

Department of State International Travel & DSSR Allowances



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Agenda

We will cover—

- ❑ International travel as performed at Department of State under the Foreign Affairs Manual - FAM

- ❑ Allowances for U.S. Government employees under the Department of State Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas)—DSSR
 - ❑ The most common DSSR allowances—not a complete treatment





International Travel Under the FAM





Scope

- The FAM applies to all Foreign Affairs Agencies (as defined in the Foreign Service Act of 1980) :
 - U.S. Department of State
 - U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
 - Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - Foreign Commercial Service, U.S. Department of Commerce
 - U.S. Board of Broadcasting Governors
- However, some sections of the FAM apply only to Foreign Service Officers or Foreign Service Nationals. DOS employees must comply with the FTR where the FAM is silent.





PCS & TDY Travel

- PCS and TDY travel are conducted similar to other agencies...
 - Contract fares must be used if available.
 - PCS travel must be conducted in economy class accommodations (unless premium class is justified due to disability, security, etc.).
 - TDY travel (not for training) MAY be conducted in business class.
 - Combined shipment and storage of HHE allowance has been established at the statutory limit of 18,000 pounds, net weight for each employee, regardless of family status.



Additional Travel under the Foreign Service Act of 1980



- Home leave
- Representational travel
- Medical travel
- R&R
- Emergency evacuation
- Emergency visitation
- Travel of children of separated families



Premium Class Travel & the 14 Hour Rule



- The Department of State authorizes business class travel under the 14-hour rule IAW the provisions of the FTR
 - Traveling between the U.S. and OCONUS destination, and
 - Scheduled flight time wheels up to wheels down is greater than 14 hours, (including stopovers), and
 - You must report to duty immediately or no later than the following day.
- The FAM restricts use of the 14-hour rule for TDY (not for training)
- Must be authorized on both the travel order and a DOS request form signed by the agency's designated approving official(s).





Rest Stop

- Allowable on any scheduled flights in excess of 14 hours (unless specifically disallowed, i.e. R&R travel)
- Must be taken at a point on the direct, usually traveled route
- Must be included on the travel authorization
- Should be taken at the midway point in travel if possible
- If elect day pass for business class lounge, no rest stop provided
- Not authorized when traveling in premium-class accommodations (unless certified by medical authority) or when conducting indirect travel



Fly America Act and Open Skies Agreements



- General Rule – Must use a U.S. carrier for travel between the U.S. and a foreign point (even if more expensive or less convenient for the traveler).
- DOS/BBG/USAID employees on agency funded travel may use foreign flag for travel between two points abroad, including the foreign leg of a trip to/from the U.S.
- Open Skies Agreements exist with Australia, EU members, and Switzerland, but do not exempt use of American carriers if a city pair agreement is in place.





Code-Share Flights

- Results from agreement between a U.S. carrier & foreign carrier, i.e. United Airlines and Lufthansa.
- Qualifies as a U.S. flag service, provided the ticketing identifies the U.S. carrier's designator.





Foreign Allowances under the Standardized Regulations (DSSR)





Scope of the DSSR

- Derived from statute, the DSSR is a Government-wide “menu” of foreign allowances and benefits that agencies have the authority either to offer, or not to offer, their employees.
- Agencies also have authority to restrict eligibility for any DSSR allowance by means of their own implementing regulations. **An agency’s rules on DSSR allowances are the last word.** The Foreign Affairs Manual is an example of this for State.
- The DSSR is for foreign allowances and benefits what GSA’s Federal Travel Regulation is for travel.



Foreign Transfer Allowance

(DSSR 240)



Helps to defray an employee's costs to transfer to a post in a foreign area

Has four portions:

- Miscellaneous Expense
- Pre-departure Subsistence Expense
- Lease Penalty Expense
- Wardrobe Expense



FTA Miscellaneous Expense Portion (DSSR 242.1)



- Lump sum of \$500 without family or \$1000 with family; or one may itemize allowable expenses, with receipts, against ceiling higher than applicable flat amount
 - Itemize against one week's salary or that of GS-13/10 (whichever is less) when without family, or two weeks' worth of either (whichever is less) when with family



FTA Pre-Departure Expense Portion (DSSR 242)



- Up to ten days of subsistence anywhere in the U.S. prior to departure for foreign post
- Basis is per diem rate of the U. S. post from which employee is transferring
- Final departure must be made from the losing U.S. post
- Two claim methods: Partial Flat Rate and Total Actual Subsistence (method available is up to each agency)





FTA Lease Penalty and Wardrobe Portions (DSSR 242)

- Lease Penalty: Per terms of lease, or three months' rent, whichever is less
 - Employee to show due diligence: five criteria to meet (242.4)
- Wardrobe: Transfer must be from zone 1 to zone 3, or vice versa, to qualify (we publish post zones online)
 - Flat amounts based on family size (DSSR 242.2b)





Advance of Pay (DSSR 850)

- Up to three months' basic pay preceding, or on, arrival at a foreign post, or in certain medical emergencies outside the U.S.
- Implementing agency sets repayment rules and schedules.





