

# U.S. Department of the Interior

## DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

Prepared by: Office of Financial Management

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### IN THE NEWS

#### Say Goodbye to Paper Tickets?

Major airlines are increasingly moving in the direction of eliminating paper tickets or assessing additional charges for paper tickets when E-tickets are available. American Airlines is considering eliminating paper tickets entirely - American plans to stop issuing paper tickets for domestic flights by



March 2003, and international flights by December 2003. Until these changes become effective, American will continue to charge passengers an additional \$20 for paper tickets if E-tickets are available. Similarly, Northwest Airlines charges leisure travelers an additional \$10 for converting E-tickets to paper tickets.



#### What To Expect If Your Rental Car Is Not Waiting For You

Taking a cue from the airlines, many rental car companies have a policy of "over-booking" to compensate for "no-shows". So, there may be times when you arrive to pick up your car and the car you have reserved is not available. It is important to know your rights under these circumstances. If payment has been guaranteed through a credit card, for example, the rental car company must find you another car in its fleet either at the same cate-

gory as your original reservation, or in a higher category. You should check with your rental car company so that you will know what to expect.

#### Airlines Raise Leisure Fares

American, United, and Delta Airlines, the nation's three largest airlines, have announced increases in leisure fares. The increase applies to 14-day advance purchase companion fares that require a Saturday night stay. The increase is the airline industry's fourth increase since mid-April. Thus far, Continental, US Airways and Northwest have not matched the fare increase.

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**Data Sources for DOI Travel Newsletter:** Much of the travel industry information contained in this newsletter was obtained from public domain sources such as newspapers and the Internet, and was current at the time of publication. Travel industry information is provided solely for the use and information of DOI employees.

# DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

## City Pair Fares—A Reminder

One of the questions travelers continue to ask is “Why does Omega World Travel (OWT) always quote higher prices than the newspaper and/or the Internet?” The December 2001 newsletter contained an article briefly explaining what a great bargain city pair fares represent. OWT is under contract to the General Services Administration (GSA) and must satisfy Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) requirements. GSA has entered into contracts with various air carriers to provide service at a discounted coach fare between some 4,000 city pairs listed in the Federal Travel Directory. The Department is a mandatory user of the GSA city pair contract, and OWT is required to quote a contract city pair fare as a first choice (<http://pub.fss.gsa.gov/services/citypairs>). When planning official travel, you are required to consider contract city-pair carriers as a first choice—because it is cost advantageous to do so.

Recent DOI experience has shown that approximately 20-25% of all itineraries are changed after airline tickets are issued, and an additional 15% of all trips are cancelled after airline tickets are issued. When a city pair fare is purchased and not used, the Government pays nothing and is automatically reimbursed for any unused city pair tickets. On the other hand, if a non-refundable ticket is purchased and your trip is canceled, the funds will be held by the airline, thus depriving your bureau of the use of these funds for travel. If the trip is eventually rescheduled, an additional charge of \$75 to \$100 will be assessed at the time a new ticket is re-issued. Finally, if the trip is not taken for one year, the airline keeps the funds permanently.

Supervisors are expected to take the “hidden costs” of restricted and non-refundable fares into account when official travel is being authorized, and to guide employees accordingly.

## Emergency Incident Travel Contacts

This is the season when extreme fire conditions exist, especially in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Kansas, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming. In anticipation of the high priority service required during this season, OWT has provided contacts to be used ONLY for Emergency Firefighting and other National Emergencies. For immediate emergency incident travel planning after hours, please call 866-785-5875.

## DOI’s Travel Management Center (TMC)

DOI traveler coordinators and employees who make their own travel arrangements are reminded that Omega World Travel is the travel management center for the Department. All official travel arrangements are required to be made through OWT except for the following:

- Pre-arranged lodging accommodations (training, conferences)
- Overseas lodging accommodations
- Lodging accommodations for unplanned travel
- Lodging accommodations at establishments exempted by the Hotel and Motel Fire Safety Act (Reference: 41 CFR 301-73-102)

## Car Rental Billing Disputes

Have you ever rented a car on official travel and been charged more by the car rental company than the rate quoted on your travel itinerary? This doesn’t happen often, but if it does, here is some helpful advice.

When you receive your itinerary, review it carefully. You are authorized to rent a compact size car, unless you are transporting a large amount of Government property that requires a larger car, or you are providing transportation to more than two other employees who

are on official travel (301-10.503). The rental car company must be a company that is under contract to the Department of Defense and its rate should be the lowest cost when all factors are considered (301-10.501). You may upgrade to a larger car if you have a free upgrade coupon or other promotional benefit.

