Defense Travel
Dispatch

VOLUME XIII, ISSUE 2

Summer 2020

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About the Publishing Entity:

The mission of the Defense Travel Management Office is to serve as the single focal point for commercial travel within the Department of Defense; to establish strategic direction, set policy, and centrally manage commercial travel programs.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE:

As our nation and the world continue to grapple with the persistent novel coronavirus, DTMO has fully adapted to our new working conditions in the face of this new reality. My message is that we continue to support our stakeholders and customers uninterrupted. While we are still teleworking full time, the important work of managing our travel enterprise moves forward. Much of our current effort is focused on the impact of COVID-19 related travel restrictions present to both DoD and our industry partners. We are developing reports and dashboards to monitor and assess travel as it resumes, and support decision-making going forward. As I write, travel volume is down about 75 percent from last year. In addition to mission impact, there are also financial impacts. For example, less travel means less use of the Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) and that means fewer rebates returned to DoD. Our GTCC daily sales volume is down 60 percent over this time last year. But the brunt of the financial burden has been levied on the travel industry. We continue to be a constant liaison with our industry partners. Together we have gained a understanding of the impact and developed an assessment framework to ensure our partners are ready for DoD travelers under "new normal" conditions.

Nothing we do is really "routine," but the normal business operations of our enterprise continue unabated. As you will read inside this issue, we have a lot going on. While COVID-19 suspended Defense Travel Modernization prototype operations, we continue to make functional improvements as we configure and test SAP Concur's new User Interface. Work progresses with our Defense Manpower Data Center partners on financial integration—improvements to Defense Agencies Iniative integration, integration activities with Army GFEBS, and integration planning with Navy ERP. TraX, our web-based platform that provides a centralized source of travel information, is getting some work done under the hood as well as an overdue facelift. We also have a new Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) webpage and we are excited to announce a new Dining Traveler Rewards Program as part of Dine Smart, our preferred dining program pilot. Finally, included in this edition is a link to provide our Dispatch editors your feedback on our newsletter. Please let us know what you think, so we can better meet and maybe exceed your information needs.

- Bill Mansell, Director, Defense Travel Management Office

Smart Dining. It Just Makes Sense.

Hi, my name is Jade Powell and I am the DoD Dine Smart Program Manager here at the Defense Travel Management Office.

The Department of Defense has several established, successful travel programs and services that support the DoD traveler, including rental car, airline, bus, and lodging. Would it surprise you to know that the Department has expanded its program offerings to include dining?

Whether you are a road warrior or just take a few trips a year, you should be aware of our preferred dining program, DoD Dine Smart. The Department has partnered with Dinova, a restaurant network of over 20,000 restaurants, to offer a frequent dining program that earns the Department rebates every time travelers dine at a participating restaurant and pay with their Government Travel Charge Card while on official travel. The rebates go directly to the Department to support travel budgets. I am excited to announce that we just added an additional program benefit. Travelers are eligible to participate in DoD Dine Smart Traveler Rewards, a loyalty program where you can sign up to earn points toward gift cards when you dine at participating restaurants and pay with your travel card (on official travel, of course). The program provides a real traveler benefit. Points are earned on your entire check, including tip. If you ever needed an excuse to order dessert – look no further.

While it is not mandatory to eat at participating restaurants when on travel, the Joint Travel Regulations (para. 010204) does require you to use your travel card for all travel-related expenses, including dining. If you have to eat while on travel, why not make it at a DoD Dine Smart restaurant?

Participating in DoD Dine Smart Traveler Rewards is easy – just go to **dod.dinova.com** or scan the QR code and register to earn points. You only have to enroll once and it takes just two minutes. After you enroll, every dining transaction you make with your travel card at a participating restaurant will earn you points, which are automatically tracked for you. You can redeem your rewards points through Dinova's website for gift cards to restaurants and retailers. You do not need to show I.D. and the servers don't need to know your diabolical plan to collect rebates or rewards.

