Travel Authorization Review

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The following checklist details items Approvers must look for when approving travel authorizations and vouchers. | |
| **Site Details** | |
|  | |
|  | Verify that the employee is not traveling to their office location[1](#_bookmark0).  - Travel reimbursement for telework employees is **never** allowed when they are commuting to their office location, regardless of their telework location. [§ 301-11.1 When am I eligible for an allowance](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/subtitle-F/chapter-301/subchapter-B/part-301-11) [(per diem or actual expense)?](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/subtitle-F/chapter-301/subchapter-B/part-301-11)  If the employee is starting or ending a TDY trip from an *authorized telework location* a cost comparison is **not**  required. |
|  | Verify that a cost comparison is included if the following scenarios apply:   * The employee chose to start/end their temporary duty station (TDY) from a location for personal convenience or deviate from the authorized official travel route. Personal deviations may occur at the beginning or end of a TDY trip. The cost comparison should show what the employee chose to do versus what they should’ve done if personal deviations were not a factor. At a minimum, they should include the cost of the government contract fare (YCA) from the **authorized departure/return location** to the TDY location and back to the **authorized return/departure location**. * The employee chose to drive their POV to the TDY location, when the most advantageous method of transportation was common carrier (i.e., air, rail, GOV or rental car). |
| **Reservations** | |
|  | Verify that travel reservations, if required, are displayed in the Reservation section. If not, return the authorization to the traveler/arranger explaining that reservations must be included within the travel authorization to ensure proper automated ticketing occurs. |
| **Airfare** | |
|  | Verify that the air reservation Fare Type selected under the Reservation section is a government contract fare (YCA or -CA). If the airfare is not a contract fare and the Booked Airfare is higher than the contract fare shown in the City Pair Information section, verify there is a valid justification for the selection within the Remarks or Travel Policy Justification section. Valid justifications may include but are not limited to:   * No contract fare for city pair. * Contract flight space unavailable to meet the mission. |
|  | Verify the air cabin class is coach under the Travel Policy Justifications. If the cabin class is business or first, verify there is a valid justification for the traveler to use this class. Valid justifications may include but are not limited to:   * Special need or disability. * Outside the continental United States (OCONUS), flight time is more than 14 hours. |
|  | **Business and first-class airfare requires Operating Administration (OA) Chief Financial Officer (CFO) approval. Verify that approval is uploaded within the Attachment section.** |

1 Office location as shown in box 22 of the employee’s SF-50 June 2023

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rail** | |
|  | If the rail cabin class is flagged as other than coach under the Travel Policy Justifications, verify there is a valid justification for the traveler to use this class. Valid justifications may include but are not limited to:   * Coach class is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of the trip. * Special need or disability. |
|  | **Business and first-class airfare requires OA CFO approval. Verify that approval is uploaded within the Attachment section.**  **Note:** Beginning May 1, 2023, OA CFO approval will be required for Acela business-class fares. The existing approval requirements for other first and business-class air and rail services remain the same. |
| **Rental Car** | |
|  | If the rental car is flagged as other than an economy or compact under the Travel Policy Justification, verify there is a valid justification for the traveler to use this class. Valid justifications may include but are not limited to:   * Special need or disability. * Cost of the other class of vehicle is less than or equal to the cost of the least expensive compact car. * Additional room is required to accommodate multiple employees authorized to travel together in the same rental vehicle. |
| **Lodging** | |
|  | Verify the lodging amount does not exceed the per diem lodging rate for the TDY location(s) and that leave days are accurately accounted for to ensure lodging is not claimed while on leave. Per diem rates are automatically updated in E2 according to the GSA website: [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877.](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877) If the amount exceeds the per diem lodging rate for the TDY location, verify there is a valid justification for actual lodging within the Remarks or Travel Policy Justification section. Valid justification may include but is not limited to:  - Higher rate booked – no properties available within per diem.  **Note**: Approval for per diem rates may not exceed 300% of the established rates for the TDY location. |
|  | Verify that lodging is not being claimed for leave days. |
| **Meals and Incidentals (M&IE)** | |
|  | Verify M&IE amounts displayed in the Expense section are the correct per diem rates for the TDY location(s). Per diem rates are automatically updated in E2 according to the GSA website: [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877.](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877) |
|  | Verify that only 75% of the TDY locations’ M&IE per diem rates are displayed for the first and last travel dates. |
|  | Verify that M&IE is not being claimed for leave days. |
| **Remarks** | |
|  | If the employee is starting or ending a TDY trip from their telework location, verify that remarks have been added stating that they’re authorized to start/end TDY from an alternate telework location. |

