

U.S. Department of the Interior

DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

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IN THE NEWS

New Security Rules

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will soon be eliminating gate screening of passengers. This second screening was done randomly on individuals after they had already passed through the security checkpoint. Additionally, all travelers must present a boarding pass to clear through the screening checkpoints. Previously, e-ticket receipts, itinerary printouts, and paper tickets were acceptable to gain access through security checkpoints.

Federal Screeners Status

The Aviation and Transportation Security Act mandated that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) deploy federal passenger screeners to all commercial airports by November 19, and that TSA screen all checked luggage for explosives by December 31, 2002. TSA has met the November 19 deadline by hiring more than 44,000 federal screeners to manage almost every airport security checkpoint. Transportation Secretary



Norman Y. Mineta acknowledged that the TSA would not meet a Dec. 31 deadline to scan all passenger luggage using explosive-detection machines. The House has approved a one-year extension of the deadline as part of the homeland security bill. The Senate has not yet voted on the bill.

Homeland Security Bill

Passage of the homeland security bill is expected shortly. This bill would authorize some pilots to carry guns. Pilot groups estimate that about 30,000 pilots will volunteer for the program. The TSA opposed arming pilots. The FBI is ready to assist in providing the TSA with firearms training if recommended by Congress.

The bill also calls for self-defense training for flight attendants.

United Plans to Reduce Flight Schedule by an Additional 6%

As part of a restructuring plan, United plans to reduce its flight schedule by another 6%. United is hoping the cutbacks will make United profitable once again by 2004. The additional 6% flight reduction will decrease the size of the nation's No. 2 carrier by 23% percent overall from its size before the September 11, 2001, terror attacks.

US Airways and United Airlines Partnership

US Airways and United Airlines were approved by the Government to enter a code-share alliance, and there are restrictions in place to preserve competition on certain routes.

Inside this issue:

Continuing Resolution	2
Travel Authorizations	2
Travel Charge Card Quiz	2
Rental Cars	2
Lowest Ticket Prices	3
Nonrefundable Air Fares	3
Trip Manager's Corner	3
OWT Ticket Data	4
Traveler's Tip Bits	4

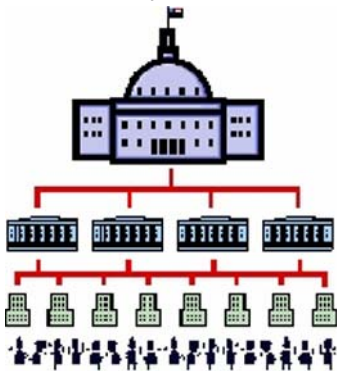


Data Sources for DOI Travel Newsletter: Much of the travel industry information contained in this newsletter was obtained from public domain sources such as newspapers and the Internet, and was current at the time of publication. Travel industry information is provided solely for the use and information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

DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

Travel During Periods Covered by a Continuing Resolution Authority

A Financial Administration Memorandum (FAM) addressing the issue of travel during periods covered by a Continuing Resolution Authority (CRA) has been approved. FAM Number 2002-014 (II.G.1) was issued on October 4, 2002. Travel arrangements may continue to be made, provided there are adequate funds available to cover anticipated travel expenses. Official travel

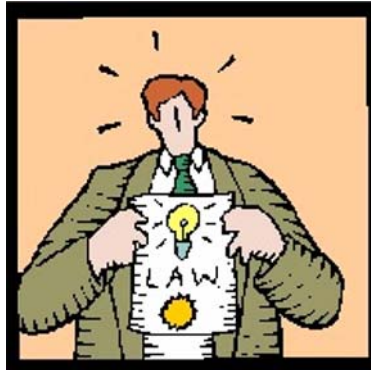


may not commence unless a Continuing Resolution is in effect or a regular appropriation has been enacted. PFM encourages travelers and travel planners to purchase only contract city-pair tickets or fully refundable tickets during this period of uncertain funding. Read the FAM at:

<http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam02-14.html>. As of this writing, the House and the Senate passed H.J. Res 124 making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2003, clearing the measure for the President. It amends the date in the first CR (P.L. 107-229) to January 11, 2003.

