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Travel Procedure

Reference #

TBD

Document Category

Procedure

Content

Contains procedure that applies to travel and its associated expenses.

Related Policy

F-15, Travel Policy

Owner

Executive Director, Compensation and Benefits

Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Sponsor

Chief Human Resources Officer

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Summary of Major Changes

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

Summary of Major Changes:

- Updated to reflect use of eTravel for managing travel expenses and clarified expense report requirements.
- Updated international travel to reflect current policy.
- Provided procedure on travel and lodging expenses for non-conventional lodging and delivery services and strengthened language for per diem and reimbursable expenses.

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 procedure to the Owner.

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1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the United States Postal Service (USPS or Postal Service) travel procedures consistent with the F-15, Travel Policy that all Postal Service employees must follow when in travel status.

2 Scope

These procedures are applicable to travelers and approving officials. Much of the information applies uniformly to both bargaining and nonbargaining employees. Any differences in applicability are noted as they occur.

Employees should direct inquiries to their manager or the Travel and Relocation Office.

Relocating employees are sometimes in travel status during their relocation. As such, relocating employees are to reference F-15-A, F-15-B, and F-15-C Relocation Policies and Procedures, as appropriate, as relocation expenses are taxable and paid through a contracted relocation management firm.

3 Travel Management

Upon notification that business travel is required, the traveler ensures they have received all necessary approvals from their approving official. The traveler must use the Travel Management Company (TMC) to make all travel arrangements, using government rates for transportation, lodging, and rental vehicles.

Additionally, for bargaining employees, the following steps must be completed:

1. The traveler completes PS Form 1011, *Travel Advance Request and Itinerary Schedule*, to convey the itinerary and travel arrangements to the immediate supervisor and the approving official. (For a bargaining employee who does not have an Individually Billed Travel Card, PS Form 1011 also conveys the request for an advance of money for travel.)
2. The traveler submits the completed PS Form 1011 to the immediate supervisor, who then forwards it to an approving official for approval.
3. The approving official reviews the form to ensure the traveler is making the most advantageous and least expensive travel arrangements.

3.1 Extended Details

To obtain approval for an extended detail away from a permanent duty station, the traveler follows the steps for regular travel, but submits the completed itinerary to the immediate supervisor at least 2 weeks before departure to allow time for the travel to be approved.

The traveler must include the following in the travel request:

- a. Destination.
- b. Purpose of the trip.
- c. Justification for the duration of the trip.
- d. Benefit to the Postal Service.

When an extended detail is activated, the officials who approve the traveler's expense vouchers determine the frequency of their intermediate travel home.

3.2 Requesting a Deviation

To request a deviation from the F-15, Travel Policy, the traveler must do the following:

1. Write a memo specifically explaining the reason for requesting the deviation.
2. Provide supporting documentation.
3. Submit the request to their approving official. The approving official reviews the request and determines if the deviation is approved.
4. If the approving official deems the request to be beyond their approval ability, the approving official then forwards the request to the manager of Travel and Relocation Office in Headquarters, who evaluates the request and responds in writing either to approve or to deny the request.

If the Request Is...	Then...
<i>Approved</i>	A reference to the memorandum approving the deviation must be remarked in the electronic expense report. The traveler attaches the memorandum to the expense report in the Receipts section. The expense report cannot be processed without the memorandum.
<i>Denied</i>	The traveler may appeal the decision to the approving official, but only if they have additional information that was not contained in the original request and that would have a bearing on the decision.

3.3 eTravel

Before traveling, the traveler or their manager requests access to eTravel using the Access Registration and Identity Services (ARIS) application. If the traveler only needs access to file an expense report, they request the *eTravel Traveler* role. Bargaining employees without access to a computer may use PS Form 1010, *eTravel Participant Enrollment Form*, and provide it to their eTravel coordinator for entry into eTravel if their office is unable to enter for them.

eTravel is a web-based system that provides the following conveniences for the Postal Service traveler:

- a. Allows the traveler to enter travel expenses into a secure, automated system.
- b. Provides electronic submission to the traveler's approving manager for approving expense reports.
- c. Reduces the requirement for hard copy receipts to only those expenses of \$50 or more that are not charged to the Individually Billed Travel Card and prepopulated from the Company Card screen into an eTravel report.
- d. Reimburses directly to the travel card company for expenses charged to the traveler's Individually Billed Travel Card.

- e. Offers electronic funds transfer (EFT) for nonbargaining employees and bargaining employees who prefer reimbursement to the traveler's bank account for out-of-pocket expenses.

3.4 Additional eTravel Roles

The traveler should contact the eTravel Coordinator for assistance with the eTravel System.

3.4.1 eTravel Web Alias

When the traveler is without access to a computer, an approving manager uses the eTravel Web Alias designation to allow the selected person to prepare and submit electronic travel reports for non-web-enabled employees. The traveler submits required forms to the designated Web Alias. The Web Alias enters and submits expense claims into the eTravel system for the traveler using the traveler's eTravel account.

3.4.2 eTravel Delegate

Officers and managers may use an eTravel Delegate to create expense reports. To be an eTravel delegate, an employee must be set up as a traveler in eTravel, and then designated by an Officer or manager through the *Workflow Section of My Info*. Once an expense report is created by the eTravel Delegate, the Officer or manager must do the following:

1. Log on to the eTravel system using their logon identification and password.
2. Review and then submit the report to the approving official.
3. Log off the system.

