



# Department of Veterans Affairs

## Financial Policy

### Volume XIV

#### Travel

### Chapter 5

## Travel Under Special Circumstances

Approved:

---

**Jon J. Rychalski**  
Assistant Secretary for Management  
and Chief Financial Officer

0501 OVERVIEW ..... 2

0502 POLICIES ..... 2

    050201 GENERAL RULES..... 2

    050202 ILLNESS, INJURY OR PERSONAL EMERGENCY WHILE ON TRAVEL... 2

    050203 EXPENSES FOR EMPLOYEES WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS5

    050204 WITNESS TESTIMONY TRAVEL..... 5

    050205 DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE WHILE IN TDY TRAVEL STATUS ..... 6

    050206 TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR THREATENED LAW ENFORCEMENT  
            OFFICERS/INVESTIGATIVE EMPLOYEES ..... 7

0503 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES ..... 10

0504 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ..... 10

0505 PROCEDURES ..... 13

0506 DEFINITIONS..... 13

0507 RESCISSIONS..... 17

0508 QUESTIONS ..... 17

0509 REVISIONS..... 18

APPENDIX A: FEDERAL TRAVEL REGULATION REFERENCES ..... 20

APPENDIX B: WITNESS TRAVEL..... 21

APPENDIX C: PROCEDURES FOR THREATENED LAW ENFORCEMENT  
            OFFICERS/INVESTIGATIVE EMPLOYEES ..... 22

APPENDIX D: THREATENED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS OR  
            INVESTIGATIVE EMPLOYEES - MAXIMUM DAILY PER DIEM  
            EXPENSES FOR ACCOMPANIED TRAVEL..... 23

## **0501 OVERVIEW**

This chapter establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) financial policies and procedures regarding traveling under special circumstances. The chapter implements and supplements those portions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) pertaining to Temporary Duty Travel (TDY). The FTR is the Federal Government regulation that implements statutory requirements and Executive Branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense (41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Chapters 300 through 304).

This chapter provides guidance on:

- General Rules – Section 050201 below.
- Illness, Injury or Personal Emergency While on Travel – Section 050202, page 2.
- Special Needs Travel – Section 050203, page 5.
- Witness Travel – Section 050204, page 5.
- Death of an Employee While in TDY Travel Status – Section 050205, page 6.
- Travel Expenses for Threatened Law Enforcement Officers or Investigative Employees – Section 050206, page 7.

Refer to Appendix A, Federal Travel Regulation References, for applicable FTR references for various subjects covered in this chapter.

## **0502 POLICIES**

### **050201 GENERAL RULES**

A. When possible, VA travelers will obtain pre-approval to incur travel-related costs while travelling under special circumstances. However, when travelers encounter special extenuating circumstances, such as an illness, injury or personal emergency while on TDY travel, and are unable to obtain pre-approval, they may request post-travel approval.

B. VA may only reimburse travel-related costs for travelling under special circumstances when the traveler has requested post-travel approval and the Approving Official (AO) has determined that the traveler acted reasonably and responsibly in incurring the costs.

### **050202 ILLNESS, INJURY OR PERSONAL EMERGENCY WHILE ON TRAVEL**

A. VA may pay for transportation and per diem expenses if travelers either interrupt or discontinue their TDY travel before completion, due to any one of the following special circumstances:

- An incapacitating illness or injury that occurs suddenly for reasons other than personal misconduct;
- The death, serious illness, or serious injury of an immediate family member;
- A catastrophic event at their official station, TDY location, or stopover, such as a fire, flood, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, or other natural catastrophe, for which no one is liable because experience, foresight, or care could not prevent; or
- Other miscellaneous identifiable causes.

**B. Traveler's Responsibility and Documentation.**

1. Travelers who are incapacitated due to illness or injury or who have been informed of an emergency that interrupts a TDY assignment will contact the AO for instructions on the travel authorization. If the travelers cannot make timely contact, they will notify the AO as soon as practicable.

2. Travelers will attach a statement to their travel voucher explaining the reason required for the emergency travel. The appropriate AO will review the statement and either approve or deny the request.

**C. Procurement of Transportation.**

1. To the extent possible, travelers will use the discount fares offered by contract air carriers and other reduced fares available to Federal travelers on official business.

2. If the traveler is authorized emergency return travel from the point of interruption or discontinuance of the assignment to the official station, VA or the traveler may purchase appropriate transportation services.

3. If appropriate, the traveler should arrange for emergency return travel using the unused return portion of the round-trip tickets initially purchased for the travel assignment. If any unused tickets remain after completing the emergency return travel, VA or the traveler must request a refund.

