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Manual 65-605, Volume 1  
Budget Guidance andTechnical Procedures  
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Office MyTravel Spotlights  
May 2023**ETHICS FLASH**  
**Fiscal, Ethics, and Administrative Law Division**  
**(SAF/GCA)****It's Temporary Duty....Not Vacation!****Retirements, Promotions, Re-enlistments....Oh My!**

At last! The third and final installment to our three-part travel series. We're not going to beat around the bush with some flashy (see what we did there?!) introduction. Nope. Not us. We are going to jump right in and get you on your way.

One of the most frequently asked questions we receive is whether the Department of the Air Force (DAF) can pay for temporary duty (TDY) travel to ceremonial events. The answer is (in typical lawyer fashion), it depends.

**Retirement ceremonies** – DAFMAN 65-605, Volume 1 provides the easy, straight-forward answer. Normally, funded travel is limited to a single presiding officer who makes official remarks at the ceremony. Other official participants (e.g., the Chaplain or the retiring individual) do so in their official capacities but are usually

local to the ceremony. Who pays?

The retiring employee's unit or command. Keep in mind, the DAF strongly encourages individuals to turn to local leaders as presiding officials except in extraordinary circumstances.

**Promotion and re-enlistment ceremonies** – There is no guidance authorizing official travel solely to attend promotion ceremonies. Recall from part one of our series, if the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) does not say something can be reimbursed, then it cannot be reimbursed. DAFMAN 65-605 also states appropriated funds may not be used to support promotion ceremonies with the exception of printing an agenda, official communication support to advertise the event to unit and command members, and support or performance of local Honor Guard and/or DAF band elements. What's the distinction between pro-

motion/re-enlistment and retirement ceremonies? Retirement ceremonies occur once in a career while promotion/re-enlistment ceremonies take place more than once in an employee or service member's career.

**Change of Command (CoC) Ceremonies** – Generally, TDY for a presiding official (whose presence satisfies command protocol requirements) is authorized and payable from the official's unit funds. Mere attendance at a CoC ceremony does not support TDY or permissive TDY. When coupled with a retirement ceremony, the same principle applies—funded TDY for those who must be present to satisfy CoC protocol requirements, and others with a clearly official role.

When in doubt, reach out to your travel approval authority for guidance.

*"The regulations can be confusing and often not make sense, but they always apply and you are responsible for your compliance." - Secretary Frank Kendall*

**I Really, Really, Really Want to Attend that Conference**

Listen, we get it. Sometimes conferences can be amazing opportunities for networking, training, and gambling...Wait. No. This isn't a General Services Administration off-site! In all seriousness though, appropriated funds for travel expenses may be used to fund official travel. The travel must be concerned with the functions or activities for which the appropriation is made or which will contribute to improved conduct, supervision, or management of the functions or activities of the agency.

The DoD and DAF published additional policy for attending conferences. Oh, and in case you were wondering, "conference" has a broad definition. It can include almost anything, such as events termed as symposiums, forums, and training. There are, of course, exceptions to the definition. Be sure to review the conference policy before committing funds.

Like everything related to government travel, we must utilize the most cost effective means of travel. The cheaper, the better. This

doesn't mean you compromise on safety. However, you must consider whether you can accomplish the mission objective through alternative means. For example, do you have to attend that meeting in person, or does video teleconferencing accomplish the same goal?

TDY can be both beneficial to the government and fun for you—just make sure it's not too much fun and you land on the front page of the *Washington Post* or the Inspector General's number pops up on your phone!

## Professional Military Education – Hey Ma! I'm Graduating!

Professional military education (PME) is an important part of the career path for Airmen and Guardians. Courses run the gamut in length. Whether a few weeks or several months, PME graduation is a significant milestone. Is it so significant to warrant official TDY orders to merely attend a ceremony? Well, (you guessed it—favorite legal phrase coming) that depends.

Official speakers at events may be authorized funded travel to a graduation. The same rules for change of command ceremonies apply. In addition, Commanders,

First Sergeants, and Command Sergeants have a duty to represent their command or squadron at a graduation. Therefore, they, or their designee, may be authorized funding for travel. That doesn't mean the entire command triad shows up. Travelers must still use good judgment and conserve government funds when determining who is representing the command. In other words, no entourage!

Let's not leave out the immediate supervisor to the graduate. Unfortunately, unless they are the Commander's designee, funded travel is not available. Howev-

er, a graduate's supervisor may be authorized five days' permissive TDY. Quick refresher – permissive TDY is unfunded orders and the traveler personally pays for travel, lodging, and meals. Before you ask, no, the Government will not pay for your family, best friend, or roommate to travel to your graduation.



*“Running afoul the rules on travel can affect you in a serious way. I recommend every individual know the regulations and be conservative about expending government funds on travel. If a situation causes you to question the appropriateness of travel, don't assume the best. Ask the question and make any source you rely on for answers show you the regulation that allows it.”*

*-Secretary Frank Kendall*

## Mixing TDY and Leave – Proceed with Caution!

We totally get it—sometimes the Government sends you to an amazing locale for official business. You start dreaming of warm, sunny beaches and beverages with little umbrellas. Then, you imagine bringing along your family or a friend. Slow down! Taking personal leave with official travel (PLOT) is permissible but there is a process to follow while scheduling your official TDY in the Defense Travel System (DTS).

When making your flight reservations, you must take into account any difference in cost to air

fare if you depart earlier or later than your TDY requires. You are responsible for the additional amount. Second, you cannot use DTS to personally book your hotel or rental car. Reservations must only reflect your TDY dates. Then, adjust your travel allowance so you do not receive per diem on your leave dates.

What about those TDYs that take you closer to another location? For example, you're in San Diego but want to head to Oregon for a quick visit to family. This is called leave in conjunction with

official travel (LICWO). A few notes: Your personal travel can't make your government travel more expensive. You cannot use your Government Travel Charge Card for personal travel expenses. You cannot use any official contracted travel rates for your personal travel. You may never, ever create official business to support personal travel. For detailed guidance, and to avoid the IG, see the MyTravel Spotlight on PLOT and LICWO from the Defense Travel Management Office.

## The Travel Series Now Coming in for a Landing

Yes, we did. We tried a Dad or Mom joke as the title of this article. What can we say? The entire series was riddled with quirky jokes we found endlessly amusing. First, we want to thank all of you for the amazing feedback on our travel series.

Secretary Kendall provided positive feedback, extolling the importance (see his quotes on this page) of complying with the rules. The discussion on local travel in the National Capital Region was such a hit that Honorable Wagner of M&RA found himself on a scooter to navigate in and around his permanent duty station.

The guidance on contractor



Hon Wagner “scootin” in and around his PDS.

travel proved extremely helpful in the field during a DAF event when requests were made for

shuttles to transport contractors around an installation. Hopefully, this final installment will help answer questions on official travel to ceremonies. As always, when in doubt, reach out to your local travel authority and local ethics official for guidance specific to your situation.

Thank you to Sean Dalton for his editing prowess and to Warner Meadows for the content of all three parts to the series. Special thank you to SAF/FM for reviewing and making sure we weren't too far off the reservation. Last, and most certainly not least, thank you to Honorable Wagner for being such a great sport!