3.5 Tools for the Traveler

To make traveling easier, the Postal Service created two programs to help travelers reduce paperwork and the need to travel with large amounts of cash.

3.5.1 Centrally Billed Account

A bargaining employee who does not have an Individually Billed Travel Card may use the Centrally Billed Account (CBA) to have their tickets on common carriers, such as airlines or railroads, billed directly to the Postal Service.

3.5.2 Individually Billed Travel Cards

If the traveler is issued an Individually Billed Travel Card, the card is in the traveler's name, and charges are billed directly to the cardholder for payment.

3.5.2.1 Requesting a Card

To request an Individually Billed Travel Card, the traveler must follow these steps:

1. Contact their Travel Card Coordinator.
2. Complete required training.
3. Complete the online application.
4. Attach training certificate and Statement of Acknowledgement to their application.

5. Obtain approval of the application by their Travel Card Coordinator.

In approximately 2 weeks, the travel card company will send the travel card to the address specified as the billing address.

3.5.2.2 Lost or Stolen Cards

If the traveler's card is lost or stolen, the traveler must follow these steps:

1. Notify the travel card company using the instructions that accompanied the card when it was issued.
2. Notify their Travel Card Coordinator.

3.5.2.3 Cards When Employee Is Transferred

If the traveler has an Individually Billed Travel Card and is transferred, the traveler must contact the Travel Card Coordinator at their new permanent duty station and request a hierarchy change. For hierarchy changes beyond the Travel Card Coordinator's oversight, the request must be forwarded to Travel Card Help in Outlook.

3.5.2.4 Cancellation and Reinstatement of Cards

To reinstate a card that was suspended, the traveler must pay all outstanding charges in full. When the travel card company receives full payment, it may remove the suspension.

To reinstate a card that was canceled for nonpayment, the traveler must pay all outstanding charges in full and contact their Travel Card Coordinator to reapply for a new travel card.

4 Travel Preparation

In accordance with the Travel Policy, the traveler must use the contracted TMC when arranging official travel.

4.1 Arranging Transportation

4.1.1 Privately Owned Vehicles

When the traveler uses a privately owned vehicle (POV) for personal convenience, the traveler uses the *Comments* feature in eTravel to record the details of the Cost Comparison (refer to [4.1.6, Alternate Travel Plans](#)). The traveler shows the cost of travel by air or train, the cost of transportation to and from the air or train terminals, and any cost of parking that would have been incurred. The lesser of the two amounts is the amount reimbursable for travel.

The traveler submits their eTravel reimbursement request using the POV expense type. If the cost for driving is less than the determined reimbursable amount, the traveler includes the full round-trip distance in the POV expense entry. If the mileage reimbursement is greater than the determined reimbursable amount, the traveler divides the reimbursable amount by the current mileage rate and submits the amount of mileage through eTravel. The traveler uses odometer readings or standard mileage guides to determine the number of miles and explains any substantial deviation from either mileage or travel time on the expense report.

Supervisors must submit Form 4570, *Vehicle Time Record*, to the servicing Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF) to report one of the following:

- a. If the traveler is claiming mileage, odometer readings are not required; however, the traveler is responsible for the integrity of the claim. If the approving official questions the claim, the traveler must provide evidence that supports the distance traveled.
- b. If the traveler is claiming the daily rate, the actual time devoted to the duties listed above.

Postmasters follow the instructions for local travel and transportation of supervisory and nonsupervisory personnel. Refer to Handbook F-1, *Post Office Accounting Procedures*.

The traveler uses the airway charts issued by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce to determine the air mileage.

4.1.2 Air Transportation

The traveler makes reservations as far in advance as possible to allow the Postal Service to take advantage of any special fares that may be available for advance reservations and ticket purchases. However, the traveler should be aware that certain discounted fares are subject to substantial penalty upon cancellation.

The procedures the traveler must follow for making reservations vary according to whether they are a bargaining or nonbargaining employee, as shown in the following table:

If The Traveler Is a...	To Obtain Airline Tickets...
<i>Bargaining employee who does not have an Individually Billed Travel Card</i>	Complete PS Form 1013 and contact applicable CBA Cardholder, who will book the flight.
<i>Nonbargaining employee or bargaining employee who has an Individually Billed Travel Card</i>	Use the Individually Billed Travel Card to purchase tickets through the contracted TMC.

The contracted TMC determines the lowest fare and informs the traveler of available flights.

4.1.3 Train or Bus

For trips of a short distance, the traveler should consider traveling by train or bus. The traveler should be sure to compare all costs involved, including the following:

- a. Train, bus, and air fares.
- b. Any taxi or rideshare fares to train stations, bus stations, or airports at both departure and destination cities.
- c. The time required to travel to and from the train or bus station, as well as the time en route.

When buying a train or bus ticket, the traveler uses the TMC for arrangements.

4.1.4 Postal Service Owned or Leased Vehicle

Local offices have procedures in place for reserving a Postal Service vehicle for official travel. The traveler should contact the VMF to learn the procedures.

4.1.5 Commercial Rental Vehicles

The traveler may use a commercially rented vehicle only in these circumstances:

- a. For short-term rentals, such as daily or weekly.
- b. When no vehicle owned or leased by the Postal Service is available.

When renting a vehicle, the traveler must use the TMC to make arrangements.

The traveler must justify the rented vehicle on their expense report and explain the special circumstances that made the rental vehicle necessary.

The traveler should exclude upgrades, special equipment, additional or young driver fees (unless qualified), and refueling charges from the reimbursement request.

