

PART 2036 - TRAVEL

Subpart A - Travel Regulations and Policies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

§ 2036.1	General.	1
§ 2036.2	Definitions.	5
§§ 2036.3	- 2036.9 [Reserved]	8
§ 2036.10	Transportation expenses.	9
§ 2036.11	Per diem expenses.	15
§ 2036.12	Miscellaneous expenses.	22
§ 2036.13	Travel of an employee with special needs.	23
§§ 2036.14	- 2036.29 [Reserved]	23
§ 2036.30	Emergency travel of employee due to illness or injury or a personal emergency situation.	23
§§ 2036.31	- 2036.49 [Reserved]	23
§ 2036.50	Arranging for travel services.	24
§ 2036.51	Paying travel expenses.	24
§ 2036.52	Claiming reimbursement.	28
§ 2036.53	Using promotional materials and frequent traveler programs.	29
§§ 2036.54	- 2036.73 [Reserved]	29
§ 2036.74	Conference and training event planning.	29
§§ 2036.75	- 2036.79 [Reserved]	30
§ 2036.80	Foreign travel.	30
§ 2036.81	Payment of expenses connected with the death of certain employees.	31
§ 2036.82	[Reserved]	32

§ 2036.83 Passport issuance.	32
§§ 2036.84- 2036.99 [Reserved]	33

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PART 2036 - TRAVEL

Subpart A - Travel Regulations and Policies

§ 2036.1 General.

This Instruction provides the policies and procedures for temporary duty (TDY) travel, local travel, and use of the government travel card. This Instruction supplements the [Federal Travel Regulation](#) (FTR), the Departmental Regulations ([DR 2300-001](#) “Government Travel Charge Card Regulation” and the [DR 2300-005](#) “Agriculture Travel Regulation (ATR).”

(a) Authority. Rural Development officials are responsible for authorizing TDY travel from allocated travel funds:

(1) The Under Secretary, Deputy Under Secretary, Administrators, Associate Administrators; Chief Operating Officer (COO), Chief Enterprise Officer (CEO), Chief Information Officer (CIO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Risk Officer (CRO), Chief Innovation Center, Directors, Deputy Administrators; Assistant Administrators; State Directors, Deputy State Directors, Administrative Program Directors (APD) and authorized Officials in the National and State Office may approve TDY travel. This authority may be re-delegated.

(2) The following types of travel situations must have special approval by the office which is designated:

(i) The Under Secretary C must approve the use of premium-class travel.

(ii) Travel involving actual expense above per diem up to 150% of the authorized expenses are submitted through the Travel Unit and approved by the Enterprise Operations Division Director, or other designee. The COO must approve requests for actual subsistence expenses which exceed 150% of the authorized per diem expenses. Actual expenses over 300% is not allowed.

(iii) Agency and Staff Office Heads must approve travel for employees selected to travel to award ceremonies.

(3) The Under Secretary and/or Deputy Under Secretary must approve all foreign travel outside the United States. This has been delegated to the agency heads or other approving officials. The Travel Unit is included in all routing for foreign travel.

(4) Approving officials and travelers are reminded that they are traveling for official Government purposes at taxpayers' expense. Therefore, they must ensure the activities of the employees for travel they are approving are prudent in terms of cost, location, appropriateness, and public perception.

(b) Applicability. All Rural Development employees are subject to this Instruction unless an employee is detailed to or traveling on behalf of another Agency, in which case the paying Agency's regulations will govern. The Federal Traveler (FT) or Federal Travel Preparer (FTP) will create travel documents and gather the Organization name and accounting code details from the funding Agency. This information will be sent to the Travel Unit, which functions as the Lead Federal Agency Travel Administrator (LFATA) to insert the accounting information into the Authorization. The Travel Unit will communicate to the FT to continue routing.

(c) General rules. Travelers must not authorize or approve their own travel authorization or travel voucher. An Authorization and Voucher must be processed for each employee requesting travel. Vouchers can be T-Entered by the Travel Preparer; however, each voucher must be signed by the traveler. Travel will be routed through the following processing steps:

(1) Recommended status indicates travel has been permitted

(2) Review status marks each document for compliance and appropriate expenditure of funds. Funds Available status show funds are available for travel; and

(3) Finally, approved status indicates the document is in full compliance with the FTR and the traveler is approved to travel or also signifies the voucher is approved for payment.

(d) Authorization of travel. The e-Gov travel system must be used for routing and approval of all travel authorizations and vouchers. Rural Development officials will authorize travel only when necessary to accomplish the mission and conduct operations, and in the best interest of the U.S. Government utilizing the most economical and effective manner and will:

- (1) Consider alternatives to travel, such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing.
- (2) Authorize only the most economical means of travel considering transportation costs, seasonal per diem rates and salary expenses. The personal convenience of the traveler will not be a determining factor. Official travel must be conducted in the most advantageous manner to the Government in accordance with Government contractual agreements for travel services.
- (3) Assure travel funds are available in advance of completing travel.
- (4) When possible, plan and schedule travel within regular duty hours. Travel outside of regularly duty hours is approved by the official authorized to certify time and attendance. The official will determine what a reasonable amount of time should be based on local commuting and travel conditions.
- (5) Travelers are required to be familiar with the travel requirements in the [Agriculture Travel Regulation](#) (ATR) and the [Federal Travel Regulation](#) (FTR).

(e) Guidelines for issuing authorizations. Travelers must submit a travel authorization for official travel at least 7 days in advance of travel, unless the travel is due to illness or injury of an employee. Last minute travel plans do not count as an emergency. In addition, the e-Gov travel system contains system constraints for unauthorized travel.

- (1) Types and uses of travel authorizations:
 - (i) Trip-by-trip authorizations will be completed and electronically approved in the e-Gov travel system for individuals or groups of individuals to take one or more specific trips.
 - (ii) All local travel must be completed utilizing [Form AD-202](#), Travel Authorization, and obtain approval from their immediate supervisor and Budget Analyst prior to travel. Once travel is complete, the traveler must complete Optional Form (OF) 1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, and obtain approval from their

immediate supervisor, Budget Analyst, and designated administrative representative. The traveler then inputs a dollar transaction into electronic time and attendance system for reimbursement.

(2) Purposes of travel. A purpose codes must be selected, and a description of the travel must be added to each travel authorization. The purpose codes are available from a list in the travel system. The description of travel must be added in the comments section of the authorization.

(f) Travel situations requiring special approval. Travel arrangements that include the types of travel identified in the [DR 2300-005, Section 3, paragraphs \(k\) and \(l\)](#) may require specific justification and approval by the Assistant to the Secretary..

(g) Mixing official and personal travel. Guidelines are outlined in the [DR 2300-005](#) Section 3, paragraphs (f) for mixing official travel and personal (leisure) travel.