Travel Authorizations

A memorandum issued by the Assistant Secretary-Policy, Management and Budget on September 27, 2002, reminds travelers and travel arrangers that certain types of travel must be authorized on a trip-by-trip basis in order



to comply with statutory, regulatory, and Departmental policy requirements.

The types of travel that must be authorized on a trip-by-trip basis are:

- Conference Travel
- International Travel
- Travel Received From A Non-Federal Source (Donated Travel)
- Training-Related Travel
- Travel by Volunteers (Invitational Travel)

Read the memorandum on the PFM web site:

<http://www.doi.gov/pfm/fam02-16.html>

Travel Charge Card Quiz

Have any of the following events occurred lately?

–Your travel charge card expiration date was changed.

–Your previous travel charge card was lost or stolen, and a new account was re-issued by the Bank of America.

If your answer to either question is "yes," you will need to update your OWT profile before any airline tickets can be issued.

OWT Profile: Go to

https://profiler.owt.net/doi_2001/modify.htm. Follow the directions by entering your unique user name and password. The screen will then display your profile, which you may update. To save the changes, remember to click on SUBMIT located at the bottom left of the screen.

The changes will take place within 72 hours.

If you are a Trip Manager user, you will also need to contact your Bureau Trip Manager Administrator at http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/trip_mgr_admin.html and ask to have the Trip Manager profile updated.

Rental Cars

DOI employees are normally expected to rent a compact size car while on official travel, unless you are transporting a large amount of Government property that requires a larger car, or you are providing transportation to two or more other employees who are on official travel. You may upgrade to a larger car if you have a free upgrade coupon or other promotional benefit. You may choose a rental car company of your choice, provided that the company is under contract to DOD, and should reflect the lowest cost option when all factors are considered (i.e., location of the pick up and drop off points and availability of compact size rental rates).

DOD administers a contract for all Government agencies and the companies covered by the contract must provide



DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

current model cars and insurance as part of the rental fee. In addition, the companies may not charge for authorizing additional government drivers. Non-Government employees and family members who are not performing official travel and holding a current travel authorization may not drive a rental car. A copy of the current rental car agreement is located at <http://www.mtmc.army.mil/CONTENT/6603/CAR3.pdf>.

Expanded Search for Lowest Ticket Prices

DOI travelers often ask why there is so much variability in non-refundable airline ticket prices. One reason is that many airlines offer the lowest fares on their own web-sites, and these fares may not be available elsewhere. At the present time, OWT (and Worldspan) do not have the capability of pulling online fares from individual airline web sites, and quoted fares are limited to those contained on the global distribution system (Worldspan).

Worldspan is in the process of adopting Real-time Web automation technology and will soon have the ability to access and book online (non-refundable) fares from individual airline sites later this year. Real-time Web automation technology will provide DOI travelers access and full booking functionality for all online fares. Additionally, travelers will have access to travel inventory from more than 150 travel Web sites, including such airlines as JetBlue. This real-time search capability will enable travelers to book with complete confidence, knowing they have found the best fare available without spending extra time searching additional sites on the Internet.

As always, DOI travelers are reminded of the risks associated with the use of non-refundable fares. DOI employees on official business should consider using Government contract city pairs as a first choice.



The Volatility of Nonrefundable Air Fares

DOI travelers are strongly encouraged to use contract city pairs when traveling on official business, because the quoted prices are fixed by GSA contract. On occasion, a Bureau may grant authorization to use non-refundable tickets, when travel is guaranteed to occur. Travelers are often confused about non-refundable fares—particularly when two travelers going to the same location at the same time may receive different rates.

There are several key factors that cause variations in nonrefundable airline ticket prices. Fares vary according to when a particular airline reservation is booked, flight departure time, airline preferences, alternate airports, connections, aircraft types, and other factors. Airline inventory is perishable and is often capacity controlled. If one or two seats remain for sale at a particular price, that price could appear and disappear every time you search for it as other travelers book and cancel. There can also be a discrepancy simply because the systems are updated at different times of day or display information that is no longer current. Airlines may decide to release more seats for sale at the lower price because sales are not going as well as planned so prices may vary with every lookup. Thus, if you are

looking for consistency and predictability in fares, always book a GSA contract city-pair flight!