4.1.6 Alternate Travel Plans

If the traveler chooses a method of transportation that seems less advantageous to the Postal Service, the traveler must do the following:

1. Obtain prior approval from approving official.
2. Justify the arrangements on expense report.
3. Include a cost comparison to show how the arrangements benefit the Postal Service.

If the traveler chooses to interrupt travel or take a less direct route for personal convenience, the traveler must do the following:

1. Obtain prior approval from approving official.
2. Provide a cost comparison on expense report. Payments will be the lesser amount from the cost comparison. Per diem may not exceed the per diem allowed for uninterrupted travel by a direct route.

If the traveler uses a more expensive service, the traveler must do the following:

1. Obtain prior approval from approving official.
2. Include a statement on the expense report explaining these factors:
 - a. Why the more expensive service was used.
 - b. How the more expensive service is beneficial to the Postal Service.

4.1.6.1 Traveling on Short Notice

If the ticket is canceled or cannot be picked up, the traveler immediately notifies the travel agency or the person who made the reservation.

The standard form for air travel is electronic tickets. Travelers or travel arrangers receive itinerary invoices by e-mail or fax.

4.1.6.2 Changes to the Itinerary

If the itinerary changes after receipt of the ticket, the traveler immediately notifies the TMC or the person who made the reservation. The traveler must use any unused ticket credits within the specified time frame.

If the changes increase the cost and if the traveler is away from the office, the traveler pays the additional charge and submits the expense on the expense report upon return.

4.1.6.3 Canceling a Reservation

To cancel a reservation that has not yet ticketed, the traveler notifies the TMC through the online booking tool. For cancellation of trips that have already ticketed, the employee calls the TMC at 1-800-577-5993. If the traveler must respond to an emergency that requires air travel after business-hours, the traveler calls the TMC's toll-free number.

4.1.7 Calculating Costs

To calculate transportation costs, the traveler bases the costs on the transportation authorized by the approval official in accordance with the F-15, Travel Policy. The traveler determines the cost of common carrier transportation by considering the following:

- a. If air travel is approved, the traveler uses the cost of the least expensive, approved, service available at the government rate.
- b. If train or bus travel is approved, the traveler uses the cost of coach transportation.

When determining the estimated costs of common carrier transportation, such as taxis, rideshares, or shuttles, the traveler uses the cost of the transportation most advantageous to USPS that is available to and from the airports, train stations, or bus stations.

4.2 Arranging Lodging

The traveler uses the TMC to book hotels for official travel.

When hotels are not available, alternative lodging options may be considered. To determine the feasibility of leased lodging, the traveler performs a cost comparison between the cost of leased lodging and the cost of daily commercial rates at a hotel or motel for the same length of time. In calculating the leased rates, the traveler ensures inclusion of any items included in the rent, such as utilities, maid service, and furniture. To provide an accurate comparison, the traveler calculates the daily commercial rate for the number of days the traveler expects to occupy the unit, using the following formula to calculate the number of days of expected occupancy:

	Number of days in the lease period.
minus (-)	Number of workdays expected to be at the permanent duty station.
minus (-)	Number of non-workdays when expected not to be at the permanent duty station.
minus (-)	Number of days of expected annual leave during this period.
equals (=)	Number of days of expected occupancy.

To obtain exemptions from sales taxes, the traveler should access the General Services Administration (GSA) website (<https://smartpay.gsa.gov/smarttax/tax-information-by-state/>) to

download the appropriate form to be presented at the lodging location. The employee should present appropriate identification when making the request.

If the traveler has a temporary assignment lasting more than 29 consecutive days and wants to use the USPS Corporate Housing Program, they must contact the Travel and Relocation Office via email at HQLodging@usps.gov at least 7 days prior to their official travel. The traveler provides the following with their lodging request:

- a. Traveler's name
- b. Length of stay
- c. Required dates of travel
- d. Check-in date
- e. Check-out date

The Travel and Relocation Office will facilitate the booking by identifying available locations and providing vendor contact information to the traveler. The traveler communicates directly with the vendor to secure their lodging reservation and inform Headquarters (HQ) Lodging of their selection.

The traveler must use their Individually Billed Travel Card to pay for their Corporate Housing accommodations, and must file expense vouchers timely through eTravel, using the expense type Rent. The traveler is required to provide a copy of the lease as documentation in the eTravel system.

A traveler may use home-sharing (non-conventional lodging) properties if approved in accordance with the Travel Policy. If these properties only accept web-based payments, the traveler coordinates payment with the property owner and is responsible for obtaining a credible paid receipt to submit as documentation in their expense report.

4.3 Obtaining Advances

Advances are paid by the St. Louis Accounting Service Center (ASC) through the eIWS Online Forms Application. The traveler must allow sufficient time for the request to be approved and submitted to the payment office and a check issued.

A bargaining employee who does not have an Individually Billed Travel Card must fill out PS Form 1011, *Travel Advance Request and Itinerary Schedule*.

The traveler submits the completed form to their immediate supervisor as soon as possible before departure. The supervisor then submits the form electronically via the eIWS Online Forms Application to the St. Louis ASC. The St. Louis ASC will issue the advance check at least 1 week but not more than 2 weeks before departure.

