



File Code: 6500
Route To:

Date:

Subject: Travel and Lodging Guidance for Emergency Responders

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Deputy Chiefs, and WO Directors

Agency leadership recognizes the challenges our firefighters and incident responders face due to traffic fatigue under unusual weather when traveling to assignments or not having established sleeping and/or support facilities available. Therefore, to support firefighters and incident responders during emergency response, the Forest Service authorizes the following options through calendar year 2022.

Emergency per diem for TDY locations within 50-miles of duty station

Provide emergency per diem (lodging and meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) for temporary duty (TDY) within firefighter's or incident responder's local travel area (7 U.S.C 2228). Emergency conditions may include wildfire, hurricanes, other disaster response and support that would endanger a traveler's health or safety if the individual were to return to their duty station or residence. The traveler should attempt to obtain pre-authorization whenever possible. However, the primary concern is for the traveler's safety and the agency may grant post-travel approval on a case-by-case basis. Justification should be signed by the line officer and uploaded in ETS2 to the voucher.

Privately Owned Vehicles and Lodging Costs over 150% Per Diem

Due to the significant increase in lodging costs across the United States and the urgent requirement for travelers to quickly report to an assignment, first line supervisors can approve the use of privately owned vehicles (POV) and lodging costs over 150% per diem (not to exceed 300% per diem). This exception is only applicable for wildland fire suppression travel and the traveler will be responsible for any costs over 300% of the applicable per diem rate.

Supervisors may authorize travelers to use their POV in lieu of a common carrier, without submitting the *Constructive Travel Using Common Carrier Cost Comparative Statement* ([FS-6500-6](#)). For details on calculating the 300% cost limitation, see the enclosed document.

Traveler Assistance

All travelers can receive assistance by logging into ETS2, calling the 24/7 BCD travel line (800-877-6120), or contacting the CFO Travel Help Desk (877-372-7248, option 3) Monday through Friday, 8:15 am – 4:15 pm Mountain Time.



Government Travel Card

A government-issued travel charge card is required to make travel arrangements in ETS2 or with BCD Travel for each individual traveler. Travelers can request a card at the [Travel Compliance SharePoint](#) and follow instructions.

Nonconventional lodging

In the absence of government provided or conventional lodging under the [Federal Travel Regulations](#) (FTR), the Forest Service authorizes the use of [nonconventional lodging](#) (e.g., AirBnB, VRBO, HomeAway) to support incident responders. Individual travelers may reserve outside of ETS2 or by contacting the CFO Travel Helpdesk for reservation assistance. Travelers requiring nonconventional lodging reservations for a group must request assistance from the CFO Travel Helpdesk.

This guidance is effective immediately through December 31, 2022 and supersedes all previous related memos. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Smith (linda.m.smith@usda.gov).

ROBERT VELASCO
Chief Financial Officer

Enclosure: Calculation of 300% Limit