

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees

FROM: Jon P. Alexander
Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 09-7, Rental Cars

The purpose of this travel advisory is to provide guidance on when and how to rent a vehicle while on official temporary duty station (TDY) travel. Rental car information is provided below according to specific points:

- **How to Authorize a Rental Vehicle:** Employees on official travel should first consider the use of taxicabs, shuttle service (many hotels offer complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport), and any other type of public transportation before requesting approval to rent a vehicle at a TDY site. In addition, employees attending a conference at or in the immediate vicinity of the hotel should only rent a vehicle when the cost of commuting by taxi would exceed the cost of a rental vehicle. Once it is determined that the use of a rental car is necessary and advantageous to the Government, it must be authorized specifically in Block 6 of the travel authorization.
- **What type of Rental Vehicle to Authorize:** Employees are normally only authorized to rent a compact or economy-sized vehicle. However, under unusual circumstances and when specifically authorized in Block 5 of the travel authorization, employees may rent a larger vehicle when deemed officially necessary. The following are examples of situations where it may be necessary to authorize a vehicle above an economy or compact vehicle:
 - o Transporting government equipment that will not fit in an economy or compact vehicle;
 - o Transporting a group of employees who cannot all fit in an economy or compact vehicle; and
 - o Use of a special rental vehicle due to the location of the TDY site, i.e., all terrain vehicles, trucks, etc.

How to Procure a Rental Vehicle: In addition, employees who are authorized a rental vehicle must book the vehicle through ADTRAV, our servicing Travel Management Center (TMC), to ensure that the rental vehicle is insured and is the lowest cost available. Employees are required to rental vehicles under government rates since they include full coverage insurance. This is important since employees cannot be reimbursed for extra insurance purchased when renting a vehicle within the Continental United States (CONUS) and certain Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) locations. Employees are required to purchase extra insurance in OCONUS locations that do not offer government rates. For more information on rental vehicle coverage, you may visit the following website:

<http://www.sddc.army.mil/sddc/Content/Pub/656/rentalcaragreement.pdf>.

How to Fuel a Rental Vehicle: When renting a vehicle, employees must use the “prudent traveler” approach for refueling:

- o Long distance travel: Some rental vehicle companies offer fuel at or below the market rate when the traveler pre-pays a tank of fuel. In cases where the employee travels long distances, they should take advantage of the prepaid fuel option. However, employees should not take advantage of the prepaid fuel option when they do not plan on using a full tank of gas, or when charged above the market rate for gas, i.e., if the average cost of gas is \$1.99 a gallon and the rental car company will charge you \$4.99 a gallon to refill the rental car.
- o Short distance travel: Employees should fill rental vehicles prior to returning the vehicle. Generally, fuel charges are more costly at the car rental company than at a local gas station.

Under unusual circumstances, employees may be reimbursed for gas charges in excess of market value gas prices where time constraints make it impossible to fill up before returning the car and when justified on the travel authorization or post approved on the travel voucher. However, this practice should be the exception rather than the rule.

If you have any questions regarding this advisory, please contact Rachel Wivell on (301) 444-2136.