests for USPIS personnel. IPA and GS work with the U.S.

Department of State (DoS) and foreign embassies to ensure that all USPS and USPIS personnel are appropriately credentialed when making international travel arrangements.

The DoS's Chief of Mission is responsible for all U.S. Government employees in the respective country, including USPS and USPIS personnel on official international travel (OIT). Personnel holding a security clearance or working in a designated sensitive position must follow Security Executive Agent Directive (SEAD-3) reporting requirements. ITAP will service travel requests and reporting requirements for personnel who hold a national security clearance and/or work in a designated sensitive position.

10.1 Traveler Responsibilities

OIT requests must be submitted at least 21 business days prior to the planned departure. Prior to departure, each traveler must complete all required trainings and security briefings.

USPS personnel must immediately return their official passport to IPA upon return from travel. USPIS personnel must follow USPIS guidance for managing passports.

USPS and USPIS personnel must complete a post-travel questionnaire within 5 business days of completing travel. USPS and USPIS personnel may be required to furnish an ITAP Official International Travel Authorization Letter to the dedicated travel agency upon request.

10.2 Approval Authority for International Travel

USPS Officer international travel must be approved by the PMG or designee. USPS non-Officer international travel must be approved by the DPMG, CHRO, or designee.

The approving officials for USPS and USPIS must utilize the ITAP application to review and approve OIT requests.

The Chief Postal Inspector is responsible for approving international travel of USPIS personnel. The Inspector General, Assistant Inspectors General, Deputy Assistant Inspectors General, and Directors are responsible for approving international travel for OIG personnel.

10.3 Passports

An official U.S. Passport is required for each international traveler on OIT, as required by the DoS under 22 CFR § 53.1. A contractor may be authorized to travel internationally using a personal passport.

10.4 Fly America Act

The Postal Service complies with the Fly America Act, which mandates all international air travel (and cargo transportation) funded by the U.S. Government be provided by U.S. flag air carrier service, regardless of cost, convenience, or personal travel preferences. U.S. flag air carrier service is service provided by an American-owned air carrier. This also includes service provided under a code share agreement with a foreign air carrier in accordance with Title 14, CFR, when the ticket, or documentation for an electronic ticket, identifies the U.S. flag air carrier's designator code and flight number.

In unusual circumstances, an Officer of the Postal Service may authorize an exemption from using American air carriers. Requests for exemption must be made at least 2 weeks before departure. Exceptions may only be issued if one of the following applies:

1. The use of foreign air carrier service is a matter of necessity because:

a. A U.S. flag air carrier service cannot provide the air transportation needed for the entire trip or a segment of the trip as the:
    i. Use of foreign air carrier is necessary for medical reasons.
    ii. Use of foreign air carrier is required to avoid unreasonable risk to the traveler's safety according to 41 CFR § 301-10.138(b)(2).
    iii. Seat on the U.S. air carrier in authorized class of service is unavailable, the seat on foreign air carrier in authorized class of service is available.
    iv. Other justification; or
b. The use of U.S. flag air carrier will not accomplish the Postal Service's mission.

2. A U.S. flag air carrier involuntarily reroutes the traveler on a foreign air carrier.
3. Air travel is between the U.S. and another country, and use of a U.S. flag carrier on a nonstop flight extends travel time by 24 hours or more.
4. A U.S. flag carrier does not offer a nonstop or direct flight between origin and destination, and using a U.S. carrier:
    a. Increases the number of aircraft changes outside the U.S. by two or more; or
    b. Extends travel time by 6 hours or more; or
    c. Requires a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point.
5. The flight time from origin to destination is less than 3 hours and using a U.S. flag carrier doubles the en route flight time.
6. There is an applicable "Open Skies Agreement" in effect that meets the requirements of the Fly America Act.

A traveler authorized by the Postal Service who improperly uses a foreign air carrier for any part of a trip not permitted under 41 CFR § 301-10 Subpart B - Use of United States Flag Air Carriers, may not expense transportation costs to the Postal Service.

10.5 Cabin Class Upgrades for International Travel

Restrictions as stated in 9.1 Air and Train Transportation apply.