5 During Travel

5.1 Allowable Expenses

5.1.1 Parking

The traveler may claim parking fees incurred while conducting official business, with the following exceptions:

- a. The traveler may not request reimbursement for valet parking unless it is the only parking option available. Self-parking should be used whenever possible.
- b. The traveler may not request reimbursement for parking at the official duty station.
- c. The traveler may be able to obtain reimbursement for a portion of monthly parking fees at a permanent duty station. If the traveler is required to use a POV on official business at a temporary duty station and the monthly parking at the permanent duty station has already been paid, the portion of the monthly parking fees at the permanent duty station that was not used may be reimbursed. The traveler uses the following formula below to determine the prorated amount.

	Monthly parking fee
divided by (/)	Number of working days in that month
equals (=)	Fee per day
multiplied by (x)	Number of days parking for official business was used
equals (=)	Prorated amount to claim

5.1.2 Tips

The traveler may claim tips to drivers of limousines, airport shuttles, taxis, or rideshare services for an amount not to exceed 20 percent of the fare. If the amount of the tip is not an exact multiple of 5 cents, the traveler should increase it to the next multiple of 5 cents.

5.1.3 Baggage

In accordance with the Travel Policy, the traveler may claim baggage fees charged by the airline for any necessary baggage that is not carried free by transportation companies.

5.2 Determining Daily Expenses

The traveler may claim daily expenses, which includes money spent on meals, laundry, and other miscellaneous expenses. The traveler determines whether to claim per diem or actual expenses in accordance with the F-15, Travel Policy.

5.2.1 Actual Expenses

To claim meals at which attendance is required as part of an official business session, the traveler indicates on the expense report that attendance was required. To claim miscellaneous expenses, the traveler maintains receipts for any expenditures of more than \$50 that were not paid with an Individually Billed Travel Card. The traveler explains the expense when completing their expense report.

For mileage accrued during regular travel, reimbursement is based on the price comparison described in [4.1.1 Privately Owned Vehicles](#). For mileage accrued during local travel, the traveler uses the following formula to calculate the amount for reimbursement:

	Mileage from home to <i>temporary</i> duty station
minus (-)	Mileage from home to <i>permanent</i> duty station
equals (=)	Allowable mileage

multiplied by (x)	Standard mileage rate per the Travel Policy
equals (=)	Amount the traveler may claim for reimbursement

5.2.2 Per Diem

Some travel destinations may be more expensive than others; per diem rates are set to reflect this difference. If the traveler visits several areas with different rates during the same trip, the traveler uses the applicable rate for each area.

If meals are provided at a nominal fee, the traveler reduces the per diem by the appropriate amount based on the meal provided.

Examples:

- Family or friends at a former permanent duty station provide a meal.
- The sponsors of a meeting, conference, or training session provide a meal.
- The Postal Service Technical Training Center in Norman, OK, or the Bolger Center in Potomac, MD, provides the meal.
- An agency of the federal government provides a meal.

The amount reduced varies according to the meal provided and whether the traveler is in an average-cost or high-cost area of the United States. If traveling to a foreign country, the traveler must reduce the per diem by a percentage instead of a specific amount. The eTravel system calculates per diem automatically. The traveler enters the number of breakfasts, lunches, and/or dinners provided in the appropriate fields of the per diem expense type entry.

5.3 Documenting Expenses

All transactions made when the traveler uses the Individually Billed Travel Card are downloaded from the travel card vendor into the eTravel system on a daily basis. These expenses are displayed on the Company Card page of the system. The traveler can move them into the expense report by clicking on the Add button.

The traveler saves the documentation specified in this section to substantiate their expenses on the expense report. If the traveler uses an Individually Billed Travel Card for payment, then they add the expense in the travel report from the Company Card page of the eTravel system, and receipts are not required for these expenses.

The traveler must ensure the correct expense type is used for each expense in the report. For example, seat upgrades may populate as Airfare. The traveler must change the expense type in eTravel to Seat Upgrade.

The documentation required for reimbursement requests of actual expenses is detailed in the sections that follow.

5.3.1 Documenting Transportation

The traveler uses the following table to determine documentation required for various transportation types:

Type of Transportation	Documentation Needed
<i>Air</i>	Air itinerary — unless purchased with an Individually Billed Travel Card and prepopulated into the expense report from the Company Card page of the eTravel system.
<i>Train</i>	Train itinerary — unless purchased with an Individually Billed Travel Card and prepopulated into the expense report from the Company Card page of the eTravel system.
<i>Bus</i>	Bus itinerary — unless purchased with an Individually Billed Travel Card and prepopulated into the expense report from the Company Card page of the eTravel system.
<i>POV</i>	Car or Motorcycle — The traveler must keep track of the driving time and mileage. Use odometer readings or standard mileage guides. Personal Airplane — The traveler must keep track of the mileage from airport to airport using the airway charts issued by the NOAA, Department of Commerce, and any additional mileage traveled due to circumstances such as adverse weather or mechanical difficulty.
<i>Rented vehicle — car, boat, aircraft</i>	Receipts or credit card slips for the vehicle and for any incidental expenses, such as gasoline, oil, tolls, ferrying, aircraft landing and tie down fees, or renting a garage, boathouse, or hangar. Receipts must describe the service or equipment, and include the unit price, daily or hourly rate, and period of service. Not required if the traveler uses an Individually Billed Travel Card and prepopulates into the expense report from the Company Card page of the eTravel system.
<i>Taxi, limousines, airport shuttles, or rideshare services</i>	Receipt for any total fare that exceeds \$50. Not required if the traveler uses their Individually Billed Travel Card and prepopulates into their expense report from the Company Card page of the eTravel system.

