

SD 312, Travel

Smithsonian Institution Travel Handbook



Smithsonian Institution

**Office of the Under Secretary for Finance
and Administration/Chief Financial Officer
Office of Contracting
and Personal Property Management**

SD 312, Travel

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Acronyms and Initials

ATM	Automated Teller Machine
CBA	Centrally Billed Account (government contractor-issued travel charge card billed to and paid by SI)
CDW	Collision Damage Waiver
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
ConcurGov	Concur Government Edition
CONUS	Continental United States
CRV	Cash Receipt Voucher
DTI	Duluth Travel Incorporated
EFT	Electronic Funds Transfer
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning (commonly referred to as PeopleSoft)
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
FDS	Foreign Duty Station
FTR	Federal Travel Regulation
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GS	General Schedule
GSA	General Services Administration
IBA	Individually Billed Account (government contractor-issued travel charge card billed to and paid by the employee)
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
M&IE	Meals and Incidental Expenses
OCIO	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
OCon&PPM	Office of Contracting and Personal Property Management
OCONUS	Outside the Continental United States
OFA	Office of Finance and Accounting
OGC	Office of the General Counsel
OHR	Office of Human Resources
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OIR	Office of International Relations
OTRAT	Overseas Tour Renewal Agreement Travel
PO	Purchase Order
POV	Privately Owned Vehicle
SAO	Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory
SMR	Smithsonian Miscellaneous Reimbursement
SI	Smithsonian Institution
STRI	Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
TA	Travel Authorization
TDY	Temporary Duty (the government term for official travel)
TH	Travel Horizons (a division of Connoisseur Travel)
TQSE	Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expense
TMO	Travel Management Office
U.S.	United States
USF&A/CFO	Under Secretary for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer
VRE	Virginia Railway Express

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WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Office of Contracting & Personal Property Management (OCon&PPM)

Travel Authorizations, Travel Vouchers, Federal
Travel Regulations, Relocation, Concur

OCon&PPM Travel Help Desk
 Number.....202-966-8600
 Fax.....202-966-8830
 Email TMOHelpDesk@si.edu
 Web Access (Prism)..... <http://prism2.si.edu/SUPPORT/TRAVEL/Pages/Home.aspx>
 Forms <http://prism2.si.edu/SIOrganization/OCFO/OConPPM/Pages/OConPPMFormsRef.aspx>
 Main OCon&PPM Phone Number (for all OCon&PPM staff)..... (202) 633-7290

Office of Finance and Accounting (OF&A)

Vendor File Maintenance, Risk Management, Payment

Vendor Maintenance (202) 633-7320
 Vendor Maintenance Email..... VendorHelp@si.edu
 Web Access (Prism)..... <http://prism2.si.edu/SIOrganization/OCFO/OC/Pages/Home.aspx>
 Vendor Enrollment Forms <http://prism2.si.edu/SIOrganization/OCFO/OC/pages/OCFormsRef.aspx>
 Financial Policies and
 Procedures..... <http://prism2.si.edu/SIOrganization/OCFO/OC/FPPD/Pages/Home.aspx>
 Accounts Payable (202) 633-7160
 Accounts Payable Email APHelp@si.edu
 Risk Management..... (202) 633-7146
 Web Access (Prism).... http://prism2.si.edu/SIOrganization/OCFO/OC/Pages/Insur_RiskMgmt.aspx

Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)

SI ERP (*PeopleSoft*) Issues

ERP Support..... (202) 633-4000
 ERP Support Email OCIOHelpDesk@si.edu

Office of General Counsel (OGC)

Main OGC Phone Number (202) 633-5115
 OGC Prism Website..... <http://prism2.si.edu/SIOrganization/OGC/Pages/Home.aspx>

Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (SAO) Travel

Number..... (617) 495-7220
 Fax Number..... (617) 496-7608
 Email (Travel Help) tr@cfa.harvard.edu
 Email (for Concur and PeopleSoft support)..... erphelp@cfa.harvard.edu

Travel Reservations

Duluth Travel Incorporated (DTI)..... (855) 282-9113
 Travel Horizons (a division of Connoisseur Travel)
 Jayna Marquez.....(202) 469-8920
 Cathy Bock.....(202) 469-8917
 Jackie Churchbourne (202) 469-8918

ConcurGov

Web Access <https://cge.concursolutions.com>

CHAPTER 1.0: INTRODUCTION

All Smithsonian Institution (SI) travel policies and procedures conform to the provisions of the General Services Administration (GSA) Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), Presidential executive orders, appropriate statutes, and decisions of the Comptroller General of the United States (U.S.) and the Secretary of SI. Please refer to the SI Travel Requirements section of this Handbook for specific information.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide SI-specific guidance that supplements the FTR, along with a reference listing of travel-related SI addresses, links to online information, and highlights from the FTR.

With the exception of the information contained in the Local Travel section, the provisions of this handbook address only Temporary Duty (TDY)/non-local travel.

CHAPTER 2.0: REFERENCE INFORMATION

2.1 SI Travel System

The Smithsonian travel system consists of three integrated but separate parts:

- 2.1.1. **Concur** (ConcurGov) is a web-based travel system created, operated and supported by Concur Technologies. It provides the ability to create a travel authorization; book airline, hotel and rental cars through an on-line booking engine; and create a voucher at the end of the trip. Concur is one of two on-line travel systems approved for use by federal agencies and was procured under a master contract issued and administered by the General Services Administration. Concur is the most widely deployed of the two systems and serves more than 80% of the federal government travelers.
- 2.1.2. The Smithsonian **travel agents** utilize the actual travel reservation systems used by the travel service providers (airlines, hotels, rental car companies). The process of actually reserving travel resources (airline seats, rental cars, hotel rooms) and issuing tickets is called “fulfillment”. Fulfillment can be performed by the Concur travel agent partner based on information automatically passed from the system (via the on-line booking engine) or by direct calls from the traveler to the travel agent. In some cases, the travel agent employs an automated system to exchange data with Concur which provides the automatic entry of travel costs into the Concur travel authorization. The alternate travel agent (currently Travel Horizons (a division of Connoisseur Travel in Washington D.C) make reservations directly in the reservation system and provide the cost information (via an electronic itinerary) to a traveler or travel preparer who enters this information into the Concur record.
- 2.1.3. The **PeopleSoft ERP system** processes data from the Concur system to obligate and pay travel expenses. Each traveler in the Concur system must have a valid accounts payable vendor number because this is the link between Concur and the PeopleSoft system. When a Concur authorization is approved, information from it (including the traveler’s vendor number) is used to create a purchase order in the PeopleSoft accounts payable system. This purchase order identifies the vendor (traveler), the chartfields to be used for the trip and obligates the funds based on the charges contained in the travel authorization. When an authorization is changed and approved, the changes are automatically applied to the purchase order. Because funds are obligated by the travel authorization, it should reflect the best estimate for the cost of a trip.

Occasionally, there is a need for a unit to create a purchase order directly in the PeopleSoft ERP system to procure air and lodging for large group travel (see Section 3.17) for invitational travelers (individuals traveling on behalf of the Smithsonian who are not employees). Under some circumstances, this alternate method of arranging and paying for travel for employees may be used upon obtaining advance approval from the Manager, Travel Management Office, Office of Contracting & Personal Property Management (OCon&PPM).

Regardless of the procurement method used, all travel purchases must comply with the travel policies and procedures as prescribed in Chapter 1.0, and related Smithsonian's procurement policies where applicable.

2.2 Travel Management Office (TMO)

The Travel Management Office (TMO) manages all aspects of official temporary duty travel at the Smithsonian. TMO manages the Concur Help Desk, the configuration of the travel system, the addition and deletion of traveler records and the compilation and interpretation of SI travel policy. TMO serves as the liaison between SI and travel vendors and participates in government-wide travel groups. TMO provides expert assistance for all travel-related issues. The TMO is part of the Office of the Contracting and Personal Property Management (OCon&PPM) in Crystal City.

Help Desk Hours of Operation: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Phone number: 202-633-8600

Fax number: 202-633-8830

E-mail: TMOHelpDesk@si.edu

Address: 2011 Crystal Drive

Suite 350, MRC 1200

Arlington, VA 22202

2.3 Duluth Travel Incorporated

Duluth Travel Incorporated (DTI) Travel is the travel agent partner for the Concur system. Reservations made through the Concur online booking engine are passed electronically to DTI for ticketing. Reservations made with the online booking engine and directly with DTI by phone are automatically reflected in the Concur authorization.

For travel reservation or ticketing assistance, call DTI at 1-855-282-9113. Reservation and ticketing assistance for Concur via DTI is available 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Assistance for **emergency travel** is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

2.4 Travel Horizons (TH)

Travel Horizons (a division of Connoisseur Travel) is an alternative travel agent that may be used in place of DTI for reservations and ticketing. Travel Horizons' pricing and procedures are different from DTI and are fully described on the PRISM/Travel web page. Information is also available by calling the TMO help desk. Reservations made with Travel Horizons must be manually entered into the Concur document.

For travel reservation or ticketing assistance, call Travel Horizons. Their contact information is available from Smithsonian's [travel home page](#). Go to Contact Info (on right hand side of the page), and click on the Travel Agents tab.

For emergency calls between 5:30pm and 8:30am Monday - Friday or on weekends and holidays: Please dial 877-969-8916

2.5 SAO Travel

Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (SAO) operates its own travel agency, SAO Travel, which provides reservation and ticketing assistance for SAO staff only. SAO reservations are automatically entered into Concur authorizations.

Phone number: 617-495-7220

Fax number: 617-496-7608

Email: tr@cfa.harvard.edu (travel help)

Email: erphelp@cfa.harvard.edu (for Concur and PeopleSoft support)

2.6 Concur (ConcurGov)

Concur is a web-based system for the creation and processing of Smithsonian travel authorizations, vouchers, and local vouchers (petty cash claims). It can be accessed by both individual travelers and those that prepare travel for others. The Concur web address: <https://cge.concursolutions.com>

2.7 General Services Administration (GSA)

GSA is the federal government agency responsible for the creation and administration of federal travel policy. GSA is also responsible for developing and administering discount contracts for air travel and lodging.

GSA web address: [GSA Home](#)

The following travel-related information is available on the GSA website:

- Federal Travel Regulation (FTR): [Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\)](#)
- Per Diem Rates: [Per Diem Rates](#)
- Airfares: City Pair Program: [Airline City Pairs](#)
- Lodging Programs: [GSA Lodging®](#)
- POV Mileage Reimbursement Rates: [Privately Owned Vehicle \(POV\) Mileage Reimbursement Rates](#)
- Travel Charge Card: [Travel Charge Cards](#)
- GSA Travel Training: [Travel Training](#)
- State and Local tax exemption program: [State Tax Exempt Forms Library](#)
- Reference for contract airfares and per diem rates: <http://www.fedtravel.com>

2.8 Travel Processing Forms

The following travel-related forms are available on the [Travel page](#) of Prism:

- a. [OCon 501](#) (Field Expenses Review and Authorization) – this form documents field expenses and records the appropriate signatures. [This form is found in the OCon&PPM Forms section of the OCFO web page.]
- b. [OCon 700](#) (Request for Use of Foreign Flag Air Carrier) – this form must be submitted to and approved by the TMO prior to the use of a foreign flag carrier to fly to or from the U.S.
- c. [OCon 710](#) (Additional Pre-Approval for Senior Executive Travel) – this form is used to obtain pre-approval from the immediate supervisor for some Senior Executives if it is anticipated that the trip duration will be ten (10) calendar days or more, or the cost of the trip will exceed \$6,000.
- d. [OCon 711](#) (Interim Authorization of Travel) – this form is used to document travel that must be arranged for someone not yet in the Concur system. A Concur travel authorization (TA) must be created as soon as possible.
- e. [OCon 720](#) (Concur Travel System Profile Form) – this form is used to add a new user or change user permissions in Concur
- f. [OGC Form 2, Sponsored Travel](#) – this form is used to obtain OGC clearance for travel sponsored by a for-profit entity or a foreign government
- g. [OGC Form 5, Direct Reimbursement](#) – this form is used to obtain OGC clearance to allow a travel reimbursement to be paid directly to an employee (state or local government or US non-profit only)
- h. [SI-3881](#) (Invitational Traveler Vendor Enrollment Form) – this form is required to enroll an invitational traveler in the SI Vendor system for travel reimbursements
- i. [SI Short-term Housing Lease Agreement](#) – this template may be used to obtain temporary lodging for SI employees and affiliated persons not to exceed sixty (60) calendar days during periods of TDY on official Smithsonian business when a commercial lodgings provider does not provide its own lease agreement
- j. [Occupant Responsibility for Damage and Loss](#) – this template may be used as an attachment to the SI Short-term Housing Lease Agreement and is signed by each employee and/or affiliated person who will occupy the leased property

CHAPTER 3.0: SMITHSONIAN TRAVEL GUIDANCE

The following section contains specific SI travel policies that supplement general Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) guidelines as they apply to common SI travel activities.

3.1 Travel Policy and Guidelines

All travel must comply with the FTR issued by GSA and/or SI policy. The SI Board of Regents has delegated to the Secretary the right to authorize travel on behalf of SI. The Secretary has delegated authority to the unit directors, who in turn may delegate to unit staff as needed to carry out the mission and operations of the unit. As with any delegation of authority, officials delegating travel authority to subordinates remain responsible for the proper execution of their organization's travel activity in compliance with the FTR and SI policy.

Failure to comply with SI travel policies and procedures may result in one or more of the following:

- Withdrawal of the unit's authority to authorize travel
- Withdrawal of an individual's authority to authorize travel
- Cancellation of the non-compliant travel authorization
- Delay in, or denial of, processing the travel reimbursement
- Employee disciplinary action, such as letter of reprimand, suspension and/or termination of employment
- Investigation by the Inspector General
- SI TA's, vouchers, and related documents are subject to audit by OFA, OIG, GSA, and the Government Accountability Office (GAO).
- SI travel policy is established by [SD 312](#), *Travel* and this Travel Handbook.
- In accordance with [SD 931](#), *Use of Computers & Networks*, an authorized Concur user may not share their user ID, password and/or electronic signature. An individual using the Concur system must log-in using their own user ID and password to process or approve travel documents.

3.2 Travel Authorizations

All SI employees and affiliated persons must have a pre-approved travel authorization (TA) for travel from their official station or other authorized point of departure, to a temporary duty station and return, to conduct official travel. An employee's official station is listed on their OHR record and in the Concur profile and may be the employee's telework site*. Travel authorizations are estimates of the cost of a trip. For international travel, a miscellaneous expense item should be added to account for fluctuations in currency exchange rates.