Trip Manager's Corner

Travelers are again reminded that they may book their own travel arrangements using Trip Manager, and realize significant savings for their Bureau/Office (\$10.50 cost per trip using Trip Manager vs. \$26.64 using a travel agent). During the month of September, 3,333 air segments, 532 hotel rooms, and 423 rental cars were reserved on Trip Manager.

Finding Capacity Controlled Fares on Trip Manager

Have you noticed on Trip Manager that flights with a "G" icon in the left margin do not always have the same fare? The reason is due to the capacity controlled fares, introduced by GSA in 2001. The restricted fares are anywhere from \$20 to \$100 less expensive than the standard city-pair rates. The capacity controlled reduced fares are available only for a limited number of seats, which prompts federal travelers to book earlier. There are no cancellation fees on the capacity controlled fares.

These fares are listed with the "G" icon in the left margin when they are available, but will reflect a lesser rate than the standard city pair fare. For example, the contract city pair from Washington, DC (Reagan National Airport) to Denver, Colorado, is held by United. The contract city pair fare is \$167. If a capacity controlled fare is available, the cost is only \$123. Trip Manager will not show a special notification to the traveler that the fare is for a capacity controlled seat, however, the traveler will notice the cost is lower than other government rates offered.

DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

OWT Airline Ticket Data

The following table shows updated OWT airline ticket data.

OWT Airline Ticket Data		
October 2001–September 2002		
	Tickets Issued	Dollar Value (in millions)
Oct	17,713	\$5.72
Nov	15,364	4.93
Dec	8,993	2.15
Jan	16,670	5.58
Feb	15,872	5.34
Mar	18,197	5.76
Apr	18,665	6.31
May	18,923	6.49
Jun	13,180	5.72
Jul	17,487	6.24
Aug	15,428	6.69
Sept	14,661	4.69
TOTAL	206,238	\$67.95

Traveler's "Tip Bits"

Tips on Avoiding Flight Delays and Cancellations

Flight delays and cancellations can be very frustrating and time consuming. There are some precautions you can take to help reduce your chances of encountering most problems and limit their effects.

- **Travel early:** Chances are the first flight of the day will be on time.
- **Avoid peak travel times:** The busiest time to fly is between 4:00-6:00 p.m.
- **Travel on nonstop flights:** Delays are greater on stop over flights.
- **Fly on a new plane:** Newer planes have fewer mechanical problems.

- **Stick with the crowd:** Flights canceled will inconvenience the fewest people.

- **History speaks:** Check on-time performance information on the airline.

- **Beware the bad weather hubs:** Be particular about stop over hubs.

- **Certain airports are more congested than others:** Crowds may slow you down.

- **Useful Hubs:** Delays may increase at Hubs, but frequently, extra planes are available.

- **Avoid the crowd:** Some airports are used beyond capacity—avoid rush hours.

- **Smaller airports:** May reduce chance of delay, but closes first in bad weather.

- **Curfews:** Know which airports have flight restrictions.

- **Research:** Know when the next flight leaves, and other airlines with the same flight.

Call the airline prior to your departure time to check on your flight's status. If there is a problem, try to rebook over the telephone. If your flight is canceled, most airlines will rebook you on their next flight to your destination on which space is available, at no additional charge. Each airline has its own policies about what it will do for delayed passengers waiting at the airport. If you are delayed, ask the airline staff if they will pay for meals or phone calls. Some do not provide any amenities to stranded passengers. Others may not offer amenities if bad weather or something else beyond the airline's control causes the delay. Airlines are not required to compensate passengers for "damages" when flights are delayed or canceled. There are no federal requirements regarding these amenities or services. If it is more expedient to arrange a flight on another airline, ask the first airline to endorse your ticket to the new carrier, which could save you a fare increase.

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TMC Comments and Feedback Form:
www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html

DOI Online Quality Assurance Form:
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

This newsletter is available on the Internet at:
www.doi.gov/pfm/travel_newsletter

Remember, however, that there is no rule requiring an airline to do this. Airline delays and cancellations are not unusual, and defensive planning is a good idea when time is your most important consideration.