

4 FAM 460 TRAVEL AND TRAVEL ADVANCE MANAGEMENT

*(CT:FIN-376; 11-01-2005)
(Office of Origin: RM/FPRA/FPMC)*

4 FAM 461 POLICY

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

This subchapter contains the fiscal policy related to travel claims, contracted charge cards, and travelers checks. The policy stated herein must be used in conjunction with those procedures set forth in 4 FAM 410, 4 FAM 420, and 4 FAM 430.

4 FAM 462 AUTHORITY FOR TRAVEL

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

22 U.S.C. 4081 or 5 U.S.C., Chapter 57 contains the statutory authority for the manner in which travel is performed and the expenses for which the traveler can be reimbursed. Officials responsible for financial management and administrative activities should use prudence and make businesslike decisions when applying these regulations.

4 FAM 463 TRAVEL ADVANCES

4 FAM 463.1 Authority for Travel Advances

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

The authority to grant a travel advance is in 5 U.S.C. 5705, as defined in the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), Title 41 CFR, Chapters 301-304. The purpose of a travel advance is to provide an employee authorized to travel at Government expense with funds to meet authorized travel expenses.

4 FAM 463.2 Applicability

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

- a. A travel advance may be issued as an EFT, U.S. Treasury check, cash, travelers checks, or third-party drafts (where authorized). A non-cash form for the advance is preferred where possible. It is issued to an employee who has proper identification and a valid travel authorization that cites the funds to be charged for the travel.
- b. The term "employee" is defined in 3 FAM 1100. Travel advances for Department-authorized travel may be issued to employees of other agencies or individuals traveling under invitational travel or to personal service contractors (PSC) as defined in 3 FAM 8000. The terms and conditions regarding access to and recovery of travel advances to a PSC must be included in the contract. Individuals who are not Government employees **may not** receive an advance of funds under this part.

4 FAM 463.3 Approving (Granting) of Advances

4 FAM 463.3-1 Amount of Advance and When To Apply

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

- a. An authorized traveler may be granted a travel advance for out-of-pocket travel expenses by the travel-authorizing official whenever 80 percent of the estimated expenses exceed \$100. The minimum domestic advance is \$100 when travelers checks are being issued. For a Foreign Service National employee, the approving officer may approve a lesser amount when warranted. The amount that may be advanced is the estimated out-of-pocket expenses and should be shown on all temporary duty (TDY) travel authorizations. The amount advanced **may not** exceed 80 percent of the estimated expenses minus the ticket.
- b. A travel advance is to be made before commencement of travel. A supplemental advance may be authorized en route only when an amended authorization extends the period of the travel, an emergency situation exists, or the post of departure has difficulty in obtaining U.S. dollars.
- c. Normally, a travel advance should be requested no earlier than 10 business days prior to travel departure when making a direct deposit to the traveler's account. An advance in cash, or where authorized in travelers checks, may also be made by an authorized cashier from the

cashier's operating cash advance in accordance with 4 FAM 390 and should be requested no earlier than 3 business days prior to travel departure.

- d. In addition, the certifying officer must be authorized to certify the travel costs for the accounts of the Department or agency being charged. When the regulations of the agency being charged with the advance are not available at the post, the provisions contained in this regulation apply.

4 FAM 463.3-2 Travelers With Government Contracted Individual Charge Cards (Charge Cards)

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

Domestically and where approved at posts, direct-hire or PSC employees who expect to travel more than five times a year must obtain and have a valid Government-authorized charge card; these employees will not receive a travel advance without a justification approved by RM/GFS or the post management officer. The suspension of the charge card because of the employee's non-payment or misuse is not a valid reason for issuing a travel advance (see 4 FAH-3 H-466). Misuse is defined as any use other than officially authorized travel.

4 FAM 463.3-3 Travelers Without Charge Cards

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

Travel advances for 80 percent of the total estimated per diem and miscellaneous expenses may be issued to employees assigned outside of Washington or when it is determined that the employee should not be issued a charge card or when an advance is approved for a cardholder.

4 FAM 463.3-4 Advance Exceptions

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

- a. Domestically, the appropriate bureau officer must provide the certifying officer specific written justification (such as traveling to a location where charge cards or travelers checks would be difficult to use or not accepted, or when a traveler has not been issued a charge card) to issue a travel advance. In addition, cardholders may be issued a TDY travel advance by check or in cash limited to 80 percent of the estimated out-of-pocket expenses where the issuance or sale of travelers checks is not available to the cardholder.