# Travel Voucher Review

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Site Details** | |
|  | Verify that the employee is not traveling to their office location[1](#_bookmark1).  - Travel reimbursement for telework employees is **never** allowed when they are commuting to their office location, regardless of their telework location. [§ 301-11.1 When am I eligible for an allowance](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/subtitle-F/chapter-301/subchapter-B/part-301-11) [(per diem or actual expense)?](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/subtitle-F/chapter-301/subchapter-B/part-301-11)  If the employee is starting or ending a TDY trip from an *authorized telework location* a cost comparison is **not**  required. |
|  | Verify that a cost comparison is included if the following scenarios apply:   * The employee chose to start/end their temporary duty station (TDY) from a location for personal convenience or deviate from the authorized official travel route. Personal deviations may occur at the beginning or end of a TDY trip. The cost comparison should show what the employee chose to do versus what they should’ve done if personal deviations were not a factor. At a minimum, they should include the cost of the government contract fare (YCA) from the **authorized departure/return location** to the TDY location and back to the **authorized return/departure location**. * The employee chose to drive their POV to the TDY location, when the most advantageous method of transportation was common carrier (i.e., air, rail, GOV or rental car). |
| **Trip History** | |
|  | Verify that the travel authorization received final approval prior to the trip start date. If approval occurred after the trip start date, look for a justification explaining why approval was delayed. If no justification exists, reject the voucher with a comment requesting written justification from the traveler for the delayed approval.  - View Trip History to confirm |
| **Airfare** | |
|  | Verify the receipts for airfare are attached to the voucher in one of the following places:   * Attachments section of the voucher, or * An attachment under the Expenses section (notated in the Alerts column).   If the receipt shows first or business-class, verify that OA CFO Approval is attached to the voucher. |
|  | If the Booked Airfare cost is higher than the round-trip YCA fare, verify there is a valid justification for the selection within the Remarks or Travel Policy Justification section. Valid justifications may include but are not limited to:   * No contract fares are available in time to meet mission requirements. * Use of a contract fare would incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs. |
|  | Verify the air cabin class is coach under the Travel Policy Justifications. If the cabin class is business or first, verify there is a valid justification for the traveler to use this class. Valid justifications may include but are not limited to:   * Special need or disability. * Outside the continental United States (OCONUS), flight time is more than 14 hours. |
|  | **Business and first-class airfare requires OA CFO approval. Verify that approval is uploaded within the Attachment section.** |

1 Office location as shown in box 22 of the employee’s SF-50

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Rail** | |
|  | Verify the rail expense receipt(s) is uploaded in one of the following places:   * Attachments section of the voucher, or * An attachment under the Expenses section (notated in the Alerts column).   If the receipt shows first or business-class, verify that OA CFO Approval is attached to the voucher. |
|  | If the rail cabin class is flagged as other than coach under the Travel Policy Justifications or if the receipt indicates that other than coach class was used, verify there is a valid justification for the traveler to use this class. Valid justifications may include but are not limited to:   * Coach class is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of the trip. * Special need or disability. |
|  | **Business and first-class airfare requires OA CFO approval. Verify that approval is uploaded within the Attachment section.**  **Note:** Beginning May 1, 2023, OA CFO approval will be required for Acela business-class fares. The existing approval requirements for other first and business-class air and rail services remain the same. |