*The official worksite for an employee covered by a telework agreement, who is not scheduled to report at least twice each bi-weekly pay period on a regular and recurring basis to the regular worksite, is the location of the telework site (e.g., home or other alternative worksite), except in certain temporary situations.

3.2.1 Travel Authorization Approval

- a. A TA requires the following approvals from one or more individuals – with some additional approvals required, depending on the circumstance:
- Authorization to travel in support of a given mission or purpose
 - Availability of funds
 - Special approval for some Senior Executive travel – temporary duty travel must be pre-approved by their immediate supervisor (may not be delegated to a subordinate) if:

- 1) The trip duration is 10 calendar days or longer, or,
- 2) The cost of the trip is projected to exceed \$6000.

A list of senior management executives subject to the special approval is maintained by the Office of Human Resources and updated quarterly. The Additional Pre-Approval for Senior Executive Travel form ([OCon 710](#)) is located on the [SI Travel Forms & Policy Documents](#) page. Questions related to this policy should be directed to the Travel Management Office.

Note: If, after a trip is complete and the number of days or the cost of the trip now requires special approval, an [OCon 710](#) form must be approved by the traveler's immediate supervisor, and uploaded to the Concur voucher before the payment is approved.

- Compliance with the FTR and/or SI policy
- b. The approving official for a TA is the traveler's immediate supervisor (or the supervisor of the organization providing travel for an invitational traveler). The immediate supervisor may delegate the approval authority to a peer of the immediate supervisor, a second level (or higher) supervisor, or a designated management official - **never a subordinate of the traveler.**
- c. In addition, if applicable, the unit director (or a designee) must approve relocation-related expenses in advance, and the traveler/preparer must electronically attach the pen-and-ink signed approval form to the TA in Concur , and note in the comments section of the TA the form has been electronically attached. (See Chapter 5: Relocation.)
- d. Pre-approval is required whenever a traveler requires car service. This includes use of a car service for transportation in the user's designated local travel area. The approvals required are as follows:
- If the traveler is a unit director, car service use must be approved in advance by the appropriate Under Secretary
 - All other travelers, car service use must be approved in advance by the Unit Director
- e. A unit may use a paper document to record one or more of the signatures required (rather than using the Concur electronic routing and stamping process) for a TA. The

signed paper document must be electronically attached to the TA before the document is APPROVED electronically. TA's must receive an electronic Approval stamp to authorize travel prior to the commencement of travel. The approving official designated to electronically stamp the document "APPROVED" in Concur is responsible for confirming the hard-copy documentation is properly completed, reflecting the required signature of the approving official(s), and is electronically attached to the Concur document.

- f. In order to ensure all pertinent travel information is presented to the approving official (s), some units may use the printed TA form from Concur to capture required pen-and-ink signatures if the traveler's approver has delegated electronic document approval. Attach the pen-and-ink signed form to the electronic TA and use this form to capture required signatures if the traveler's approver has delegated electronic approval signed by the appropriate approving official(s) for each trip or amended trip.
- g. Prior to the start of a trip, if the starting or ending date changes by more than five days, the departure or destination location changes, or the total cost of the trip increases by more than \$400, the traveler/preparer must create and process an amended TA. If these types of changes occur after the start of the trip, the changes can be made in the voucher.

Table 312-A-1: Authorization Approvals

	TRAVELER OR TRAVEL PREPARER	APPROVER	OGC	UNIT DIRECTOR	UNDER SECRETARY	USF&A/ CFO
Travel	X	X				
Sponsored travel will require additional approvals described in 3.10		X	X (depending on sponsor type)			
Emergency travel		X		X		
Ex post facto authorization		X		X		
Car service (not simple trip) (See d above)		X		X	X (if Unit Director)	X (if Under Sec)
Spousal and dependent family member travel		X	X	X	X	X
Chartered Aircraft		X	X	X	X	X

3.2.2 Travel Authorization Attachments

The traveler/preparer must electronically attach the following documentation to the Concur TA:

- A copy of the pen-and-ink approved TA if the electronic approver is not the immediate supervisor or designated management official
- A copy of the approved [OCon 501](#) form if field expenses will be incurred on the trip
- A copy of the approved [OCon 700](#) if use of a Foreign Carrier is required
- A copy of the offer of sponsorship if some or all of the travel will be paid by an outside entity
- A copy of any higher level (Office of General Counsel, OGC or Under Secretary) approval required for a trip
- A copy of the itinerary (reservation) for common carrier transportation, if booked outside of Concur (to include employee travel reserved on a Purchase order)
- A copy of the traveler's hotel reservation, if booked outside of Concur (to include employee travel reserved on a Purchase Order)
- If travel is to a conference, a copy of the conference description/agenda which shows the dates, purpose, fees, and meals provided. (The name and dates of the Conference must be noted in the Document Details box of the Concur TA.)

Table 312-A-2: Authorization Attachments

	Paper Signed Authorization	Sponsored Travel Agreement	OGC Approval Document	Completed OCon 501
Approver not signing electronically	X			
Sponsored Travel:				
1) U.S. non-profit 501(c)3 or state or local government no direct reimbursement		X		
2) Federal agency reimbursement to SI or employee		X		
3) U.S non-profit 501(c)3 or state or local government direct reimbursement to employee		X	X	
4) Foreign Government, individual, or for-profit sponsor (see section 3.10 for detailed information)		X	X	
Field Expenses over \$500				X

See Chapter 5.0, Relocation for the required approvals for relocation expenses.

3.3 Travel Vouchers

A travel voucher must be submitted, with receipts electronically attached, **within five workdays after completion of travel, or every 30 days if on long-term or continuous travel**. Where necessary, a pre-trip voucher may be used to provide reimbursement for travel related expenses incurred prior to travel (e.g. pre-payment of conference registration or training, non-refundable tickets, pre-paid lodging, etc.).

Each traveler, whether staff or invitational, must sign a travel voucher. If the traveler does not electronically sign in Concur, the traveler must pen-and-ink sign a printed copy of the Concur voucher. This signed travel voucher must be electronically attached to the Concur record. The designated unit employee (travel arranger) may then (and only then) electronically “sign” the travel voucher in his/her own name in Concur using the SIGNED ON BEHALF stamp.

The approving official for a voucher is the traveler’s immediate supervisor (or the supervisor of the organization providing travel for an invitational traveler). The immediate supervisor may delegate the approval authority to a peer of the immediate supervisor, a second level (or higher) supervisor, or a designated management official - **never a subordinate of the traveler**.

The approving official must ensure that a voucher is properly completed and all necessary receipts and other required documentation are attached before applying the “Approved” stamp. The approver must work with the traveler, travel preparer or the traveler’s supervisor (if necessary) to correct any deficiencies in the voucher before approval.

3.3.1 Travel Expenses Requiring Unit Director Approval

A voucher for the following events requires the additional approval from a unit director:

- a. Travel expenses related to emergency travel for reasons such as illness, injury, natural disaster, etc.
- b. An ex post facto TA (occurs when travel expenses (other than conference registration) are incurred before a Concur travel authorization is created and approved)

Table 312-A-3: Voucher Approvals

	Traveler (electronic or paper)	Approver	Unit Director
Voucher	X	X	
Emergency Travel	X	X	X
Ex post facto TA	X	X	X

3.3.2 Travel Voucher Attachments

The traveler/preparer must electronically attach the following documentation to the Concur voucher:

- a. A copy of the pen-and-ink signed voucher, if the traveler does not sign it electronically
- b. A copy of the ticketed transportation invoice showing the commercial carrier name, fare code and charges (do not include boarding passes)
- c. A copy of any vehicle rental receipt
- d. A complete copy of any lodging receipts
- e. A copy of the receipt for any single expense over \$75.
- f. All receipts for meal and incidental expenses (M&IE) when M&IE exceeds the daily locality rate and the traveler has been authorized actual expense reimbursement.
- g. Itemized receipts for any business development, donor cultivation or any other meal when the traveler is paying for others. Receipt must include the business purpose of the meal and names and titles of all those attending in addition to the date and location
- h. Each use of ground transportation must indicate the from and to location, and be either itemized in the voucher or documented with a receipt if over \$75, or when a lump sum amount is entered
- i. A copy of an offer of sponsorship if one was received during travel
- j. For travel in a remote area where receipts are not available, the traveler should maintain a journal of the trip indicating what expenses were paid on which day including the name of the payee, a description of the payment and the amount including the exchange rate if the payment was in a foreign currency
- k. All receipts from international travel should include the exchange rate for the TDY location or a copy of the credit card monthly statement showing the US dollar amount of the expense and any currency conversion fees
- l. Under some circumstances the statement from the government issued travel card can be used to substantiate expenses (but not lodging charges). Contact the TMO Help Desk for information

Table 312-A-4: Travel Voucher Attachments

	Paper Signed Voucher	Transportation Invoice	Vehicle Rental Receipt	Lodging Receipt	Itemized Ground Transportation or Receipts	Expense Receipts	Sponsor Agreement	Conference Description
Traveler not signing electronically	X							
Approver not signing electronically	X							
Air or Rail		X						
Vehicle Rental			X					
Lodging costs				X				
Taxi, shuttle car service					X			
Other expense over \$75						X		
Sponsor agreement during travel							X	
Conference Attendance								X

3.4 Electronic Records

Concur will retain all electronic records (including those faxed or scanned/uploaded into a TA or voucher) for six years and three months, and will be the system of record for travel. A unit may, at its discretion, also retain a copy of travel records for its files.

3.5 Travel Charge Card

Each SI employee with a government contractor-issued travel charge card (IBA) is required to use it for all authorized expenses incurred while in travel status. The cardholder is personally responsible for the debt incurred.

The travel charge card may only be used for expenses related to official temporary duty (TDY) or relocation. For example:

- Transportation (i.e. air and rail) travel costs for non-local travel
- Per Diem - employee lodging, meals and incidental expenses
- Allowable miscellaneous expenses
- Representational expenses, including business development and donor cultivation
- Field expenses

A traveler may use the travel charge card to obtain an ATM cash advance for anticipated out-of-pocket travel expenses that **cannot be purchased with the travel charge card** (e.g. taxi and meals) and for which a cost can be estimated.

The travel charge card may **not** be used for, among other things, the following:

- Personal expenses – **including personal travel**
- Expenses incurred by other travelers
- ATM cash advances when the cash will not be used for official expenses incurred while on official travel
- Registration fees in the local travel area

Failure to pay the balance on the travel charge card statement in full before it becomes delinquent and/or using a travel charge card to pay expenses not related to official travel is considered abuse of travel charge card privileges. Such abuse constitutes a violation of [SD 103](#), *Smithsonian Institution Standards of Conduct*. SD 103, Section 14 (Financial Responsibility) requires that the SI “employee shall pay debts properly and timely”. Such abuse may result in one or more of the following:

- a. Suspension or cancellation of travel charge card privileges
- b. Employee disciplinary action, such as letter of reprimand, suspension and/or termination of employment
- c. Notification of senior leadership for other appropriate action
- d. Investigation by the Office of the Inspector General

All new travel charge card applicants are required to complete GSA’s Government Travel Charge Card Training Program online course prior to receiving a travel charge card. This training is required to educate new cardholders and remind long-time cardholders on the proper use of the travel charge card and the FTR. The Government Travel Charge Card Training Program may be accessed using the following link:

<https://training.smartpay.gsa.gov/>

3.6 Travel Advances

3.6.1 ATM Cash Advance:

- a. The travel charge card provides for ATM withdrawals for cash advances to cover anticipated out-of-pocket travel expenses that **cannot be purchased with the travel charge card** and must be paid using cash or a cash equivalent, and for which a cost can be estimated. In rare cases and when circumstances warrant, an SI Cash Advance may be authorized to supplement anticipated cash needs. (See Section 3.6.2.)

ATM cash advances are limited to not more than 100% of the estimated reimbursable expenses that **cannot be purchased with the travel charge card**.

The service fee(s) charged by the vendor(s) – travel charge card bank and/or ATM bank - should be added by the traveler/preparer to the Concur document as an ATM Fee, and will be charged to the chartfield on the TA.

3.6.2 SI Cash Advance:

Please note that in those **limited situations** in which OFA issues a cash advance:

- a. The advance may not exceed 100% of the estimated reimbursable expenses in the authorization
- b. A traveler whose travel card has been suspended or closed (for cause) may not receive a travel advance except where necessary to cover anticipated field expenses. No travel advance is permitted for transportation, per diem or miscellaneous expenses
- c. The advance is scheduled to be issued 30 calendar days prior to the travel departure date. In Concur, the approving official applying the APPROVED stamp can request earlier issuance of the travel advance by checking the box next to “Request Immediate Release” on the Totals tab in the Travel Authorization.
- d. The traveler’s approving official is responsible for collecting any unused advance amounts due to SI after the official travel has been completed
- e. The traveler must immediately refund any unused advance amounts via check payable to SI and annotated with the applicable TA number. A copy of the reimbursement should be uploaded to the respective voucher.

SI Cash Advance Uses. SI cash advances are issued by OFA to:

- a. Invitational travelers who need a cash advance (they will not have a government contractor-issued travel charge card)
- b. SI employees who do not have government travel cards
- c. SI employees on travel exceeding 30 continuous days where circumstances warrant and use of the IBA travel card is not practical.

3.7 Acceptance of Gifts While on Travel

Acceptance of any gift, gratuity, or benefit from a private source by an SI employee on travel must not violate [SD 103](#), *Smithsonian Institution Standards of Conduct* which includes a comprehensive statement on gifts and appropriate action to be taken by the employee. The employee should avoid even **the appearance** of a conflict of interest. In addition, promotional materials or payments received are the property of SI, and may not be retained by the employee. These materials or benefits include, but are not limited to, cash, gifts, merchandise, bonus flights, reduced-fare coupons, credits toward future expenses or future car rentals, free tickets, and free accommodations.

There are two exceptions to this policy:

1. The traveler may keep compensation from an airline for a seat the traveler has voluntarily given up because of overbooking. In this situation, the traveler must use annual leave for delays during official hours, and may not charge additional per diem or expenses to SI.
2. The traveler may keep frequent flier mileage credits for personal use.

3.8 Invitational (Non-Employee) Travelers

A non-employee traveling at the invitation of SI is subject to the FTR and SI travel policy. The invitational traveler must be acting in a capacity directly connected with official SI activities.

An honorarium is an expression of appreciation in cash or kind to an individual for a contribution of time, expertise, and/or participation in a Smithsonian activity or event. Such tokens of appreciation are usually presented after the fact, when there was no prior expectation of a payment of any kind, and when there was no prior agreement, verbal or in writing, that any payment would be made to the individual. Honoraria are not payments for which SI is legally or traditionally required to make, such as payments under service contracts or purchase order awards. Honoraria are not to be used to circumvent normal procurement procedures for professional services or consultants.

