

PART 10: INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

1 Guidelines

A. General Information

This part sets forth general guidelines and administrative requirements for international travel. The FAS' ITS will assist in processing all USDA foreign travelers to ensure that all required preparations, immunizations, introductions, and itineraries are completed. ITS is also responsible for:

- obtaining official visas
- obtaining transit visas
- securing Official Passports
- securing Diplomatic Passports
- releasing airline tickets for Washington-based FFAS employees

B. Forms Required

All international travel must be authorized on Form AD-202, or in some cases, an ICD-94. ICD-94 is the travel authorization for domestic and international travel for non-government participant travel. The ICD-94 is used for authorizing single or group travel.

Refer to Part 1 for guidance on preparation of the AD-202. Contact ITS at (202) 720-7815 for information regarding ICD-94.

C. Advance Notification of International Travel – FAS and FSA

All employees traveling overseas are reminded to forward advance notification to ITS. Early notification will facilitate ITS in obtaining the required visas. Employees should follow the following processes:

- *If a passport is available* - Traveler should forward a copy of the AD-202 or complete the Advance TDY International Travel Notification form (ITS-1), which contains all of the information necessary for the ITS to obtain the required visas. The ITS-1 is available on the following site: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/generalforms>

SPECIAL NOTE: This advance notice process is being automated via the web and it will be the mandatory method for requesting issuance of a passport and/or visas. Each program area will need to have designated staff attend the training on this new IPATTS Travel Request web site. This will supersede the present procedure for submitting a hard copy of the AD-202 or ITS-1 form. The web site will be: http://199.129.100.31/appscripts/ipatts_web/travel_request/engine/home/index.asp.

- *If a passport is not available* - Refer to Part 11 for information on how to obtain an official passport.

D. Approval of Foreign Travel for FSA Employees

All foreign travel by FSA employees requires prior clearance and approval by the Administrator, FSA. Employees must submit requests to the Administrator, through the Director, FMD, at least 2 weeks in advance of the scheduled departure date. Requests are required from each traveler and must include:

- a Type C (trip-by-trip) AD-202, that includes the itinerary and all estimated expenses for the trip
- a completed Foreign Travel Justification Form
 - FFAS Employee Forms Online website at: <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/dam/ffasforms>
 - select current forms keyword: foreign travel

Emergency foreign travel requests must be:

- submitted to the Administrator as soon as possible
- state the urgent nature of the travel

Emergency requests will be considered by the Administrator on a case-by-case basis.

(Refer to Notice FI-2553, Approving Foreign Travel for FSA Employees)

NOTE: Travelers should refer to Paragraph 1C, Advance Notification of International Travel.

2 International Travel Country Clearance

A. Definition

International travel must be cleared in the country of destination to ensure that all post responsibilities, including official traveler support, can be carried out effectively and to protect the health and welfare of U.S. Government employees in official travel status.

The initiating USDA agency is responsible for obtaining the country clearance from the Agricultural Counselor/Attaché (AC/A) well in advance of the proposed visit. If no AC/A resides near the country to be visited, the clearance must be obtained from the post nearest the country to be visited. An information copy must be sent to the country where the AC/A resides. Clearance of the communication by the appropriate FAS Area Officer, Foreign Agricultural Affairs (FAA) is mandatory. This approval is necessary before the traveler departs the U.S.

The importance and requirement of obtaining proper country clearance is to:

- Obtain needed post support
- Accomplish traveler responsibilities
- Protect and inform post of U.S. Government employees in official travel status

B. How to Obtain Country Clearance?

USDA FAS cable or State cable are the official means of communication with overseas posts. FAS travelers should contact FAS/ITS at (202) 720-7815 and FSA travelers should contact FSA/ITSD at (202) 720-2962 for assistance or questions in preparing the clearance cable. The following cable format shall be used:

 SUBJECT: USDA COUNTRY CLEARANCE REQUEST: [Last Name, First Name]

[If request is for a group traveling together for the same purpose, then use the word >GROUP= instead of traveler's name]

1. COUNTRY CLEARANCE IS REQUESTED FOR: [Name], [Position Title], [Agency Name]

[If request is for a group traveling together for the same purpose, enter info for each traveler]

2: TO VISIT: [city or cities, country and dates - see examples below]

PRETORIA 11/02 TO 11/05
 CAPETOWN 11/06 TO 11/10

3. PURPOSE VISIT:

[--- provide a detailed explanation of the official business, to be conducted in each city (if more than one), requiring this country visit, -----]

4. EMBASSY OR FAS SUPPORT REQUIRED:

[If none, so state; otherwise, see various examples below]

A. LODGING: PLEASE MAKE APPROPRIATE HOTEL RESERVATIONS IN [cities] AND ADVISE ON RATES TO INCLUDE ALL TAXES.

B. TRANSPORTATION: PLEASE ADVISE ON TRANSPORTATION FROM AIRPORT TO HOTEL OR OFFICE.

C. ITINERARY: [details required only if needing assistance -

- at airport or transportation, indicate arrival and departure times and respective airline and flight number.
- in making lodging arrangements - provide details]

D. Identify and request any other support requirement- such as;

- working with staff members to install PC LAN system or post communication/computer office
- access for PC parts, tools, etc. Request arrangements be made with security office to allow for entry into embassy of specified items and for customs clearance at airport as necessary.
- arrangements with security office to allow entry of laptop PC, video camera, etc., into the Embassy offices where working/visiting.