(1) Employees must submit their reservations through the e- Gov travel system Contract provider for official travel only. Once travel is approved employees should work with the travel management company or the airline directly to change the flight itinerary. This would include taking annual leave to arrive at the TDY travel location early, leaving at a later date, or taking an indirect route to/from the TDY travel location.

(2) The traveler authorization dates will show only the official travel, not any personal deviations. Leave dates and the approval of the employee's request by the supervisor must be noted in the comments section of the authorization.

(3) The traveler will not be paid per diem for any additional travel time incurred because of personal convenience.

(4) Personal travel costs and arrangements shall be borne by the employee and paid with personal funds.

(5) The employee must first book their official travel. When the ticket is issued, the employee may go to an airline or travel agent to reserve their personal travel and have the ticket re-issued. The employee will be financially responsible for any additional difference in costs, and they will not

be reimbursed for these costs. The employee must pay any additional difference in cost from personal funds. Any refund from the airline will go directly to the Government issued Individually Billed Account or Centrally Billed Account.

(6) Mixed official and personal travel must not be approved if the personal portion of the travel exceeds 50% of the total for the combined official and personal travel. For example, official travel to Hawaii consisting of three days must not be approved if the personal portion of travel is four or more days.

§ 2036.2 Definitions.

- (a) **Actual Subsistence.** Expenses that are in excess of the General Services Administration (GSA) authorized maximum per diem for lodging.
- (b) **Agency.** For this instruction the term “agency” means Rural Development.
- (c) **Head of RD.** The head of RD is the Under Secretary.
- (d) **Approving Official (AO)/Approver.** The official who has been delegated the authority to authorize travel and payment of travel vouchers for a traveler.
- (e) **Baggage Fees.** The fees pertaining to checked bags. Checked bags refer to those handed over to the airline and usually carried in the cargo compartment of the same aircraft.
- (f) **Centrally Billed Account (CBA).** A Centrally Billed Account, or CBA, is a variation of the travel card used for the Department's specific needs and may be the method of payment for expenses incident to official travel, to include local travel.
- (g) **City-Pair Fares.** These are GSA-contracted airfares for Federal employees for official travel. The fares are fully refundable, do not have change fees, and have a fixed maximum price. Under the terms of the Government contract with the airlines, Federal employees on official travel must use these fares unless they meet one of the exceptions listed in the [Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\) 301-10.107](#).
- (h) **Common Carrier Transportation.** Can be transportation by airline, train, bus, ship or other transit system. Government owned or leased vehicles or other special conveyance.

- (i) **Conference.** A meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event that involves attendee travel. The term “conference” also applies to training activities that are defined as conferences under [5 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) 410.404](#).
- (j) **Conference Expenses.** All direct and indirect conference costs paid by the Government, whether paid directly by agencies or reimbursed by agencies to travelers or others associated with the conference.
- (k) **Conference Attendance.** Employee(s) participation in a U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) or non-USDA sponsored/hosted conference.
- (l) **General Officers.** Those who assist the Secretary in the supervision and control of the Agency as defined in [7 CFR §2.4](#).
- (m) **Government Facility.** Property owned or controlled by the Government.
- (n) **Immediate Family.** Any of the following named members of the employee’s household at the time he/she reports for duty at the new permanent duty station or performs other travel involving family members: spouse, same-sex domestic partner, children of the employee, of the employee’s spouse, or of the employee’s same-sex domestic partner who are unmarried and under 21 years of age or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self-support. (The term “children” shall include natural offspring; stepchildren; adopted children; grandchildren, legal minor wards or other dependent children who are under legal guardianship of the employee, of the employee’s spouse, or of the same-sex domestic partner; and an unborn child(ren) born and moved after the employee’s effective date of transfer; dependent parents (including step and legally adoptive parents) of the employee, of the employee’s spouse, or of the employee’s same-sex domestic partner; and dependent brothers and sisters (including step and legally adoptive brothers and sisters) of the employee, of the employee’s spouse, or of the employee’s same-sex domestic partner, who are unmarried and under 21 years of age or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self- support ([FTR 300-3.1](#)).
- (o) **Pre-Trip Travel Voucher.** An official request for reimbursement of travel expenses prior to the completion of the temporary duty travel.
- (p) **Local Travel.** Travel performed by the most direct route, within a 50-mile radius of an employee’s official worksite, duty station or alternative worksite, to

conduct official USDA business. Local travel does not include any official travel that is part of a temporary duty (TDY) travel authorization, including travel to a common carrier terminal in the employee's local travel area in conjunction with TDY.

- (q) **Local Travel Expenses.** Includes expenses such as subway, bus, taxi, mileage, tolls, and parking incurred because of official business.

- (r) **Official Travel.** Travel performed on behalf of the U.S. Government which is authorized via written or electronic travel authorizations and vouchers.

- (s) **Official Travel Expense.** An authorized expense incurred because of official travel. Authority to incur such expenses is provided through a travel authorization.

- (t) **Open or "blanket" travel authorizations.** Travel of more than a single trip and/or more than one employee. Some organizations may choose to use Form AD-202 to approve travel for a quarter or annually, when it is more advantageous to obtain approval for multiple local travel that identifies dates of travel and estimated cost for selected travelers.

- (u) **Premium Class Travel.** Any class of travel accommodations above coach class (e.g., first class or business class.)

- (v) **Rest Period.** A break not more than 24 hours, between the times an employee arrives at a destination and must begin official duties.

- (w) **Restricted and Non-refundable Fares.** Fares offered through the e-Gov travel system that will not provide a refund if unused.

- (x) **Sponsored/Hosted Conference/Training.** A conference or training for which an agency leads or participates in the arranging, planning, conducting, or funding. Each conference or training event has a principal sponsor and may have multiple co-hosts. The sponsor typically pays for all or part of the fees associated with facility rental, speakers/presenters, etc.

- (y) **Staff Office.** Departmental administrative office whose head reports to the Under Secretary for Administration or officials within the Office of the Secretary.

- (z) **Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel.** A place, away from an employee's official duty station, where the employee is authorized to travel.

(aa) **Training.** Educational activities to become proficient or qualified in one or more areas of responsibility ([FTR Appendix C to Chapter 301](#)). [5 CFR 410.404](#) defines “training” to mean the process of providing for and making available to an employee, and placing or enrolling the employee in a planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education, in scientific, professional, technical, mechanical, trade, clerical, fiscal, administrative, or other fields which will improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the agency’s mission and performance goals.

(bb) **Travel Management Center (TMC).** A commercial travel firm under contract that provides reservations, tickets, and related travel management services for official travel.