- a. **U.S. Citizens.** If the invitational traveler is a U.S. citizen, has a U.S. tax identification number, or will receive a direct payment (travel advance, honorarium, or reimbursement),
 - 1) He/she must complete the appropriate invitational traveler enrollment package ([SI-3881](#), *Invitational Traveler Vendor Enrollment Form*) so that the sponsoring unit can enroll him/her in the PeopleSoft vendor system.
 - 2) The sponsoring unit must normally process travel documents through the Concur system on behalf of the invitational traveler – including spousal travel when authorized, or for members of SI Boards Commissions, or Councils. This requirement is waived for travelers in item d.3) below.
- b. **Non- U.S. Citizens.** If the traveler is not a U.S. citizen, and will not receive a direct reimbursement, or is a member of a group of 10 or more travelers invited to an SI-sponsored event, special travel arrangements may be available. Please contact the TMO for information.
 - 1) The travel preparer in the sponsoring unit will create and process the TA.
 - 2) At the completion of the trip, the traveler will be required to pen-and-ink sign a paper copy of the travel voucher attesting to the validity of the claimed reimbursable expenses.
 - 3) The signed travel voucher must be electronically attached to the Concur record prior to the preparer electronically signing (with the SIGNED ON BEHALF stamp) the voucher.
- c. **Large Group Invitational Travelers.** When invitational travelers are part of a large group, see section 3.17
- d. **Non-employee individuals** who may qualify for invitational traveler status are:
 - 1) Speakers at SI events, program experts and advisors
 - 2) Interns, fellows, research associates, and volunteers

- 3) Students, post docs, or other individuals collaborating on an SI program or research project
- 4) Employees of Federal agencies whose travel is solely for SI business
- 5) Persons providing personal assistance to employees with special needs who are authorized to travel
- 6) Employment applicants traveling at the request of SI
- 7) Spouse and dependent family members (see Section 3.9)
- 8) Contractors, *only when* invitational travel is *not* related to their contract or purchase order Statement of Work

Note: All invitational travelers are eligible to travel using City Pair fares while on official SI business. Contractors are not eligible for government contract fares when travel is required pursuant to a prevailing Statement of Work; their travel may not be processed in Concur. Contact the appropriate Unit Procurement Officer or the TMO help desk for questions about supporting contractor travel.

3.8.1 Board of Regents

Travel expense reimbursement may be provided to members of the Board of Regents in accordance with the Regents Reimbursement Policy as published by the Office of the Board of Regents.

3.9 Spousal and Dependent Family Member Travel

Note: The guidance below does not pertain to spouse or family members that hold official appointments in SI including registered volunteers. They should be treated as invitational travelers and OGC or USF&A/CFO clearance is not required.

SI will authorize a spouse or dependent family member to travel on official travel at SI expense in limited, exceptional cases. The presence of a spouse or dependent family member on official travel is considered a bona fide business purpose where the spouse or dependent family member conducts official and substantive business-related functions on behalf of SI.

Spousal or dependent family member travel may be authorized only upon written approval **in advance** from the OGC and the USF&A/CFO. The unit must submit a request for approval of spousal or dependent family member travel **prior to the proposed travel** through the approving official to the OGC and the USF&A/CFO. The CFO will review all requests for approval of spousal or dependent family member travel submitted by the Secretary.

Such requests must demonstrate in writing the bona fide business purpose for the travel and the manner in which such travel furthers the mission of SI. Mere attendance at an event or the performance of incidental services as a spouse or dependent family member does not qualify as a bona fide business purpose. In addition, the table below provides some guidance

in determining whether a spouse's or dependent family member's presence on SI travel serves a bona fide business purpose:

Table 312-A-5: Spouse/Family Travel – Bona fide Business Purposes

Presence is <u>less likely</u> to be “bona fide” when:	Presence is <u>more likely</u> to be “bona fide” when:
No formal request for spouse or dependent family member to attend function	Formal or official written correspondence requests spouse or dependent family member to attend event
Spouse or dependent family member is not required to attend meetings, be given advance assignments, or make presentations at the event	Spouse or dependent family member is required to attend meetings, be given advance assignments, or make presentations at the event
Spouse or dependent family member will attend only social functions	Spouse or dependent family member will attend business-related meetings or events
Spouse or dependent family member will perform only “helpful” services (e.g., note taking, secretarial services)	Spouse or dependent family member will perform “necessary” services by acting as a representative of the SI in a significant manner
Only SI employees and spouses or dependent family members of SI employees will attend event	Third parties (i.e. non-SI employees) will attend event
Spouse or dependent family member will participate in substantial tourist activities (shopping, sightseeing, etc.)	Spouse or dependent family member will not participate in tourist activities
Children or other family members will attend	Children and other family members will not attend
	Spouse's or dependent family member's presence is dictated by tradition or protocol
	The duties and responsibilities performed by the spouse or dependent family member would have been performed by another SI employee had the spouse or dependent family member not attended the event.

Note: The unit must electronically attach the approved request to the TA in Concur.

Travel for the spouse or dependent family member of a director must use the same Concur routing list as the director's travel.

3.10 Sponsored Travel

3.10.1 Definition of terms

Smithsonian Employee – an individual paid through the Smithsonian Payroll system from federal or trust funds. Interns, fellows and research associates are not Smithsonian employees.

Sponsored travel – occurs when any Smithsonian employee accepts financial support from a Federal or non-Federal source to fund travel expenses. This section describes the policies and procedures that govern an employee's use of sponsorship. These sponsored travel rules do not apply to interns, fellows or research associates whose travel expenses are entirely funded by a non-SI source. They may accept any level support offered by the sponsor. In those instances when the travel for an intern, fellow or research associate is partially paid by SI and partially by a non-SI source, the intern, fellow or research associate must follow SI invitational travel policies and procedures for those expenses paid for by SI.

Meeting – is a conference, seminar, speaking engagement, symposium, training course or similar event that takes place away from the traveler's official station. For Smithsonian travelers, donor cultivation events qualify as meetings.

Direct reimbursement – a payment made directly to an employee for reimbursement of travel expenses. For domestic travel, a direct reimbursement must be check, money order or a direct deposit to the traveler's bank account, never cash. OCON&PPM, TMO will audit 100% of direct reimbursements requiring the [OGC Form 5 - Direct Reimbursement Clearance form](#).

Cash Payments – Some foreign sponsors may offer to reimburse travel expenses with a cash payment either at the beginning or end of a trip. Travelers should make every attempt to avoid cash payments. Federal law allows SI employees to accept cash from a foreign government or governmental entity, but such payments must be handled as follows to prevent problems:

- a. If cash is received at the end of a trip –
 - Obtain a written receipt from the sponsor attesting to the amount paid
 - Submit cash for deposit in a Smithsonian account
 - Attach receipts and deposit information to the travel voucher
- b. If cash is received at the beginning of the trip for payment of local expenses such as lodging, meals and local transportation –
 - Obtain a written receipt from the sponsor attesting to the amount paid
 - Provide receipts or a log documenting all expenditures
 - Deposit any remaining funds in a Smithsonian account

Honorarium – remuneration made to acknowledge or “reward” participation in an event; often given in recognition of a speech or presentation. Honoraria must be payable to SI, not the traveler.

Payment – remuneration made for service rendered such as participation on a review board or panel, and, sometimes, participation in an event as a speaker or presenter.

3.10.2 Sponsored travel made by in-kind payments

In-kind payments occur when the sponsor directly arranges and pays for travel arrangements including transportation, hotels, meals, etc., and the traveler does not incur out-of-pocket expenses.

Generally, an employee may only be provided with sponsored travel arrangements at the same level as would otherwise be permitted if the SI were paying for the arrangements with two exceptions:

- a. traveler may use a non-U.S. flag carrier and
- b. Traveler may use non-coach class travel if authorized by the sponsor

Sponsored travel arrangements which exceed standard levels (such as first class airline tickets, transportation on a chartered or private jet or deluxe hotel accommodations), must be approved in advance by a supervisor and OGC regardless of the sponsor. Acceptance of such arrangements may be permitted on a case by case basis so long as such arrangements are not lavish and do not raise a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest.

A sponsor may fund all or part of a trip in advance or upon completion of the specified travel. For employee sponsored travel only, the sponsor's commitment letter must be received prior to the trip and must be addressed to the SI organization in addition to the traveler.

- For employees, the external sponsorship must be noted in the Document Details box of the Concur TA. Concur TAs are not to be used for sponsored travel for interns, fellows and research associates.
- For employees, the TA must identify the funding source and any conditions
- For employees, the commitment letter must be electronically attached to the TA in Concur
- For employees, unit administrative personnel are responsible for ensuring that sponsored travel transactions are properly structured, documented and processed within Concur and the ERP financial system.
- For employees, reimbursement made to SI for payment received from a sponsor must be recorded on a Cash Receipt Voucher (CRV). The unit must confirm the CRV has the proper travel chartfield coding and must attach a copy of the travel voucher

3.10.3 If the sponsor is a US Government agency (such as NOAA, NSF or NASA)

- An [OGC Form 2 - Sponsored Travel Conflicts of Interest Clearance Request](#) is not required for any traveler
- Employee travelers may receive a direct reimbursement ((OGC Form 5) Direct Reimbursement Clearance Request is not required)

- Sponsor may pay some or all expenses on behalf of traveler (see in-kind payment definition above)
- For employees, sponsor may reimburse the Smithsonian directly rather than pay the traveler
- Employees may not accept an honorarium, only reimbursement of actual travel expenses. Honoraria or non-travel payments may be made directly to the employee's unit or Smithsonian. An employee traveler may not accept a check in his/her name and turn it over to SI (See more about these kinds of payments below)
- Employees must electronically attach a copy of the payment document (check, money order or electronic funds transfer (EFT) advice) and all travel receipts to the travel voucher

3.10.4 If the sponsor is a state or local government or a US non-profit entity (an organization that qualifies under section 501(c)(3))

- An [OGC Form 2 - Sponsored Travel Conflicts of Interest Clearance form](#) is not required for any traveler
- Employee traveler may receive a direct reimbursement if an [OGC Form 5 - Direct Reimbursement Clearance form](#) is approved by OGC in advance. (Approval is not required for invitational travelers, fellows, or interns.)
- Sponsor may pay some or all expenses on behalf of traveler (see in-kind payment definition above)
- For employees, sponsor may reimburse the Smithsonian directly rather than pay the traveler
- Employees may not accept an honorarium, only payment for actual travel expenses. Honoraria or non-travel payments may be made directly to the employee's unit or Smithsonian. Employees may not accept a check for honoraria in their name and turn it over to SI. (See more about these kinds of payments in Section 3.10.9.)
- Employees must electronically attach a copy of the payment document (check, money order or EFT advice), all travel receipts and the [OGC Form 5](#) to the travel voucher

3.10.5 If the sponsor is a foreign non-profit entity

- OGC Form 2 - Sponsored Travel Conflicts of Interest Clearance form is not required for any traveler
- Employees may not receive a direct reimbursement
- Sponsor may pay some or all expenses on behalf of traveler (see in-kind payment definition above)
- For employees, sponsor must reimburse the Smithsonian directly rather than pay the traveler
- Employees may not accept an honorarium or payment. Honoraria or non-travel payments may be made directly to the traveler's unit or Smithsonian. Traveler may not accept a check in his/her name and turn it over to SI (See more about these kinds of payments below)

3.10.6 If the sponsor is a US or foreign for-profit entity

- Employees must submit an [OGC Form 2 - Sponsored Travel Conflicts of Interest Clearance form](#) which must be approved prior to travel
- Employees may not receive a direct reimbursement
- Sponsor may pay some or all expenses on behalf of traveler (see in-kind payment definition above)
- For employees, sponsor must reimburse the Smithsonian directly rather than pay the traveler
- Employees may not accept an honorarium or payment. Honoraria or non-travel payments may be made directly to the traveler's unit or Smithsonian. Traveler may not accept a check in their name and turn it over to SI (See more about these kinds of payments in 3.10.9)

3.10.7 If the sponsor is a foreign government or foreign governmental entity (generally, a foreign public university is a foreign governmental entity)

- Employees must submit an [OGC Form 2 - Sponsored Travel Conflicts of Interest form](#) which must be approved prior to travel
- Employees may accept cash if no other form of payment is available from the sponsor (see procedures in 3.10.1)
- Sponsor may pay some or all expenses on behalf of traveler (see in-kind payment definition above)
- For employees, sponsor must reimburse the Smithsonian directly rather than pay the traveler if the reimbursement is in the form of a check or wire transfer
- Employees may not accept an honorarium or payment. Honoraria or non-travel payments may be made directly to the traveler's unit or Smithsonian. Traveler may not accept a check in their name and turn it over to SI (see more about these kinds of payments in 3.10.9)

3.10.8 If the sponsor is an individual

- An OGC Form 2 - Sponsored Travel Conflicts of Interest Clearance form is not required for any traveler
- Employees must provide detailed information about sponsor, sponsor's affiliation with Smithsonian, purpose of travel, and the details of the offer in travel authorization form for the travel approver
- For offers of hospitality that arise after travel has already commenced, employee must, upon return, disclose the details and nature of the hospitality to the travel preparer for inclusion in the voucher

3.10.9 Payments and Honoraria (other than travel reimbursements)

Employees on official business may never accept payments and honoraria other than travel expense reimbursements. Payments must always be made to the unit or the Smithsonian. Contact the [OGC](#) Ethics Officer for additional information.

Sponsorship Questions

If the unit has any question about the type of entity or the propriety of accepting sponsorship or direct reimbursements, contact the [OGC](#) Ethics Officer.

3.11 No Cost Travel

A no-cost TA and voucher must be prepared and processed by the unit when:

- A sponsor handles the arrangements for an employee traveling on SI business and directly pays all related expenses, either in-kind or to the employee (such as transportation, lodging, and meals). Attach, if required, an OGC-approved clearance form.
- An employee attends a conference at his/her own expense. A comment must be entered in the Document Details section of the Concur travel authorization citing that no costs will be claimed or reimbursement sought by the traveler from the SI in performance of this trip (regardless of incident or circumstance).

3.12 Combining Personal and Official Travel

- All personal travel planned during the trip must be clearly annotated on the TA.
- The traveler must mark all personal days as annual leave – no lodging or M&IE will be paid.
- The traveler may not use the Concur system, the Government Travel Card or Government Contract Fares for any personal travel.
- The traveler may purchase the business portion of travel through the Concur system using the government travel card or he/she may purchase the entire roundtrip ticket outside of Concur. In either case, the traveler will only be reimbursed the round trip government fare or the actual cost of his/her ticket, whichever is less.