5. SECURITY CLEARANCE: [i.e., >TOP SECRET=, >SECRET=, >NONE=]

[If clearance request is for more than one person, list persons name and respective clearance]

6. CONTACT POINTS WHILE IN COUNTRY: [see examples below]

[Pretoria - Hilton Hotel, tele #] and/or [SA Food Aid Conference, Jim Jones, tele #]

[Capetown - Marriott Hotel, tele #]

[Basically list cities, telephone numbers and persons that could reach you at that location]

7. TRAVELER CONTACT POINT PRIOR TO DEPARTURE:

[Name, telephone number]

8. EMERGENCY CONTACT AT HOME OFFICE:

[Name, telephone and fax numbers]

C. State Department Clearance

Travel to Taiwan and China requires the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, State Department, clearance. Travelers should contact ITS at (202) 720-7815 to obtain copies of the clearance forms required for travel to these countries. Forms are also available from the North Asia Area Officer.

D. Diplomatic Contacts

Employees traveling to a foreign country on official business must comply with the following requirements regarding U.S. diplomatic contacts abroad:

- Contact foreign consular officers for information regarding any additional requirements for entry into a foreign country
- Contact the AC/A upon arrival in the foreign country and before transacting business with officials of Foreign Governments
- Cooperate with any directions given by U.S. representatives during the visit
- Consult the American Embassy or consulate if itinerary changes after arrival in the country

3 Required Security Briefing

All U.S. Government employees traveling overseas to specific countries are **REQUIRED** to have a special briefing by the Department of State before traveling to that country. Travelers should contact the following offices **IMMEDIATELY** upon scheduling an international trip. The traveler shall indicate the country or countries that they are traveling to and they will be told if they must have this special briefing.

- For FAS, contact the Compliance Review Staff, FAS Security Officer at 202-720-6713
- For FSA, contact the Department's Personnel and Document Security Division at 202-720-7373

4 Foreign Per Diem Rates

A. Method of Calculation

Foreign per diem rates are calculated using the lodgings-plus or actual subsistence methods, as applicable. Refer to Parts 3 and 4.

B. Who Sets the Rates?

The Department of State sets the applicable rates. These rates are changed periodically, as often as monthly, as announced by the Department of State. Foreign per diem rates are available at the following web site: <http://www.state.gov/www/perdiems/index.html>

5 Rest Stops

A. When a Rest Stop is Allowed?

When travel is direct between duty points which are separated by several times zones and at least one duty point is outside CONUS, a rest period not in excess of 24 hours may be authorized or approved when air travel between the duty points is by **less-than premium-class accommodations** and the scheduled flight time, including stopovers, exceeds 14 hours by a direct or usually traveled route.

B. Where a Rest Stop Should be Taken?

The rest stop may be authorized at any intermediate point, including points within CONUS, provided the point is midway in the journey or as near to midway as requirements for use of U.S. flag carriers and carrier scheduling permit.

C. When a Rest Stop is Not Allowed?

A rest stop shall not be authorized when an employee, for personal convenience, elects to travel by an indirect route resulting in excess travel time.

When airline carrier schedules or the requirements for the U.S. flag carrier preclude an intermediate rest stop, or a rest stop is not authorized, it is recommended that the employee be scheduled to arrive at the TDY point with sufficient time to allow a reasonable rest period before reporting for duty. A rest period shall not be allowed when a traveler is approved/authorized to travel by premium-class accommodation.

D. Allowable Per Diem

The per diem rate for the rest stop shall be the rate applicable for the rest stop location.

6 Excess Baggage

Each airline has different allowances; therefore, the traveler should contact TMC to inquire what their baggage allowance might be. Currently, the average allowance is one carry-on bag that fits in the bag measurement rack (usually located at the check-in counter) and meets airline weight limits. The traveler will be responsible for any additional cost assessed by the airlines for baggage that exceeds the airline allowances. For employees on extended international trips, arrangements can be made through the TMC for authorized payment of the excess baggage. This must be done at time of booking and included on the Form AD-202.

7 Premium-Class Travel

Policies, procedures, and forms for business class travel are available at the following site:

- <http://www.fas.usda.gov/generalforms>

8 Fly America Act - Use of U.S. Flag Carriers

The Fly America Act, as implemented by the Comptroller Generals guidelines, requires Federal employees and their dependents, consultants, grantees, and others performing foreign air travel financed by U. S. Government funds to travel on U.S. flag carriers. Travelers should contact ITS for special exceptions to policy and guidelines. This information can be found in Sections 301-10.131 through 301.10.143 of the FTR on GSAs website at:

<http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/FTR/ch301-10.html>

9 Immunizations

Washington-based travelers are responsible for consulting the USDA Health Unit on immunizations as soon as an overseas trip is planned. Employees outside the Washington area should make arrangements for the necessary immunizations to be given at a public health facility or by a private physician. More information concerning immunizations may be obtained from the following web sites:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/vaccinat.htm>
- <http://www.who.int/ith>

10 Acceptance of Travel Payment from Non-Federal Sources (FAS Only)

Policies and procedures for acceptance of payment for travel from non-Federal sources is available at the following web site: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/generalforms>

11 Trip Reports (FAS Only)

A. International Travel with FAS-Funded Authorizations - TDY

Trip reports are required from all FAS/Washington travelers for international travel. It is the responsibility of all supervisors to ensure that trip reports are submitted by travelers within 30 days of completion of travel. Foreign Service personnel on permanent change of station, home leave or rest & recuperation travel are not required to prepare a trip report.

B. Section 108 Travel

A traveler is required to prepare a trip report regardless of domestic or international travel when Section 108 funds are expended. The traveler must prepare the report within 30 days of completion of travel. Travelers are responsible for providing the Marketing Operations Staff with a copy of the trip report.

12 TDY Telephone Use and Reimbursement Policy (FAS Only)

The USDA/FAS policy can be viewed on the FASTNET Travel Services website at:

- <http://fastnet.usda.gov/isd/travel/newtravel.htm>