(cc) **Travel Unit (TU).** A group of employees serving as subject matter experts (SME) on travel and related matters such as actual Subsistence requests, centrally billed account, and the electronic travel management system. Conducts analyses and performs cost benefit and economic evaluations of current and projected travel requirements. Provides technical advice to headquarters and field employees at all levels on the interpretations and applications of Rural Development (RD), GSA and USDA travel and transportation policies and instructions.

(dd) **Travel and Transportation Specialist (TTS).** Provides customer support for travelers. Resolves issues on an individual basis analyzing and evaluating travel and employee relocation programs, coordinates, plans, organizes, and prioritizes travel initiatives, travel management problems, and prepares reports on the resolution of issues/problems.

(ee) **Viable City** as related to conference and training planning. A city with an available conference facility and lodging, if needed, that a prudent person would consider to be a cost-effective location, including being reachable by standard methods of transportation.

§§ 2036.3 - 2036.9 [Reserved]

§ 2036.10 Transportation expenses.

Travelers and authorizing officials are responsible for selecting the mode of transportation most cost advantageous to the Government. Guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapter 301-10](#) and [DR 2300-005, Section 3, paragraph \(g\)](#).

(a) Common carrier transportation. Guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapters, 301-10.121](#) and [301-70.102](#) and [DR 2300-005, Section 3, paragraph \(g\)\(2\)](#).

(1) Travelers must use e-Gov travel system contract provider to reserve airline tickets at least 14 days in advance. Travelers will use contract air carriers, (contract city pair) if such fares are available or unless use of a non-contract or non-refundable airfare is justified and approved.

(2) All use of premium-class travel must be approved 7 days in advance. All requests must be routed through the TU to the Enterprise Operations Director first, then through the Chief Operating Officer to the Under Secretary.

(3) Documentation requirements for use of first-class and premium-class are referenced in the ATR Chapter 301-3.3(d)(3)(ii).

~~(4) All State and National Offices will submit a report of the use of premium-class airfare travel accommodations to the TU each year. Officials will send the required information to the Travel Unit at rd.travel@usda.gov, by September 30 of each year. Negative reports are required.~~

(5) The [Non-Refundable Airfare Acknowledgement](#) is for the use of a non-refundable airfare must be completed, signed, and scanned into the e-Gov travel system by the traveler, as an attachment to the travel authorization. If official travel is canceled for personal reasons by the employee, the employee is responsible for reimbursing the full amount paid by the Government, including any penalties incurred.

(6) All Rural Development employees must obtain e-tickets through the e-Gov travel system. If paper tickets are issued for international travelers, employees will be reimbursed for any paper ticket fees. If an unusual circumstance requires a paper ticket for domestic travel, a written

justification must be included in the comments section of the travel authorization and approved by the official authorizing the travel prior to incurring a paper ticket fee.

(b) Government-owned vehicles (GOV) or Government Furnished Vehicle (GFV). The use of GOVs or GFV for official transportation is generally advantageous to the Government. Employees who travel on a regular or intermittent basis are required to use a GOV or GFV if one is available. Rural Development employees will comply with RD Instruction 2018-G on the proper use of GOVs and GFVs.

(1) Drivers must possess a valid driver's license and have completed the mandatory training in AgLearn.

(2) GOV or GFV shall be reserved through the Vehicle Management Tool (VMT). Travelers need an individual [WEX Pin](#) if using a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) owned vehicle. Vehicles assigned to RD should be the first vehicle preference selected in VMT.

(3) A cost comparison analysis must be used in determining the most advantageous use of a GOV, GFV or rental vehicle.

(4) For RD GFV vehicles fuel shall be purchased with the vehicle's GSA fleet services card. For RD Agency owned vehicles or when using another agency GOV the drivers must use their individual WEX-PIN to purchase fuel.

(5) It is recommended to consider the following items when deciding to allow the employee to take the GOV or GFV home overnight to use the vehicle for local or temporary duty travel:

(i) The TDY travel station is located in the opposite direction of the employee's duty station, and

(ii) The cost for the employee to take the GOV or GFV to their residence is less than the mileage rate which would be paid to the employee to drive to their duty station to pick up the GOV or GFV, or

(iii) The event which the employee is attending is scheduled to begin at a time which would not allow the employee time to pick up the GOV at their duty station without the Agency incurring additional overtime cost.

(c) Rental Vehicle and Shuttles.

(1) Employees will be reimbursed for rental car expenses when the rental car is specifically authorized and advantageous to the Government. Employees are responsible for all additional costs resulting from the unauthorized use of a rental vehicle. Fuel for rental vehicles shall be paid for with the traveler's GSA travel card. Unauthorized use is defined as anything other than official travel-related purposes.

(2) Employees must use the e-Gov travel service contract provider to reserve rental cars.

(3) Employees will lease only sub-compact or compact cars, unless a justification for a larger vehicle is included in the authorization in accordance with the [FTR, 301-10.450](#).

(4) Employees must waive the CDW, and theft insurance offered by the rental service. The Federal Government is self-insured and employees will not be reimbursed for the extra insurance options; i.e., collision damage waiver (CDW) or theft insurance.

(i) Employees will only be reimbursed for a collision damage or theft insurance when traveling outside the Continental United States (CONUS), and such insurance is necessary, because of rental or leasing agency requirements, foreign statute, or legal procedures could cause extreme difficulty for an employee involved in an accident.

(ii) Miscellaneous expenses, such as surcharge for use of a global positioning system will not be reimbursed.

(5) Employees will use a courtesy hotel shuttle or paid ground transportation shuttle, if available. Use of a paid ground transportation shuttle service must be considered as transportation between a place of lodging at the TDY travel station and a common carrier terminal, only if a courtesy hotel shuttle is not available. Tips to courtesy and shuttle transportation drivers are allowed in an amount that your agency determines as reasonable.

(d) Privately owned vehicle (POV) mileage reimbursement. When a privately-owned vehicle (POV) is authorized to be used in lieu of a GOV, the lesser GOV available reimbursement rate shall apply. The latest GSA mileage rates can be

found on the [GSA website](#). The allowable reimbursement rate is determined by GSA. The authorization to use another conveyance must be specifically authorized in advance.

(1) TDY travel mileage payments. Mileage rates include all costs incurred in the operation of a POV. The traveler may be reimbursed for expenses such as parking fees, ferry fees, and bridge, road, and tunnel tolls. Authorized POV fuel expense will be reimbursed via the vouchering process. Documentation of mileage must be provided. Documentation can be as shown in paper or electronic standard highway mileage guides, or the actual miles driven as determined from odometer readings (picture) ([FTR 301-10.302](#)).

(i) Mileage may be paid for official travel to a TDY travel point that begins and ends at the employee's official duty station. No mileage will be paid if it is more cost advantageous to take public transportation in metropolitan areas that have subway, bus, or other local transit available.