**050202.01 Illness or Injury of a VA Employee Traveler.**

VA will pay the travel and transportation costs if a traveler on official business travel becomes incapacitated due to an illness or injury. VA will pay the travel and transportation costs for travelers to return to their official stations or to an alternate location for treatment.

A. Person Attending to an Incapacitated Traveler. VA will pay for an attendant for the traveler if medically necessary, based on written documentation from the attending physician. The cost of round trip transportation from the official duty station to the TDY location or alternate medical location will be reimbursed. VA attendants will use VA's E-Government Travel Service (ETS) to prepare travel authorities and expense reports for

reimbursement of both transportation and per diem. However, non-VA attendants will only be reimbursed for transportation expenses.

B. Continuation of Per Diem Due to Incapacitating Illness or Injury. VA will allow per diem if the traveler has an incapacitating illness or injury while on TDY travel and is required to take annual or sick leave. The per diem allowance may not exceed the rate allowed for the location where the illness or injury occurs, and the total period may not exceed 14 calendar days. VA may approve a longer period, however, if the traveler submits a request.

C. Limitations on Per Diem. VA will not pay per diem if the traveler is confined to a medical facility or reimbursed for hospital expenses under any Federal statute—including hospitalization in a VA or military hospital—other than 5 U.S.C. 8901-8913 (Federal Employees Health Benefits Program). If per diem was paid in this situation, VA will collect it from the traveler.

D. Travel to an Alternate Location for Medical Treatment and Return to the TDY Assignment.

1. VA may reimburse certain excess travel costs for the traveler to obtain medical services and then return to the TDY assignment. Travelers will contact the appropriate AO to receive approval prior to interrupting a TDY assignment for medical treatment in order to travel to an alternate location. Travel to the nearest medical facility or hospital capable of treating the employee's illness or injury will not be considered an alternate location for per diem purposes. The TDY location on the travel authorization will not change. Refer to paragraph 050604 for the definition of an alternate location.

2. VA may authorize reimbursement for the excess difference, if any, between actual costs and the constructive costs of round-trip travel between the official station and the alternate location.

E. Should a traveler be incapacitated, requiring their travel claim be alternately submitted, the employee's guardian or fiduciary, appointed under applicable State or other law, respectively, is authorized to sign a hard copy of the travel claim on behalf of the incapacitated employee.

Reference VA Financial Policy [Volume XIV Chapter 1, Travel Administration](#), for policy and procedures on alternate submission of an incapacitated employee's travel claim.

050202.02 Personal Emergency. VA may approve transportation and per diem expenses for a traveler who discontinues a TDY assignment because of a personal emergency. A personal emergency may be the death or serious illness/injury of an immediate family member; a catastrophic event; or other immediate causes. The traveler will request approval, if feasible or possible, from the appropriate AO or alternate prior to discontinuing the TDY.

A. VA may decide it is in the Government's best interest to return a traveler to the TDY location when the personal emergency has been resolved. The return to TDY will be considered a new travel assignment at Government expense and will require a new travel authorization.

B. VA may allow reimbursement for certain excess travel costs (transportation and per diem) to the same extent allowed for an incapacitating illness or injury. Refer to paragraph 050202C above.

### **050203 EXPENSES FOR EMPLOYEES WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEED**

A. VA may pay for a variety of travel expenses, as needed, in order to provide reasonable accommodations for a traveler with a disability or special needs. Refer to VA Financial Policy Volume XIV Chapter 3, Transportation Expenses, for additional information on other than coach class travel requirements.

B. An AO may approve payment of any expenses deemed necessary to accommodate a traveler with a disability or special need,<sup>1</sup> including, but not limited to, the following:

- Transportation and per diem is authorized for an attendant accompanying the traveler. Written justification of the medical necessity for the attendant is required from the employee's physician ([5 U.S.C. 3102](#));
- Specialized transportation for the traveler to, from, and/or at the TDY location;
- Specialized services provided by a commercial carrier necessary to accommodate the traveler's disability or special need;
- Costs incurred as a direct result of the traveler's disability or special need for baggage handling at a public transportation or lodging facilities;
- Renting and/or transporting specialized assistance equipment, such as a wheelchair, needed in transit or at the TDY location; and
- Other than economy/coach class accommodations, when necessary, to accommodate a traveler with a medical disability or special need.

### **050204 WITNESS TESTIMONY TRAVEL**

A. VA may pay per diem and transportation allowance to current and former VA employees when they are:

1. Requested to appear as a witness in any judicial or agency proceeding;
2. Summoned, subpoenaed, or authorized to appear as a witness in any judicial or agency proceeding;

---

<sup>1</sup> A traveler with a special need should be treated the same as an employee with a disability. VA must determine that additional travel expenses are necessary to accommodate the traveler's needs.