10.6 Expenses

The Postal Service reimburses for certain international expenses including:

a. Fees for passports and visas, along with the cost of photographs for passports and visas. A receipt must be obtained and submitted for reimbursement.
b. Costs for obtaining certificates of birth, health, and identity, and charges for affidavits.
c. Charges for inoculations that a traveler cannot obtain through a federal dispensary.
d. Automated Teller Machine (ATM) user fees and bank fees for cash advances.
e. Commissions charged to convert currency in foreign countries. Receipts that show the commission charge and rate of exchange must be obtained and submitted for reimbursement.

f. Exchange fees for cashing U.S. government checks or drafts issued to reimburse the traveler for travel expenses in foreign countries. Exchange fees for cashing salary checks or drafts are not allowed in travel accounts.

g. The cost of additional vehicle insurance that is required for renting a vehicle in a foreign country, such as collision damage waiver insurance

h. The loss incurred when converting foreign currency back to U.S. dollars when returning to the permanent duty station. A receipt showing the amount of currency converted, with the exchange rate at the beginning and end of the trip, must be obtained and submitted for reimbursement.

USPIS and OIG personnel must follow additional internal guidance regarding international travel.

10.6.1 Per Diem

The traveler will be reimbursed for daily expenses according to the per diem rate determined by the DoS for the specific location(s) of travel. These rates are updated monthly by the DoS.

10.6.2 International Conferences, Congress, and Trainings

Travel expenses to attend international conferences, meetings, or training sessions are reimbursed the same as travel to a temporary duty station.

10.6.3 Civil Defense

When traveling internationally for the purpose of civil defense, the traveler must report civil defense tests or exercises on the expense report. Those traveling for the purpose of civil defense must report departure and return time in order to claim mileage.

10.7 Unofficial Foreign Travel

If an employee on approved OIT also engages in unofficial foreign travel (UFT) during their travel, they must use their personal U.S. Passport (navy blue cover) for the segments of any part of their travel that is not deemed as approved OIT. Employees are prohibited from using their Official U.S. Passport (maroon) for any segment of UFT.

A traveler who engages in UFT is personally responsible for identifying and complying with any visa or entry requirements that may exist for the country of destination they will visit. Specific guidance for this is accessible via the DoS's public-facing website.

A traveler who holds a national security clearance, or works in a designated sensitive position, and is planning UFT in conjunction with OIT, must submit an OIT request in ITAP, and report their complete travel itinerary to USPIS National Security at least 30 days prior to departure.

A traveler who holds a national security clearance and/or works in a designated sensitive position that deviates from approved OIT, whether due to planned or unplanned UFT, or crosses the border into another country unexpectedly, must report it to the Postal Service and USPIS National Security. This applies regardless of the duration of time spent in the deviation location.

In such situations involving unplanned UFT or the unexpected crossing of a border into another country, the traveler must immediately notify their direct supervisor or next level supervisor(s) and security control officer(s) within USPIS National Security to ensure there will be no issues with departing and/or re-entering the host country. A traveler with a national security clearance or a traveler who works in a designated sensitive position must formally report the full scope of their international travel itinerary within 5 business days after completing such a deviation by submitting a post-travel questionnaire to USPIS within the ITAP system.

10.8 Emergencies

If Postal Service personnel are on OIT and encounter an urgent situation, such as arrest, civil unrest, injury, or death, the following must be notified whenever possible:

a. The nearest U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate, through calling the emergency telephone line.

b. The appropriate Vice President or Postal Service installation manager. USPIS employees should notify the National Law Enforcement Communications Center (NLECC) for subsequent notification through to the Chief Postal Inspector.

c. IPA.

Under authority of the Chief of Mission, the U.S. Ambassador to the respective host country and the DoS will coordinate the evacuation of U.S. Government employees, including those from the Postal Service.

11 Other Expenses

A traveler is not reimbursed for services provided by a government employee.

11.1 Per Diem

Per diem allowances for official travel begin when the traveler leaves the permanent duty station, home, or other authorized point, and end when the traveler arrives back at the permanent duty station, home, or other authorized point. Official travel may include non-workdays.

11.1.1 Per Diem Calculation

On the first day of the trip, the traveler is reimbursed 75 percent of the daily per diem rate of the destination, regardless of the total length of official travel. On the last day of the trip, the traveler is reimbursed 75 percent of the daily per diem rate of the last destination of the trip, regardless of the time that the traveler returned home or to the duty station. The location of a traveler's permanent duty station or residence is not considered a destination for per diem purposes.