(ii) Mileage may be paid for official travel to a TDY point that begins and ends at the employee's residence. No mileage will be paid if it is more cost advantageous to take public transportation in metropolitan areas that have subway, bus, or other local transit available.

(iii) Mileage will be paid for the distance in excess of the normal commuting distance when TDY travel is performed enroute from the residence to the official duty station or vice versa. Mileage will be paid for the day of departure and the day of return if the duration of the trip is a minimum of one night away from the official duty station.

(vi) The traveler must complete Form AD-202, Travel Authorization, and obtain approval from their immediate supervisor and Budget Analyst prior to travel. Once travel is complete, the traveler must complete Form OF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, and obtain approval from their immediate supervisor and Budget Analyst. Once approval is obtained on Form OF-1164, the traveler must input a dollar transaction into WebTA for reimbursement. (Added 07-22-22, PN 564.)

(2) Privately owned planes. Employees may travel on official government business in privately-owned planes when the authorization has been approved in advance and it is cost advantageous to the Government. Expenses to park, land, and tie-down fees will be reimbursed in addition to mileage.

(3) Private owned motorcycles. An employee may use privately owned motorcycles for travel on official business under the same requirement as using POVs. The authorized mileage rate reimbursement for motorcycles must be used.

(4) Personal preference. Reimbursement is limited to the costs by approved methods of transportation, constructive per diem allowance, and the usual transportation costs to and from the terminals.

(e) Local travel expenses. Reimbursement of local travel expenses will be paid to employees who travel between their residence and alternate duty point(s) near the employee's permanent duty station, i.e., between offices when the following conditions occur. **The traveler must obtain approval in advance of performing the local travel.**

(1) Government Furnished Vehicle (GFV) is authorized, advantageous, and available, USDA employees should use a GOV or GFV for local travel. Travelers will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience (e.g., taxi or a Transportation Network Company (TNC) in lieu of available free shuttle, mass transportation, or Government-furnished automobile, etc.).

(2) For normal local travel, the travel charge card **cannot** be used.

(3) Approval for local travel expenses shall be made on a case-by-case basis. The traveler seeking reimbursement must clearly illustrate and justify those local costs incurred were additional out-of-pocket expenses, and not part of the normal commuting expenses. **The traveler must obtain approval in advance of performing the local travel.**

(4) Claiming Local travel expenses.

(i) Employees who require local travel for official business must first complete Form [AD-202](#) "Travel Authorization/Advance", obtain their

direct supervisor's signature, and then submit the form to the Administrative Officer (AO), Management and Programs Analyst (MPA) or designated representative for review and budget tracking. Some organizations may choose to use Form AD-202 to approve travel for a quarter or annually, when it is more advantageous to obtain approval for multiple local travel that identifies dates of travel and estimated cost for selected travelers. The DSD/AO/MPA/Designated Representative utilizes [Blanket Local Travel Authorization Template](#) for this purpose and attaches to Form AD-202.

(ii) Upon completion of local travel, employees must complete Form [OF-1164](#), "Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business" to voucher the expense. Receipts, (such as tolls, metro receipts, etc.) or other documentation, (such as Google maps) must be included, regardless of expense amount. The form must be signed by the direct supervisor and submitted to the Administrative Officer. Once signed, the Administrative Officer sends the completed form to the Budget Analyst for budget tracking.

(iii) The last step is to enter a Dollar Transaction Request for the approved amount in the WebTA system to claim reimbursement for local travel. When the transaction request is approved in the system, reimbursement will be made directly to the employee's bank account.

(f) **Taxicabs.** Use of taxicabs is permitted when more cost advantageous to the Government. Taxicab fare plus 15 percent tip will be allowed. Employees must use courtesy transportation service furnished by hotels/motels to the maximum extent possible.

(g) **Ride Sharing Service.** Ride sharing services, i.e., Uber or Lyft, may provide a quicker and less expensive alternative while in TDY travel status. The employee must ensure that they consider the cost of ride share services which may be higher during peak rate rush-hour times vs. the cost for a taxi or a paid ground transportation shuttle. Employees must not use their government travel charge card to pay for ride sharing services unless per diem is authorized.

§ 2036.11 [Per diem expenses.](#)

Guidelines are outlined in FTR Chapter 301-11.

(a) Travel of less than 12 hours. Per diem must not be authorized for travel of less than 12 hours.

(b) General rules on per diem within the vicinity of the official duty station.

(1) For travel within 1 calendar day. Per diem must not be authorized when travel is conducted within a 50-mile radius of either the employee's official duty station or residence (the place from which the employee commutes daily to the official duty station).

(2) For travel of more than 1 calendar day. Per diem must not be authorized when travel is conducted within a 50-mile radius of the employee's official duty station or residence (the place from which the employee commutes daily to the official duty station).

(c) Meals at the official duty station. Employees shall not be reimbursed for meals taken at the official duty station.

(d) Meals furnished by the Government. The employee's meal allowance must be adjusted for meals furnished by the Government by deducting the appropriate amount in accordance with the [FTR, 301-11.18](#). If a meal is provided at a conference or training, then the employee cannot claim reimbursement for a meal eaten elsewhere.

(e) Reductions to maximum per diem rates. Guidelines are outlined in the [DR 2300-005, Section 3, paragraph \(4\)](#)(P(4B -2. Assignments greater than 30 days.)

(1) Extended TDY travel. When an employee is on extended TDY travel, the first 30 days of an assignment, lodging and M&IE (per diem) will be reimbursed at the authorized rate. During this time period the employee is responsible for finding long-term lodging. After the first 30-day period, a lower rate of 55 percent of the per diem rate, (which includes lodging and M&IE), will be reimbursed to the employee. If lodging cannot be found that will accept the reduced rate, the employee must receive a written exemption from the Chief Operating Officer for any amount above the reduced rate. The

COO is the only official who has been delegated the authority to approve an exemption. There is no exemption for a reduction in M&IE. Per diem rates for employees on extended TDY travel will be as follows:

- (i) Thirty days or less. The applicable maximum per diem rate (standard Continental United States (CONUS) or locality rate from [FTR Chapter 301, Appendix A](#)) will be paid to the employee for the first 30 calendar days.
- (ii) More than 30 days. After the first 30 calendar days, a per diem rate of 55 percent of the locality rate is established for extended stays. If reduced lodging and/or meals cannot be obtained, a higher rate may be approved when a written justification is scanned into the e-Gov travel system as an attachment to the travel authorization and approved by the COO. When the per diem rate is adjusted downward, the travel authorization must show the reduced rate. The per diem rate is always known because it has been established by GSA. Travelers need to calculate the reduced per diem amount and update their travel authorization for expenses beginning on day 31 of their extended TDY travel.
- (iii) When the employee returns to their official duty station/residence during the first 30 days of an extended TDY travel assignment the employee will be reimbursed for 75% of the M&IE rate on their travel days.
- (iv) When the employee returns to their official duty station/residence after the first 30 days of an extended TDY travel assignment the employee will be reimbursed for 75% of the **reduced M&IE rate** on their travel days.
- (v) When the employee returns to their official duty station/residence during an extended TDY travel assignment the employee is not authorized M&IE while they are at the duty station/residence.
- (vi) The employee will be reimbursed for the authorized per diem rate amount on the first and last day of their extended TDY travel assignment.