3. Assigned by VA to testify or produce official records on behalf of the Government;
  4. Required to testify in their official capacity; or
  5. Required to produce official records on behalf of a party other than the Government.
- B. Refer to Appendix B, Witness Travel, for information on the travel funding authority.
- C. If the court authority, or other party, causing a traveler to be summoned as a witness on behalf of a party other than the Government, pays any of the travel expenses directly to the employee, VA will deduct the payment from the amount due to the traveler under the travel authorization.
- D. VA will not issue a travel authorization for a traveler summoned for jury duty. Travel expenses for jurors in a Federal court are reimbursed from funds appropriated to the Federal judiciary.

#### **050205 DEATH OF AN EMPLOYEE WHILE IN TDY TRAVEL STATUS**

- A. In the event a traveler dies while in TDY travel status, the traveler's immediate supervisor, or designee, will notify the next of kin or legal representative and coordinate payment of allowable expenses. If the next of kin of the deceased employee chooses to invoke Veterans status for the deceased, refer to the VHA Procedure Guide [1601B.04 Decedent Affairs](#) and/or [38 C.F.R. Part 12](#) for additional information.
- B. VA will cover all of the authorized costs associated with the TDY assignment that the traveler was performing at the time of his or her death.
- C. Secretary of Veterans Affairs (SECVA) has designated the Deputy Secretary (DEPSEC), Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Other Key Officials (OKOs) with the authority to authorize reimbursement of death-related expenses for an employee or an employee's immediate family member residing with the employee outside the continental U.S. (OCONUS), under the authority in FTR §§ 303-70.301; 303-70.500. No further re-delegation is authorized. Refer to VA Financial Policy Volume XIV Chapter 1, Travel Administration, for the SECVA Memorandum, "Delegation of Authority for Travel and Conferences".
- D. VA may reimburse any or all of the following costs, in accordance with the FTR § 303-70-1:
- Transportation, lodging, meals, and incidental expenses for up to two individuals, as determined by the employee's family, to escort the remains of the deceased;<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Escorts may be family members, friends or VA employees. Non-VA employee escorts will follow the guidelines in VA Financial Policy Volume XIV Chapter 1, Travel Administration, regarding invitational travel to claim reimbursement of travel expenses.

- Shipping costs to return the traveler's baggage to his or her permanent duty station or residence paid with the VA Government purchase card;
- Transportation costs for the return of the traveler's family and household goods when the traveler was serving at an Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) permanent duty station; or
- Preparation and transportation of the remains of the deceased as referenced in FTR §303-70.200. These expenses may be paid with a VA Government purchase card.

E. The employee's official station will cancel reservations and arrange for the return of a rental car, as necessary. The official station will contact the rental car company to determine the best way to ensure the return of the rental car in compliance with the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement.

F. The official station will work with the AO to ensure that required actions are completed in ETS on behalf of the deceased traveler, including updating the bank information in accordance with the deceased employee's executor/administrator as needed to ensure the travel reimbursement will be sent to the appropriate bank account prior to authorizing the travel claim. A copy of the employee's travel card statement may be used in lieu of unavailable receipts. The employee's executor/administrator of his/her estate that has been appointed pursuant to applicable state law is authorized to sign and date a hard copy of the travel claim to certify on behalf of the deceased employee.

Reference VA Financial Policy [Volume XIV Chapter 1, Travel Administration](#), for procedures for alternate submission of a travel claim.

## **050206 TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR THREATENED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS/INVESTIGATIVE EMPLOYEES**

050206.01 Agency Responsibility and Delegation of Authority.

- A. SECVA has delegated the DEPSEC, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and OKOs with the authority to authorize payment of certain transportation and other expenses for an employee's immediate family upon the death of an employee as a result of personal injury sustained while in the performance of the employee's law enforcement duties, with no further re-delegation authorized. Refer to FTR § 303-70.700. Refer to VA Financial Policy Volume XIV Chapter 1, Travel Administration, for the SECVA Memorandum, "Delegation of Authority for Travel and Conferences".
- B. The AO will seek advice from VA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) to review requests for payment of subsistence and certain transportation expenses for threatened travelers whose lives have been placed in jeopardy as a result of their assigned duties and who, as a protective measure, are moved to temporary living accommodations at or away from the official station within or outside of the Continental United States (CONUS). Refer to Appendix C, Procedures for



Threatened Law Enforcement Officers or Investigative Employees, for additional information.