5.3.2 Documenting Lodging

The traveler uses the current rates and percentages in accordance with the Travel Policy. The traveler should be sure to save receipts. To be reimbursed, the traveler uploads required receipts to the expense report. Receipts must be from a recognized commercial place of lodging such as a hotel or motel. For leased lodging, a copy of the lease serves as the receipt.

5.3.3 Documenting Parking

The traveler provides receipts for parking exceeding \$50, unless paid with an Individually Billed Travel Card.

5.3.4 Documenting Excess Baggage

If the excess baggage cost exceeds \$50, the traveler provides a receipt showing the weight of the baggage and the points between which the baggage was moved, unless paid with an Individually Billed Travel Card and prepopulated into the expense report from the Company Card page of the eTravel system.

5.3.5 Documenting Telephone Calls

No receipts are required, but the traveler provides documentation to support claims if an approving official considers the telephone calls to be unreasonable or excessive.

5.3.6 Documenting Meeting Rooms

If the cost exceeds \$50, the traveler provides a receipt for any meeting rooms used during travel, unless paid with an Individually Billed Travel Card and prepopulated into the expense report from the Company Card page of the eTravel system.

5.3.7 Documenting Tips

Receipts are **not** required for tips to the following people:

- a. Baggage handlers handling Postal Service property. The traveler states on the expense report that the baggage handled was Postal Service property.
- b. Limousine, airport shuttle, or taxi/rideshare drivers, unless the taxi fare plus tip exceeds \$50. Receipts are not required if paid with an Individually Billed Travel Card and the charge was added into the expense report from the Company Card page of the eTravel system.

5.3.8 Documenting Miscellaneous Expenses

When cash is paid, the traveler submits paid invoices or receipts with the expense report. They provide the type of service or equipment, cost, and dates if the cost exceeds \$50.

5.4 Entering Lodging Costs into eTravel

5.4.1 Hotels and Motels

The traveler must enter lodging charges using the hotel expert feature of the eTravel system. The system allows for itemization of the room charge and tax and the elimination of non-reimbursable charges by designating them as "personal." The traveler itemizes hotel charges to

identify taxes paid and eliminates all non-reimbursable charges that may be included in the lodging bill.

5.4.2 Leased Lodging

The traveler enters leased lodging charges in the eTravel expense report using the "Rent" expense type. For each rent expense that is included in an eTravel report, the traveler includes a copy of the summary page of the lease agreement with the receipt.

If the traveler is on a detail assignment and residing in leased lodging and travels to another destination, the traveler claims the lease expense using the "Rent" expense type and the lodging expense during the travel using the "Hotel" expense type.

5.5 Determining the Beginning and End of Official Travel Status

If travel status is interrupted for any reason, the traveler clearly documents these periods on the expense report by splitting the per diem by leg. To enter this per diem into eTravel, the traveler splits the per diem by leg into 2 entries. The first entry uses the start date of travel and includes the checkbox for "includes first day of travel." The second per diem entry starts on the day that per diem resumes and include the checkbox for "includes last day of travel." The trip length on both entries should be 24 hours or longer, and the calendar count should exclude the days for which per diem is not being paid.

5.6 Determining the Rates to Use

When on domestic travel, the traveler uses the following table to determine per diem rates:

If ...	Then...
<i>Leaving the home duty station</i>	The traveler uses the per diem rate of the first temporary duty station destination.
<i>Traveling between duty station destinations</i>	The traveler uses the rate of the next temporary duty station destination and changes to this rate at the beginning of the day of the departure.
<i>Returning to the home duty station</i>	The traveler uses the per diem rate of the last temporary duty station destination prior to returning home.

5.7 Extenuating Circumstances

5.7.1 Obtaining Emergency Cash

A bargaining employee who does not have an Individually Billed Travel Card must complete PS Form 1011, *Travel Advance Request and Itinerary Schedule*, and submit it to the appropriate approving official. A bargaining or nonbargaining employee who has an Individually Billed Travel

Card is prohibited from using that card to obtain a cash advance using an Automated Teller Machine (ATM).

5.7.2 Changes to Travel Arrangements

5.7.2.1 Changing Airline Reservations

If the changes increase the cost, the traveler pays the additional charge and, when returning, submits the expense on the expense report or travel voucher.

5.7.2.2 Canceling a Reservation

If the unused tickets or coupons are unavailable to show that travel arrangements were changed, then the traveler obtains an updated itinerary from the TMC. When travel is complete, the traveler attaches the new itinerary to the expense report or PS Form 1012, *Travel Voucher*.

To record a credit or refund in the eTravel system, the traveler claims only the portion of the ticket used by itemizing the refunded part as "personal expense (do not reimburse me)," and adds a remark indicating the total airline ticket and refunded personal amount.

5.7.2.3 After-Hours Services

If there is an emergency that requires air travel after business hours, the traveler calls the toll-free number provided by the TMC. If necessary, the traveler requests that a ticket is issued immediately.

5.7.2.4 Changes to Lodging Reservations

If there is a guaranteed reservation at a hotel and the itinerary changes, the traveler calls the hotel and cancels the reservation before the time specified by the hotel to avoid being charged for the room. The traveler retains the hotel-issued cancellation number.

If the traveler is authorized to enter into a lease but does not remain at the temporary duty station for the anticipated length of time, the Postal Service reimburses for the actual costs, including any cancellation charges. The traveler must make every effort to cancel the lease as soon as possible.

