



Approved for Release

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OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

TRAVEL BULLETIN # 07, FY08

**SUBJECT:** Use of Premium Class Travel

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** June 13, 2008

**EXPIRATION DATE:** Effective until canceled or superseded

**SUPERSEDES:** Not Applicable

**BACKGROUND:** A September 2007 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report identified numerous instances of improperly authorized or inadequately justified use of premium class travel by Federal employees at various agencies. As a result, all agencies must implement certain travel policies immediately at the direction of the Office of Management and Budget. (OMB).

**PURPOSE:** This bulletin provides interim notice and clarification of the Department's policy for use of premium (first and business) class travel in accordance with OMB's direction. The General Services Administration is revising the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) as a result of GAO's findings and the Department will amend its *Travel Handbook* accordingly. Operating units must ensure that any existing internal guidance or procedures conform to the requirements of this bulletin.

**PROCEDURES:** In general, federal employees must use coach accommodations for all travel, except when premium travel is specifically authorized. Use of premium class travel may be authorized only if it meets certain requirements under the FTR (§301-10.123-124 (air), 301-10.162,164 (rail)). Additionally, the following requirements and definitions will be made a part of and be applicable to the use of premium class accommodations.

1. Premium Class Approval Levels. Premium class travel requests for all agency personnel, including senior-level executives, must be approved by an individual at least at the same level as the traveler, or by an office designated to approve premium class travel. (Not all travel-approving officials have authority to approve premium class travel. See the DOC *Travel Handbook* for more information.)

2. **Mission Criteria and Intent as Justification for Premium Class Travel.** Premium travel must be justified based on the need to conduct agency operations in a manner that will not compromise the mission of the Department.

3. **Rest Period Definition.** A U.S. Government-funded rest period is not to exceed 24 hours, plus necessary time to obtain the earliest transportation to the authorized destination. Full per diem (lodging and miscellaneous and incidental expenses) at the official rest-stop location rate is authorized in these circumstances. When travel routing requires a flight in excess of 14 hours, the recommended practice is to authorize a rest stop en route or a rest period upon arrival at the duty site to avoid the increased expense of business class accommodations.

4. **Certification of a Disability or Special Need.** An employee requiring premium class accommodations based on a disability or special need must furnish current medical documentation from a competent medical authority. This certification must be updated annually for any subsequent requests, unless the disability is lifelong.

5. **Restriction on Temporary Duty and Change of Station Travel.** Premium class travel is restricted for both temporary duty and permanent change of station travel when the employee is not required to report to duty the following day.

6. **Restriction on Blanket Authorization of Premium Travel.** Premium class travel must always be authorized on a trip-by-trip basis, unless the traveler has a certification of disability.

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