- C. The AO will forward requests for authorization of expenses to the Secretary, describing the circumstances of the travel and certifying the necessity. The Secretary may not further delegate this authority (FTR, Part 301).
- D. Eligible individuals for allowances in FTR Part 301 are:
1. VA employees serving in law enforcement, investigative, or similar capacity, or other Federal employees detailed into these capacities for special law enforcement or investigational purposes;
  2. Any member of the traveler's immediate family; and
  3. Other extended family members of either the traveler or the traveler's spouse on a case by case basis.

Refer to Appendix D, Threatened Law Enforcement Officers or Investigative Employees – Maximum Daily Per Diem Expenses for Accompanied Travel, for additional information on maximum per diem rates.

E. VA will prepare a travel authority and give priority consideration when the life-threatening situation is expected to be temporary (normally not greater than 60 days) and the only feasible alternative is to transfer the travelers to a new official station. The AO will make the final decision about the length of such payments, based on the specific nature and potential duration of the life-threatening situation and the alternative costs of a change of official station for protective purposes.

F. VA will evaluate the risk of threatened individuals and reevaluate the situation every 30 days to determine whether an extension of the time limit is warranted. When a situation appears to be life-threatening, VA will:

- Take any action necessary to protect the eligible individuals;
- Determine whether removal from the official station or residence is warranted;
- Seek assistance from the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice (DOJ) in determining the degree and seriousness of the threat;
- Assess the situation and the advice of VA's General Counsel, if requested, regarding whether protective action should be initiated, or continued, if already undertaken;
- Determine the amount of subsistence and transportation expenses that will be approved; and
- Base authorization of expenses on the nature of the threat. Expenses need not be authorized if VA determines the threat does not warrant payment.

G. Limits on Duration of Temporary Living Accommodations.

1. VA will make subsistence payments as soon as the decision is made to invoke the provisions of FTR Part 301 in a particular situation. Subsistence payments may be allowed for a period of no more than 60 days. VA may, however, approve extensions of the time period, if warranted.

2. If deemed necessary, a traveler may move to temporary accommodations while the assessment, degree, and seriousness of the threat are being considered. Payments for subsistence may be allowed for this period, even if VA ultimately determines that the threat is not serious, or no longer exists, and decides to return the traveler to his or her home.

3. If temporary living accommodations are expected to exceed 120 days, VA will consider whether or not to relocate the traveler permanently, if that action would be advantageous to the Government, and the traveler, given the specific nature of the threat, the continued disruption of the family, and the alternative costs of a change of official station.

#### H. Location of Temporary Living Accommodations.

1. The temporary living accommodations may be located within the vicinity of the traveler's official station or at an alternate location away from the official station, as circumstances warrant. When justified, the traveler and immediate family members may occupy temporary living accommodations at different locations. VA will designate the appropriate location.

2. The AO may approve the payment of transportation expenses when a situation requires the employee and/or members of the immediate family to be temporarily relocated to a place away from the employee's official station or designated post of duty. Transportation to and from the location must be in accordance with the governing provisions of FTR Part 301, unless VA specifically approves a deviation from the rules for security reasons.

3. Payments under this authority are intended to cover only reasonable and necessary subsistence expenses actually incurred incident to the occupancy of temporary living accommodations. VA will limit payments to:

- Lodging Costs,
- Certain expenses for meals, laundry, and dry cleaning of clothing if the temporary living accommodations are not equipped with kitchen or laundry facilities, or VA determines that payment of such expenses is warranted, or
- Actual subsistence, if warranted, but not per diem allowance.

#### I. Determining Allowable Lodging Costs and Expenses.

1. The same costs allowed for lodging facilities obtained in connection with TDY travel may be allowed for temporary living accommodations. Refer to VA Financial Policy Volume XIV Chapter 2, Travel Per Diem, for additional information.

2. When an eligible individual rents lodgings for temporary occupancy on other than a daily basis, the allowable costs will be converted to a daily basis, using the general guidelines that apply to lodgings obtained in connection with TDY travel.

3. Costs of food, laundry, and cleaning of clothing are expenses incurred as part of day-to-day living. These expenses are the responsibility of the traveler and normally will not be reimbursed. However, VA may allow certain expenses, deemed appropriate, if temporary living accommodations do not contain cooking and/or laundry facilities, or other extenuating circumstances are present.

**J. Itemization and Receipts.**

1. The traveler will itemize actual expenses in a manner that will permit a review of, at a minimum, the amounts spent daily for lodging, meals, and other allowable items of subsistence expenses. Receipts are required at least for lodging and any other allowable expenses of \$75.00 or more.

2. In instances when documentation might compromise the security of the travelers involved, the AO may waive all but absolutely essential documentation requirements.