3.12.1 Leave at TDY Location

When a traveler plans to take leave at a TDY location in conjunction with official travel, either prior to, during or following completion of official travel, the traveler must:

- a. Purchase the ticket through Concur using the government travel card following the guidelines as outlined in section 4.2-Air Transportation. Leave at TDY location does not qualify as an exception to the ticket purchases as outlined in Section 3.12-Combining Personal and Business travel;
- b. Create a TA with the actual departure and return dates. For example, official travel is scheduled from Monday through Friday and the traveler decides to stay at the

- business location for personal reasons until the following Wednesday; the departure date is Monday and the return date as the following Wednesday;
- c. Not claim lodging or meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) on personal days and is required to adjust the TA accordingly. In addition, any leave days must be clearly identified on the TA; and,
 - d. If a rental vehicle was approved in order to conduct official business, the government insurance only covers the time frame of the official travel. The traveler must notify the vehicle rental company at time of rental, the dates of official travel and the dates for personal use.

3.12.2 Side trip from official destination.

If personal travel is from a TDY location returning to the same TDY location (for example, official travel to Los Angeles and traveler goes to San Francisco for personal reasons and then back to Los Angeles):

- a. The traveler's TA must show only the itinerary from the duty station to the TDY location and return (do not show personal destinations), but must show the entire duration of the trip including leave days
- b. The traveler can book the travel to and from the TDY location using the Concur online booking tool or an SI travel agent

3.12.3 Personal destination departure or return.

If personal travel originates at a TDY location but requires the return to the duty station to be from a personal destination (for example, traveler goes from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles on business and then goes to Seattle to visit family and wishes to return from Seattle to Washington, D.C.):

- a. The traveler must complete a TA showing only the itinerary from the duty station to the TDY location and return (the TA dates must cover the entire trip including leave days)
- b. The traveler may not use the travel charge card to buy the portion of the ticket that includes a personal departure or destination, and must use personal funds. Travel from the duty station directly to the TDY location or from the TDY location to the duty station can be procured through the Concur system or from an SI travel agent. In this example, the ticket from Washington, D.C. to Los Angeles can be procured through Concur using government fares, but the Los Angeles to Seattle to Washington, D.C. ticket must be procured outside the system. Alternatively, a traveler may purchase a roundtrip ticket for the entire trip to take advantage of commercial (non-refundable) roundtrip fares. This may make the total cost of the airfare less than the round trip government fare to and from the official travel destination
- c. The traveler will only be reimbursed for the actual cost of the ticket, not to exceed the government contract round trip airfare to the TDY location

3.12.4 Accompanied by unofficial travelers.

If the traveler wishes to take family members on an official trip:

- a. The traveler must complete a TA showing only the itinerary from the duty station to the TDY location and return to the duty station
- b. Travel arrangements for family members are a personal matter and must be arranged outside the Concur system
- c. The traveler must book their official travel through the Concur system or with an SI travel agent
- d. No lodging, M&IE expenses, or other expenses for family members will be paid or reimbursed to the traveler. Family members may share a room with the traveler at the TDY location provided any additional room charges (such as additional guest fees) are not reimbursable to the traveler.

3.12.5 Official travel during leave.

If a traveler is called upon to travel to a TDY location when the traveler is already on annual leave or annual leave has already been scheduled when the requirement for official travel becomes known:

- a. The traveler or travel preparer must complete a TA showing the itinerary from the leave location to the TDY location and back to the leave location. Traveler can also travel from the leave location to the TDY location and return to the duty station or leave from the duty station, travel to the TDY location and then continue to the leave destination.
- b. Traveler will receive lodging and M&IE for the official business days including $\frac{3}{4}$ per diem for the first and last days of official travel.

3.13 Local Travel

There are two kinds of local travel as defined by the geographical area in which the travel takes place:

3.13.1 Official Local Travel

- a. Official Local Travel is travel in the “official local travel area” defined in Appendix 4.
- b. Official Local Travel is not recorded on a Concur Travel Authorization. Local travel expenses are reimbursed to employees via Concur’s Local Voucher process.
- c. Fees to attend conferences and training events in the Official Local Travel area must be paid for using the Unit’s purchase card or personal funds. An employee’s travel card may not be used to cover fees to attend conferences and training events in the local area.
- d. Lodging and per diem reimbursements are not allowed

3.13.2 Day Trip Travel

Day Trip Travel is round trip travel from a traveler's home or office completed in less than 12 hours.

- a. Normally travel outside of the Institution's "official local travel area" requires a Concur TA, but a TA is NOT REQUIRED if:
 - The total travel time is less than 12 hours; and
 - Air, Amtrak or bus reservations are not required (VRE, Metro and MARC tickets excepted); and
 - Overnight stay is not required.
- b. Any local travel expenses normally authorized by a unit (mileage, taxi, tolls, rental car, VRE, Marc, Metro tickets and parking) may be paid for "day trip" travel using the Concur [Local Voucher process](#) ([SMR Reference Guide](#)).
- c. Unit directors in locations other than the Washington Metropolitan region may allow day trips in their areas at their discretion.

Note: Without specific authorization, a traveler shall not use their individual government travel card to pay for local travel expenses, including those incurred on day trips (especially rental cars). Travel cards may only be used for travel covered by a Concur Travel Authorization. The only exception for the usage of a government travel card in the local area is authorized in [SD 322, Charge Card Program Appendix A - Use of Travel Cards for Development, Official Representation, and Business Activity Expenses](#).

3.14 Field Expenses

Field Expenses are the costs for all personal property items, regardless of dollar amount, and other goods or services with aggregated costs that exceed \$500 per trip, determined necessary to carry out research and/or special projects, normally during extended travel by employees on official SI business and for which use of traditional purchase procedures are not practical. Travel documents may include field expense items, such as supplies for a research project. Prior to the trip, the unit is required to complete an [OCon 501](#), *Field Expenses Review and Authorization* form to authorize potential field expenses.

The traveler/preparer must electronically attach the completed [OCon 501](#) form to the TA. All field expenses must be:

- Approved by OCon&PPM or a unit official with delegated procurement authority specifically for field expenses
- Identified in the Expense List section of the TA
- Charged to the correct chartfield class codes

3.15 Compensatory Time

The compensatory time discussed below is only for time spent during transportation to (or from) a TDY location. Once a traveler has arrived at the TDY location, time at the TDY location during non-working hours is subject to the employee's unit's normal overtime rules.

Compensatory time off for travel may be earned by a salaried (not hourly) employee without regard to whether the employee is exempt from or covered by the overtime pay provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended. This includes SI Federal employees in the General Schedule (GS), prevailing rate (WG) employees, and scientific or professional (ST) positions, Trust employees in the Institution Schedule (IS), and senior-level employees in Federal (SL) and Trust (IL) positions, but does not include prevailing rate (wage) employees, either Federal or Trust. An SI Federal or Trust wage employee who is required to travel outside his/her regular duty hours earns overtime pay.

For travel time to be creditable under this provision, travel must be officially authorized, i.e., travel must be for work purposes and must be approved by an authorized SI official or otherwise authorized under established SI policies. To minimize the accrual of excessive compensatory time off for travel, a unit may require the employee to schedule travel to occur during normal working hours whenever and wherever possible.

For the purpose of compensatory time off for travel, time in a travel status includes:

- a. Time spent traveling between the official duty station and a temporary duty station. (Time in travel status ends when the employee arrives at the temporary duty worksite or their lodging, wherever employee arrives first.)
- b. Time spent traveling between two temporary duty stations.
- c. The "usual waiting time" preceding or interrupting such travel (e.g., waiting at an airport or train station prior to departure). SI has the sole and exclusive discretion to determine what is creditable as "usual waiting time." OHR has determined the creditable "usual waiting time" shall be up to two hours for a domestic flight, up to three hours for an international flight or up to 30 minutes prior to travel using other modes of transportation (bus, train, etc.). Please see the Time and Attendance Handbook for additional details. An "extended" waiting period—i.e., an unusually long wait during which the employee is free to rest, sleep, or otherwise use the time for his or her own purposes—is usually not considered time in a travel status.

Note: Time spent traveling on union business is excluded.

3.15.1 Alternate mode of travel

An employee may choose any mode of travel and route, but may earn only the compensatory time off that would have resulted from the mode of travel and route offered to the employee by the unit.

3.15.2 Travel involving two or more time zones

When travel involves two or more time zones, the time zone from the point of first departure must be used to determine how many hours the employee actually spent in a travel status for the purpose of accruing compensatory time off.

3.15.3 Commuting Time

- Travel outside regular working hours between an employee's home and a temporary duty station or transportation terminal outside the limits of his or her official duty station is considered creditable travel time. However, SI must deduct the employee's normal home-to-work/work-to-home commuting time from the creditable travel time.
- Travel outside regular working hours between a worksite and a transportation terminal is creditable travel time, and no commuting time offset applies.
- Travel outside regular working hours to or from a transportation terminal within the limits of the employee's official duty station is considered equivalent to commuting time and is not creditable travel time.

3.15.4 Crediting and Use

- Compensatory time off for travel is credited and used in increments of one-quarter of an hour (15 minutes).
- The employee must comply with his/her unit's procedures for requesting credit within the time period required by SI.
- The employee must comply with his/her unit's policies and procedures for scheduling and using earned compensatory time off for travel.

Under no circumstances may an employee, whether non-exempt or exempt, receive payment for unused compensatory time off for travel. Compensatory time off for travel is forfeited—

- a. If not used by the end of the 26th pay period after the pay period during which it was earned. (Exception: SI may authorize an extension of up to 26 additional pay periods if the forfeiture is the result of an exigency of the unit or SI. Exceptions require the approval of the Office of Human Resources.)
- b. Upon voluntary transfer to another agency (if a Federal employee); or
- c. Upon separation from SI (if either a Trust or Federal employee)

3.16 International Travel Support

The Office of International Relations (OIR) at the Smithsonian Institution serves as the central point for institution-wide coordination of international activities. The OIR leads institutional relationships with U.S. government and international organizations, including the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, foreign embassies, and other organizations in the U.S. and abroad. It also provides critical services to

Smithsonian units and staff who travel internationally or who host international visitors in an official capacity.

OIR provides logistical support for travel and travel-related matters including the following:

- Important international travel policies, safety guidance, international insurance information and various helpful travel resources. More information can be found via our Prism site: <http://prism2.si.edu/siorganization/oir/Pages/Home.aspx>
- Passport/Visa services and advising, including Official Passports: <http://prism2.si.edu/SIOrganization/OIR/Pages/Visas-and-Passports-for-SI-Employees.aspx>.
- Assisting with visits of foreign scholars/interns and International Visitor Groups, including the processing of entry documents/visas appropriate for the purpose of the visit: <http://prism2.si.edu/SIOrganization/OIR/Pages/International-Visitors-to-SI.aspx>.

Any traveler visiting a foreign country should contact the SI Health Unit to confer on immunization requirements and other health-related regulations.

For travel-related questions, please contact the Office of International Relations via: global@si.edu.

3.17 Large Group Travel

Normally, any travel funded by Smithsonian Institution (SI) should be recorded and processed using the Concur system. However, under some specific circumstances, an alternate method of arranging and paying for travel for employees or invitational travelers (individuals traveling on behalf of SI, who are not employees) may be authorized upon obtaining prior written approval from the Manager, Travel Management Office (TMO).

Large Group Travel Procedures (used for securing and paying for travel expenses) are intended for invitational travelers only. All employee travel (procurement of air and/or lodging) must be administered within the Smithsonian's electronic travel system (Concur) unless the Manager, TMO has given prior written approval for use of a Purchase Order (PO) to satisfy a specific circumstance related to employee travel that cannot be reasonably administered within Concur. A copy of the PO, approved by the Manager, TMO, must be attached to the employee's travel authorization. The below scenarios in section 3.17.1 and 3.17.2 provide guidance for large group travel.

3.17.1 Purchase of Air Tickets and/or Lodging Only

Invitational travelers will receive no direct reimbursements or payments of any kind. Air tickets, lodging and other expenses will be procured by PO. A copy of all travel expense (air ticket and lodging) POs must be sent to the Manager, TMO. Invitational travelers will not be entered into Concur or the PeopleSoft ERP system. Air tickets will be charged to the centrally-billed travel card account and then reconciled to the expense chartfield on the air ticket PO as outlined below:

- a. Unit will contact the Manager, TMO via email and describe the event, location, number of participants and how travel will be funded.
- b. Unit will create a vendor for the event (see the procedures for *Adding a Vendor for Large Group Travel PO* in section 3.17.3 below.)
- c. All reservations must be secured through Travel Horizons using the centrally- billed credit card.
- d. Unit will create a purchase order for the centrally-billed tickets (see *Central Billed Air Ticket PO Format* guidelines in section 3.17.4 below) using the vendor created in b) above. Enter the appropriate chartfield(s) to fund the tickets in the “PO Distribution” section. Unit must “Approve” and “Budget Check” the PO.
- e. Provide a copy of the approved PO (including all travel itineraries) to the Manager, TMO.
- f. Travel Management staff will review the Travel Horizons ticket reservations to ensure fares and itineraries are in accordance with SI travel policy and that the PO number is included in the Passenger Name Record (PNR).
- g. Upon review, Travel Management staff will authorize Travel Horizons to release the tickets billed on SI centrally-billed account.
- h. Unit will create any other POs required for other travel expenses, such as lodging, referencing the air ticket PO, to include the event name, dates, and purpose.
- i. After ticket purchase, the centrally-billed charges will be applied to the chartfield(s) in the air ticket PO by the centrally-billed credit card reconciliation process.

3.17.2 Purchase of Air Tickets and Honoraria

When invitational travelers receive an air ticket and an honorarium, travelers must be added to the vendor system but not to Concur. Air tickets will be charged to the centrally billed travel card and then reconciled to the expense chartfield on the air ticket PO created below:

- a. Since an honorarium will be paid to the travelers, each traveler must be entered into the PeopleSoft ERP system. **Honorarium payments are taxable to U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens with tax identification numbers. Honorarium payments may be taxable to non-U.S. citizens who are residents of a country with a tax treaty with the U.S.**
- b. Unit will contact the Manager, TMO via email and describe the event, location, number of participants and how travel will be funded.
- c. Unit will create a vendor for the event (see the procedures for *Adding a Vendor for Large Group Travel PO* in section 3.17.3.)
- d. All reservations must be secured through Travel Horizons using the centrally- billed credit card.
- e. Unit will create a purchase order for the centrally-billed tickets (see *Central Billed Air Ticket PO Format* guidelines in section 3.17.4) using the vendor created in c)

above. Enter the appropriate chartfield(s) to fund the tickets in the PO Distribution section. Unit must “Approve” and “Budget Check” the PO.