(vii) When an employee departs from their extended TDY travel assignment, they are not entitled to M&IE during their stay at the duty station/residence, however, lodging will continue to be paid on a daily basis at the extended TDY travel location. Normally, the employee should not checkout of their extended stay hotel when they depart for travel to another TDY travel location or to their duty station/residence.

(ix) The interruption of an extended TDY travel assignment for any period of time **does not** renew the first 30-day time period.

(x) The employee may return home at the Government expense for every continuous two weeks of extended TDY travel, provided that the extended TDY assignment will continue for at least one additional full week after the return to the extended TDY assignment.

(xi) The employee may be reimbursed for laundry/dry cleaning expenses during their travel.

(xii) The employee may be asked by the extended stay facility to sign a contract. Should this occur contact the TU for assistance and guidance.

(xiii) Reimbursement for costs associated with the termination of the extended stay facility lease at the convenience of the employee will not be reimbursed. Reimbursement shall occur due to the needs of the agency.

(xiv) While an employee is on an extended TDY detail they may be required to travel for that detail. Any secondary travel that is required is not subject to the reduced per diem rate and will need to be managed apart from the Extended TDY travel authorization. This will create an overlapping date warning that will have to be addressed, but the funding and authorizations will be on different travel documents. Example, an employee that is detailed to work in the office of external affairs for 120 days. During these 120 days the employee is required to travel to different states. These trips are not subject to the reduced per diem rate. An overlapping dates travel authorization and voucher will be created for each secondary trip.

(xv) The RD travel unit is required to be included in approval routing for all extended stay authorizations for compliance.

(2) Deductions from meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) when meals are provided. Refer to FTR Chapter 301-11.18 for specified amounts that the M&IE is to be reduced for each meal provided.

(3) Incidental expenses when meals and lodging are provided. When there is no charge to the employee for lodging or meals (i.e., lodging and meals are included in the cost of a meeting or training), the employee will be authorized a flat M&IE rate of:

- (i) \$3 per day for all other instances.
- (ii) The allowable reimbursement rate is determined by GSA. Current reimbursement rates can be obtained through [GSA's Web](#) site.

(f) Interruptions of per diem entitlement.

(1) Indirect route or interrupted travel. An employee will not be paid extra per diem for extra travel time incurred at the sole convenience or personal preference of the employee due to a deviation from the most direct or usually traveled route. Per diem paid may not exceed that which would have been paid had the employee traveled by the contract carrier for the most direct or usually traveled route.

(2) Return to official duty station for non-workdays. Employees may be authorized only per diem or actual expense and round-trip transportation expenses, for periodic return travel on non-workdays to their residence or official station when:

- (i) The agency requires the employee to return to their official duty station to perform official business; or
- (ii) The agency will realize a substantial cost savings by returning the employee to their residence; or
- (iii) Periodic return travel to their residence is justified incident to an extended TDY assignment.

(A) When an employee voluntarily returns to the official duty station or residence for nonworkdays, the maximum reimbursement for round trip transportation and per diem or actual subsistence is limited to what would have been allowed had the employee remained at the TDY and provided the TDY travel assignment is a duration of 15 consecutive regular business workdays (3 weeks). This travel must be completed outside regular duty hours.

(B) Reimbursements of expenses in relation to extended TDY travel assignments exceeding 1 year in duration will be considered taxable income by the Internal Revenue Service.

(3) Leave and nonworkdays.

(i) Employees will not receive per diem entitlements while in leave status.

(ii) When leave or compensatory time is requested and the leave time will occur during official travel, the employee shall obtain approval by their leave approving official or designee.

(iii) Any leave taken in conjunction with official travel will be noted on the travel authorization in the e-Gov travel system.

(iv) Per diem will not be paid when the employee is:

(A) In leave status at the end of the workday at the beginning of a workday, before a non-workday and at the beginning of a workday following the nonworkday(s); e.g., Friday and Monday; and

(B) The period of leave on either workday (e.g., Friday or Monday) is more than one-half of the employee's regularly prescribed working hours for that day.

(C) Employees are expected to be prudent when taking leave in conjunction with official travel. Travel must not be approved if the employee's leave accounts for more than 50% of the total travel time.

(g) Actual expenses. General guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapter 301-11, Subpart D](#) and [DR 2300-5, Section 3, paragraph \(d\)](#).

(1) Maximum allowed. Actual subsistence reimbursements must not exceed 300 percent of the locality's per diem rate. The Chief Operating Officer or delegated authority must approve actual subsistence reimbursements which exceed 150 percent of the per diem rate. The Enterprise Operations Division Director will approve travel involving actual expense up to 150 percent of the per diem rate. This approval can be re-delegated in writing from the COO.

(2) Approved in advance of travel. Actual expense requests must be approved in advance. Requests are to be sent to the TU with the [Request for Actual Expense Above Per Diem form](#). A written justification and cost comparison reflecting the name, telephone number, and room rate of at least three hotels for similar accommodations must be included from the Agency approved travel system. The justification must contain substitutive reasons why alternate hotels cannot be used if costs are not an issue. A justification including, networking, meeting with stakeholders, or after-hours socializing is not an acceptable reason. The approved request and supporting documentation must be added to the travel authorization as an attachment. It is the employee's responsibility to assure that every effort has been made to locate lodging within regular per diem rates. Employees can check the e-Gov travel system to determine if the Government rate is available within the TDY travel location.

(3) Post approval. Requests for post approval of actual lodging costs will only be approved on a case-by-case basis when pre-approval was not possible. Expense Above Per Diem will not be post approved for expenses that could or should have been foreseen or anticipated. The Agency does not have any requirements for personal "emergency" travel, so post approval must be carefully screened. Follow the request and approval procedures in paragraph (2) above for post approval requests. Responses requiring travel for natural disasters will be evaluated per incident.

(h) Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act requirements. Guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapters 300-3.1](#) and [301-11](#).

(1) Standards to meet the Act.

(i) Hotels three stories or lower must have hard-wired, single-station smoke detectors installed in each guestroom. Smoke detectors that are totally battery operated or those that have a cord that plugs into a wall outlet do not meet the Act.

(ii) Hotels more than three stories must have hard-wired, single-station smoke detectors PLUS an automatic sprinkler system installed in each guestroom.

(2) Compliance requirements.