3. VA may advance funds for subsistence and transportation expenses covered under FTR Part 301. The advance of funds will be at intervals prescribed by VA but for no more than a 30-day period at a time. The amount of the advance will not exceed an amount based on the daily limitations that VA has established.

**0503 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES**

050301 [5 U.S.C. 3102, Employment of Personal Assistants for Handicapped Employees](#)

050302 [5 U.S.C. 5751, Travel Expenses of a Witness](#)

050303 [5 U.S.C. 8901-8913, Federal Employees Health Benefits Program](#)

050304 [FTR Chapters 300-304](#)

**0504 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

050401 The Assistant Secretary for Management/Chief Financial Officer (ASM/CFO) oversees all financial management activities relating to the Department's programs and operations, as required by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 and 38 U.S.C. 309. Specific responsibilities include the direction, management and provision of policy guidance and oversight of VA's financial management personnel, activities and operations. The ASM/CFO establishes financial policy inclusive of travel, systems and

operating procedures for all VA financial entities and provides guidance on all aspects of financial management.

050402 DEPSEC, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and OKOs have been delegated the following authorities by the SECVA, with no further re-delegation authorized:

1. To authorize reimbursement of death-related expenses for an employee or an employee's immediate family member residing with the employee outside the continental U.S. (OCONUS) per FTR § 303-70.301; 303-70.500.
2. To authorize payment of certain transportation and other expenses for an employee's immediate family to an alternate residential destination upon the death of an employee as a result of personal injury sustained while in the performance of the employee's law enforcement duties, per FTR § 303-70.700.

050403 Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Chief Financial Officers, Finance Officers, Chiefs of Finance Activities, Chief Accountants and Other Key Officials are responsible for ensuring compliance with the policies and procedures set forth in this chapter and will designate one or more persons to answer questions pertaining to the preparation of temporary duty travel and permanent change of station authorities and vouchers.

050404 The Office of Financial Policy (OFP) provides Department-wide financial policy and guidance. The Office of Financial Business Operations' Travel Policy staff develops, coordinates, issues, evaluates and reviews Departmental travel policies and procedures for compliance with all financial laws and regulations.

050405 Approving Officials (AO) will:

- A. Authorize only official travel for travelers under their jurisdiction in advance of the travel.
- B. Determine if the travel is essential for the purpose of carrying out the mission of VA.
- C. Ensure all travel is authorized and performed consistent with the FTR, 41 C.F.R. 301-304, VA travel policy, and other agency-specific guidance relating to travel issues.
- D. Ensure adequate funds are available before authorizing travel.
- E. Ensure all travel is performed in the most economical and effective manner.
- F. Ensure VA's ETS is used to prepare, process, approve, and route travel authorizations and vouchers for official temporary duty travel, including the requirement to use the ETS for making reservations.

G. Examine expense reports to ensure the justification, supporting documentation and receipts are attached and to ensure that travel for which reimbursement is claimed was performed as authorized and that split-pay was used to pay for all authorized expenses made to the card.

H. Authorize actual expense up to 150 percent for travelers under their jurisdiction if appropriate.

I. Ensure travelers under their jurisdiction complete vendorizing forms for establishment in VA's ETS. The ETS is used to process travel payments electronically, file expense reports with electronically attached receipts, and comply with the travel card program guidelines.

050406 Travelers will:

A. Be knowledgeable of the Federal Travel Regulation, VA travel policy, and any other agency-specific guidance relating to travel issues.

B. Minimize costs of official travel by exercising the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business will not be reimbursed and are not acceptable under this standard. Travelers will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference for convenience.

C. Ensure travel is authorized by the AO prior to departure.

D. Arrange travel using VA's ETS, including reservations for transportation, lodging, and rental cars, unless an exception applies.

E. Cancel transportation and lodging reservations timely.

F. Claim and obtain, where applicable, exemptions of tax imposed on hotel accommodations in locations listed in the Federal Acquisition Service's (FAS) GSA SmartPay Website. Only certificates issued by the locality granting the exemption may be used.

G. Submit claim for reimbursement of expenses within 5 business days upon return to the official station, except for travelers in an extended travel status. Travelers in an extended travel status will submit expense reports at least once a month when the travel period exceeds 30 days. Local expense reports may be submitted monthly or quarterly.

H. Identify and liquidate travel advances.

I. Comply with VA's Travel Charge Card Program guidance contained in VA Financial Policy Volume XVI Chapter 2, Travel Charge Card.

## **0505 PROCEDURES**

Procedural and other guidance to assist the traveler can be found either in Section 0502 Policies or in the following appendices:

- Appendix A: Federal Travel Regulation References.
- Appendix B: Witness Travel.
- Appendix C: Procedures for Threatened Law Enforcement Officers or Investigative Employees, and
- Appendix D: Threatened Law Enforcement Officers or Investigative Employees - Maximum Daily Per Diem Expenses for Accompanied Travel.