- f. Provide a copy of the approved PO (including all travel itineraries) to the Manager, TMO.
- g. Travel Management staff will review the Travel Horizons reservations to ensure all fares and itineraries are in accordance with SI travel policy and that the PO number is included in the PNR.
- h. Upon review, Travel Management staff will authorize Travel Horizons to release the tickets billed to SI Centrally-billed account.
- i. Unit will create any other POs required for other travel expenses, such as lodging, referencing the air ticket PO, to include the event name, dates, and purpose. A PO for Honoraria may only include one recipient (see the *Honoraria PO Format* guidelines in section 3.17.5)
- j. After ticket purchase, the central billed charges will be applied to the chartfield(s) in the air ticket PO by the central credit card reconciliation process.

3.17.3 Adding a Vendor for a Large Group Travel PO

- a. Create an invitational traveler vendor form ([SI-3881](#)) with a vendor last name that begins with SI – followed by the name of the event; e.g. SI – NY NMAI Film Festival
- b. For Date of Birth (DOB) use the first day of the current fiscal year
- c. Gender – male
- d. Use the Smithsonian Tax ID Number (TIN): 53-0206027
- e. Use the sponsoring unit address, phone number and contact
- f. Use the vendor name and vendor number created with this process to create the air ticket PO (and any other POs required for the event)

3.17.4 Central Billed Air Ticket PO Format:

- a. The PO Type must be “TA” for travel and
- b. PO Line category, which is in the PO Line Description field, must be “Central_Bill_Trans” for centrally-billed transactions. **Only one** Central_Bill_Trans line is allowed on any PO.
- c. Item description: Centrally-billed travel including the event name, date, and purpose
- d. When setting up the Distribution for this line make sure “Distribute by:” is set to Amount

The PO Line details must include the event name, event dates, and the number of tickets and the dollar amount. Where practical, traveler names should appear on the PO with

specific traveler itineraries (name, dates of travel, cost) provided as an attachment to the PO.

3.17.5 Honoraria PO Format:

- a. The PO Type should be “PO”
- b. PO Line category must be “HONORARIA”
- c. Item description: Honoraria/Speaker Fees
- d. When setting up the Distribution for this line make sure “Distribute by:” is set to “Amount”

Note: An Honoraria PO’s may only include one recipient.

3.18 Short-term Housing Lease Agreements with Commercial and Non-Commercial Lodging Providers

An [*SI Short-term Housing Lease Agreement*](#) may be used to obtain temporary lodging for SI employees and affiliated persons not to exceed sixty (60) calendar days during periods of TDY on official Smithsonian business.

- **Short-term Lease Agreements** are contractual agreements with commercial and non-commercial lodgings providers allowable when it is determined that conventional and commonly used accommodations are not available.
- **Daily Lodgings Rates** pursuant to short-term lease agreements may not exceed the daily lodgings rate allowed per employee by the Federal Travel Regulation. To calculate daily lodgings costs allowable per traveler, divide the daily cost for a short-term rental equally among all travelers to be accommodated by a short-term lease agreement.

Typical facilities include apartment or condominium type properties, or furnished vacation rental properties that may be furnished with all the amenities of a regular home. These facilities may be either commercial or non-commercial.

- **Commercial Lodgings Providers** are motels, hotels (including Bed and Breakfast inns not independently-owned and operated), non-conventional commercial lodgings providers such as educational institutions and other public or private agencies and organizations, and property management companies that manage and rent or lease privately-owned properties.
- **Non-commercial Lodgings Providers** are individuals who rent or lease their privately-owned properties directly or through entities such as Airbnb, VRBO, and similar non-commercial lodging providers. Examples of non-commercial lodging are: single family homes and multi-unit properties such as townhomes, apartments and condominium-type properties, including rooms therein; furnished vacation rental properties, including rooms therein; and rooms in independently-owned and operated Bed and Breakfast

inns, which are not properties that are managed and rented or leased by property management companies.

Travelers, travel approving officials, and unit procurement officers must ensure the following requirements are met when authorizing short-term housing lease agreements:

- a. The person renting assumes all responsibility and liability for injury or any damage to, or loss of, personal property owned by either party if the damage is a result of negligence by the occupant or guest(s) of the occupant.
- b. A signed ‘Smithsonian’ short-term housing lease agreement is required before occupancy begins.
- c. Requirements for lodging greater than sixty calendar days must be processed by OCon&PPM.
- d. When setting up the Distribution for this line make sure “*Distribute by:” is set to “Amount”

3.18.1 Obtaining and Paying for Short-term Lease Agreements

3.18.1.1 Credit/Charge Cards:

The method to obtain and pay for short-term leases with commercial lodging providers only may be by Travel Card when the following requirements are completed prior to travel commencing:

- a. A lease agreement presented by the commercial lodgings provider is accepted and approved by the SI, or,
- b. When a commercial lodgings provider does not provide its own lease agreement, it accepts and signs an [SI Short-term Housing Lease Agreement](#);
- c. Domestic (U.S.) commercial lodgings providers present proof of \$300,000 minimum liability insurance coverage required by the Smithsonian for all employees and affiliated persons who will occupy the leased property and from lodgings providers in foreign countries when it is available;
- d. A copy of a completed [Occupant Responsibility for Damage and Loss](#), is signed by each employee and/or affiliated person who will occupy the leased property and is attached to the executed lease agreement; and,
- e. One traveler includes the cost for the commercial rental/leased property on a reviewed and approved form [OCon 501](#), *Field Expenses Review and Authorization* containing a list of all individuals who will occupy the leased property. (The reviewed and approved OCon 501 must be attached to the employee’s travel authorization with a copy of the lease agreement forms and lodging provider’s proof of insurance.)

When a commercial lodgings provider will not accept payment by travel card, the requirements for issuing a purchase order (PO) or contract to obtain and pay for short-term lease agreements with non-commercial providers shall apply. In such instances, travel approvers and procurement officers do not need to include short-

term lease agreement info on an otherwise required [OCon 501](#), *Field Expenses Review and Authorization* form.

3.18.1.2 Purchase Order (PO) or Contract:

A purchase order (PO) or contract is required to execute and pay for all short-term lease agreements with **non-commercial providers**, and when **commercial lodgings providers** do not accept payment by travel card. All documents required in Section 3.18.1.1 (a-e) above must be obtained from lodgings providers with whom a PO or contract must be executed, and these lodgings providers must accept the SI order of precedence clause that is part of the PO or contract. When a PO is necessary to obtain and pay for short-term lease agreements, an [OCon 501](#) form does not need to include short-term lease agreement information, however the TA should be annotated citing that lodging is being provided by PO and upload a copy to the TA. Travelers and procurement officers are responsible for ensuring all requirements are met prior to issuing a PO or contract and travel commencing.

Purchase orders issued to obtain and pay for short-term lease agreements may then be reviewed and budget checked in accordance with Section 3.18.3 below.

3.18.2 Renter's Insurance

It is highly recommended that employees and affiliated persons purchase renter's insurance in the event their personal belongings are damaged or loss by the occurrence of fire, other damage, or theft during the periods short-term lease agreements are in effect.

The SI does have personal property insurance that would cover the property of employees; however, the deductible is very high and would require unit funds to cover the loss should a claim arise. If the occupant(s) or lodging provider, determines that renters insurance is necessary, advance approval in writing must be obtained from the Approving Official and may be subject to reimbursement.

Some non-commercial rental properties require occupants to purchase such insurance. If renters insurance is desired by employees, a separate PO will need to be created to cover the authorized expense; non-SI employees who will occupy the leased property must purchase their own insurance if they desire this coverage.

3.18.3 Purchase Order Review and Budget Checking

- a. **Unit procurement officers** may review and budget check PO's required for short-term lease agreements when all requirements in Section 3.18.1.1 (a-e) above are met and the dollar amount of the short-term lease does not exceed the purchasing authority delegated to the procurement officer who will execute the required PO.
- b. **OCon&PPM** must review and budget check POs required for short-term lease agreements when any of the following exists:

- A selected lodgings provider does not accept the order of precedence clause; and/or,
- The dollar amount involved with entering a short-term lease agreement exceeds the purchasing authority to the unit procurement officer who must execute the required PO or contract.

All required documents to effect a short-term lease agreement must accompany requests to OCon&PPM for review and budget checking. When budget checking is completed at OCon&PPM the transmitting unit procurement officer will be informed and all documentation must be included in the unit PO file.

3.18.4 Travelers' Concur Documentation

Employees who use their individually-billed travel cards to pay for short-term rentals must attach a copy of the signed lease agreement, receipt for lodging payment, receipt for payment of rental insurance for employees to their travel vouchers, and a copy of the approved [OCon 501](#) form.

When short term lodgings are paid for via PO, the travel vouchers for each employee and/or affiliated persons who occupied the leased property must not include any lodging expenses for reimbursement. These travel vouchers must include:

- a. copy of the PO for the short-term lease agreement;
- b. reference to the PO number in the Trip Details of the travel documentation;
- c. copy of the PO for reimbursable renters insurance (for employees only); and
- d. copy of each document listed in Section 3.18.1.1. (a-e), whichever is applicable.

3.19 Overseas Tour Renewal Agreement Travel (OTRAT)

OTRAT is an allowance that is reimbursed to an eligible employee who is assigned to a Foreign Duty Station (FDS). The allowance covers only airfare expenses for the employee and his/her immediate family members as defined by [FTR Chapter §300-3.1](#) to the employee's declared place of residence or alternate location. To qualify for OTRAT, immediate family members must reside with the employee for at least six months during a year.

To be eligible, an employee must:

- a. Satisfactorily complete at least two years of continued service at the FDS;
- b. Sign a Service Agreement to remain in service for at least 12 months;
- c. Have at least a "Successful" performance rating; and
- d. Not have any financial indebtedness to the Institution.

For more information about the procedures for requesting this benefit and the travel rules that apply to this type of travel, please refer to Smithsonian Directives (SD) 212 and 213; [Chapter 591](#), Allowances and Differentials, Office of Human Resources (OHR), [Allowances and Differentials Handbook](#).

CHAPTER 4.0: FEDERAL TRAVEL REGULATION HIGHLIGHTS

The Federal Travel Regulation Highlights section provides an overview of key provisions of the FTR to provide additional clarification for SI travelers. Specific travel guidance is available at GSA's official website [GSA Home](#).

4.1 Per Diem

- a. GSA establishes the CONUS/domestic per diem rates; the Department of Defense establishes the per diem rates for Hawaii, Alaska, U.S. territories and possessions (OCONUS); and the U.S. Department of State establishes the foreign per diem rates for travel destinations.
- b. An employee is paid the per diem allowance only if the traveler is in official travel status more than 12 hours. Status starts when the traveler departs from home or office to begin the trip and ends when the traveler returns to home or office at the end of the trip, excluding stops made for personal reasons.
- c. Lodging-plus per diem is the most common per diem calculation method. Reimbursement is for the actual lodging rate, up to the maximum allowed for the TDY location, plus a meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) allowance.
- d. You must make your lodging reservations through SI's travel management services whenever practicable. **First consideration** should be given to [FedRooms](#), a government lodging agreement program. FedRooms rates do not exceed GSA's maximum lodging rate, and cancellation policy can be as late as 6:00 PM local hotel time (varies by hotel) on the day of arrival, and no fees are charged for early departure.
- e. Incidental expenses include fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, etc.
- f. In some states and occasionally cities, SI is exempt from paying lodging occupancy and sales taxes. The requirements vary by location. Tax-exempt forms and additional information can be found at the GSA website: [State Tax Information | GSA SmartPay®](#).
- g. Actual meal or lodging expenses that exceed per diem are allowed, but must be pre-approved in the authorization and thoroughly explained and justified in the Concur record using either an attached document or the Document Detail box. Lodging and M&IE over per diem are only permitted when:
 - Lodging and/or meals are procured at a prearranged place such as a hotel where a meeting, conference or training session is held. **Justification** - attach a copy of conference information to the authorization and mention conference attendance in the pre-audit justification box.
 - Costs have escalated because of special events (e.g., missile launching periods, sporting events, World's Fair, conventions, natural disasters); lodging and meal expenses within prescribed allowances cannot be obtained nearby; and costs to commute to/from the nearby location consume most or all of the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging. **Justification** - explain the unusual event in

- the pre-audit justification box and provide any additional information required by the approving official.
 - Because of mission requirements. **Justification** - describe the mission requirement. For example, “travel was scheduled at the last minute to meet with donor (supply a name) and no hotel rooms were available at the lodging rate”; or
 - Other unusual circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Justification for these circumstances must be thorough and reasonable.
- h. Approving officials are the best judge of the appropriateness of actual expenses; travelers must provide proper justification in those instances when it is necessary to exceed the per diem rate. Actual meal and incidental expenses (M&IE) may also be claimed when a traveler wants to spend less than the allowable per diem. In either case, if claiming actual expense for meals and/or lodging, receipts for M&IE are required. All receipts for meal and incidental expenses when you are authorized reimbursement for actual expense, even when meal and incidental expenses are less than the locality rate.
 - i. Lodging below the per diem lodging limit is always permissible, but justification in the Pre-Audits section of your document is required.
 - j. The maximum amount reimbursable for actual expenses is **limited to 300% of the per diem rate for the TDY location (lodging limit plus M&IE times 300%)**.
 - k. A reduced per diem allowance may be authorized when the unit can determine in advance that lodging and/or M&IE costs will be lower than the per diem rate for the TDY location.

4.2 Air Transportation

The traveler must use the Concur online booking engine or an SI travel agent to make reservations and purchase airline tickets, including restricted fare tickets. See [Appendix 1](#) for help in determining what air travel to select for government travel.

- a. SI is contractually obligated to use one of its contracted travel agents for airline reservations and ticketing for official travel. A traveler may purchase airline tickets without using SI travel agents **only for emergency travel and/or last minute changes when contacting SI’s travel agents is not feasible or practical** (i.e., the traveler is in a remote location where there is limited access to the Internet and phone service). See section 3.12 “Combining Personal and Official Travel” in this Handbook for additional exceptions to ticket purchases.
- b. The traveler must use the contract carrier when available unless there is a lower priced non-refundable fare from a non-contract carrier. A non-contract carrier may be used, but any travel on a non-contract carrier must be approved in advance justified by one of the exceptions listed in the FTR (these are attached as [Appendix 2](#) to this Handbook).
- c. If the Government contract citypair carrier offers a discounted government (lower cost capacity-controlled) coach class contract fare (MCA, QCA, VCA, etc.) in addition to

the unrestricted coach class contract fares (YCA), the traveler should use the discounted (lower cost capacity-controlled) fare when it is available and meets mission needs.

