

For: FSA and FAS Offices, Except Overseas Offices

Using Lowest Government Contract City-Pair Air Fares

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A

Background

Employees are reminded that Federal Travel Regulation, Section 301-10.107, requires Government travelers to use contract city-pair air fares for official travel when these fares are available. These fares are negotiated by GSA with commercial U.S. air carriers for Government employees to travel between specified cities and airports at a fare that is generally lower than that offered to the general public.

B

Purpose

This notice:

- reminds employees of their obligation to use contract city-pair air fares when available for official travel
- provides Approving Officials with criteria to use when selecting alternative airports with higher city-pair air fares for official travel.

C

Contact

If there are questions about this notice, contact FMD Travel Unit at 703-305-1408.

Disposal Date

May 1, 2002

Distribution

All FSA and FAS Offices, except Overseas Offices; State Offices relay to County Offices

Notice FI-2478

2 Selecting Alternative Airports With Higher City-Pair Air Fares

A

Approving Higher Cost Alternative Airports

In approving travel authorizations, the Approving Official must remember that the airport that offers the lowest contract fare available must be used, unless the Agency determines that using 1 of the higher cost alternative airports is more advantageous to the Government.

Example: In the Washington, DC area, 3 airports may offer contract city-pair air fares at different fare amounts for a particular trip. The Approving Official, in this case, would be responsible for ensuring that the airport and city-pair air fare, most advantageous to the Government, was used for that trip. These determinations should be made on a case-by-case basis. In cases where higher cost alternative airports are selected, the “Remarks” section of the travel authorization must contain the following statements:

- the lowest fare airport (name of airport), fare amount is \$\$\$
- the alternate airport (name of airport), fare amount is \$\$\$
- the alternate airport is authorized as more advantageous to the Government.

Rules for the use on noncontract carriers remain the same.

B

Approving Official Responsibility

It is incumbent upon the Approving Official to document this determination. The traveler must request that the Travel Management Center make the reservation for the higher fare airport only after the Approving Official has signed the travel authorization authorizing the higher fare airport.

Failure to document and authorize the higher fare airport on the travel authorization may result in disapproval of reimbursement for the increased cost.

Approving officials will be held accountable for their actions and decisions in these matters.

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2 Selecting Alternative Airports With Higher City-Pair Air Fares (Continued)

C

When Alternate Airport Is Advantageous to the Government

The following general guidance is provided to assist the Approving Official and employee in making the determination whether a higher cost alternative airport is more advantageous to the Government. The alternate airport is considered advantageous to the Government when:

- the difference in cost between 2 airports is less than \$100 after consideration of ground transportation costs
- the departure time affects the performance of necessary work at the office before departure or planned work at the destination
- departure and/or arrival times unreasonably infringe on the employee's nonduty hours
- the Approving Official determines that other factors make the higher cost airport more advantageous

Note: Personal preference or minor inconvenience to the traveler are not sufficient justification for approval of higher fares.