## **0506 DEFINITIONS**

050601 Abode. The place where an individual resides, e.g., home, hotel, apartment.

050602 Actual Costs. The transportation expenses incurred, plus en route per diem, for the traveler as actually performed from the point of interruption to the alternate location and from there to the TDY assignment. No per diem is allowed for any time spent at the alternate location if the traveler was confined to a medical facility.

050603 Actual Expense. Payment of authorized actual expenses incurred, up to the limit prescribed by the Administrator of GSA or agency, as appropriate. Entitlement to reimbursement is contingent upon entitlement to per diem, and is subject to the same definitions and rules governing per diem.

050604 Alternate Location. A destination other than the traveler's official station or the point of interruption while on TDY travel. In the case of illness or injury of the employee, the nearest hospital or medical facility capable of treating the illness or injury is not considered to be an alternate location. For example, an employee becomes incapacitated during TDY and travels from his or her current location to another city or locality to seek specialized treatment.

050605 Approving Official (AO). A supervisor at least one level above the traveler, who is entitled to pre-authorize TDY travel and approve related entitlements.

050606 Calendar Day. Calendar day means the 24-hour period from one midnight to the next midnight. The calendar day technically begins one second after midnight (reflected in this part as 12:01 a.m.) and ends at 12:00 midnight.

050607 Constructive Costs. The sum of transportation expenses that would reasonably have incurred for round-trip travel between the official station and the alternate location

(if travel had begun at the official station) plus the per diem calculated for the appropriate en route travel time. The excess cost that may be reimbursed is the difference between these two calculations.

050608 Continental United States (CONUS). Refers to the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia, as defined in the FTR, 301-1.3(c) (6).

050609 Conventional Lodging Facilities. Hotel, motel, or boarding house.

050610 Extended Assignment. A TDY trip that meets both of the following criteria: (a) the traveler is in TDY status for 30 calendar days or longer at one location, and (b) the TDY location is farther than 50 miles from both the traveler's permanent duty station and residence.

050611 Federal Travel Regulation (FTR). The FTR enumerates the travel and relocation policy for all Title 5 Executive Agency employees.

050612 Flat Rate. A reduced per diem rate assigned by an AO when it can be determined in advance that lodging and/or meal costs will be lower than the GSA per diem rate for the TDY location.

050613 Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA). An allowance designed to reimburse the traveler for Federal, State and local income taxes incurred incident to an indefinite TDY assignment at one location.

050614 Indefinite Travel. Occurs when travel is expected to last for more than 12 months at the same location, or during a cumulative period of 12 months without at least a 7- month break during the cumulative period.

050615 Immediate Family. Refer to the definition in [FTR § 300-3.1](#).

050616 Local Travel. Travel performed within an established local radius of the official station. The standard local radius will be 50 miles from the official station. A VA station may establish a local radius specific to its station based on counties or nearby cities. This local radius must be established in writing and approved by the Facility Director. For virtual employees, the local radius will be 50 miles from the virtual/mobile office.

050617 Locality Rates. Maximum per diem rates prescribed for specific localities within CONUS.

050618 Lodgings-Plus Per Diem Method. The standard method VA uses to provide a per diem allowance to travelers. VA covers the actual cost of the traveler's lodging up to a maximum daily rate and provides an allowance for meals and incidental expenses.

050619 Long-Term or Extended Travel. TDY lasting more than 30 continuous calendar days.

050620 Meals and Incidental Expense (M&IE) Allowance. A daily allowance provided to travelers during TDY trips to cover the cost associated with reasonable meals and travel-related expenses (e.g., tips).

050621 Mixed Travel. Occurs when official travel within a single trip is subject to payment of the daily subsistence expenses under different reimbursement systems (i.e., lodgings-plus or actual subsistence expense).

050622 Non-Workdays. Legal Federal Government holidays, weekends or other scheduled non-workdays are considered non-workdays.

050623 Official Station. The official station of an employee or invitational traveler is the location of the employee's or invitational traveler's permanent work assignment (refer to VA Financial Policy Volume XIV Chapter 7, Local Travel).

050624 Official Travel. Travel under an official travel authorization from an employee's official station or other authorized point of departure to a TDY location and return from a TDY location, between two TDY locations, or relocation at the direction of a Federal agency.