- b. The Comptroller General has defined a travel advance as a loan. Therefore, interest, penalty, and administrative charges may be assessed on amounts outstanding more than 30 calendar days after travel is completed.
- (1) Collection of the debt will be in accordance with the time frames set forth in 4 FAH-3 H-462 Exhibit H-462;
 - (2) If salary offset becomes necessary to collect the travel advance, the procedures set forth in 4 FAH-3 H-490 are applied;
 - (3) The notice provided to the traveler under 4 FAH-3 H-463.2 is deemed as the first notice under 4 FAM 492;
 - (4) Travelers who fail to repay outstanding advances within the required time may be subject to disciplinary action; and
 - (5) When travel is indefinitely postponed or canceled, any travel advance received must be repaid immediately.
- c. Travel advances issued to a PSC employee are recovered according to the terms and conditions included in each PSC contract, including offset against the contract.

4 FAM 464 TRANSFER ALLOWANCE ADVANCES

4 FAM 464.1 Authority

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

The authority to make an advance for transfer allowance and related relocation travel expense is provided in 22 U.S.C. 4081 and 5 U.S.C. Chapter 57. A transfer allowance may be advanced for the express purpose of providing an employee authorized post assignment travel at Government expense with the funds to meet allowed transfer expenses at the rates specified in the Department of State Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas) (DSSR).

4 FAM 464.2 Applicability

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

Advances of transfer allowances and related travel expenses (post

assignment travel/permanent change-of-station (PCS)) are calculated in accordance with Section 250 of the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR).

4 FAM 464.3 Types of Advances

4 FAM 464.3-1 Home Service Transfer Allowance (HSTA) Advances

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

HSTA is an advance of funds made to an eligible employee being assigned from a foreign post to a stateside assignment to defray relocation expenses. The amount advanced for the HSTA is limited to 80% of the amounts authorized in Section 250 of the DSSR and includes portions for miscellaneous and subsistence expenses. Subsistence expenses are limited to the prescribed maximum standard per diem rate within the Continental United States (CONUS).

4 FAM 464.3-2 Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA) Advances

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

FTA is an advance of funds made to an eligible employee being assigned to a foreign post. FTA includes portions of miscellaneous, pre-departure subsistence expenses. Pre-departure expenses are limited to the prescribed maximum per diem rate for the locality.

4 FAM 464.3-3 Miscellaneous Expense Allowance (MEA)

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

MEA is paid to an employee in accordance with DSSR sections 243 and 253 as a flat amount to defray various costs of transferring from one post of assignment to another. MEA is issued no earlier than 10 business days prior to departure and is charged to the account shown on the travel authorization. The employee must refund any MEA received if the transfer is not completed (see 4 FAM 490).

4 FAM 464.3-4 Quarters Allowance (QA) Advances

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

QA is an advance of funds that may be granted an employee at a foreign post of assignment. The DSSR cites the criteria and restrictions in Section 113. When a QA advance is granted, an accounts receivable must be established to control the repayment of such an advance. QA **is not** advanced domestically.

4 FAM 464.3-5 Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA) Advances

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

TQSA is an advance of funds that may be granted an employee under the same provisions, criteria, and controls established for QA advances (see 4 FAM 464.3-4). The application for payment is modified to fit the circumstances of TQSA advance. When an advance for TQSA is granted, an accounts receivable must be set up to control the repayment of such an advance.

4 FAM 465 TRAVEL CLAIMS

4 FAM 465.1 Traveler's Responsibility

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

Upon travel completion, each traveler is required to submit an expense report (voucher/claim) to account for the travel performed and for the related authorized costs. Travel is completed when the traveler arrives at the officially assigned post of duty or place of residence.

4 FAM 465.2 Accounting for Transportation

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

Travelers are responsible for the use and/or disposition of all tickets, Government Transportation Requests (GTRs), airline-denied boarding compensation checks, or promotional materials bought by GTR, Government Travel System (GTS), or other voucher.

4 FAM 465.3 Approving Official's Responsibility

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

a. Before a voucher claiming reimbursement of travel expenses is presented

for certification by the certifying officer, the voucher must be administratively approved by an official (see 4 FAM 424) who has a requisite personal knowledge that the travel was performed by the traveler during the period claimed or who is responsible for supervising the traveler.