For travel that has a single temporary duty station destination, the per diem for the entire trip is equal to that of the traveler's temporary duty station destination.

For travel that has multiple temporary duty station destinations, the final duty station destination of a given travel day determines the per diem rate for the entire day.

11.1.2 Provided Meals

If meals are provided at no cost or at a nominal fee to the traveler, the per diem must be reduced by the amount calculated by the eTravel system. The traveler must enter the number of breakfasts, lunches, and/or dinners provided in the appropriate fields of the per diem expense type entry. This includes meals provided by:

a. Family.

b. The sponsors of a meeting, conference, or training session.

c. The NCED in Norman, OK, or the Bolger Center in Potomac, MD.

d. An agency of the federal government.

11.1.3 Non-workdays

A traveler en route to or from a temporary duty station on a non-workday is entitled to per diem (75 percent of the daily rate) for the day. A traveler on a non-workday, but not en route to or from a permanent duty station or home, is entitled to per diem for the full day.

11.1.4 Annual Leave While in Travel Status

A traveler who takes 4 hours or less of annual leave is reimbursed per diem for the full day. A traveler who takes more than 4 hours of annual leave is not reimbursed per diem for the day. A traveler who takes more than 4 hours of annual leave on the day immediately before or after a non-workday is not reimbursed per diem for the non-workday.

11.1.5 Sick Leave While in Travel Status

A traveler is allowed per diem for any day(s) of sick leave taken while traveling.

A traveler must provide a physician's certificate in order to take more than 3 consecutive workdays as sick leave.

A traveler hospitalized while in travel status is reimbursed for hospital expenses under any health benefit plan offered by the Federal Employees Health Benefit Act of 1959. The Postal Service reimburses the traveler for any meals and lodging which were already paid but were not utilized due to hospitalization.

11.1.6 Transportation

Per diem is limited to the amount allowable if the approved mode of transportation is used.

If the trip includes more than one temporary duty station, the entire trip must be reconstructed to ensure that the traveler only claims the per diem periods that would have been claimed if they had used the approved mode of transportation.

11.2 Allowable Expenses

11.2.1 Travel To and From the Terminal

A traveler is allowed to claim expenses incurred when traveling between home, permanent duty station, or other approved point, and the airport, train, or bus station.

A traveler may claim:

a. The full fare, plus a maximum tip of 20 percent for the use of a taxi, rideshare, or airport shuttle.

b. Actual mileage for the round trip to and from the airport, train, or bus station another person provides the traveler.

c. Two round trips and any parking fees incurred by a driver dropping off and picking up the traveler at the terminal.

d. Actual mileage plus parking fees when the traveler drives themselves to and from the terminal and parks the car.

11.2.2 Parking

A traveler may be reimbursed for necessary parking fees incurred while conducting official business according to the following:

a. Parking at a hotel. Self-parking should be used whenever possible. Valet parking is not reimbursable, unless it is the only parking option available. If valet parking is chosen for personal convenience, the reimbursement is limited to the cost of self-parking.

b. Parking for the use of a POV for local travel. However, parking at the official duty station is not reimbursable.

c. Monthly parking fees paid, but not used at a permanent duty station when use of a POV is required on official business at a temporary duty station.

11.2.3 Tips

Tips to waiters, bellhops, and porters are included in an employees per diem allowance. For taxi or rideshare services, any amount in excess of 20 percent will not be reimbursed. Expenses are allowed up to $1 for tips for courtesy service. Expenses for tips are allowed for Postal Service property baggage handling. Expenses for tips are not allowed for personal baggage handling.

11.2.4 Baggage

Baggage fees charged by the airline are reimbursable.

Any baggage, either personal or Postal Service property, necessary for the trip that exceeds the weight or size carried free by transportation companies is classified as “excess.” The Postal Service allows expenses for excess baggage charges only if the approving official approves them. Refer to 11.2.3 Tips.

11.2.5 Mailing Postal Service Property

Postal Service property needed in the performance of official travel may be mailed using G-10 penalty postage for administrative shipments via the Click-N-Ship G-10 application, or metered postage. G-10 labels or metered postage may not be used to mail personal belongings necessary for travel.