If you arrive at the rental car company and the company does not have a compact car available for you, they are expected to provide an upgrade at the compact car rate. If the rental car company attempts to charge you more than the rate quoted on your itinerary, you should be prepared to challenge the discrepancy at the time of the incident. If the car rental company continues to dispute the amount quoted on your itinerary, you should contact the Omega 24-hour desk (800-474-6342) immediately for assistance. It is not Omega’s responsibility to correct the issue after the fact. If you are under time constraints when you arrive, you may rent the car and call Omega at some point during your trip before returning the car.



# DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

## Trip Manager Corner

### Training on Trip Manager

Since the March 22, 2002, increase in the base transaction fee to \$26.64 for every airline ticket issued by OWT, many bureaus and offices have expressed an interest in using Trip Manager, the official on-line booking system used by the Department. The \$10.50 transaction fee associated with the use of Trip Manager saves approximately \$16 each time it is used.



Training on Trip Manager has been provided to most bureaus. The training sessions are intended to acquaint employees with the features provided by Trip Manager. These include the ability to check flight schedules, the ability to select airline seats, the ability to print itineraries, and significant savings in transaction fees.

Training was recently provided to the U.S. Geological Survey, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Office of the Secretary during the months of April, May, and June. The bureaus are still in the process of rolling the system out to their employees. Several methods to reach the travel planners and travelers were used. This included hands on training, train-the-trainer sessions, live demonstrations, as well as Web-based training sessions. Training guides and system information were provided to the employees for reference.

DOI is well positioned to manage future travel costs by increasing the use of Trip Manager – which lowers the per transaction cost of travel by approximately \$16.00. Please contact your bureau Travel Management Center Coordinator for further information about your bureau's 2002 Implementation Plan for Trip Manager.

## Index of Past Travel Newsletter Articles

To assist our readers, we are providing this index of articles, by subject matter, that have appeared in previous issues of the "DOI Travel Newsletter." Remember - all Travel Newsletter issues are available on the Office of Financial Management's homepage at:  
[http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel\\_newsletter](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel_newsletter).

Subject	Issue
Airport Security	Oct/Nov 01
City Pair Fare Program	Oct/Nov 01
Electronic Tickets	July 01
Frequent Flyer Miles	Oct 01
Government Travel Car Lodging	Oct 01
	May/July/Dec 01
OWT Airline Ticket Data	June/July/Oct/Nov 01
Per Diem	May/Oct 01
Rental Cars	July 01
Travel Transaction Fees	Oct 01
Travel Mgmt Center	May 01
Traveler Profiles	May/June Dec 01

## OWT Airline Ticket Data

The following table shows updated OWT airline ticket data:

OWT Airline Ticket Data (June 2001 to May 2002)		
Month	Tickets Issued	Dollar Value (in millions)
June	14,373	\$4.70
July	15,700	\$4.99
Aug	18,331	\$6.03
Sep	14,995	\$2.33
Oct	17,713	\$5.72
Nov	15,364	\$4.93
Dec	8,993	\$2.15
Jan	16,760	\$5.58
Feb	15,872	\$5.34
Mar	18,197	\$5.76
Apr	18,665	\$6.31
May	18,923	\$6.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>193,886</b>	<b>\$60.33</b>

### Travel Contacts and Web Sites:

**Newsletter:** Charlene Hutchinson, [charlene\\_hutchinson@ios.doi.gov](mailto:charlene_hutchinson@ios.doi.gov)  
202.208.3964

**Government Travel Policy:** Les Oden, [les\\_oden@ios.doi.gov](mailto:les_oden@ios.doi.gov)  
202.208.6225

**TMC Administrator:** Tamara L. Peyton, [tamara\\_l\\_peyton@ios.doi.gov](mailto:tamara_l_peyton@ios.doi.gov)  
202.208.6227

**Omega World Travel:** Viola Thompson, [vthompson@owt.net](mailto:vthompson@owt.net)  
703.359.0200, ext.392

**TMC Comments and Feedback Form:**  
[www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html)

**DOI Online Quality Assurance Form:**  
[www.owt.net/survey/doi/daily/doi\\_daily.asp](http://www.owt.net/survey/doi/daily/doi_daily.asp)

**DOI Travel Profile:**  
<https://profile.owt.net/doi>

**DOI Travel Policy:**  
[www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html)

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