050625 Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS). Refers to Alaska, Hawaii, and the United States territories, including American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

050626 Per Diem Allowance. The per diem allowance (also referred to as subsistence allowance) is a daily payment instead of reimbursement for actual expenses for lodging, meals, and related incidental expenses. The per diem allowance is separate from transportation expenses and other miscellaneous travel expenses. The per diem allowance covers all charges and services, including any service charges where applicable. The per diem allowance covers the following:

A. Lodging. Includes expenses, except lodging taxes in the United States, for overnight sleeping facilities, baths, personal use of the room during daytime, telephone access fee, and service charges for fans, air conditioners, heaters and fires furnished in the room, when such charges are not included in the room rate.

B. Meals. Expenses for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and related tips and taxes. Specifically excluded are alcoholic beverage and entertainment expenses, and any expenses incurred for other persons.

C. Incidental Expenses. The following listed incidental expenses are part of a traveler's per diem allowance and are not reimbursed as a miscellaneous travel expense:

1. Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, parking attendants, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships, and hotel servants (foreign countries);



2. Transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the TDY site; and

3. Mailing cost associated with filing travel vouchers and payment of Government sponsored charge card billings.

050627 Personal Emergency Situation. Personal emergency situation means the death or serious illness or injury of the employee's family or catastrophic occurrence or impending disaster, such as a fire, flood, or act of God, that directly affects the employee's home at the official station or the family and occurs while the employee is at or en route to or from a TDY location.

050628 Other-than-Coach Class (Premium-Class) Accommodation. First class or business class accommodations on a train or airline.

050629 Reduced Per Diem. A per diem rate that is less than the maximum allowable and is authorized when there are known reductions in lodging and meal costs or when subsistence costs can be determined in advance and are lower than the prescribed per diem rate.

050630 Remote or Isolated Location. A geographic area that is inaccessible or difficult to travel due to limited infrastructure (roads, navigable waterways, telecommunications, etc.) or temporary conditions due to fire, flood, or acts of God. The area may also include locations that are more than 100 miles from the nearest population center having year-round access.

050631 Rest Period/Rest Stop. A period of rest not to exceed 24 hours at either an intermediate point en route or at the destination and must allow for appropriate overnight lodging. The rest period or stop begins upon arrival at the lodging accommodation and ends at departure from the accommodation.

050632 Serious Illness or Injury. A grave or critical, or potentially life-threatening illness or injury, or a sudden injury such as an automobile accident, where the exact extent of the injury may be undetermined but is thought to be critical or potentially life-threatening, based on the best assessment available; or other situations involving less serious illness or injury of a family member in which the absence of the employee would result in great personal hardship for the immediate family.

050633 Standard CONUS Rate. The per diem rate allowed for any location in CONUS that does not have a specific rate approved.

050634 Temporary Duty (TDY) Location. A place away from an employee's official station, where the employee is authorized to travel.

050635 Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel. Travel by an employee on official business, as authorized by an employee's AO through a travel authorization.

050636 Travel Advance. Prepayment of estimated travel expenses paid to an employee in the form of electronic funds transfer (EFT).

050637 Travel Authorization. Written or electronic authorization to travel on authorized official business for the Government resulting in reimbursement for expenses on a travel claim (voucher). Travel may be authorized on a blanket (unlimited or limited) authorization or on a trip-by-trip authorization. An unlimited authorization allows an employee to travel for any official purpose without further authorization. A limited authorization allows an employee to travel on official business without further authorization under certain specific conditions (e.g., travel to a specific geographic area for a specific purpose, subject to trip cost ceilings, or travel for specific periods of time.) A trip-by-trip authorization allows an individual or group of individuals to take one or more official business trips, which must include specific purpose, itinerary, and estimated costs.

050638 Traveler. An individual, as defined by the FTR, who is authorized to perform official Government travel.

## **0507 RESCISSIONS**

VA Financial Policy Volume XIV Chapter 5, Travel Under Special Circumstances, February 2020.

## **0508 QUESTIONS**

Questions concerning these financial policies and procedures should be directed as follows:

VHA  
VBA  
NCA  
OIT  
All Others

[VAFSCtravelpolicy@va.gov](mailto:VAFSCtravelpolicy@va.gov)  
[TRAVEL.VBACO@va.gov](mailto:TRAVEL.VBACO@va.gov)  
[NCABudgetService@va.gov](mailto:NCABudgetService@va.gov)  
[VACOITTravel@va.gov](mailto:VACOITTravel@va.gov)  
[VAFSCtravelpolicy@va.gov](mailto:VAFSCtravelpolicy@va.gov)