For those of you who are traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic, you may find it a challenge to be on the road during these times. Many of us are no longer just concerned about catching an airplane cold or developing a permanent crick in the neck. Dinova recently improved it's app, which caters to your dining travel needs (why yes, I did just chuckle at my clever word choice), to include information related to COVID-19. When you select a restaurant in the myDinova app, you are able to see what safety protocols that restaurant is following in order to keep you safe. The app previously only allowed you to filter by cuisine or dietary preferences. Now you can filter by safety practices, so you can select a restaurant that meets your safety needs. The app includes information such as, mask and social distance requirements, contactless payment availability, and take out or delivery options.
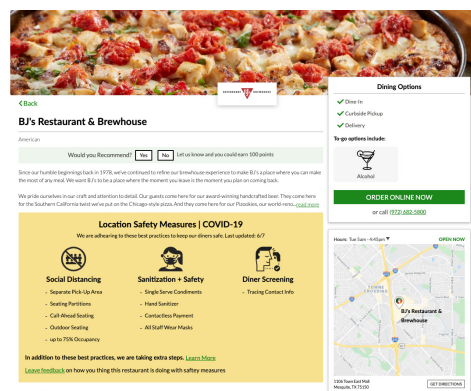
DoD Dine Smart Traveler Rewards and Dinova are working together to offer benefits for our intrepid travelers. If you do have to travel, stay safe; eat well; earn well; and reward yourself for a job well-done. It just makes sense.
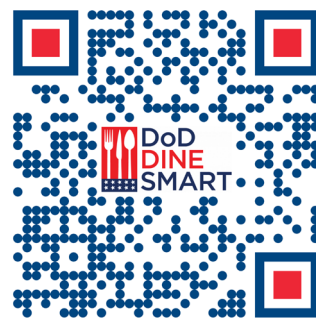
The Work Doesn't Stop

The Secretary of Defense stop-movement orders have meant that travel across the Department has significantly slowed, but that hasn't slowed the important work of managing the Department's travel enterprise. DTMO's transition to 100 percent telework has been relatively seamless. Our support of DoD's mission is equally as seamless as we maintain continuity of operations during the pandemic. Even though travel is down approximately 75 percent of what it was a year ago, our mission remains the same – to serve as the central focal point for commercial travel within the Department of Defense; establish strategic direction, set policy, and centrally manage commercial travel programs – but some of our work has shifted to responding to the COVID travel restrictions and its impact on travel.

DTMO continues to configure Defense Travel Modernization (DTM) functionality as we prepare to test the prototype with more DoD organizations in the few months ahead (see an update on DTM on page 6). To date, we have fielded DTM to smaller DoD agencies. Much of the onboarding process was manual, which was possible when deploying the prototype to these smaller organizations. But as we open it up to larger organizations, we need an automated way to load all of the traveler information in to the system. While DTM operations take a strategic pause, we seized the opportunity and worked with DMDC to develop the Cloud Profile Management Tool to automate onboarding processes, minimizing manual intervention and expediting the loading of user profile data into the system. We continue to implement Defense Travel System (DTS) maintenance releases and address system issues in the queue.

In April, we implemented a release that made improvements to the DTS Expense module. Working together with DMDC, our team is preparing for a continuity of operations (COOP) exercise in September. In February, we released DoD Bus Agreement #5, requiring motorcoach carriers to reapply to continue to be part of the program. Our team reviewed close to 400 applications; no small task. We continue to make great progress in realigning and restructuring Travel Management Company contracts as well as our other initiatives. While we move forward with many of our initiatives, some work has understandably shifted to understanding the impact of the COVID-19 travel restriction across the Department. The COVID-19 challenges extend to our Policy & Regulations Division as they assess and respond to the policy aspects of the pandemic. The DoD travel restrictions pose situations that require a quick turn on Joint Travel Regulations changes. Working through the Per Diem Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC) and its working-level advisory panels – the Military Advisory Panel and the Civilian Advisory Panel, DTMO is able to quickly facilitate these changes to ensure DoD travelers are fairly compensated.

Our policy team also participates in COVID-19 task force meetings and serves as a resource for travel policy-related issues for both DoD and GSA. To address many of the questions the team was getting from the field, the team published **COVID-19 JTR Travel and Transportation Allowance Questions and Answers**.