If the traveler has confirmed reservations and, upon arrival, they find that a room is not available, the traveler uses the TMC to make alternate arrangements and requests that the hotel or motel do one of the following:

- a. Issue the Postal Service a penalty payment in the form of a check made payable to the disbursing Officer, U.S. Postal Service. The traveler sends the check to the Eagan ASC with a statement describing the circumstances.
- b. Arrange for complimentary or partial complimentary lodging elsewhere. When completing their expense report, the traveler claims reimbursement only for their actual lodging charges.

5.7.2.5 Documenting the Change on the Travel Voucher or Expense Report

If travel is shortened before reaching the destination shown on the itinerary, the traveler must include a statement on the expense report that explains the circumstances.

The traveler explains any cancellation charges on the travel voucher or expense report and attaches the receipts to the PS Form 1012 or to the eTravel expense report in accordance with the Travel Policy.

5.7.3 Illness and Emergencies

5.7.3.1 Sick Leave

If more than 3 consecutive work days of sick leave are taken while on official travel, the traveler must provide a physician's certificate and attach the certificate to the completed expense report.

5.7.3.2 Family Emergencies

If travel must be changed because of a family emergency, the traveler contacts the approving official and requests a deviation from normal travel.

5.7.4 Death of an Employee

Immediately after being notified of the death of the employee, the vice president or Postal Service installation manager must notify the following people:

- a. The employee's next of kin or legal representative,
- b. The appropriate vice president and the executive assistant to the Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer, and
- c. The United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) 24-hour hotline number, (877) 876-2455, if the employee passed away while on official duty or authorized travel.

Whenever practical, a representative of the Postal Service should be available to direct or assist in arranging for the body to be prepared and transported.

If a Postal Service representative is present at the place of death, they should use the CBA to pay for the transport of the body by common carrier. The family or local Postal Service representative must make arrangements to bill the employing office for allowable expenses in accordance with the Travel Policy, including providing receipts for the expenses.

The costs of transporting personal effects are reimbursed in accordance with the Travel Policy.

The employing office prepares PS Form 1012 and submits it for payment to the St. Louis Satellite Office (SLSO). If the family or a legal representative has paid the cost of preparing and transporting the body and personal effects, they are reimbursed when they submit paid receipts. The paying office attaches the receipts to PS Form 1012.

6 Official International Travel

6.1 Planning Official International Travel

USPS and USPIS personnel on official international travel (OIT) perform the following steps:

1. Ensure completion of the mandatory international travel trainings and security briefing(s) as designated by the U.S. Department of State (DoS) and the Postal Service.
2. Upload the applicable certificate(s) to the International Travel Authorization Program (ITAP) profile prior to requesting OIT.
3. Request "OIT" in the ITAP system at itap.uspis.gov.
4. Submit the OIT request at least 21 business days prior to planned departure.
5. Obtain an official passport (new/renewal), or a visa for OIT, by contacting the appropriate International Travel Office. For USPIS, the traveler contacts USPIS Global

Security. All other USPS travelers contact International Postal Affairs (IPA). An official passport (maroon cover) is different from a personal U.S. Passport (navy blue cover) and has different guidance for its use. Since the processing time to obtain an official passport may be between 8 and 12 weeks, or occasionally longer, the traveler must request it as soon as practical.

6. As directed in the ITAP process, request international virtual private network (VPN) and international phone service.
7. When returning from international travel, USPS personnel must complete the following steps:
 - a. Immediately return the official passport to IPA.
 - b. Immediately return burner devices, if applicable, to the Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) Digital Forensic & Incident Response Team (DIFIR) group, using the guidance provided upon receipt of devices. Ensure iCloud accounts are logged out.
 - c. Complete the USPIS National Security Post-Travel Questionnaire in ITAP to report any travel information as required by SEAD-3 within 5 business days of completing travel.

6.2 Documenting Official International Travel

For official foreign country travel for the Postal Service, the traveler must do all the following:

1. Claim expenses by item in eTravel.
 - a. When charges are populated/assigned to an expense report from the Card Transactions page in eTravel, they are displayed in United States Dollars (USD). A Foreign Currency Exchange Rate Helper appears on the right side of the screen to show the foreign currency conversion when a traveler clicks the "Amount in USD" field.
 - b. If charges are not populated from the Card Transactions, a traveler must enter the type of currency, foreign currency amount, and enter the exchange rate. The Foreign Currency Exchange Rate Helper also appears to assist with manually created expenses.
 - i. In such cases, the traveler must attach a copy of the currency exchange conversion to the expense report.
 - ii. Currency exchange rates can be found at:
<https://fiscaldata.treasury.gov/currency-exchange-rates-converter/>
2. Ensures all required receipts are attached, including receipts for currency exchange, showing the commission(s) charged and currency exchange conversion rates (matching the dates of your transactions).
3. Uploads a copy of the ITAP Official International Travel Authorization Letter to the completed expense report.

When traveling to another country, the traveler will be reimbursed for daily expenses according to the per diem rate determined by DoS for the specific location(s). These rates are updated monthly by the DoS.

To calculate per diem, the eTravel system will consider the temporary duty location and the number and type of meals (provided at no cost to the traveler) to be deducted. To claim standard per diem, a traveler does not need to provide receipts or an itemized list of expenses.

7 Payment and Reimbursement

Following are the steps required for travel expense payment and reimbursement.

7.1 Creating the Expense Report

When the traveler returns from travel, they must complete and submit the required forms or electronic report to be reimbursed for their travel expenses. An eTravel system user must submit regular and local travel expense reports electronically. A traveler who is not on the eTravel system completes a PS Form 1012-E, *eTravel Expense Report — Overnight Travel* or PS Form 1164-E, *eTravel Expense Report — Local Travel* and provides it, along with any required receipts, to the eTravel Web Alias. The designated Web Alias enters the expense claims into the eTravel system and submits the report to the traveler's approving official.