- d. A centrally-billed credit card may be used to purchase an air ticket if:
- The traveler does not have a travel card (includes invitational travelers)
 - The trip will end more than 30 days after the date of ticket purchase

4.3 Fly America Act

Travelers are required to use U.S. carriers in accordance with the FTR. The FTR lists some conditions that permit a traveler to use a non-U.S. flag carrier (including Open Skies agreements – contact the TMO Help Desk for assistance). Travelers are exempt from use of U.S. flag carrier if transportation by U.S. flag carrier would:

- a. Increase the number of aircraft changes you must make outside of the U.S. by 2 or more; or
- b. Extend your travel time by at least 6 hours or more;
- c. Require a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point, or
- d. Contradict a contract or non-federal grant, or gift agreement that requires a courier to use a specific airline to transport art work.
- e. Contradict travel agreement for travel being funded by a contract, granted received or gift (sponsored) received from a third party other than a federal government source.

Note: Use of a foreign carrier may not be based on cost savings or convenience.

Requests for use of a non-U.S. flag carrier will be evaluated on a case by case basis and must be approved in advance. Traveler must submit an [OCon 700](#), *Request for Use of Foreign Flag Air Carrier* with a detailed explanation describing the requirement to use a non-U.S. flag carrier to the TMO or SAO Travel for SAO staff. If the travel is approved, the approved [OCon 700](#) must be electronically attached to the authorization. See Appendix 1 for additional information.

4.4 Use of Non-Coach Travel

- a. Normally a traveler should select coach class unless non-coach (business or first) class accommodation is specifically authorized.
 - 1) Any use of non-coach class travel must be approved by the traveler's approving official based on the criteria outlined below. All non-coach travel reservations will be reviewed by the TMO for conformance with FTR and Smithsonian policy. TMO may request appropriate justification from a unit if that is not included with the authorization.
 - 2) All non-coach class tickets must be purchased through the Travel Horizons, or SAO travel; they may not be purchased by calling DTI or using the Concur booking engine.

- 3) Units may authorize and reimburse the use of a coach class seating upgrade program (such as Economy Plus, Coach Plus, etc.). Coach seating upgrade programs are considered an upgrade in coach class and are generally used as a lower cost option to a non-coach upgrade when the traveler meets the conditions described below in 4.4 b.
 - 4) Reimbursement of early boarding fees (on Southwest, for example) or seat selection (such as seat assignment fee or seat choice fee) is a personal expense and **not** reimbursable. Government travelers have last seat availability, meaning if any economy seats are available for purchase, government travelers will be guaranteed the government contract fare. Last seat availability simply refers to price guarantee, not seat assignment.
- b. The FTR currently allows non-coach travel (business class or first class if the conveyance has only two classes of service) under the following circumstances:
- 1) If traveler provides a doctor's statement specifying that non-coach class accommodations are required due to a medical condition, or
 - 2) If the traveler's total flight time to or from a non-U.S. destination, including stopovers, will exceed 14 hours the traveler is permitted either:
 - The use of non-coach class, or
 - When coach class travel is used, a rest period not to exceed 24 hours at either an intermediate point (at the applicable per diem rate) or at the traveler's destination point
- Note: Total flight time includes the time from initial take-off to landing at the final destination, to include layover time at interchange points, but not time spent waiting at the departure airport.
- c. If the use of non-coach travel is required by mission considerations as defined by SI.
- d. The specific requirements for each of these circumstances are documented in the following paragraphs.

4.4.1 Medical condition

- a. Requires a written statement by a competent medical authority that special accommodation is necessary and describing
 - 1) Approximate duration of the special accommodation
 - 2) Recommendation as to the suitable class of transportation accommodations based on the condition
- b. Statements of temporary and permanent medical conditions will be maintained by the SI Occupational Health Services Office
- c. Non-permanent medical conditions must be re-verified annually by the traveler. The Occupational Health Services Office will review and maintain employee- provided personal physician documentation for non-permanent conditions annually.

- d. Permanent medical conditions need only be documented once
- e. The Document Detail section in an authorization must be annotated with a comment that a medical waiver is on file at the Occupational Health Services Office

4.4.2 Normal Start Times:

Normal Start Times are the expected time for a traveler to start work if travel time to the business destination is less than 14 hours (or the traveler uses a non-coach fare on a trip of 14 hours or more). These are not considered rest periods.

- Traveler arrives between 12:00 midnight - 6:00 pm on the 1st day at the TDY location – start work by 9:00 am the 2nd day
- Traveler arrives between 6:00 pm – 12:00 midnight on the 1st day at the TDY location – start work by 12:00 noon the 2nd day
- These are the maximum allowable times between arrival and start of work

4.4.3 Rest Periods:

Rest periods are permitted for trips utilizing coach class travel if travel time exceeds 14 hours (these guidelines also apply if the traveler pays for an upgrade to a higher class of service with their own funds or frequent flyer miles)

- Traveler is allowed up to a 24 hour rest period before start of work at the TDY location
- Arrive 12:00 midnight – 6:00 pm on the 1st day at the TDY location – start work by 9:00 am the 3rd day
- Arrive 6:00 pm – 12:00 midnight on the 1st day at the TDY location – start work by 12:00 noon the 3rd day
- These are the maximum allowable times between arrival and start of work

4.4.4 Mission Requirements:

Mission requirements may justify the use of non-coach travel. To be considered a necessary expense the non-coach travel must meet both of the following rules:

- a. The non-coach travel furthers the Smithsonian mission. The Institution's mission is defined in documents such as, but not limited to, the annual appropriations, enabling legislation, the Smithsonian Strategic Plan, the Smithsonian annual performance plans, the Institution's annual goals and objectives, the federal budget request to Congress, and other lower-level (unit-specific and functional) supporting strategic and performance plans
- b. The expense must be allowable:
 - A **federal expense** is allowable when it is reasonably related to the purpose that Congress intended the appropriation to fulfill, not prohibited by law, and not within the scope of another appropriation

- A Smithsonian **trust expense** is allowable when *at least one* of the following conditions is met:
 - 1) Federal funds can be used for the same purpose
 - 2) The expense represents an ordinary cost commonly incurred by nonprofit organizations with missions similar to the Smithsonian, including activities such as but not limited to advisory boards; development and fund raising; official representation; and special events
 - 3) For businesses operated by the Smithsonian, the expense represents an ordinary cost commonly incurred by that type of business activity in the commercial, federal or nonprofit sector
- c. Some examples of mission requirements are:
 - Travel is accompanying an artifact that requires special handling
 - Invitational traveler for whom non-coach travel is a condition of traveler's participation in a Smithsonian event and that participation is critical to the success of the event
 - Traveler must reach his/her destination at a time when no coach class seats are available for the transportation (e.g. coach class sold out on required flight)
 - Other situations that meet the criteria listed above. The final decision for these other mission required non-coach travel situations will be made by the Under Secretary for Finance & Administration and Chief Financial Officer (USF&A/CFO)

4.5 Train Service

For train service along the Northeast Corridor, SI employees and affiliated persons who will travel on official Smithsonian business, may use Amtrak Regional Trains (Coach Class, Reserved Coach or Business Class fare) or Acela Express trains (at government business class fare).

Government discounts for Amtrak regional fare and Acela Express Trains are only available when using one of SI's Travel Management Centers (DTI and Travel Horizons):

- a. Book online through Concur's online booking engine, or
- b. Call DTI (1-855-282-9113) or Travel Horizons (202-469-8920) to purchase, which will result in full service fees for ticketing and handling. These fees may be avoided by contacting Amtrak directly.

4.6 Official Travel on Acela Express Trains

Amtrak only provides a government business class fare for travel on its Acela trains between Washington, DC, and New York City (and points-in-between). The government business class fare on Acela trains has last seat availability. Last seat availability means if any Acela Express seats are available for purchase, government travelers are guaranteed the government rate and can be ticketed up to and including the day of departure.

If a train only has two classes of accommodations available, *i.e.*, first and business class, then the business class is deemed to be classified as coach-class for purposes of official travel on Amtrak trains, as it is the lowest class offered. No additional justification or approval is required for use of Amtrak Business Class.

Note: The maximum reimbursement allowed may not exceed the cost of the current one-way or roundtrip Amtrak government rate. Travelers are responsible for verifying the current Amtrak Express government rate with the Travel Management Office (TMO).

If Amtrak's discounted Amtrak Express fare available to the general public is less than the official government rate, travelers may:

- a. Book online through the Amtrak website at www.amtrak.com
- b. Call Amtrak (1-800-USA-RAIL)

Government discounts for Amtrak train service are not available for travelers who make reservations through Amtrak online or through an Amtrak ticket agent.

4.7 Ship Tickets

The traveler must use a U.S. flag ship unless the necessity of the mission requires a foreign ship.

4.8 Travel to/from Transportation Terminal.

Reimbursement for travel to and from a transportation terminal (airport, train station, etc.) will be either the sum of the private vehicle mileage and airport parking expense or the cost of a roundtrip taxi, whichever is less. If a traveler is "dropped off" at the airport, the traveler may claim the roundtrip mileage to the airport for both the departure drop off and the return pickup.

4.9 Car Service

If the traveler is a unit director, use of car service must be approved in advance by the appropriate Under Secretary. This includes use of a car service for transportation in the user's designated local travel area.

For all other travelers, car service use must be approved in advance by the Unit Director.

The traveler must demonstrate that the use of a car service is advantageous to SI.

Use of a private car service (e.g., Uber or Lyft) is allowed, provided that the service is hired at a basic service level (e.g., UberX), so that the cost is comparable to a taxi fare. Travelers who frequently use Uber while on official travel should establish an Uber business account (separate from account for personal use). Use of government travel card as method of payment may be used for business account. No prior approval is required.

4.10 Rental Vehicles

When it is determined that a rental vehicle is necessary to perform official duties or will be more cost effective than other forms of local transportation (taxi, bus, subway, light rail, etc.) a rental car may be requested. Prior to commencing official travel, travelers must request approval for a rental vehicle on the travel authorization from their Approving Official. Vehicle rentals should be limited to situations where other means of transportation are not practical, economical or available, and in emergency situations. Whenever practical, the most economical means of transportation to and from hotels and terminals should be used.

- Travelers are authorized to rent the least expensive compact car available. Larger vehicles may be authorized if a traveler is transporting a large amount of government property; or the traveler is providing transportation for more than two SI travelers who are also on official travel; or is necessary to accommodate a medical disability or other special need.
- Travelers may not be reimbursed for pre-paid refueling options and are required to refuel all rental vehicles prior to returning them to vehicle rental companies, as specified in the vehicle rental contract. However, if it is not possible to refuel completely prior to returning the vehicle because of safety issues or the location of the closest fueling station, travelers will be reimbursed for vendor refueling charges.
- Traveler will not be reimbursed for fees associated with rental company loyalty points or the transfer of points charged by car companies to other loyalty programs.
- Travelers may be reimbursed for a Global Positioning System (GPS) device during performance of official duties when authorized by their Approving Official.
- Travelers are authorized for reimbursement of rental vehicle companies' electronic toll collection device and should obtain a record of tolls assessed upon returning the vehicle.

4.10.1 Obtaining a Rental Vehicle at the Government Rental Rate

It is the responsibility of the traveler on official travel to ensure the government rental rate is obtained and reflected on the rental contract before signing. Rental companies may require the traveler to authenticate their travel status by providing a copy of their Travel Authorization, or presenting their government travel charge card. The government rental rate is advantageous to the government and includes Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) insurance and Personal Accident Insurance.

- The terms and conditions of the agreement apply only when the traveler obtains the government rental rate for the vehicle. If you rent a vehicle, as required, using government rates, you should decline any request for additional types of insurance. Failure to rent under the government rental rate waives your right to the negotiated government coverage and you (or you Unit) will be personally liable for any damages to the rental vehicle.

- Employees are also protected from personal injury loss in the case of an accident by the Federal Employees Compensation Act against losses due to personal injuries received while operating rental vehicles on official business.
- The government insurance applies (which includes CDW and Personal Accident Insurance) only when the traveler is on approved official business. The traveler must notify the vehicle rental company at time of rental, the dates of official travel and dates for personal use. The traveler is required to obtain a separate rental agreement when the vehicle rental includes personal use.

4.10.2 Purchasing Insurance When Government Rental Rates are Not Available

When the government vehicle rental rate is not available within the continental United States, the traveler may not purchase CDW insurance. Travelers will not be reimbursed for any costs incurred for purchasing any type of insurance. Any claims for loss or damage will be handled through SI's Office of Insurance and Risk Management. CDW fees will not be reimbursed for any vehicle rental in the continental United States.

Travelers may purchase insurance and be reimbursed when:

- a. Traveling in Hawaii or Alaska, and no government rate is available;
- b. Traveling outside of the United States, the traveler must purchase CDW and other additional insurance coverage depending on the country in which the rental is made.

4.10.3 Rental Vehicle Accident Reporting Requirements

If the traveler has an accident while using the rental vehicle on official business, the traveler should notify the police and have an accident report prepared. A copy of the accident report must be provided to the rental car company. The rental car company may not bill the employee for damages incurred to a rental car used for official business purposes.

The rental car company must bill SI for any damages for which they believe the employee is responsible. If an investigation reveals the damage was incurred through negligence or improper use of the vehicle (see Appendix 5), the employee's Unit will be responsible for collecting the cost of damages from the employee.

If a rental car company tries to bill the employee directly or requests the name of the employee's personal insurance company, the employee should notify the SI's Office of Insurance & Risk Management. The employee should not provide personal insurance policy information.

4.11 Other Means of Travel

- A traveler may also use a government car or plane; personal vehicle (with reimbursement based on mileage); rental car; or taxi.

- A cost comparison is required from travelers authorized to travel to their TDY location via common carrier or rental car but choose to use their privately owned vehicle (POV) instead. The traveler shall be reimbursed the applicable POV mileage rate, not to exceed the cost of travel had a common carrier been used.
- The FTR permits a traveler to use a taxi from home to the duty station when the traveler is leaving on official travel from the duty station. Similarly, when returning from official travel, a traveler may take a taxi from the duty station to home.
- The traveler will not be reimbursed for any costs incurred solely for the convenience of the traveler.