(i) To ensure travelers stay in an approved facility that meet the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act, all lodging arrangements must be made through the e-Gov travel service contract provider that offers compliant and non-compliant hotels. When selecting a commercial lodging facility, first preference must be given to GSA contracted facilities, unless a condition in [FTR Chapter 301-11.11](#) exists.

(ii) The travel voucher must contain an accounting of the total number of overnight accommodations that did not meet the requirements of the Act. Approving officials will ensure this data is annotated in the notes section of the travel voucher in the travel system.

(3) Pre-booked Lodging for events or training.

(i) Travelers must ensure they follow the procedures for booking lodging when they have received approval to complete TDY travel to attend a training or conference event hosted by an outside organization, business partner, or other Government Agency.

(ii) The traveler must book the lodging through the e-Gov travel system or the Travel Management Contractor (TMC). If a block of rooms was reserved for the event, the reservation should be made as directed by the conference host. The traveler must upload a copy of the event instructions regarding the reservation of lodging as an attachment to their travel voucher. Travelers must still follow procedures for the approval of lodging which may exceed the authorized lodging rate.

§ 2036.12 Miscellaneous expenses.

General guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapter 301-11.12](#).

(a) Lodging taxes. Taxes are limited to the reimbursable lodging costs, unless exempted by the state or local jurisdiction. Exemptions from taxes for Rural Development travelers, and the forms required to claim them, vary from location to location. The GSA Homepage can be found at <http://GSA.gov>.

(b) Reimbursable fees. Fees for Government travel contract provider transactions, automated teller machine (ATM) withdrawals are reimbursable. Fees for ATM withdrawals will not be reimbursed for amounts that exceed the allowable limit.

(c) Laundry, pressing clothes, etc. Refer to [FTR Chapter 301-11.31](#). Expenses for laundry, dry cleaning and pressing of clothes at the CONUS only TDY travel location are reimbursable when the following requirements are met:

(1) Laundry service must take place while on official travel to be reimbursed and the employee must be in official travel status for two full weeks in order to claim this expense. The reimbursement for laundry expenses from the employee's area of residence after travel is completed is not allowed.

(2) A receipt, from the facility at the TDY travel site, must be provided to substantiate the claim and scanned into the travel system as an attachment to the travel voucher.

(3) The cost of the cleaning must be reasonable, as determined by the approving official.

(d) Receipt requirements. Receipts shall be submitted for **all** expenses claimed over \$75. This includes but not limited to, airfare, lodging, rental vehicle, baggage, laundry/dry cleaning, taxis, shuttles, ride share programs, tolls, POV mileage and parking.

(1) Receipts shall be uploaded to the travel system as an attachment to the travel voucher.

(2) An airfare estimate is not acceptable as the receipt. The airfare receipt that is emailed to the employee upon completion of travel must be included.

(3) A map documenting mileage must be added for POV mileage reimbursement. Documentation can be as shown in paper or electronic standard highway mileage guides (Ex: Map Quest or Google Maps), or the actual miles driven as determined from odometer readings (picture), [FTR 301-10.302](#).

(4) The traveler may be audited for any expense which the employee received reimbursement. If an expense is determined to be disallowed, the traveler will be required to pay back the Government.

§ 2036.13 [Travel of an employee with special needs](#).

(a) General guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapters 301-13](#).

(b) Reasonable Accommodation must be annotated in the travel authorization. No medical documentation should be attached to the travel authorization. Any reasonable accommodation should be applied for through the Human Resources office.

§§ 2036.14 - 2036.29 [Reserved]

§ 2036.30 [Emergency travel of employee due to illness or injury or a personal emergency situation](#).

General guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapter 301-30](#) and [ATR Section 3\(k\)](#).

(a) [Employee responsibility and documentation](#). The employee is responsible for contacting their supervisor as soon as possible. The TU is not responsible for notifying the employee's supervisor.

(b) [Family emergencies, illnesses, or injuries](#). The claim for emergency travel expenses must be listed on the travel voucher. A justification must be entered into the comments section of the travel voucher. The justification must specify the circumstances that caused the emergency travel. Emergency travel for a family emergency is limited to immediate family members only, or a minor for which the employee is the legal guardian. Immediate family members will include domestic partners as defined by the [FTR 301.30.2](#).

§§ 2036.31 - 2036.49 [Reserved]

§ 2036.50 Arranging for travel services.

General guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapters 301.50](#) and [301.73](#) and [ATR Section 3\(a\)](#). Rural Development employees must use the Government travel contract provider for official travel. Rural Development employees will be responsible for any additional costs that result from the use of an unauthorized travel agent or travel management system.

§ 2036.51 Paying travel expenses.

General guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapter 301-51](#) and [DR 2300-001](#). Employees must use their Government-issued travel charge card to pay for reimbursable travel expenses; i.e., air, rail, lodging, and rental cars.

(a) Government contract travel service provider. All employees who travel must use the e-Gov travel service provider contracted by the Government. There are no exceptions or waivers allowed. Employees must book their airline, hotel and car rental through the online Government travel system, [FTR 301-50.3](#))

(b) Centrally Billed Account (CBA). The CBA used by the current travel service provider to directly bill the Agency for common carrier transportation for those employees who do not have Government charge cards. The Travel Unit will complete an Interim Voucher for the common carrier cost and fees associated. The employee is responsible for completing the final voucher within 5 business days of completion of travel. The employee and approving official must ensure that the payment of the common carrier transportation is made to the CBA and not the employee's personal funds.

(c) Government charge cards. All employees must participate in the Government travel charge card program when travel is anticipated to be more than 4 times per year at the agency's discretion. Supervisors must counsel employees on appropriate use of the card and must sign the Acknowledgment & Acceptance Statement for travel charge cards. New travel card holders must complete the "[Annual Travel Charge Card Training](#)" module in AgLearn and the Cardholder Acknowledgment & Acceptance Statement. All existing travel credit card holders are required to complete the "[Annual Travel Charge Card Training](#)" module in AgLearn on an annual basis by the end of each calendar year. The following are exceptions to the mandatory issuance of the charge cards.

(1) New employees required to perform TDY travel in route to their first post of duty.

- (2) An employee who had the card canceled by the issuing bank.
- (3) Employees with personal credit worthiness issues concerning credit with the Government vendor; e.g., past or present credit problems or issues.
- (4) Employees who do not have a Government travel charge card and must perform official travel are still required to utilize the Government travel contract provider.
- (5) Employees who are delinquent must re-take the "Travel Charge Card Reinstatement Training." The employee must provide a copy of the completion certificate of the training to the TU within five days upon receipt of the delinquency notice.

(d) Charge Card Credit Limit Increase. All credit card limit increases must be requested, to the TU by the cardholder's supervisor, Deputy State Director, Administrative Programs Director or Management and Program Analyst (DSD/APD/MPA) prior to the travel, if possible and are based on mission requirements.