To claim expenses for street supervision at the daily rate, eligible supervisors complete PS Form 1164-A, *Claim for Reimbursement for Postal Supervisors (for Employee Business Expenses Only)*.

The traveler uses the following table to determine when to submit an expense report:

Travel Status	Report Submission Requirements
<i>Regular travel in the United States, its territories, or possessions</i>	Must submit at least one expense report at the end of the trip.
<i>International travel</i>	Must submit an expense report when the trip is complete.
<i>No additional travel is anticipated within the following 3-week period</i>	Must submit an expense report immediately and claim travel expenses.
<i>No additional trips are anticipated within the accounting month</i>	Must submit an expense report at the end of the trip.
<i>The trip spans 2 accounting months</i>	May submit expense reports more frequently if the traveler needs the funds to meet their expenses.
<i>Extended detail or training assignment lasting 2 weeks or more</i>	May submit expense reports more frequently if the traveler needs the funds to meet their expenses.
<i>Local travel</i>	May accumulate claims until the cumulative total reaches \$15, but only include expenses for one calendar month in each report.

The traveler, eTravel Web Alias, or delegate completes the following steps to create an eTravel report.

Step 1 <i>Log on to the eTravel system</i>	1. Access a web browser on a postal computer. 2. Type "eTravel" into the browser's address field and press the Enter key. 3. Type logon ID and password in the appropriate fields on the logon page. 4. Click the logon button or press Enter. Note: The logon ID is not case sensitive, but the password is.
Step 2 <i>Create a new report</i>	1. On the home page, select <i>Create a New Expense Report</i>. The report header page will be displayed. 2. If set up as a delegate for the manager, select <i>Act as a Delegate</i> and select manager's name. 3. If the Web Alias has added employee under <i>Web Alias Tools</i>, select <i>Act as a Delegate</i> and choose the correct employee name.
Step 3 <i>Complete the header information</i>	1. Complete all fields preceded by a red asterisk. 2. Click the OK button to save the information.
Step 4 <i>Prepopulate the report with charges from the Company Card page</i>	1. Select <i>Unassigned Company Card Transactions</i> to add them to the expense report. 2. Edit the company card entries that are now in the travel report.
Step 5 <i>Manually add charges that were not paid with an Individually Billed Travel Card</i>	1. Add new entries that were not charged on the Individually Billed Travel Card (per diem, mileage, etc.) by clicking on <i>Add Other Expenses</i>.
Step 6 <i>Upload receipts to the expense report</i>	1. Scan original receipts and save as PDF. 2. Click on <i>Receipts</i> to add them to the expense voucher.
Step 7 <i>Review and submit the expense report</i>	Note: Only the traveler or the eTravel Web Alias delegates should perform this step. Delegates do not submit reports. 1. Carefully review the expense report and make any necessary changes. 2. Explain any unusual items and eliminate any exception flags. 3. Click the <i>Submit</i> button and then <i>OK</i> on the legal certification that displays if it does not apply to the

	expense report. The <i>Submit Report</i> screen displays showing the name of the traveler's approving manager. Note: For the delegate, the <i>Notify</i> button will display. Click the button and the expense report will be forwarded to manager. 4. If the approving manager is correct as displayed, click <i>OK</i>. 5. The <i>Recall</i> button can be used to return an expense report back to the employee for correction and resubmission.
Step 8 <i>Print the report</i>	1. Print the expense report, if necessary, from the <i>Expense Report List</i> page by clicking the <i>Print</i> button. 2. Select either <i>Receipt Report</i>, which will display required receipts, or <i>Detailed Report</i>. 3. Log off the eTravel system.

7.2 Reviewing and Approving Expense Reports

The eTravel system notifies approvers by e-mail when they have an expense report to approve. To approve an expense report, the approver logs on to the eTravel system and accesses the expense report by clicking on the report name under *My Work* or after selecting "Approve Expense Reports" under *Expense Reports* on the eTravel Desktop page.

Upon receipt of an eTravel expense report, an approving official must do the following:

1. Ensure that exception flags have been cleared, any remarks are accurate, and the trip was authorized. For international travel, ensure that the ITAP Official Travel Authorization is included with the expense report.
2. Ensure that all charges claimed are reasonable, considering the area in which they were incurred.
3. Return the report to the traveler for correction or explanation of expenses claimed, if necessary. The approver is not able to alter the report.
4. Electronically approve the expense report to indicate that the expenses are approved. The electronic approval sends the expense report to Back Office Processing for possible audit and payment processing.

Electronic approval and submission of eTravel expense report for payment signifies the approving official has completed the following:

- a. Verified that the transportation and expenses comply with Postal policy.
- b. Certified that the transportation and expenses are the most advantageous to the Postal Service.
- c. Verified that all "flags" within a report are explained, and any "remarks" entered by the traveler are accurate.

7.3 Reimbursement

Once a report is approved, the Back Office reviews the report for accuracy and completeness before reimbursing the traveler for all approved expenses minus any advances received. If the approving official or the Back Office does not approve a report, they return the report to the traveler for correction and resubmission. Reimbursement for reports created and submitted using the eTravel system will be made via a direct payment to the Individually Billed Travel Card vendor (for those reimbursable expenses claimed that were incurred using the Individually Billed Travel Card), or by EFT for those expenses not made using the Individually Billed Travel Card. The Back Office usually completes reimbursement by the fourth business day after the report is approved, all required receipts have been received, and the report is processed for payment.

