

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
 Farm Production and Conservation Mission Area
 Business Center
 Washington, DC 20250

FPAC NOTICE	FPAC-N FMD-001
Subject: Fiscal Year 2022 Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel Guidance	Effective Date: August 2, 2022
Approved by: /s/ Sherry Laws <i>for</i> Senior Accountable Travel Official (SATO) Chief Financial Officer Farm Production and Conservation Business Center	Expiration Date: December 31, 2022

1. PURPOSE

This notice provides Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area guidance for TDY travel and applies to Farm Service Agency (FSA), FPAC Business Center, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

2. RELATED POLICY

With the establishment of the FPAC Business Center, all travel is aligned under the Federal Travel Regulation.

- a. [Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\)](#);
- b. [Departmental Regulation \(DR\) 2300-005 – Agriculture Travel Regulation \(ATR\)](#) (ATR is currently being updated);
- c. [DR 2300-001 – Government Travel Charge Card Regulation](#);
- d. [Public Law \(Pub. L.\) 105-264, the Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998](#).

Note: Pub. L. 105-264, Section 2, requires use of the travel charge card and states:

“In General. – Under regulations issued by the Administrator of General Services after consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Administrator shall require that Federal employees use the travel charge card established pursuant to the United States Travel and Transportation Payment and Expense Control System, or any Federal contractor-issued travel card, for all payments of expenses of official Government travel.”

The act provides exemptions from this statement, but none apply to USDA.

3. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

The agency guidance below supplements this notice:

- a. NRCS Title 250, General Manual, “Financial Management,” Part 404, Subpart B 404.10 – 404.22 and 404.25.
- b. FSA Handbook 118-FI, “Travel Management,” Parts 1 – 7.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Financial Management Division (FMD), TDY Travel Team

- (1) The TDY Travel Team develops and administers a comprehensive travel management policy and program, including coordination of applicable travel operations and reporting. The TDY Travel Team also oversees the agency travel regulations, travel procedures, and the Government travel charge card.
- (2) The TDY Travel Team maintains travel policy and provides consultation and technical information to solve problems concerning travel policy. The team is deliberate and proactive in keeping lines of communication open with the key points of contact at the State and Headquarters level to ensure that customer service is at the forefront for all stakeholders.

b. Cardholders

- (1) Cardholders are employees who are issued a travel charge card. Cardholders assume the responsibility to use the card for official travel purposes and pay their charges in a timely manner. Use of the card does not relieve the employee of the responsibility to employ prudent travel practices and to observe rules and regulations governing travel as set forth in the FTR, the USDA Zero Tolerance Policy, and agency-specific policies and procedures. See [DR 2300-001, Section 6 \(f\)](#).
- (2) Cardholders are personally responsible for all items billed to the travel charge card unless the card was reported lost or stolen (see [Government Travel Charge Card training](#) on lost or stolen cards). Employees will pay the contractor in accordance with the contractor payment terms and is mandated to use split disbursement. These responsibilities are explained in the “Cardholder Agreement” that each employee signs during the application process. Furthermore, employees are not relieved of their obligation to pay the travel charge card bill in rare instances when the traveler’s organization has not reimbursed the traveler within 30 days of a timely submitted travel voucher.

c. Employee Travel Services

- (1) Employees must reserve all travel arrangements (e.g., airfare, hotel, rental car) through USDA’s electronic travel system (ETS), currently ConcurGov.
- (2) Employees are authorized to make hotel reservations outside of ConcurGov only when:

- (a) A group rate will be used that requires direct contact with the hotel; or
- (b) Local hotels in rural areas do not appear in ConcurGov.

Note: Employees must provide the hotel name and justification on the authorization.

- (3) Employees are not authorized to use third-party travel arrangers (e.g., Expedia, Trivago, Travelocity) to make travel reservations.
- (4) Employees are authorized to use ground transportation such as taxis, Uber, and Lyft instead of full-time car rental.
- (5) Employee airport parking reimbursement is limited to the cost of roundtrip transportation using transport such as taxis, Uber, and Lyft.

d. Mandatory Travel Charge Card Use

- (1) [41 CFR](#) Parts 301-51, 301-52, 301-54, 301-70, 301-71, and 301-76 requires mandatory use of the travel charge card by all employees, other than,
 - (a) New employees;
 - (b) Other invitational travelers, unless the account was closed for misuse or abuse; or
 - (c) Infrequent travelers conducting official Government travel fewer than three times in a 12-month period.
- (2) The use of the travel charge card is limited to expenses incurred in conjunction with official travel. The provisions of this regulation apply to all employees, supervisors, and managers of USDA who were issued or are applying for a travel charge card.

e. Authorized Costs Charged to the Government Travel Charge Card

- (1) Use the travel charge card for the following authorized expenses:
 - (a) Airfare;
 - (b) Common carrier transportation services;
 - (c) Lodging;
 - (d) Automobile rental;
 - (e) Fuel; and
 - (f) Other incidental expenses to official travel.