(e) The TU performs the responsibilities of Agency/Organization Program Coordinators (A/OPCs) These responsibilities for administering the program include:

- (1) Provide instructions and online applications to employees who qualify for the charge card.
- (2) Review charge card applications for completeness, including certification by the applicant's supervisor.
- (3) Ensure the employee completes the "Annual Travel Card Training," in AgLearn and signs the Acceptance and Acknowledgement Statement.
- (4) If the A/OPC identifies an employee Government travel charge card account as being delinquent or for misuse, the A/OPC notifies the employee, the employee's supervisor and Human Resources of the delinquency/misuse, using the TU email at rd.travel@usda.gov.
- (5) Reduce and monitor travel advances for eligible employees.
- (6) Promptly report to the USBank and the Travel Unit, any problems with the charge card, including lost or stolen cards.

(7) Ensure the charge card account is canceled, the card is destroyed, and the employee does not have an outstanding account balance due when an employee leaves, retires, or transfers to another agency outside of USDA. Travel charge cards go with the employee when transferring within USDA.

(f) Responsibilities of employees who have been issued a travel charge card:

(1) Mandatory use of the charge card for expenses incurred in connection with only official travel away from the duty station; i.e., commercial transportation, authorized car rental, and lodging. Personal items that are not reimbursable as official expenses may not be purchased using the charge card. Employees who use the charge card for inappropriate or non-official purposes will be subject to disciplinary action.

(2) Expenses exempt from mandatory use of the travel charge card are:

(i) Out-of-pocket expenses; e.g., laundry/dry cleaning, parking, tolls, telephone calls, local transportation systems, taxicabs, tips; and

(ii) Expenses covered by the M&IE portion of the Federal per diem allowance.

(3) Pay all valid bills in full by the due date shown on the billing statement, regardless of voucher status. Cardholders are responsible for resolving billing problems.

(4) Safeguard the charge card.

(5) The employee is responsible for notifying the charge card company if the card is lost, stolen, or for name and address changes.

(6) Return the card to the respective A/OPC or immediate supervisor when employee is reassigned to another organization or when employment is terminated.

(7) Notify the charge card company immediately if any un-authorized charges appear on the billing statement.

(8) Notify the supervisor and the TU of the un-authorized charges.

(9) Use of the travel charge card is prohibited by [DR 2300-001 Section 5, paragraph \(e\)\(10\)](#), to procure or pay for the following including but not limited to:

- (i) Book and Magazine Subscriptions;
- (ii) Membership Fees;
- (iii) Training and Conference Fees;
- (iv) Higher Education Expenses;
- (v) Theme Parks;
- (vi) Management Consulting Services;
- (vii) Automobile Purchases, Car Repairs and Services;
- (viii) Clothing, Lingerie, Outerwear, Shoes, and Furniture;
- (ix) Hair Services, Cosmetics, Tattoos, and Massages;
- (x) Emergency Medical Services;
- (xi) Office Supplies;
- (xii) Computers, Televisions, or Telecommunication Equipment;
- (xiii) Rental Global Positioning Systems; and
- (xiv) Any service or product obtained for personal, family, or household purposes.

(g) Automated Teller Machine (ATM). The ATMs are the primary method for obtaining cash advances for employees who have been issued the Government travel charge card. Employees whose accounts are in arrears or who have misused their travel charge card may be denied access. Surcharge and service fees for usage are reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense on the travel voucher. Cash advances are limited to a maximum of \$100 per day (domestic) and \$150 per day (international). Cash obtained from the ATM in amounts greater

than the amount required for the duration of travel is considered misuse. Cash advances are allowed no earlier than 3 calendar days before official travel. Cash advances are not to be used to procure common carrier transportation tickets; i.e., air, rail or bus. Acquiring cash advances for any purpose other than official travel expenses may result in disciplinary action. A copy of the ATM withdrawal receipt must be included as an attachment to the travel voucher. Fees will not be reimbursed for withdrawals which exceed the amount charged by the ATM.

(h) Travel advances. Employees who have not been issued the Government travel charge card may obtain a maximum amount of eighty percent of the amount estimated for travel costs as an advance of funds for out-of-pocket expenses. General guidelines for out-of-pocket expenses are in [FTR Chapter 301-51.200, Subpart C](#).

§ 2036.52 Claiming reimbursement.

General guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapter 301-52](#) and ATR Chapter 301-11.

(a) Receipt requirements. Receipts are required for all expenses plus any applicable over \$75. must be scanned into the travel system as an attachment to the travel voucher. Receipts for common carrier transportation, i.e., plane, train, or bus, are also required to be included as an attachment to the travel voucher. The airfare receipt is emailed to the employee upon completion of travel. The estimated airfare email notification sent to the employee when making travel arrangements is not a valid receipt.

(b) Signatures. Signatures are required for special justification requests. Original signatures or digital signatures are accepted. The approved request must be uploaded into the travel system as an attachment to the travel authorization.

(c) Approval. Employees are prohibited from approving their own travel. Authorizations and Vouchers are approved per the assigned routing list on the employee's profile in the e-Gov travel system.

(d) Fraudulent claims. False or fraudulent claims for reimbursement of TDY travel expenses will result in forfeiture of the claim. In addition, the employee is also subject to potential disciplinary action and criminal provisions under which severe penalties may be imposed. The results of attempting to defraud the Government are outlined in the [FTR 301-52.12](#).

(e) Temporary Duty Entitlements. TDY travel entitlements end when a traveler arrives back in the vicinity of their permanent duty station. TDY travel entitlements begin when a traveler arrives at the initial departure location and end when they return to that location. For example, an employee's return flight arrives at 10:00 p.m. and the employee arrives at their residence after midnight. The employee is not entitled to an additional day of M&IE.

§ 2036.53 Using promotional materials and frequent traveler programs.

(a) General guidelines are outlined in [FTR 301-53](#).

(b) Frequent traveler benefits (FTBs) programs.

(1) Rural Development employees participating in FTB programs may retain promotional items received conducting official travel, including frequent flyer miles, for personal use. These items must have been obtained under the same conditions as those offered to the public and at no additional cost to the Government. Employees are responsible for establishing their FTB accounts. Any associated costs, including taxes, will be paid by the employee and are not reimbursable expenses. Employees may redeem their FTBs to purchase personal travel or upgrade official travel, at no additional cost to the Government, without prior approval.

(2) All Rural Development employees will follow [FTR Chapters 301-10.123](#) and [301-10.124](#) governing upgrades to premium airline accommodations which will be paid for by Rural Development. Rural Development will not pay for any upgrades unless one of the exceptions listed have been met.

