Forest Service leadership recognizes that travelers may face challenges expediting travel to assignments and reserving hotels in compliance with Federal Travel Regulations (FTR). Significant increases in lodging costs across the United States have resulted in difficulty for travelers to find lodging, and due to the emergent needs at incidents, travelers need to quickly report to assignments.

To further support our wildland firefighters and the communities they serve, Forest Service is reducing the administrative burden and granting first line supervisors the authority to approve the use of privately owned vehicles (POV), reservations for unconventional lodging, and lodging over 150% per diem, not to exceed 300% per diem, from now until December 15, 2021. The traveler will be responsible for any costs over 300% of the applicable per diem rate. Supervisors may authorize travelers to use POV, in lieu of common carrier, without submitting the cost comparison FS-6500-6 form. These exceptions are only applicable for wildland fire suppression travel and Forest Service employees displaced to evacuation zones.

All travelers can receive assistance for researching and reserving hotels by using various resources, to include logging into the Electronic Travel System (ETS2); calling the 24-hours BCD Travel line at 800-877-6120; or calling the CFO Travel Help Desk at 877-372-7248, option 3, Monday through Friday, 8:15 am – 4:15 pm Mountain Time.

In addition, authorization to use nonconventional lodging is being expanded during this critical time. Individual travelers can reserve nonconventional lodging accommodations with their government travel card, personal credit card, or by contacting the CFO Travel Helpdesk for reservation assistance. Travelers requiring nonconventional lodging reservations (Airbnb, VRBO, HomeAway etc.) for a group of travelers, must request assistance from the CFO Travel Helpdesk (during regular business hours), or contact Linda Smith (505-221-0001) or Sally Jewell (505-208-5523) for assistance after hours and on weekends. Nonconventional lodging can also be utilized by Forest Service employees displaced to evacuation zones due to wildland fires and other natural disasters. For information regarding nonconventional lodging support for evacuated employees, contact the CFO Travel Help Desk.
To calculate the 300% lodging limitation, add meals, incidentals, and lodging allowance, and multiply the sum total by 3. The General Services Administration (GSA) determines meals, incidentals, and lodging allowances based on a geographic locations, as found on their website at [Per Diem Rates | GSA](https://www.gsa.gov/Per-Diem-Rates).

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meals &amp; Incidentals</td>
<td>GSA Per Diem</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>GSA Per Diem</td>
<td>$96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum Total: $151

300% Limitation: $453

In the above example, the maximum reimbursement for meals, incidentals, and lodging a traveler can receive is $453 per day. Wildland firefighters may incur additional reimbursable expenses, such as fire smoke damage. Please contact the CFO Travel Helpdesk for additional information regarding additional fees.

A Government Travel Card is required to make travel arrangements in ETS2 or with BCD Travel, per each individual traveler. Travelers can request a government travel card at the Travel Compliance SharePoint located at [Travel Compliance - Home (sharepoint.com)](https://travel-compliance.sharepoint.com).

If you have any questions, please contact Linda Smith, linda.m.smith@usda.gov or Sally Jewell, sally.jewell@usda.gov.

cc: Donald Modder, Jennifer McGuire, Lynn Moaney, Lucas Castillo