Note: See [DR 2300-001, Section 5\(e\)](#).

- (2) All costs for which the government reimburses the traveler for the actual costs incurred are to be charged to the travel charge card. Actual costs include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Lodging;
 - (b) Airfare; and
 - (c) Rental car charges.
- (3) Meals and incidental expenses are not required to be charged to the Government travel charge card.

f. Travel Voucher Requirements

- (1) Cardholders must provide through ConcurGov:
 - (a) Receipts for lodging expense;
 - (b) Receipts for other expenses over \$75; and
 - (c) Receipts for airline tickets or other approved transportation reimbursement through ConcurGov.

Note: The failure to furnish receipts in any instance as required by this subparagraph must be fully explained on the travel voucher. Mere inconvenience of submitting receipts is not considered a valid reason. See [FTR 301-52.4](#).

- (2) In accordance with [FTR 301-52.7](#), unless the agency administratively requires a cardholder to submit travel claims within a shorter timeframe, the cardholder must submit their travel claim as follows:
 - (a) Within 5 working days after completing the trip or period of travel; or
 - (b) Every 30 calendar days for cardholders on continuous travel status.

g. TDY Actual Expense Allowance Above Per Diem

- (1) In accordance with the [Approval Authority Guidance for Actual Expense Reimbursement Requests Above Per Diem](#) dated March 20, 2019, this delegation of authority identifies approval level thresholds for actual expense above per diem rate and clarification on delegating approval authority for such expenses.
- (2) Approving officials will ensure that requests are approved in advance of travel (preapproved). Reimbursement can be approved after the travel is completed (post approval), when the approving official determines one of the following occurred:
 - (a) Pre-approval was not necessary or possible; or

- (b) Unanticipated, unusual, or extenuating circumstances caused necessary expenses to be greater than the authorized per diem allowance.
- (3) FPAC Agency Heads may take the following actions regarding actual expense reimbursement requests:
 - (a) Approve request up to 300 percent above the per diem rate ([41 CFR, 301-11.305](#)). Reimbursements are limited to 300 percent; there is no authority to exceed this ceiling ([OCFO actual expense memo](#)).
 - (b) Delegate the authority to SATO to approve requests for hazard-related emergencies (e.g., disease, fire, natural disasters) not to exceed 300 percent above the per diem rate.
 - (c) Delegate the authority to SATO to approve non-emergency requests up to 150 percent above the per diem rate.
- (4) Agencies can elect to have the designated approving official or Agency Head authorize or approve the request as a routing official through the ETS, currently ConcurGov. Alternatively, the Agency Head can sign the approval form and have SATO approve the actual expenses through ConcurGov.
- (5) Use the following guidance for requesting actual expense reimbursement requests when a traveler requests lodging above the allowed rate:
 - (a) The traveler will submit the [“Request for Actual Expense Above Per Diem”](#) form, providing an explanation and percentage increase for the additional funds, to their supervisor or approving official.

Note: The FSA Administrator has delegated this authority to the Deputy Administrator for Field Operations for all State and County Office requests.

Note: See [“Actual Expense Calculation Information”](#) for instructions.

Note: All FSA State and County Office requests shall be submitted through the State Executive Director to the Deputy Administrator for Field Operations for review by e-mailing april.macdonald@usda.gov. DAFO will coordinate the approval with the appropriate approving official and return the form to the State to be loaded in the ConcurGov.

All FSA Headquarter requests shall be submitted to the Office of Management and Strategy (OMS). OMS will coordinate the approval with the appropriate approving official and return the form to be loaded in the ConcurGov.

- (b) The traveler’s supervisor or approving official will approve requests up to 150 percent by signing the Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) request form and

the traveler will upload the request form (authorization or voucher) into ConcurGov. The traveler will enter the approved “actual lodging” amount in the travel authorization field on the “Expenses and Receipts” tab. The document is then routed in ConcurGov to SATO or Agency Head for final approval.

Note: This also applies to the AEA from 151 to 300 percent. The traveler’s supervisor or approving official will approve the AEA request form and the traveler will upload the request form (authorization or voucher) into ConcurGov. ConcurGov will route the document to the Agency Head for approval or SATO if delegated by the Agency Head.

- (c) The actual approver will review the documentation (authorization or voucher) and apply the “Actuals Approved” stamp in ConcurGov.
- (d) The document will continue the routing process and end with the traveler’s approving official.

5. CONTACT

- a. Submit questions about this notice to FMD TDY Travel Team through [myFPACServices](#) according to the following instructions:
 - (1) Select “Travel” for request type;
 - (2) Select “General TDY” for request type subcategory;
 - (3) “Watch List” is an optional field;
 - (4) Type of request in the “Request Description” box;
 - (5) Attach document(s), if any; and
 - (6) Click “Submit” to create the request.
- b. Visit the [FPAC TDY Travel SharePoint](#) for more information on travel policies, procedures, guidance, and quick links to Governmental and Departmental Regulations.