§§ 2036.54 - 2036.73 [Reserved]

§ 2036.74 Conference and training event planning.

Guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapter 301-74](#) and [ATR Section 3\(m\)](#).

(a) Compliance requirement. Conference and training events must be planned, organized and held at the most cost-effective location and in accordance with the [FTR Part 301-74](#) and [ATR Section 3, paragraph \(m\)](#). Factors such as per diem, transportation, and rental of conference rooms must be considered. A cost

comparison of at least three geographically diverse. Events must follow the [FTR 301-74.10](#) requirements to use FEMA approved locations. The splitting of a single event into multiple events to reduce threshold levels of approval that provide the same training or conference agenda is prohibited. All purchases for the event must be reflected in the cost estimate. The splitting of purchases with a government purchase card is prohibited.

(b) Approval of conference or training event. All requests for a conference or training event having a total agency cost exceeding \$20,000 must be approved in advance by OCFO as designated in the [ATR](#) to mitigate the risk of inappropriate spending by following levels of approval authority. Requests must include the following information:

- (1) Clearly written explanation of how the conference or training activity will help further the agency's mission.
- (2) Clearly written explanation why the information cannot be effectively shared through another means, i.e., teleconference.
- (3) Explanation that the number of attendees is justified.
- (4) A clearly written explanation whether the event will take place at a non-USDA Government facility or commercial facility. The location must be appropriate, and a prudent person would not think it a waste of tax dollars.
- (5) A detailed cost analysis reflecting cost comparisons near the majority of attendees.
- (6) An explanation why the event is necessary, considering limited budgets.
- (7) Certification that vendors' supplies, or services were selected through a competitive contracting process. Sole source contracts or no contract must include an additional justification.

[§§ 2036.75 - 2036.79 \[Reserved\]](#)

[§ 2036.80 Foreign travel](#).

General guidelines are outlined in [ATR, Section 3, paragraph \(g\)](#).

(a) Approval process for Foreign Travel:

(07-19-24) PN 619

(1) The employee is responsible for completing a foreign travel justification with a clearly worded explanation of the reason for travel, dates of travel, estimated cost and an explanation of how the trip will contribute to the Agency's mission. The Justification must be submitted to the TU six weeks prior to the proposed trip. Requests received less than six weeks before travel are not guaranteed approval and is an insufficient time to process passports

(2) The TU will submit the request to the Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development for review and approval/disapproval.

(3) Once approval is received, the TU, will work with the traveler to complete and submit the necessary paperwork to obtain passports or visas for the proposed trip.

(b) Politically appointed officials. All foreign travel by politically appointed officials of the Department, including Presidential appointees, members of the non-career Senior Executive Service, and Schedule C employees, must be approved by the Office of the Secretary.

(c) Delegations or individual career employees. All foreign travel by delegations or individual career employees must be approved by the Chief Operating Officer or delegated officials.

§ 2036.81 [Payment of expenses connected with the death of certain employees.](#)

Guidelines are outlined in [FTR Chapter 303](#).

(a) General procedures.

(1) An Agency representative will notify the family of the death and explain what costs the agency will pay.

(2) Generally, the family of the deceased will make the funeral arrangements and the agency will reimburse the funeral director for the preparation and transportation of the remains.

(3) Allow the family to choose the funeral director that will make the necessary arrangements. The funeral director will coordinate these arrangements with a funeral director at the TDY travel site.

(4) The funeral director should prepare a separate bill for the services, itemizing only those costs the Government will pay.

(5) The applicable office submits the itemized list to the certifying official for processing. The certifying official prepares Form AD-757, "Miscellaneous Payment System," which is sent to the NFC for processing.

(b) When deceased employee's agency must make the arrangements. The procedures for the preparation and transportation of the remains include preparing a Form AD-202, or an amendment to the deceased employee's existing authorization. Payment expenses, along with death-related expenses are authorized at the time of death, according to the [FTR 303-70](#).

§ 2036.82 [Reserved]

§ 2036.83 Passport issuance.

For official travel the Government issued passport must be used for foreign travel. In order for employees to obtain an official passport when the employee does not have one, the employee is responsible for following the steps listed below. There should not be a charge by the local post office or courthouse for processing an employee's official Government passport request. Any expenses the employee incurs, i.e., passport photographs or processing, may be reimbursed by submitting an [OF-1164](#) through their local office and Budget Analyst for payment through the electronic financial accounting system or attaching the expense to the associated travel voucher.

(a) Request for foreign travel. Employees are responsible for obtaining approval eight to ten weeks in advance for foreign travel. See § [2036.80](#) for requirements of approval.

(b) Form AD-121, Passport/Visa Request. Complete [Form AD-121](#) "Passport Request." This form is completed by the employee and submitted to the TU for processing. An [AD-121](#) must be submitted for each foreign travel authorization, at least three weeks in advance of foreign travel.

(c) Passport photographs. Submit two color official passport size (2 inch square) photographs taken within the last six months. Do not staple the photographs. Reimbursement for the cost of photographs can be obtained by submitting an [OF-1164](#) through their local office and Budget Analyst for payment through the

electronic financial accounting system or attaching the expense to the associated travel voucher.

(d) [Form DS-82, U.S. Passport Renewal Application for Eligible Individuals](#). If an employee possesses a valid U.S. personal passport, they must complete and sign the State Department [Form DS-82](#). Send a color copy of their personal passport to the TU. This form must come from the [Department of State website](#) so that the barcode is legible. All passport documentation must be processed through the TU not through the address on the application.

(e) [Form DS-11, Application for a U.S. Passport](#).” If the employee does not possess a U.S. personal passport, they must complete (but do not sign) the State Department [Form DS-11](#). This form must come from the [Department of State website](#) so that the barcode is legible. The employee takes the completed [Form DS-11](#) to their local U.S. Post Office or courthouse for administration of the oath. Employees located in the Washington D.C. metro area are administered the oath by the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) office. The employee must also provide an original birth certificate with raised seal. All passport documentation must be processed through the TU not through the address on the application.

(f) [Approval process](#). Once all documentation is received by the TU, a case is entered into the International Passports and Travel Tracking System (IPATTS) for processing by Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

(g) [Issuance of passport](#). Upon receipt of all required documentation, processing time is approximately eight to ten weeks for an official government passport.

(h) [Safekeeping of passport](#). Once travel is completed, the employee must return the passport within five business days to the FAS office for safekeeping until it is needed. The passport is the property of the U.S. Government and must be returned. If the traveler needs the passport for another trip it is coordinated through the TU using Form AD-121.

(i) Requesting an existing passport. The traveler must contact the TU to request an existing passport be returned for additional foreign travel. Requests must be made a minimum of two weeks in advance of travel.

§§ 2036.84 - 2036.99 [Reserved]

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(07-19-24) PN 619