Our Travel Operations Division has been busy developing reports and dashboards to monitor and assess travel as it resumes, and

support decision-making going forward. We have automated the process and are providing regular reports to our governance boards to support decisions at the field level. With DoD accounting for about

60 percent of federal government travel spend, DTMO is particularly interested in industry's response to the drop in travel and how it will impact service delivery and affect the overall cost of DoD travel. Our Travel Programs and Services Divisions has been working closely with our industry partners to stay abreast of the travel industry's response to the pandemic and help us understand the impact of COVID-19 on the passenger travel industry.

We leveraged our relationship with National Defense Travel Association's (NDTA)'s Government Passenger Travel Advisory Council (GPTAC) as one avenue to help us stay informed. The council consists of representatives from various sectors of the travel industry, each of whom chairs a respective industry committee. The GPTAC assessed the commercial travel industry's readiness to support government travel requirements as government travel restrictions are eased and official travel resumes. Although the pandemic has significantly affected the travel industry, our travel partners indicate that they are capable of supporting our anticipated travel requirements.

Our travel industry partners continue to be significantly impacted economically as stay at-home orders and travel bans become the order of the day. As a result, industry is implementing new procedures and processes in response to CDC guidelines to protect their employees and travelers, and take other measures in response to the financial impact of the pandemic. Like other industries, the travel industry has laid off or furloughed employees; airlines have cut flights and changed routes; bus carriers need more buses per move as they institute social distancing measures; rental car companies may have shifted inventory; and some hotels have temporarily closed as COVID-19 levels in certain areas spiked.

The bus and airline industries are two sectors that reported having the most significant impact due to COVID-19. According to the American Bus Association, the $15 billion-a-year bus industry, that provides 600 million passenger trips annually, is currently operating at about 15 percent of capacity. As a result, most of the nation's 3,000 bus companies have had to furlough employees, and many of their 36,000 vehicles are parked. Most sources of business and revenue for these companies have been severely restricted or eliminated. Government travel continues, albeit at a much lower level than before the pandemic hit, but DoD's essential movements are providing some business to bus companies. Bus companies are seeing additional operating costs as they observe CDC public health recommendations for cleaning and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), among other COVID-19 response requirements. Due to social distancing recommendations, movements require additional buses to accommodate travelers with the appropriate social distancing. For air carriers, the pandemic dealt an expected, but serious blow. Before COVID-19, fuel costs were low, and demand was healthy. Today, the industry is struggling and have altered or cut routes. However, the General Services Administration managed City Pair Program remains intact and recently released its list of **FY 2021 City Pair routes**.

Information on the travel industry's COVID-19 pandemic protocols can be accessed via the links on the **DTMO Coronavirus Webpage**.

TraX

TraX Home

Trip Calculator +

Quick Tools +

Training +

Knowledge Search

Travel Assistance +

Passport Home

Logout

Training
Access all of our online travel training. Customize your training itinerary, track your completed training, and print certificates of completion.

Knowledge Search
Find answers to your travel questions by searching our database of thousands of FAQs, help topics, guides, and other resources.

Trip Tools
Build a trip estimate and look up location reports that include maps, travel advisories, U.S. Embassy contacts, weather and more.

Travel Assistance
Submit a help desk ticket directly to the Travel Assistance Center. Plus, review your ticket history.

Announcements

- DTS will be unavailable for 12 hours beginning at 2300 EST on Friday, April 19, 2019
- New Requirement for Other Than Economy-/Coach-Class Transportation
- TAC Outreach Call - Next Call: 8/14 (Topic: DTS Update/FY Crossover: Budgets and LOAs)
- GSA Announces Adjusted CY2012 POV Mileage Rates
- FY2012 OCONUS On-Base Incidental Expense Rate Increase Rescheduled
- Importance of Cancelling Airline Reservations in DTS
- DTS Debts Online through the Pay.Gov Website
- New Travel Justification Required for DD 1610 and Other Order Formats
- Having Trouble Accessing Links and Viewing Documents in DTS?

It's Here: New Look for TraX

The Defense Travel Management Office is pleased to announce the release of an updated version of TraX, the web-based application that provides a centralized source of travel information to include travel assistance, training, access to trip tools, and other useful information. The new version of TraX will feature a refreshed look, improved usability, and enhanced accessibility. This update comes on the heels of the release of a redesigned version of Passport, our single sign-on for permission-based applications, which also got a new look in June.