11.2.6 Telephone Calls

Telephones or cell phones issued by the Postal Service must be used for all business calls and text messages. Hotel surcharges for telephone use are reimbursable expenses if the employee does not have a Postal-issued telephone.

11.2.6.1 Personal Calls

Employee personal telephone calls may be reimbursed up to 5 minutes per 24-hour period if the employee does not have a Postal-issued telephone. If there is a change to plans while traveling, regardless of time spent in travel status, one additional telephone call to advise friends or family of the change may be reimbursed.

The employee must use the least expensive means of placing the phone call. The employee must use phone lines owned or leased by the Postal Service whenever possible. If the employee cannot use Postal Service-owned or -leased lines, expenses are allowed without a receipt.

Approving officials may challenge or request support for questionable charges.

11.2.7 Internet Services

Charges for internet services are reimbursable when purchased for use to conduct official business. Travelers must follow protocols included in Handbook AS-805-C, Information Security Requirements for All Personnel.

11.2.8 Meeting Rooms

Expenses are allowed for renting a meeting room at a hotel or elsewhere in order to transact official business.

For training sessions or duty-in-service conducted away from the participants' official duty station, this charge must be approved by the appropriate approving official before the meeting room is rented.

11.2.9 Trips Home During Extended Travel

The number of intermediate trips home that are allowed depends upon the reason of travel and the duration of trip.

The employee is allowed trips home during extended detail or training as follows:

Duration of Detail or Training	Number of Trips
3 weeks or less	0
4 to 6 weeks	1
7 to 9 weeks	2
10 to 12 weeks	3
Longer than 12 weeks	One trip every 3 weeks.

The employee is only allowed trips home or to the permanent duty station. The employee is not reimbursed for trips to any other locations, nor may the approving official approve such trips.

The Postal Service may allow the employee to return home every weekend if the total cost of the trip, including such items as transportation, mileage, parking, and per diem, is less than the cost of staying at the temporary duty station for that weekend. Trips must include a cost comparison with the expense report.

11.2.10 Miscellaneous Expenses

A traveler is reimbursed for expenses that are reasonable and necessary to conduct official business while traveling, and that do not fall into any other expense category.

Miscellaneous travel expenses must be approved by the approving official.

12 Promotional Incentives

During travel, promotional incentives may be received from airlines, hotels, or rental car agencies. Whether these incentives are allowed depends on the type of incentive, value, and the benefit to the Postal Service.

12.1 Gifts

USPS employees are subject to 5 CFR § 2635. In general, gifts $20 or less, that do not present a conflict of interest, may be kept. Gifts valued over $20 must not be accepted.

12.2 Coupons

Coupons for free or reduced transportation fares, or free or reduced rates, that are received from rental car agencies or hotels as a result of official travel may not be used for personal travel. Coupons that are not expected to expire may be kept and used for the next official travel trip. If a transferable coupon will expire before the employee's next official travel, the coupon must be submitted to the immediate supervisor or manager. If the local office is unable to use the coupon before it expires, then it must be forwarded to the local, district, or area finance office.

12.3 Benefits from Frequent Flyer or Frequent Traveler Programs

A traveler must never use a more expensive means of transportation or accommodations solely to accumulate mileage, points, or other such benefits, from frequent flyer or frequent traveler programs. The traveler must always make the most economic and convenient arrangements available, which allow for complete business efficiency.

The traveler may keep and use for personal travel any accumulated mileage or points that were received by participating in frequent flyer or frequent traveler programs, such as those sponsored by airlines, rental car agencies, or hotels.

Free hotel accommodations, rental cars, and airline seating upgrades may be kept by the traveler.

13 Extenuating Circumstances

13.1 Overbooked Flights

If an airline refuses a seat for a confirmed flight reservation, the employee must request penalty payment from the airline's agent per the Denied Boarding Compensation Plan, which governs most scheduled airlines and guarantees this right. Any check issued as compensation must be payable to the U.S. Postal Service.

13.1.1 Voluntarily Vacating a Seat

Only an exempt nonbargaining employee may voluntarily vacate a reserved seat on an overbooked flight, only if it does not interfere with official business and no additional expenses are incurred (lodging, per diem, etc.). The exempt nonbargaining employee may keep any compensation offered by the airline. Bargaining and Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) nonexempt employees may not voluntarily vacate a reserved seat on an overbooked flight.