TQSA on Arrival (DSSR 120)

- Reimburses temporary lodging, meals, laundry/dry cleaning in a foreign location on arrival/departure when permanent quarters are unavailable
(this is the foreign-post subsistence piece of the two DSSR transfer allowances)
- On arrival: up to 90 days, with another 60 if approved by the employing agency
- Based upon per diem rate for the foreign post; reimbursement reduces over time



Living Quarters Allowance

(DSSR 130)

- Where **no** USG-owned or -leased permanent housing is provided for employees, a Living Quarters Allowance can be granted for the rental of privately leased quarters
- To reimburse the cost of “suitable, adequate living quarters” at a foreign post
- Amount can vary with family size at post
- Maximum annual rates published by quarters group (2, 3, 4) based on grade/rank/family size (quarters group tables at DSSR 135.2)



Post (Cost of Living) Allowance (DSSR 220)

- To reimburse employees for added expense of serving at a high-cost post
- A percentage of *spendable income* by salary level **AND** family size (*not* entire salary)
- Based upon post's Retail Price Survey and comparison to prices in Washington, DC



Education Allowance

(DSSR 270)



- Reimburses employees for education of eligible family members (K-12) that is typically provided by U.S. public schools—
 - At-Post vs. Away-from-Post
 - Adequate vs. Inadequate
 - Special Needs Education
- Home Schooling





Educational Travel (DSSR 280)

- One round trip annually between a school (high school/baccalaureate/graduate level) and foreign post of assignment
- Travel may begin in either direction
- Eligibility ends at age 23 in most cases
- Educational Travel and Education Allowance are mutually exclusive



Separate Maintenance Allowance (DSSR 260)



- Reimburses the employee for the extra cost of maintaining a separate household away from the employee's foreign post
- Three types:
 - Involuntary: Family members not permitted at post
 - Voluntary: Family chooses to reside elsewhere
 - Transitional: Short-term subsistence "bridge" for family in certain situations
- Rates for SMA: DSSR 267.1



Hardship Differential/ Danger Pay (DSSR 500 and 650)

- **Post Differential:** For significant hardship conditions compared with general U.S. conditions.
- **Danger Pay:** For service where civil war, insurrection, terrorism or war threaten physical harm or imminent danger to the employee.
- **Percentage of basic salary.**



Hardship Differential/ Danger Pay (DSSR 500 and 650)



- Availability for temporary duty (TDY):
 - Post differential: May be paid to employee on TDY after 42 consecutive calendar days in hardship location(s) (DSSR 541).
 - Danger pay: May be paid to employee on TDY after four hours at danger pay location.





Difficult-To-Staff Incentive Differential (DSSR 1000)

- 15% of basic salary for hard-to-fill jobs at posts with at least 15% post differential.
 - Recruitment and retention incentive to fill overseas needs.
 - Employing agency decides.
 - Position-by-position, occupational specialty, or post-by-post.





TQSA Pre-Departure (DSSR 120)

- Reimburses temporary lodging, meals, laundry/dry cleaning on arrival/departure when permanent quarters are unavailable
(this is the foreign-post subsistence piece of the two DSSR transfer allowances)
- Pre-departure: up to 30 days, with one or two 30-day extensions
- Based upon per diem rate for the foreign post; reimbursement reduces over time



Home Service Transfer Allowance (DSSR 250)



- Helps to defray transfer costs from a foreign post to a post in the U.S.
- Three of four HSTA portions are identical to those under Foreign Transfer Allowance:
 - Miscellaneous, Lease Penalty, and Wardrobe
- But rate basis and period of time for HSTA Subsistence Expense stand apart



HSTA Subsistence Expense Portion (DSSR 252.3)



- Two claim methods: Actual Expense Reimbursement and Fixed Amount Reimbursement (method available is up to each agency)
- Actual Expense method (used by DOS): Basis is standard CONUS per diem; 60 days routinely allotted, with amounts reducing in second month; additional 60 days may be granted on case-by-case basis





Resources - Travel

- Employing agency's regulations and policies
- Foreign Affairs Manual
- FTR, JFTR, JTR
- DOS Travel Internet Homepage:
<http://www.state.gov/m/a/c8026.htm>



Resources – Official Passports/ Visas



- Direct questions to DOS Special Issuance Agency.
 - Phone: (202) 955-0198 / 0414
 - Visa Section: CA-PPT-SIA-VISA@state.gov
 - Diplomatic Travel: CA-PPT-SIA-DiplomaticTravel@state.gov
 - Official Travel: CA-PPT-SIA-Official-Travel@state.gov
- Website: www.travel.state.gov





Resources - Allowances

- Office of Allowances Homepage:
aoprals.state.gov
- Allowance Rates by Type and Location
- Foreign Per Diem by Location
- Standardized Regulations (DSSR)
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Contact information



Questions?