Users will still have access to the same features as before including training, trip estimating tools and calculators, and tools to submit help desk tickets to the Travel Assistance Center. In this mobile friendly new version, users will notice:

- Redesigned landing page – the new design will improve navigation, allowing users to more easily navigate to TraX tools.
- Restructured TraX Training display – the new design with navigation tabs and color-coded icons makes it easier for users to view available courses and determine which course is right for them. New training designations better identify the types of training. It is also easier to view the status of scheduled and completed coursework, and download completed training certificates.

- Updated Trip Tools – the updated look and flow makes it easier to get and share estimates of expenses for travel.
- Renamed Knowledge Search –The Knowledge Center has been renamed Knowledge Search to better reflect its purpose – to allow users to search for answers and solutions.

The updated version of TraX was released on August 21, 2020.

Update on Defense Travel Modernization Prototype

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and the transition from SAP Concur's commercial cloud environment to the SAP Concur Cloud Public Sector (CCPS), we have temporarily paused travel operations in the Defense Travel Modernization prototype, delaying the rollout to additional organizations. CCPS is a critical component of the prototype. It will ensure DoD data remains secure and segregated in an Amazon Web Services GovCloud environment and enable the deployment to additional users. Operations in the commercial environment were limited to 5,000 users. While government operational testing of CCPS is complete, operations can not resume until DoD CIO completes its cyber assessment, expected by the end of September.

During this strategic pause work continues on the prototype. The team is adding and improving system functionality. This includes configuring and testing SAP Concur's latest User Interface (UI). The new UI will address critical user feedback we received during this prototype phase. We also continue to work with the Defense Manpower Data Center and Service and Agency partners on financial integration--making improvements to DAI integration while conducting integration planning and design activities with Army GFEBS and initial planning for integration with Navy ERP.

As COVID-19 travel restrictions permit, travel operations in the prototype and the rollout to additional organizations will resume once DoD CIO completes its cyber assessment. With over 2,000 current users and more than $1M in travel reimbursements, the DTM prototype has been rolled out to travelers in the Defense Human Resources Activity, Washington Headquarters Services, and Defense Contract Management Agency HQ staff.

Practice DTS Simulations Using EWTS

Are you a Defense Travel Administrator who is interested in providing DTS training using a hands-on sandbox environment? You may want to consider using the Enterprise Web Training System (EWTS), an online training environment that mirrors the Defense Travel System (DTS). EWTS simulates the DTS experience by having the same look and feel of DTS, but there are a few functional differences between the two systems including:

- EWTS does not create real-world reservations, but simulates the functions performed by a Travel Management Company (TMC)

- EWTS does not create/expend funds, but simulates the functions performed by a DoD financial system (e.g., creating obligations, making payments)

For more information, see the EWTS Guide at **www. defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/Training/EWTS_Guide.pdf**. DTMO also offers a distance learning class dedicated to using EWTS. Information on this class can be found in the Training section of TraX.

Did you know that DTMO recently updated 33 training resources to include information on the recent DTS update to the Expense Module? These resources include:

GUIDES	MANUALS	INFORMATION PAPERS	TRIFOLDS	OTHER
• DTS Guide 1: Overview • DTS Guide 2: Authorizations • DTS Guide 3: Vouchers • DTS Guide 4: Local Vouchers • DTS Guide 5: Group Travel • Desktop Guide for Authorizing Officials and Certifying Officers • DTS & TMC Interaction: Reservation Process • Invitational Travel • Financial Field Procedures • DoD DTS Best Practices • Guide to Managing Travel-Incurred Debt	• DTA Manual, Appendix K • DTS CBA Reconciliation	• Access AO/CO WBT • Access DTS Basic WBT • Access GTCC Misuse WBT • Access Travel Card Program WBT • General TraX Training Instructions • Select Restricted Airfare in DTS • Travel Advances on Restricted Airfares • Expenses Screen Traveler • Expenses Screen AO • Introduction to CBA Reconciliation in DTS • Report Scheduler Reports • Faxed Records Not in DTS - Retired	• Create An Authorization/ Order • Create A Voucher From Authorization • Create A Local Voucher • Updating Itinerary and Reservations in an Authorization • Updating Itinerary and Reservations in a Voucher • Partner System Traveler Instructions for Completing an Imported Authorization in DTS • AO Checklist and Instructions	• Travel Card Program Material – Slides, Instructor/ Student Manual