To obtain an EFT reimbursement, the traveler adds or changes their information in PostalEASE. The traveler calls PostalEASE at 877-4PS-EASE (877-477-3273) or visits the PostalEASE website using <http://blue.usps.gov> or <https://liteblue.usps.gov>. To access PostalEASE, the traveler goes to the MyHR section and clicks PostalEASE. The traveler uses their PostalEASE personal identification number (PIN) to access their information.

For Travel at the Request of Another Government Agency, the traveler follows the instructions provided by the requesting agency. The agency requesting travel does one of the following:

- a. Provides instructions for billing the agency for the travel expenses.
- b. Provides instructions for reimbursing the traveler directly.

When approved by the Postmaster General or designee, spouses or guests may be allowed to attend Postal Service functions with the travel expenses being paid or reimbursed by the Postal Service. Expenses for spousal or guest travel that are paid directly or reimbursed are considered taxable compensation to the Postal Service employee; therefore, the employee's reimbursement for spousal or guest travel will be reduced by federal income tax, FICA, and Medicare taxes. The traveler provides a separate voucher (PS Form 1012) in the Postal Service employee's name and Social Security number. This voucher must be annotated "SPOUSAL TRAVEL," or "GUEST TRAVEL." The traveler must attach a copy of the preapproval documentation to the expense report. In accordance with the F-15, Travel Policy, the approving official approves the expense report and submits it to the Eagan Accounting Service Center for processing. The traveler does not use the eTravel system for claiming reimbursement for spousal travel or guest travel.

Travelers on extended details may request that their approving official allow spousal travel in lieu of the employee's immediate trip home. If approved, the traveler may use the CBA to purchase airfare or request reimbursement if purchased on a personal card. Individually Billed Travel Cards should not be used for spousal travel.

7.4 Repaying Advances

The repayment of travel advances to the traveler depends on how the advance was issued and whether the traveler uses the eTravel system. If the traveler received an advance, they must provide documentation to account for the amount of the advance by completing their expense report. If the amount of the outstanding travel advance exceeds the amount of travel expenses, the traveler must repay the difference.

If the traveler does not have access to eTravel, they must complete PS Form 1012 and provide it to their Web Alias for entry into eTravel. If the advance was issued locally, the traveler repays the advance with a personal check or money order submitted to the local retail window after

completing PS Form 1012. If the advance was issued through eIWS, a receivable invoice is automatically generated, and the employee pays the disbursing Officer.

7.5 Outstanding Travel Advances

On a weekly basis, the Accounting Help Desk automatically generates an email with a file attached that is sent to any manager who has an active employee travel advance with a balance. For locally issued emergency travel advances, the approving official receives a list of outstanding advances on the unit's RSS Unresolved Employee Items Report. The manager reviews the information to determine whether each listed employee is a continuous traveler or will be traveling within the next 3 weeks. If no travel is anticipated, the employee must immediately refund the outstanding balance. If any of the listed employees will definitely travel within 3 weeks, the approving official determines how much of the outstanding advance is needed and request an immediate refund of any excess. If a traveler has any outstanding balance due, the manager notifies the traveler in writing and instructs them to repay their balance.

When a traveler separates from the Postal Service, the ASC deducts any unpaid outstanding advances from their final salary checks in a manner consistent with the Debt Collection Act unless they directly repay the disbursing Officer.

8 References

F-15, *Travel Policy*

PS Form 1164-A, *Claim for Reimbursement for Postal Supervisors (for Employee Business Expenses Only)*

PS Form 1010, *eTravel Participant Enrollment Form*

PS Form 1011, *Travel Advance Request and Itinerary Schedule*

PS Form 1012, *Travel Voucher*

PS Form 1012-A, *Travel Voucher — Continuation Sheet*

PS Form 1013, *Transportation Ticketing Authorization*

PS Form 1018, *eTravel Repayment for Overpayments or Cash Advances*

PS Form 1164-E, *eTravel Expense Report — Local Travel*

USPIS International Travel Office (Global Security): ISOIT@uspis.gov.

ITAP: itap.uspis.gov/itap-welcome

International Postal Affairs: blue.usps.gov/ipa/welcome.htm

Appendix: Processing a Repayment

Eagan ASC performs the following tasks:

1. Deposits the check using the account and finance number indicated on the repayment form. If no account and finance number are indicated, deposits the check to travel account 51401.183 and service-wide finance number 10-4390.
2. Batches and forwards the forms to the eTravel administrator at the St. Louis ASC at the following address:

GENERAL ACCOUNTING SECTION ACCOUNTING
SERVICE CENTER
PO BOX 80471
ST LOUIS MO 63180-9471

The eTravel Administrator at the St. Louis ASC performs the following tasks:

1. Updates eTravel to reflect collection of the overpayment by accessing the expense report in which the overpayment occurred and entering comments indicating collection of the overpayment. At a minimum, the comments should include the following:
 - a. Explanation of overpayment.
 - b. Amount of overpayment.
 - c. Date of repayment.
 - d. Name of person updating the expense report and date updated.
2. Annotates the form to indicate that eTravel was updated. The St. Louis ASC maintains PS Form 1018 for 3 years.
3. Provides guidance on the repayment process.

The traveler may call the Accounting Help Desk at 866-9-SHARED or 866-974-2733 for all payment issues.