0509 REVISIONS

Section	Revision	Office	Reason for Change	Effective Date
050205	Added the delegated responsibility of the Deputy Secretary, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Other Key Officials, under FTR §§ 303-70.301; 303-70.500.	OFP (047G)	SECVA Memorandum, "Delegation of Authority for Travel and Conferences".	October 2021
050206	Added the delegated responsibility of the Deputy Secretary Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Other Key Officials, under FTR § 303-70.700.	OFP (047G)	SECVA Memorandum, "Delegation of Authority for Travel and Conferences".	October 2021
0504	Added the delegated responsibilities of the Deputy Secretary, Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and Other Key Officials, under FTR §§ 303-70.301; 303-70.500, and under FTR § 303-70.700.	OFP (047G)	SECVA Memorandum, "Delegation of Authority for Travel and Conferences".	October 2021
0507	Rescinded VA Financial Policy Volume XIV Chapter 5, Travel Under Special Circumstances, February 2020.	OFP (047G)	General Update	October 2021
050201.1	Added paragraph E. for guidance on reimbursement of an incapacitated employees travel expenses.	OFP (047G)	Improve Guidance.	February 2020
050205	Updated paragraph E. for guidance on reimbursement of a deceased employees travel expense.	OFP (047G)	Improve Guidance.	February 2020
050404	Removed outdated office title, 050403 covers OFP roles and responsibilities.	OFP (047G)	General Update.	February 2020

<b>Section</b>	<b>Revision</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Reason for Change</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
0507 Rescissions	Rescinded April 2011 published chapter.	OFP (047G)	Added internal controls.	February 2020
0508 Questions	Updated POC information.	OFP (047G)	General Update.	February 2020
0509 Revisions	Added this section with changes.	OFP (047G)	General Update.	February 2020

**APPENDIX A: FEDERAL TRAVEL REGULATION REFERENCES**

<b>Chapter References</b>	<b>FTR References</b>	<b>Subject Descriptions</b>
050202.01B	FTR 301-30.4a,5a,5b/301-70.501-502	Continuation of Per Diem Due to Incapacitating Illness or Injury
050202.01C	301-30.5b/301-70.502/301-30.4c	Limitations on Per Diem
050202.01D	301-30.4b/301-70.500c/301-70.504&505	Travel to an Alternate Location
050202.02	301-30.4c/301-70.503&506-507/301-70.500a,b,c	Personal Emergency
050206.01A	301-31.1	Travel Expenses for Threatened Investigative Employees
050206.01B	301-70.600	Travel Expenses for Threatened Investigative Employees
050206.01D	301-70.600/301-31.13	Travel Expenses for Threatened Investigative Employees
050206.01C	301-31.1-3	Travel Expenses for Threatened Investigative Employees
050206.01E	301-31.4/301-70.600&602	Travel Expenses for Threatened Investigative Employees
050206.01F	301-31.4 & 13/301-70.601	Travel Expenses for Threatened Investigative Employees
050206.01G	301-70.600e/301-31.6,7n,9,11	Travel Expenses for Threatened Investigative Employees
050206H	301-31.9	Travel Expenses for Threatened Investigative Employees
050206I	301-70.600/301-31.4,58,12,14-15	Travel Expenses for Threatened Investigative Employees

**APPENDIX B: WITNESS TRAVEL**

<b>Type of Witness Travel</b>	<b>Funding Authority</b>
Summoned as witness for the Government by the employing agency	VA will issue a travel authorization and will reimburse allowable expenses. The employee's permanent station will be responsible for paying expenses.
Summoned as witness for the Government by other than the employing agency	Employee's agency is responsible for paying expenses.
Summoned as a witness for other than the Government to testify or produce official records on behalf of the Government	VA will issue a travel authorization and will reimburse allowable expenses.
Former VA employee summoned as witness for the Government by other than the employing agency	Requesting agency is responsible for paying expenses.

**APPENDIX C: PROCEDURES FOR THREATENED LAW ENFORCEMENT  
OFFICERS/INVESTIGATIVE EMPLOYEES**

Procedures under development.

**APPENDIX D: THREATENED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS OR  
 INVESTIGATIVE EMPLOYEES - MAXIMUM DAILY PER DIEM EXPENSES FOR  
 ACCOMPANIED TRAVEL**

If your Agency authorizes	The “maximum daily amount” of per diem expenses that		
	You or your unaccompanied spouse or other unaccompanied family member may receive is	Your accompanied spouse or a member of your family who is age 12 or older may receive is	A member of your family who is under age 12 may receive is
Payment of only lodging expenses.	The maximum lodging amount applicable to the locality.	3/4 times the maximum lodging amount applicable to the locality.	1/2 times the maximum lodging amount applicable to the locality.
Payment for lodging, meals and other per diem expenses.	The maximum per diem rate applicable to the locality.	3/4 times the maximum per diem rate applicable to the locality.	1/2 times the maximum per diem rate applicable to the locality.