DTMO revises training materials after each update to DTS to make sure they continue to be a valuable resource for our travel community. Check out these resources in the Training Resources Lookup Tool at **www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/training.cfm.**

We Want to Hear From You!

As editors of the Defense Travel Dispatch, we strive to provide you with a publication that meets your information needs. To help us understand how we can better serve you, we are interested in hearing what types of content you would like us to include in future editions. Please take a minute to complete the short Dispatch Subscriber Questionnaire at www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Community/se/2511374559286C56 to share your thoughts with us and let us know how we are doing.

Check Out Our New JTR Webpage

If you are a frequent visitor to our website, you may have noticed we have been making some tweaks to the design. One of the recent changes we made was to the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) webpage. Based on feedback from our website users and analysis of website data, we modified the page design to better address user needs.

During a recent review of our site, we identified key capability gaps in the previous website design and policy documents: the website's navigation did not map to user needs, travel administrators found policy documents dense and hard to access, and travelers could not find relevant information quickly. We used our website analytics to track website traffic and drive decision-making during the redesign of this page.

This webpage is a central hub where travelers and administrators can access a copy of the JTR, consult frequently asked questions, and more. We moved several of the high traffic links to the main body of the webpage for easier access. We created large, easily visible buttons for the JTR and JTR Supplement documents, and additional smaller buttons for other frequently visited resources including the JTR Archive, Computation Examples, FAQs and Per Diem Rates. We also updated the JTR governance process and outlined a four-step process for travelers and administrators who may need additional clarification or guidance on particular policy topics.

We also completed a comprehensive review and update of the JTR FAQs. We focused time and attention on simplifying topics with high web traffic, such as permanent change of station allowances and per diem rate review procedures. We applied the DoD Plain Language standards to make the policy guidance easier to read and help travelers and administrators quickly find the information they need.

The next time you visit the DTMO website, take some time to explore the new JTR webpage and let us know what you think!

More to Come

Tweaks to the DTMO website are only the beginning. Over the next year, we will be undergoing a complete redesign of the site that focuses on improving accessibility, usability, and making it a more user-centric resource. If you would like to submit feedback on our current site or recommendations for what we should include in the future, feel free to submit website feedback or sign up to be a beta tester right on our homepage.

Save the Date: GovTravels 2021

Mark your calendars for the National Defense Transportation Association's 2021 GovTravels symposium, which will be held February 22-24, 2021. GovTravels presents an opportunity for passenger travel professionals from government and industry to learn about and collaborate on regulations, technology, challenges and best practices in government travel. Next year's theme will be "Respond, Adapt, Innovate – The Changing World of Government Travel." The decision on whether GovTravels 2021 will be a virtual or in-person event in Alexandria, VA is still pending situational circumstances. We expect a decision to be made this fall.

TSA Institutes New Security Measures in Response to COVID-19

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) implemented additional safety measures related to airport security to protect travelers and TSA agents. Travelers will notice the following changes:

- Exemption for hand sanitizer in carry-on bags. Travelers can now bring one liquid hand sanitizer container (up to 12 ounces) through airport security.

- Travelers now maintain possession of their IDs and boarding passes at all time, holding documents up to the TSA officers for visual inspection instead of handing it to agents.

- Face mask requirements for both travelers and TSA officers.

- Phased installation of plastic shielding at points of interaction between passengers and TSA officers.

- TSA officers are required to wear gloves and change their gloves following each pat-down and upon passenger request.

Go to **www.tsa.gov/coronavirus** for more detailed and complete information on precautions to protect the health of travelers, air travel employees, and TSA officers. Please note that there may be additional safety measures and restrictions for travel depending on airport or airline. Please be sure to research both your departure and destination locations' specific rules before traveling.