4.12 Examples of Allowed Miscellaneous Expenses

See [FTR part 301-12.1](#) for additional information:

- Fees for passports/visas, passport photos, birth/health certificates
- Fees for travelers checks, ATMs, and foreign currency conversion
- Any entrance/exit fees for travel to a foreign country
- Services of guides, interpreters, drivers while on international travel
- Tips for taxis, shuttles or other for-hire conveyance, or handling of government property carried by the traveler. Tips for a taxi, shuttle service, courtesy transportation driver, or valet parking attendants are recommended to not exceed 20%, subject to availability of funds
- Charges for conference centers/hotel rooms for official meetings
- Official phone calls (government-provided services should be used when possible)
- Charges for faxes and other forms of electronic communication
- Charges for internet access fees
- Energy surcharges and lodging resort fees (when not optional)
- Charges for laundry service if the traveler has incurred a minimum of 4 consecutive nights lodging on official travel in the CONUS. Laundry service is included in the per diem for OCONUS/foreign locations.
- Charges for checking, storing, transferring baggage
- The traveler is allowed one personal phone call per day (must be itemized as a separate expense on the voucher).

4.13 Chartered Aircraft

- a. FTR permits the use of chartered aircraft as a “special conveyance” when no scheduled commercial airline service is reasonably available or the use of such a fare is cost effective. SI policy requires that both the OGC and the USF&A/CFO approve the use of a chartered aircraft in advance in writing. SI leadership will review each request on a case-by-case basis. Please note that SI will not pay or reimburse the cost of travel on chartered aircraft in the absence of an advance written approval, as outlined above.
- b. For each use of a chartered aircraft, the requesting employee must prepare a written justification that sets forth the reasons for using the chartered aircraft. The traveler employing the charter and the TA approving official both must sign the justification

before submitting it to the USF&A/CFO and the OGC for review. The traveler or travel preparer must electronically attach the approved justification to the TA in the Concur system.

- c. The only exception to the approval process is if a unit director has received a written delegation of authority from the USF&A/CFO and the OGC to approve the use of chartered aircraft to address specific circumstances, such as:
- d. To conduct scientific research in remote areas that are not accessible via a regularly scheduled commercial service
 - 1) To conduct time-sensitive scientific research in non-remote areas when waiting for a regularly scheduled commercial service could compromise the value of the research
 - 2) To address health, safety and security emergencies
- e. Delegations will remain in effect for one year. The unit director must request and justify a new delegation annually from the USF&A/CFO and the OGC.

CHAPTER 5.0: RELOCATION

A relocation allowance is essentially a reimbursement to an employee for relocation-related costs. The provisions of [FTR Chapter 302](#) (Relocation Allowances) govern relocation allowances to SI employees. The payments addressed in this Handbook include payments made to, or on behalf of, an employee for relocation-related expenses that SI leadership has expressly authorized **in advance**. Please note this material does not cover relocation incentives or bonuses.

5.1 Employee Eligibility

Only current SI employees who transfer duty stations at the request of management are eligible to receive relocation allowances. **SI does not offer relocation allowances to new employees, except in very limited circumstances.** A unit director may request a waiver to include a relocation allowance in a vacancy announcement by submitting a justification for approval by the OHR Director, the unit's Under Secretary and the USF&A/CFO.

5.2 General Requirements/Documentation

The unit director or his/her designee must authorize and approve relocation allowances and ensure that all required approvals, as outlined below in the Authorizations/Approvals section, are obtained in advance, and:

- The move must be more than 50 miles
- A **Service Agreement**—approved in advance by the OHR Director—and an **approved TA** is required for a relocation allowance to be paid. An employment letter cannot be substituted in lieu of a Service Agreement
- No binding commitment can be made to the employee until the Service Agreement has been approved
- SI will not reimburse an employee for any relocation-related expenses incurred before both the Service Agreement and the TA are approved
- The TA must state the specific expense items authorized as part of the allowance and the amount of any advance. Premium class travel (business or first class) is not authorized unless the individual must report for duty in one day
- The relocation should be completed within two years
- If a waiver is granted to offer an allowance to a new appointee (see Employee Eligibility), the related **vacancy announcement** must state that relocation expenses may be paid

5.3 Eligible Expenses

The FTR defines relocation allowance expense items as Mandatory (the unit must pay these items to the transferring employee) and Discretionary. A relocation allowance may only include those expenses specifically mentioned in the FTR.

The mandatory components of a relocation allowance for an employee transferring to/from a CONUS location include those items listed below. Please refer to FTR Chapter 302 for explanations of these expense items, the related limitations, and information on OCONUS relocations:

- Transportation of the employee and his/her immediate family members
- Per diem for the employee and immediate family members
- Transportation and temporary storage of household goods
- Extended storage of household goods
- Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household goods
- Relocation income tax allowances (RITA)
- Miscellaneous moving expenses
- Sell or buy residence transactions or lease termination expenses

The discretionary components of a relocation allowance for a transferring employee include the following items:

- House hunting per diem & transportation, employee & spouse only
- Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE)
- Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV)
- Use of a relocation services company
- Property management services
- Home marketing incentives

Because of the complexity of relocation transactions, a unit choosing to pay a relocation allowance is required to use and fund a relocation management vendor. The FTR relocation regulations are complex and can involve extended oversight for up to two years after the relocation date. In addition, there can be tax implications for both SI and the employee who benefits from relocation allowance payments.

5.4 Authorizations

Table 312-A-6: Relocation Authorizations

Document	Unit Director	OHR Director	Under Secretary	Other
Vacancy Announcement	X	X		USF&A/CFO
Service Agreement:				
Amounts up to \$10,000	X	X		
Amounts over \$10,000	X	X	X	
Amounts over \$20,000	X	X	X	USF&A/CFO
Travel Authorization	X			
Advance	X			OFA

5.5 Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities have been assigned:

5.5.1 Unit Director or above

- a. Ensures the required authorizations (outlined above) are obtained in advance and provides a copy of all approved relocation documents to OFA
- b. Approves the Service Agreement between the unit and the eligible employee
- c. Approves advances
- d. Assumes responsibility to fund the relocation payments, the relocation management vendor, and any SI tax liability resulting from the transactions
- e. With unit administrative staff, ensures the relocation allowance is properly documented, processed, and recorded in SI's financial system
- f. Submits a justification for approval (see Employee Eligibility) if the unit wants a waiver to offer a relocation allowance to a new appointee
- g. If a waiver has been granted (see Employee Eligibility), approves the vacancy announcement that offers the relocation allowance

5.5.2 Office of Human Resources

- a. Approves the Service Agreement and provides a copy to OFA
- b. Maintains the Service Agreement and related records in the employee's personnel file
- c. Ensures compliance with additional rules, regulations and guidance from the Office of Personnel Management and SI policies, as appropriate and applicable
- d. Approves the unit waiver request to offer a relocation allowance to a new employee
- e. If a waiver has been granted (see Employee Eligibility), approves the vacancy announcement that offers the relocation allowance

5.5.3 Office of Finance and Accounting (OFA)

- a. Retains a copy of the authorization to pay the relocation allowance
- b. Retains a copy of the approved Service Agreement
- c. Approves advances
- d. Notifies the unit travel approving official of any budget/chartfield irregularities
- e. Issues timely disbursements as directed by the unit authority
- f. Provides the employee and the IRS with tax documentation using either IRS form 1099 or W-2, as appropriate, for all tax years affected

5.5.4 Unit's Under Secretary

- a. Approves a Service Agreement for over \$10,000
- b. Approves the unit waiver request to offer a relocation allowance to a new employee

5.5.5 Under Secretary for Finance and Administration/Chief Financial Officer

- a. Approves a Service Agreement for over \$20,000
- b. Approves the unit waiver request to offer a relocation allowance to a new employee

5.6 Service Agreement

An approved Service Agreement must in place before a binding commitment may be extended to pay a relocation allowance to an employee:

- All required SI approving officials (see Authorizations) must approve the Service Agreement in order for it to be considered approved
- The employee must also sign the Service Agreement to be eligible to receive a relocation allowance
- SI will reimburse only those authorized expenses incurred after the Service Agreement approval date
- The Service Agreement must state that the candidate will remain in the service of SI for a minimum of 12 months following the effective hire date
- Repayment of the allowance must be consistent with the terms of the Service Agreement
- The Service Agreement must disclose that potential tax consequences are the responsibility of the employee benefiting from direct or indirect relocation payments

5.7 Travel Authorizations/Chartfields

A TA is required to process a relocation allowance. SI will reimburse only those authorized expenses incurred after the TA approval date. The candidate must provide receipts to the approving official (s) to support the voucher for all reimbursable expenses. The unit approving official is responsible for compliance with FTR and SI policy, obtaining all necessary approvals, and ensuring budget availability and chartfield validity.

Please note that the relocation allowance is not to be coded as travel. For direct reimbursements to employees, please use class code **1284**. Direct payments to moving companies (Mayflower, etc.) should be charged to class code **2215**.

5.8 Relocation Management Vendor

Management of an approved relocation allowance is not a standard financial service provided by SI's OHR and OFA. GSA travel authorities and the FTR recognize that relocation issues can be very diverse, long in duration and complex for normal travel approvers.

GSA has approved several companies that are available on the GSA schedule to assist with these transactions. **An SI unit choosing to give a relocation allowance is required to use and fund a relocation management vendor to provide the necessary services to ensure that employee payments receive the proper tax treatment and that relocation expenses and reimbursements are properly documented and reconciled.** Cost estimates for the services of the relocation management vendor will vary depending upon the complexity of the move.

5.9 Advances

- Relocation-related advances should be discouraged except in hardship situations.
- Advances must be approved by the unit director and OFA.
- Reconciliation of an advance to the actual expenses incurred is the responsibility of the unit director, the travel voucher approver, and the unit fund manager in concert with the contracted relocation management vendor.
- If an advance is not reconciled to actual expenses within the same tax year, SI will report the entire advance to the IRS as taxable income to the employee.

5.10 Tax Consequences

- All relocation allowance payments are reportable to the IRS and some may be taxable.
- It is very important to account for relocation payments properly to ensure that all amounts are correctly reflected on the employee's W-2.
- The employee should be encouraged to consult his/her tax advisor regarding any potential tax implications.
- SI does not provide tax advice.
- The unit is responsible for properly coding and recording all expenses in SI financial system.
- The unit is also responsible for any SI tax liability resulting from relocation-related payments.

APPENDIX 1 – CHOOSING A FLIGHT IN THE CONCUR TRAVEL SYSTEM

General guidelines for choosing flights for SI travel.

1. Travelers can choose between government city pair fares, government “me too” fares (under some specific circumstances) and non-government (restricted) fares
 - a. Government city pair fares are only available to government employees (or SI invitational travelers) on official business. Government city pair fares provide the ultimate flexibility if travel plans are uncertain.
 - 1) Government city pair tickets are fully refundable and changeable without penalties or fare increases and can be ticketed up to and including the day of departure
 - 2) Domestic government city pair fares can be higher than restricted fares on some routes

International government city pair fares usually offer significant savings, even when compared to restricted fares. Government “me too” fares are fares offered by a non-contract airline to government travelers only. These fares cannot be used except in certain specific circumstances described in **Glossary of air travel terms, item e below**.
 - b. Restricted (or excursion) fares are available to all travelers and usually have many restrictions. They may be less expensive than government fares and may offer a good alternative if travel plans are firm.
 - 1) Restricted fare tickets are non-refundable and changes will incur a change fee – usually \$200 or more for domestic flights; and \$300 for international flights
 - 2) Changes may also result in additional airfare if the fare has changed since the ticket was purchased. For example, if the ticket is purchased with the special 14-day advanced fare then is changed 7 days prior to departure, the total increased charges would include the change fee plus the difference between the original fare and the fare on the day the ticket is changed. In some cases this can result in a substantial increase in the ticket cost
 - 3) Restricted tickets normally have to be purchased within 24 hours of making the reservation
 - 4) If a traveler is considering a restricted fare on a route covered by a government contract city-pair fare, the traveler must choose the government contract airline’s restricted fare unless it is higher than the lowest fare available
2. No matter what type of fare is chosen, tickets must be purchased using either Concur or an SI travel agent, except for the following situations :
 - a. Traveler is at the airport and needs to purchase a ticket immediately (e.g. program related, health, safety, security)
 - b. Traveler is on travel and needs to make a sudden change in travel plans

- c. Traveler intends to combine business and leisure travel on one trip when the departure or return city is not the business destination

Follow the decision tree below to determine how to choose flights that conform to the FTR and SI travel policies using the Concur travel system

Flights from one US location to another US location (see page 53 for foreign destinations):

1. Enter departure and destination airports and travel dates at internet travel and/or airline site(s) and determine low fare options and restrictions
2. Enter departure and destination airports in Concur and search for flights
3. Is there a government city-pair fare (green bar in Concur) that meets your schedule?
 - a. If yes go to 4
 - b. If no go to 9
4. Use Concur to price city-pair flight. Is there a capacity controlled city-pair fare?
 - a. If yes go to 5
 - b. If no go to 7
5. Is the capacity controlled price acceptable?
 - a. If yes go to 6
 - b. If no go to 12
6. Select and save the capacity controlled flight in Concur. Go to 15
7. No capacity controlled city-pair fare. Is the city-pair price acceptable?
 - a. If yes go to 8
 - b. If no go to 12
8. Select and save the city-pair flight in Concur. Go to 15
9. No city-pair fare - is there a government ("me too") fare (yellow "Reserve" bar in Concur) **(Me too fares cannot be used if there is a city pair fare available even if the city pair fare is higher)?**
 - a. If yes go to 10
 - b. If no go to 12
10. Is the price acceptable?
 - a. If yes go to 11
 - b. If no go to 12
11. Select and save the flight in Concur. **Me too fares cannot be used if there is a city pair fare available even if the city pair fare is higher.** Go to 15

12. Government fare is not available or price is unsatisfactory. Does the contract carrier have a fare equal to the lowest fare found?
 - a. If yes go to 13
 - b. If no go to 14
13. Select the Concur **Non-Government** fare or call an SI travel agent to book the contract carrier flight. FTR provides that you must use the contract carrier if its price is equal to the lowest price found. **FTR does not permit use of an internet site to make flight reservations unless one of the conditions under [Section 4.2.a. applies](#).** Go to 15
14. Contract carrier fare not equal to the lowest price - use Concur “Sorted by: Price – Low to High” or call an SI travel agent to book the lower cost flight. **FTR does not permit use of an internet travel sites to make flight reservations unless one of the conditions under [Section 4.2.a. applies](#).** Go to 15
15. Have all needed flights been reserved?
 - a. If yes you are done
 - b. If no go to 1 and repeat steps

Travelers may utilize Airport Filters section in Concur to select alternate origin and destination airports to find government fares. Washington, D.C.-based travelers may choose to fly from Dulles, National or Baltimore Washington International at their discretion.

Flights from/to a U.S. location from/to a non-U.S. location (International Travel):

The basic rule for international travel is that trips originating from or terminating in the U.S. must be flown on a U.S. flag carrier for as much of the trip as possible in accordance with the rules in the FTR. The FTR also specifies that if a US Flag carrier provides non-stop or direct service from one non-US location to another non-US location, the US carrier must be used (these are provisions of the Fly America Act).