- b. Administrative approval confirms that the traveler made the authorized trip and performed the expected official duties.
- c. Administrative approval of the travel vouchers by approving officials must be completed within 2 work days of the traveler submitting the voucher.
- d. When approving travel vouchers, officials who have been delegated authority to authorize or approve are required to ensure upon completion of travel:
 - (1) That the travel was performed as directed;
 - (2) That the items of expense claimed are appropriate, reasonable, and in accordance with applicable regulations; and
 - (3) That funds have been obligated to pay for the travel.

4 FAM 465.4 Prepayment Examination of Vouchers/Claims

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

Prior to certification, each travel reimbursement voucher is examined according to voucher audit standards. These standards include internal audits contained in Commercial Off-the Shelf (COTS) software used to automate the generation and processing of travel vouchers, as well as edits and controls present in the Department's financial management system(s) which process payment data from feeder systems.

4 FAM 465.5 Certification for Payment of Approved Claims

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

All processed travel vouchers are certified for payment in accordance with 4 FAM 430, on Voucher Schedule of Payments (SF-1166) or the electronic equivalent generated by the Department's financial management system(s). Certified payments are forwarded to Treasury or the servicing USDO, according to 4 FAM 434, so that the claim can be paid within 25 work days

after travel is completed. Vouchers are payable in U.S. dollars, except that in foreign areas, Locally Employed Staff are reimbursed in accordance with local currency laws.

4 FAM 466 GOVERNMENT CONTRACTED INDIVIDUAL CHARGE CARDS

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

The Department, through the General Services Administration (GSA) contract, authorizes the issuance and maintenance of charge cards to travelers.

4 FAM 467 GOVERNMENT-CONTRACTED TRAVELERS CHECKS

4 FAM 467.1 Authority

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

The Department, through the General Services Administration (GSA) contract, is authorized to maintain an inventory of travelers checks to issue or sell.

4 FAM 467.2 Applicability

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

Government-contracted travelers checks may be issued to travelers as authorized travel advances in lieu of cash or a Treasury check. In addition, travelers checks may be sold to travelers possessing a charge card. No fees are charged or collected for the travelers checks issued as travel advances. Fees will be charged for checks sold on charge cards. This is a miscellaneous reimbursable expense on the voucher.

4 FAM 468 CONGRESSIONAL TRAVEL

(CT:FIN-367; 12-07-2004)

- a. **22 U.S.C. 1754** authorizes using local currencies overseas for transportation, per diem, and other expenses for foreign travel for

members of Congress and Congressional staff. This authority establishes the appropriation to be charged as well as the authorizations and restrictions that are applicable to congressional delegations (CODEL) or staff delegations (STAFFDEL).

- b. Particular procedures pertain to Congressional travel only and include the rates to be paid, manner of payment, accounts charged, authorizations required, use and exchange of foreign currencies, and related reporting requirements.

4 FAM 469 EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL VOUCHERS

(CT:FIN-376; 11-01-2005)

- a. Payment or reimbursement of expenses incurred for Educational Travel, when authorized in accordance with *14 FAM 500*, may include actual expenses for transportation for the dependent child, authorized per diem at the maximum applicable rates, and transportation expenses for unaccompanied air baggage (UAB), up to the weight allowance of 113 gross kilograms, or 250 pounds.
- b. Employees who have been authorized educational travel may elect to store the dependent's UAB in lieu of transporting the UAB back to the dependent's post. Refer to *14 FAM 500*, *14 FAM 600*, and Department of State Standardized Regulation (DSSR) 285.1 for applicable guidelines regarding the cost of storage that may be claimed. When choosing this election, employees are responsible for making arrangements with local storage facilities to store the UAB and must pay all fees directly to the storage facility.
- c. Employees should refer to *14 FAM 500* before electing storage as an option to shipping dependent's UAB and must consult with post concerning documentation required for reimbursement. The employee is also responsible for obtaining an estimate of shipping the UAB to determine the maximum amount of reimbursement of storage vs. shipment of UAB. Claims for storage of UAB will be restricted to the lesser of the constructive cost of shipping UAB or costs of storing the UAB.
- d. The employee should request reimbursement for authorized Education Travel expenses at post and claim them via Form DS-189 (travel voucher). The reimbursement request must include all necessary receipts and reference the entitlement detailed on the post assignment travel (PAT) orders. The fiscal data charged for paying the claim will be the accounting data on the educational travel orders issued by the post for

this post-funded expense. These data must include the post allotment code, the associated appropriation symbol used to fund the educational travel, the obligation number, and budget object code 2162 (the code assigned to educational travel), as well as other relevant accounting data associated with educational travel orders.