**Rental Car**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Verify the receipt for the rental car is uploaded in one of the following places:   * Attachments section of the voucher, or * An attachment under the Expenses section (notated in the Alerts column). |
|  | Verify that the receipt includes a GARS charge of $5/day and no additional insurance, fuel surcharges, or upgrades by reviewing the detailed receipt and Expenses section in the voucher.  **Note**: Insurance may be accepted during foreign travel but must be declined otherwise. |
|  | If the rental car is flagged as other than an economy or compact under the Travel Policy Justification or if the receipt indicates that other than an economy or compact car was used, verify there is a valid justification for the traveler to use this class. Valid justifications may include but are not limited to:   * Special need or disability. * Cost of the other class of vehicle is less than or equal to the cost of the least expensive compact car. * Additional room is required to accommodate multiple employees authorized to travel together in the same rental vehicle. |
| **Lodging** | |
|  | Verify the lodging receipt(s) is uploaded within the Attachments section of the voucher. |
|  | Verify the lodging receipt contains the following information:   * Receipt amount matches the amount claimed in the Expenses section of the voucher. * Traveler’s name on the receipt matches the name on the E2 profile. * Dates of the receipt are within the trip dates of the voucher. * Receipt must be itemized showing dates, location, daily rate, taxes, total amount billed, and must show zero dollars due. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Verify the lodging amount does not exceed the per diem lodging rate for the TDY location(s) and that leave days are accurately accounted for to ensure lodging is not claimed.   * Per diem rates are automatically updated in E2 according to the GSA website: [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877.](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877) * If the amount exceeds the per diem lodging rate for the TDY location, verify that the approval of the higher rate is documented within the Remarks or Travel Policy Justifications section.   **Note**: Approval for per diem rates may not exceed 300% of the established rates for the TDY location. |
|  | Verify that lodging is not being claimed for leave days. |
| **Meals and Incidentals (M&IE)** | |
|  | Verify M&IE amounts claimed in the Expenses section of the voucher are the correct per diem rates for the TDY location(s). Per diem rates are automatically updated in E2 according to the GSA website: [http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877.](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877) |
|  | Verify that only 75% of the TDY locations’ M&IE per diem rates are claimed for the first and last travel dates. |
|  | Verify that M&IE is not being claimed for leave days. |
| **Other Expenses** | |
|  | The Pay To option for Airfare and TMC fee expenses must have reimbursement directed to either Travel Charge Card or Agency Billed (depending on the form of payment used to pay for airfare).  - **If Traveler is displayed as the Pay To**, return the voucher to the employee to verify the form of payment used for airfare, and instruct them to correct the Pay To option accordingly and resubmit the voucher for approval. |
|  | Verify there are no third-party booking fees included in the Expenses section of the voucher (e.g., Expedia, Orbitz). |
|  | Verify foreign currency expenses are converted to USD amounts (i.e., expense amount claimed is not equal to foreign currency amount on expense receipt). |
| **Remarks/Attachments** | |
|  | If the employee is starting or ending a TDY trip from their telework location, verify that remarks have been added stating that they’re authorized to start/end TDY from an alternate telework location. |
|  | Verify that receipts are uploaded for any transportation (air, rail, rental car, bus), lodging and any other single expense of $75 or more in one of the following places:   * Attachments section of the voucher, or * An attachment under the Expenses section (notated in the Alerts column).   **Note:** Meal receipts are not required. |
|  | Invitational Travel Only (non-DOT employee):  - Verify signed/paper voucher uploaded within the Attachments section confirming invitational traveler acknowledges reimbursement amount. |

# Local Voucher Review

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Site Details** | |
|  | Verify that the employee is not traveling to their office location[1](#_bookmark2).  - Travel reimbursement for telework employees is **never** allowed when they are commuting to their office location, regardless of their telework location. [§ 301-11.1 When am I eligible for an allowance](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/subtitle-F/chapter-301/subchapter-B/part-301-11) [(per diem or actual expense)?](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/subtitle-F/chapter-301/subchapter-B/part-301-11) |
| **Other Expenses** | |
|  | If expenses are being claimed that are associated with a TDY travel, travel outside a 50-mile radius of the ODS, the local voucher should be rejected with instructions stating a supplemental voucher should be filed with the applicable TDY trip. |
|  | Verify that receipts are attached for individual expenses that are over $75. |

1 Office location as shown in box 22 of the employee’s SF-50