Travel may occur on non-U.S. flag carriers if any of the following conditions are met: (1) cannot provide the air transportation needed; (2) a contract or non-federal grant, or gift agreement requires a courier to use a specific non-U.S. carrier to transport art work; (3) SI determines use of a foreign carrier is necessary for medical reasons, including use of a foreign air carrier service to reduce the number of connections and possible delays in the transportation of persons in need of medical treatment; (4) use of a foreign air carrier is required to avoid an unreasonable risk to your safety (e.g., terrorist threats) and is approved by SI; (5) when you cannot purchase a ticket in your authorized class of service on a U.S. flag air carrier, and a seat is available in your authorized class of service on a foreign carrier. Form [OCon 700](#), *Request for Use of Foreign Flag Air Carrier* must still be submitted and approved by the TMO (or SAO Travel) prior to authorization approval.

16. Enter departure and destination airports and travel dates at internet travel and/or airline site(s) and determine low fare options and restrictions
17. Is trip to a single non-US major city (such as Paris, London, Beijing or Tokyo)?

- a. If yes go to 18
 - b. If no go to 25
18. Enter departure and destination airports in Concur. Is there a government city-pair fare available (green bar in Concur)?
- a. If yes go to 19
 - b. If no go to 24
19. Use Concur to price city-pair flight. Is there a capacity controlled city-pair fare available?
- a. If yes go to 20
 - b. If no go to 22
20. Is the price acceptable?
- a. If yes go to 21
 - b. If no go to 24
21. Select the capacity controlled flight in Concur. Go to 28
22. No capacity controlled fare available. Is the city-pair fare acceptable?
- a. If yes go to 23
 - b. If no go to 24
23. Select the city-pair flight in Concur. Go to 28
24. Call the TMO help desk (or SAO Travel for SAO staff) for travel planning assistance. You may be asked to submit form [OCon 700](#) to the TMO or SAO Travel identifying the flight and the reason(s) why you must take it. **You may not use a foreign flag carrier to fly to or from the U.S. without the prior written permission of the TMO or SAO Travel (this includes grant, contract or gift funded travel mentioned above).** Go to 28
25. Does the trip include multiple foreign stops from a U.S. departure or a trip from the U.S. to a non-U.S. location other than a major city (no city-pair flights)?
- a. If yes go to 26
 - b. If no go to 27
26. Call the TMO help desk for travel planning assistance
- a. You may be required to submit form [OCon 700](#) to the TMO or SAO Travel for SAO staff identifying the flight and the reason(s) why you must take it. **You may not use a foreign flag carrier to fly to or from the U.S. without the prior written permission of the TMO or SAO Travel (this includes grant, contract or gift funded travel mentioned above).**
 - b. Go to 28
27. For trips from one foreign location to another foreign location:

Call the TMO help desk for travel planning assistance. Go to 28

28. You are done

Glossary of air travel terms

- a. **Capacity Controlled City-Pair Fare** – a special fare priced below the regular city pair fare for a given route. Only a limited number of seats are available
- b. **City-Pair Fare** – the fare charged by the airline that has been awarded a GSA contract between two airports (either the departure or arrival airport will be in the continental U.S.). There is only one contract airline between any two airports
- c. **Code Share** – two airlines agree to share the sale of space on a flight and each airline will book travel under its own flight number. In the case where a U.S. Flag carrier has a code share arrangement with a foreign flag carrier, a government traveler may make reservations using the U.S. Flag carrier's flight number but not the foreign flag carrier's flight number. The carrier name and flight number are printed on the ticket invoice
- d. **Contract Carrier** – the U.S. airline awarded the city-pair contract between two locations
- e. **Government "Me Too" Fare** – a fare offered by a carrier that is not the contract carrier for a city-pair, but matches the city-pair fare and restrictions. **These fares are not available to the general public and cannot be used by SI travelers unless there are no seats on the contract carrier or the contract carrier does not offer flights that meet the traveler's schedule**
- f. **Restricted Fare** – usually the lowest airfare available to the public. Usually has restrictions on changes and refunds
- g. **SI travel agent** – any of the official designated travel agents including Duluth Travel Incorporated (DTI), or Travel Horizons, SAO Travel (SAO employees and affiliated persons only) and any other travel agents under contract to SI
- h. **U.S. Flag Carrier** – any airline based in the U.S. that flies routes to destinations outside the U.S., including American carriers that have a code share relationship with a foreign carrier

APPENDIX 2 – EXCEPTIONS TO THE USE OF A CONTRACT CITY PAIR FARE

1. Space on a scheduled contract flight is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of your travel, or use of contract service would require you to incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs which would increase the total cost of the trip;
2. The contractor's flight schedule is inconsistent with explicit policies of SI with regard to scheduling travel during normal working hours;
3. A non-contract carrier offers a lower fare to the general public that, if used, will result in a lower total trip cost to SI (the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, and related expenses considered);
4. Note to paragraph (3): This exception does not apply if the contract carrier offers the same or lower fare and has seats available at that fare, or if the fare offered by the non-contract carrier is restricted to government and military travelers performing official business and may be purchased only with a contractor-issued charge card, centrally billed account (*e.g.*, YDG, MDG, QDG, VDG, and similar fares) or GTR where the two previous options are not available;
5. Cost-effective rail service is available and is consistent with mission requirements; or
6. Smoking is permitted on the contract air carrier and the nonsmoking section of the contract aircraft is not acceptable to you.

Note:

1. If the non-contract fare is non-refundable, restricted, or has specific eligibility requirements, you must know or reasonably anticipate, based on your planned trip, that you will use the ticket; and
2. SI must determine that the proposed non-contract transportation is practical and cost-effective for SI

APPENDIX 3 – MATRIX OF SI ENHANCEMENTS TO FTR

Travel Event	FTR Guidance	SI	SI Documentation	SI Approval Process
Purchase of Rail tickets	All tickets must be purchased through Agency's TMC (online or via an SI travel agent). §301-50.3	Rail tickets may be purchased in Concur or from one of SI Travel Management Centers. Government discounts for Amtrak train service are not available when travelers make train reservations online or through an Amtrak ticket agent (Preferred purchase method is booking online with Concur, in order to take advantage of discounted fares.)	Travel Handbook	Prior approval by approving official
Hotel Reservations	When selecting a commercial lodging facility, first consideration should be given to government lodging agreement programs such as FedRooms® (http://www.fedrooms.com). §301-11.12	Whenever practicable, travelers must make their lodging reservations through SI's travel management services. First consideration should be given to FedRooms, a government lodging agreement program.	Travel Handbook	Prior approval by approving official
Combining personal and official travel	FTR does not address personal travel (only talks about official business)	Traveler may add personal travel to an official trip however, neither the Government travel card nor government contract fares may be used for trip segments originating to or terminating at a personal destination. SI procedures ensure that the combined official and personal travel conform to the FTR	Travel Handbook	Prior approval by approving official
Employees traveling at his/her own expense on official business	FTR has a broad definition of travel sponsorship that can be applied to employee's paying for their own travel (in-kind sponsorship). §304-2.1	Employee may travel on official business at their own expense with documentation of what expenses will be covered by the employee, SI or other sponsor.	Travel Handbook	Prior approval by approving official
Field Expenses	FTR specifies that travel authorizations should only be used for travel expenses. §301-2.2	If travel includes field expenses, traveler must include them on the authorization and voucher with proper documentation and accounting. Field expenses are an integral part of research travel	Travel Handbook	Prior approval by appropriate levels in accordance with form OCON 501 (go to PRISM/OCFO then OCON Forms; look in Procurement Information)

Travel Event	FTR Guidance	SI	SI Documentation	SI Approval Process
Spouse, Dependent or other Family Member Travel	FTR does not make any mention of travel by spouses, dependents and other family members	Spouse, dependent, or other family member travel is a special case of invitational travel when such traveler is conducting official business	Travel Handbook	Advance written approval from the General Counsel and the Under Secretary for Finance & Administration/ Chief Financial Officer will approve Secretary's spouse or dependent family member travel
Travel Sponsored by a non-federal source	FTR describes policies and requirements that apply to all travel payments from a non-federal source without regard to the organization providing the payment	Payment from a for-profit organization or a foreign government or unit thereof (such as a national university or research center), requires additional approval	Travel Handbook	Advance written approval is required from the, traveler's supervisor, the unit head, and OGC
Chartered Aircraft	FTR permits the use of a chartered aircraft as a "special conveyance" under §301-10.3; §301-10.400 . Agency needs to develop a procedure for authorization/approval	Smithsonian has a procedure to approve the use of a chartered aircraft that covers both unique mission-related needs and use in lieu of a scheduled commercial carrier for cost savings. Annual delegation of approval can be made to unit director who can approve chartered aircraft to: • Conduct scientific research in remote areas that are not accessible via a regularly scheduled commercial service • Conduct time-sensitive scientific research in non-remote areas when waiting for a regularly scheduled commercial service could compromise the value of the research • Address health, safety and security emergencies	Travel Handbook	Advance written approval from OGC and USF&A/CFO

Travel Event	FTR Guidance	SI	SI Documentation	SI Approval Process
Foreign Flag Carriers	FTR allows the use of a foreign flag carrier under specific circumstances	Travel on a foreign flag carrier using trust funds may be permitted if the grant, contract or gift has specific funds identified for transportation.	Travel Handbook	SI -3345 form signed by TMO in advance of making reservations. TMO will obtain additional approvals as necessary
Ground Transportation	FTR does not require a receipt for any ground transportation expense under \$75	Smithsonian requires daily itemization of any ground transportation charges in the voucher	Travel Handbook	Approving official to verify each use of ground transportation
Sponsored Travel (see section 3.10 for complete information)	Sponsorship for meeting or conference attendance is allowed	Smithsonian requires the sponsorship agreement to be attached to the authorization. Sponsor letter must be addressed to the Smithsonian Institution, as well as the individual traveler. Traveler can accept direct non-cash reimbursement if the sponsor is a 501(c)(3) non-profit or another Federal agency.	Travel Handbook	For profit or foreign government sponsorship must be approved in advance by OGC
Invitational Travel	FTR allows travel payments to individuals Smithsonian designates as invitational travelers	Invitational travelers must be set up in the <i>PeopleSoft</i> ERP system and added to the Concur system using the OCon 720 Concur Add User Form.	Travel Handbook	Prior approval by the approving official of the unit extending the invitation

APPENDIX 4 – LOCAL TRAVEL AREA DEFINITIONS

Location	Local Travel Area
D. C. Area Units	District of Columbia, the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church, the counties of Arlington, Loudoun and Fairfax in Virginia, Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties in Maryland. Local travel also includes travel between offices in these locations and the National Zoo’s Conservation and Research Center (CRC) and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC) unless the trip is over 12 hours in duration or requires an overnight stay, in which case it is no longer deemed local travel, and a TA is required
Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute	Any destination within 200 kilometers (124 miles) from the traveler’s work place
Smithsonian Enterprises, NY	All destinations in New York, New Jersey or Connecticut with trip length less than 12 hours and no overnight stay
Fort Pierce, FL	Any destination within 120 miles of the station where travel is less than 12 hours and no overnight stay
Cooper Hewitt, NY	The 5 boroughs (Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, Brooklyn and Bronx) and Newark, NJ
AAA, New York	The 5 boroughs (Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, Brooklyn and Bronx) and Newark, NJ
NMAI, NY	5 boroughs of New York plus the following counties: Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, Fairfield, Hudson, Bergen, Union, and Essex
Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, MA	50 mile radius from Cambridge, MA. Also 50 mile radius from Whipple Observatory, AZ and Hilo, HI facility

**APPENDIX 5 – VEHICLE RENTAL CAR INSURANCE EXCEPTIONS TO LOSS OR
DAMAGE COVERAGE**

The term ‘vehicle’ in this appendix refers to passenger cars, sport utility vehicles (SUV), station wagons, passenger vans, or small pick-up trucks.

1. When travelers on official business rent vehicles under the government rental rate, the vehicle rental company, and not the traveler or U.S. Government, hereby assumes and shall bear the entire risk of loss of or damage to the rented vehicles (including costs of towing, administrative costs, loss of use, and replacements) except where the loss or damage is caused by one or more of the following:
 - a. Obtaining the vehicle through fraud or misrepresentation;
 - b. Damage or loss is caused intentionally by an authorized driver;
 - c. Operation of the vehicle by a driver who is under the influence of intoxicants or any prohibited drugs;
 - d. Use of the vehicle for any illegal purpose;
 - e. Use of the vehicle in pushing or towing another vehicle;
 - f. Operation of the vehicle in live artillery fire exercises, or used in training for tactical maneuvers;
 - g. For law enforcement purposes that are likely to expose the vehicle, the driver or passengers or other persons or property of others to a risk of damage or injury above that of routine travel;
 - h. Operation of the vehicle in a test, race or contest;
 - i. Operation of the vehicle with the consent of an authorized driver by a person other than the authorized driver;
 - j. Operation across international boundaries unless specifically authorized at the time of rental;
 - k. Theft of the rented vehicle and the renter cannot produce the vehicles keys, unless the renter can show the keys were stolen through theft or robbery;
 - l. Operation of the vehicle off paved, graded, state or professionally maintained roads, or driveways, except when the Smithsonian has agreed to this in writing beforehand;

- m. Loss of vehicle keys. The traveler's and/or Government's liability for loss of vehicle keys shall be limited to the cost of replacing the keys and associated labor and towing charges unless the rented vehicle is stolen as set forth in (k) above;
 - n. Adding improper fuel to a vehicle when the required vehicle fuel type is clearly and obviously marked; or
 - o. Any damage to a rented vehicle caused by a Government employee, not the renter or authorized driver of a vehicle rented under this Agreement, but acting within the scope of employment.
2. **When loss or damage is due to an exception stated above**, the vehicle rental company will submit bills directly to the Government agency employing the renter. If the renter's employing Government agency denies liability on the basis that the renter or other authorized driver was not operating the vehicle for official travel at the time of the loss, the Company may handle the matter directly with the renter.
3. **If an accident occurs**, report the accident to the vehicle rental company
- a. If you have rented the vehicle under the government contract rate, you should not have to do anything more.
 - b. If the rental agency advises you are responsible for any of the loss, refer them to the SI's Office of Insurance and Risk Management.
4. Protect employees from the risk of personal liability. When the type of vehicle or vehicle use cannot be covered under the U.S. Government Car Rental Agreement, the vehicle(s) should be rented through the procurement process (ERP, BPA). In that case, any damage that occurs to the vehicle is handled by the government under the terms of that agreement. In those cases, the agreement is not with the individual employee, but rather, is with the government.