13.2 Obtaining Emergency Cash

An employee may only use a travel card to obtain cash when traveling internationally.

13.3 Damage to Rental Car

If a rental car is damaged while being used for official business, the Postal Service may pay for one of the following:

a. The damage to the rental car up to the deductible amount as stated in the rental contract.

b. The cost to repair the car up to the amount of its value, minus its salvage value.

The traveler must report an accident as soon as possible to their supervisor or manager. The traveler must pay, or arrange to pay, for the repairs, and claim the amount of damages on an expense report that includes an itemized bill or estimate showing the cost to repair the car.

13.4 Changes to Travel Arrangements

The traveler must contact the TMC for an updated itinerary if changes are required after the ticket has been issued.

Cancellation of travel reservations and accommodations must be made as soon as it is known that the reservations will not be used. The traveler must notify the TMC for a refund.

13.5 Death of an Employee

If an employee of the Postal Service should die while traveling on official business, the appropriate vice president or Postal Service installation manager must be notified. Immediate reporting to the USPIS must also be made for investigative purposes.

13.5.1 Allowable Expenses

When a Postal Service employee dies while traveling on official business, the Postal Service pays certain expenses relating to preparing and returning the body to the residence or place of burial.

13.5.2 Costs of Preparing the Body

The Postal Service pays the expenses for a mortuary or funeral home near the place of death to prepare the body. Within the United States, actual expenses are covered up to $1,000 for preparing the body, and expenses must be reported by receipts. Outside of the United States, the Postal Service pays all expenses necessary to comply with foreign and U.S. port-of-entry laws.

Actual expenses include all ordinary costs of the following:

a. Removing the body from the place of death.

b. Preparing the death certificate.

c. Embalming or cremating the body.

d. Purchasing clothing necessary for burial.

e. Obtaining essentials for shipping the body, such as a shipping casket, air tray, shipping permits, and transportation of the body to the airport nearest the mortuary or funeral home that prepared the body.

13.5.3 Costs of Transporting the Body

The Postal Service pays for transporting the body from the airport nearest the mortuary or funeral home that is preparing the body to the mortuary or funeral home at the destination of the body.

If the body is shipped express, a Postal Service of Lading should be used when possible. The family or local Postal Service representative must make arrangements to bill the employing office for allowable expenses. The expenses must be supported by receipts.

13.5.4 Costs of Transporting Personal Effects

The Postal Service covers the cost of packing and transporting personal effects from the place of death to the permanent duty station or family residence. This cost covers only the following:

a. Clothing and personal property the deceased needed during the assignment.

b. Necessary expenses of family members or employees incurred while using the most economical transportation to retrieve an approved POV from the place of death.

14 Payment and Reimbursement

The traveler must do the following upon return from travel:

a. Complete and submit the required forms or electronic report to be reimbursed for travel expenses.

b. Repay advances.

Bargaining employees and nonbargaining employees enrolled in eTravel must use eTravel to be reimbursed for local travel expenses.

Bargaining employees not enrolled in eTravel must use the Web Alias process to submit travel expenses via eTravel.

14.1 Advances

Cash advances using the cash withdrawal feature of the Individually Billed Travel Card are prohibited, unless on international travel.

14.1.1 Nonbargaining Employees

Travel advances for nonbargaining employees are not allowed.

14.1.2 Bargaining Employees

A bargaining employee who does not have an Individually Billed Travel Card may have their management request an advance through the Enterprise Imaging Workflow System (eIWS) Online Forms Application when there is at least 2 weeks from the beginning of the travel period.

A bargaining employee who does not have an Individually Billed Travel Card may request an emergency advance of money to pay for domestic travel or travel for training when there is notification of travel requirements less than 2 weeks from the beginning of the travel period and there is not enough time to receive a check.

Advances may include costs for lodging plus per diem. If lodging is provided at the destination, the maximum allowable advance is $1,000. If lodging is not provided at the destination, the allowable advance is $1,000 plus the cost of lodging, including taxes.

The postmaster, manager, or supervisor must monitor and pursue collection of the bargaining employee's debt while adhering to the applicable collective bargaining agreement and the Debt Collection Act, in adherence with the ELM.

14.1.3 Repaying Advances

The traveler must repay outstanding advance amounts to the Postal Service as soon as travel is complete.

If the amount of the outstanding travel advance exceeds the amount of the travel expenses, the difference must be repaid immediately after travel completion for which the advance was received.

If the travel advance remains outstanding for a period of 120 days or more after travel is complete, the IRS considers that advance to be reportable compensation and, therefore, subject to federal income taxes, FICA, and Medicare taxes.

14.2 Obtaining Refunds

A refund must be obtained by the traveler if:

a. Services received are different from, or of lesser value than, those authorized.

b. A portion of the ticket is unused.

When travel is complete, the traveler must only claim the actual costs in the eTravel expense.

14.3 Documenting Expenses

Expenses exceeding $50 must have a receipt, unless paid with an Individually Billed Travel Card, and the expense is added into the eTravel system from the Card Transactions list.

Lodging expenses must be supported by receipts, regardless of cost. Lodging receipts must be from a recognized commercial place of lodging, such as a hotel or motel.

The traveler must submit the following documentation for leased lodging:

a. A copy of the summary page of the lease.

b. Rental receipts or canceled check, unless paid with the Individually Billed Travel Card.

c. Supporting documentation for other associated costs, such as renting furniture, linens, or dishes, unless paid with an Individually Billed Travel Card.

15 Glossary

Term	Definition
Centrally Billed Account (CBA)	Program through which common carriers, such as airlines and railroads, can bill tickets directly to the Postal Service.
Detail Assignment	The placement of a career employee in another established position that is vacant or from which the incumbent is absent from duty. Also known as "temporary assignment."
Domestic Travel	Travel over 50 miles from the permanent duty station to another city within the continental United States (CONUS), Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and U.S. possessions, and for which overnight lodging is needed, to conduct official business for the Postal Service.
Government Travel Card System	Program offered by the Postal Service in which an Individually Billed Travel Card is issued to designated employees for use while on official travel.
Gross Up	The process of adding money to a payment to account for the taxes that the recipient will owe.

Term	Definition
International Travel	Travel to a location outside the continental United States (OCONUS), including Canada and Mexico, to conduct official business for the Postal Service.
Local Travel	Travel to a location within a 50-mile radius of a permanent duty station in which overnight lodging is not needed.
Open Skies Agreements	Bilateral or multilateral agreements between the U.S Government and the governments of foreign countries that allow travelers to use foreign air carriers from these countries for government-funded international travel. For additional information and to review the current Open Skies Agreement country list, please see the General Services Administration (GSA) website: https://www.gsa.gov.
Per Diem	Payment allowance for each day of travel that includes meals, incidental expenses, such as fees, and any tips to waiters, bellhops, and porters, as well as laundry, drycleaning, and cleaning expenses.
Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)	Automobile, motorcycle, or airplane not owned by the Postal Service and used by the traveler for the primary purpose of personal transportation.
Transportation	All official travel by air, surface, or water, and any other expenses related to that travel.
Travel Time	Reasonable driving time for the distance traveled.
Unofficial Foreign Travel (UFT)	International travel that is not formally sanctioned, arranged, or funded by the Postal Service, and does not involve official Postal business.

16 Appendices

Appendix A: Mileage Reimbursement

The Postal Service updates mileage rates based on the rates published by GSA at www.gsa.gov.

Postal Service supervisors will be reimbursed at the rate of $6.00 per day or the GSA rate per mile, whichever is greater, when a privately owned vehicle is used.

Appendix B: Travel Per Diem Rates

It is important that travelers adhere to guidelines and use the appropriate resources to determine per diem rates. By doing so, travelers can ensure they are accurately reimbursed for per diem while on official travel.

The per diem rates for domestic travel within the CONUS are available on the GSA website at www.gsa.gov/perdiem.

Travel to Norman, OK, follows the current standard location daily rate established by GSA.

The per diem rates for domestic travel outside the CONUS (such as to Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and U.S. possessions) follow the rates set by the Department of Defense (DoD). Per diem rates for these locations can be calculated using the Local Meals and Local Incidentals rates provided by the DoD chart that is accessible through the DoD link on the GSA website noted above.

The per diem rates for foreign locations follow the rates set by the DoS chart that is accessible through the DoS link on the GSA website noted above.