



Defense Travel Dispatch

VOLUME XIV, ISSUE 3

Fall 2021

Inside

The Journey to MyTravel	3
Prevent Travel Card Declines: Set a PIN Before You Travel	5
Registration Now Open for 2022 GovTravels	6
Use Your Travel Card for Meals – Stay Policy Compliant + Earn Rewards	7
Motorcoach Driver Shortage Delays DoD Training & Missions	8
We Hope You'll Never Need Us, but If You Do, We're Here.	9

The Defense Travel Management Office serves 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

Phil Benjamin | Director



My favorite time of year is fall. I enjoy the warm days, cool nights, and the changing colors of the leaves. As those beautiful fall days transition into the cooler days of winter, I'm reminded that change and transitions are constants; a natural progression for all things, not just the seasons. In keeping with that idea, it is time for me to transition, too. At the end of the month, I will be retiring from federal service after a career that has spanned 30 years in the Air Force and 16 years as a member of the civilian workforce.

When I first started at DTMO in 2007, we were a new organization; a collection of several disparate, stove-piped programs that governed travel policy, regulations, and directives that were brought together under one umbrella to centrally manage travel policy and serve as the "single face" for commercial travel within the Department. Over the years, we've had many, many successes including standing up the Travel Assistance Center and launching a DoD travel reform effort just to name a few. I'm beyond proud of what we've built during my tenure and excited to see what DTMO will accomplish in the years to come.

In this edition, you'll read about some of those very initiatives including the recent production contract award to Concur Technologies to continue the successful rollout of the Defense Travel Modernization prototype, or better known as, DTM. Now that we are operating under a contract, the capability has been rebranded as MyTravel and you'll likely hear much more about it as we continue implementation across DoD's Fourth Estate and prepare for Service implementation.

I'm beyond proud of what we've built during my tenure and excited to see what DTMO will accomplish in the years to come.

On page 6, you'll read that registration is now open for the 2022 GovTravels symposium, DTMO's premier stakeholder engagement event. This year's event will take place at the end of February and we are currently planning for an in-person event with a vaccination or negative COVID test requirement. This year's theme is "Rebound. Reconnect. Reimagine" and as the theme implies, sessions will focus on how both the commercial

travel industry is recovering from the impacts of the pandemic and looking beyond to what the new normal may be, and how the world of government travel is changing to meet current and future travel environment. During GovTravels, we will demo MyTravel and discuss new capabilities on the horizon. We will also hold our annual DoD Connect meeting where DoD attendees will hear directly from DTMO leadership on the state of the Defense Travel Enterprise.

Also inside are articles related to the continued impact of COVID-19 on government travel. The shortage of motor coach drivers is a challenge for the Department, as are changing travel restrictions. As the new variants continue to emerge, today's guidance may change quickly as the world weighs reinstating travel restrictions.

Fred Rogers so famously said, "Often when you think you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else." That is true not just for me, but also for DTMO. This is a new era in government commercial travel and I'm pleased to be leaving it in the good hands of DTMO's employees. Thank you too, to all who I've had the pleasure of working with over the length of my career at DTMO.



The Journey to *My*Travel

On September 14, 2021, the Defense Human Resources Activity awarded a sole source production contract to SAP Concur. The production contract enables a phased deployment of the successful Defense Travel Modernization prototype across the Department of Defense. When the new capability, rebranded as “MyTravel,” is fully deployed the Department’s aging and costly to maintain legacy Defense Travel System (DTS) will be retired. MyTravel will provide the Department with a proven, always up-to-date, modern, state of the art travel application at reduced costs that empowers DOD travelers and authorizing officials to make travel decisions that benefit their organizations.

This contract award is the culmination of a years’ long business reform effort that began in 2017 when the Deputy Secretary of Defense directed the establishment of a cross functional team to improve travel performance for the Department. The Cross Functional Team – Travel conducted a review of existing policy, evaluated technical solutions to deliver an enhanced/modernized travel capability, and developed an acquisition strategy for a technical solution. In August 2018, the Department selected SAP Concur to develop a travel system prototype, referred to as “Defense Travel Modernization prototype” or “DTM,” aimed at reducing process and workflow complexity, maintaining and enhancing audit readiness, improving customer satisfaction, reducing

cost, and aligning to commercial/industry best practices. If the prototype proved successful, it would eventually replace the legacy travel system.

During the prototype phase, DHRA deployed the capability to over 2,000 users in the Fourth Estate, processing over \$1M in travel reimbursements. Having met the prototype success criteria, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition granted Authority to Proceed to the acquisition, testing, and deployment phase in July 2021, paving the way for the contract award.

Replacing the aging Defense Travel System (DTS) with this new capability will provide the Department with an always up-to-date, modern, state of the art travel application that is aimed at reducing process and workflow complexity, maintaining and enhancing audit readiness, improving customer satisfaction, reducing cost, and aligning to commercial and industry best practices. DTS will remain operational until MyTravel is fully deployed.

As we reach this critical milestone, our current focus is on completing the rollout to remaining Fourth Estate organizations on the DAI financial system, before moving on to the Services. To date, the following organizations have completed the onboarding process and are prepared to move forward with implementation plans for their organizations.

- Defense Digital Service
- Defense Human Resources Activity
- Washington Headquarters Service
- Defense Contract Management Agency
- Defense Contract Audit Agency
- DoD Education Activity
- Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency
- Missile Defense Agency
- Select offices within Office of Secretary of Defense
- DoD Inspector General's Office [by end of year]
- Defense Commissary Activity [by end of year]
- Defense Acquisition University [by end of year]
- Defense Technical Information Center [by end of year]

Remaining Fourth Estate organizations that utilize DAI are scheduled to complete the onboarding process throughout the 2022 calendar year. Marine Corps is the first military Service currently targeted to begin onboarding process in late 2022, followed by the Army, Air Force in early 2023, the Navy in spring 2023. These timelines are contingent on the successful integration of those Services' financial systems and are subject to change.

In the Know: Changing COVID-19 Travel Requirements

Effective December 6, 2021, all travelers entering the United States are required to provide a negative COVID-19 test taken within 1 day of their flight departure and some travelers are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to enter the U.S. Check the CDC website for up-to-date guidance.

U.S. citizens, Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs), and non-citizens on immigration visas traveling to the U.S.: Negative COVID-19 test taken within 1 day of flight departure required, regardless of vaccination status.

All other travelers entering the U.S. (non-U.S. citizens, non-LPRs, or non-immigrants): Negative COVID-19 test taken within 1 day of flight departure required along with proof of full vaccination.

For purposes of entry into the United States, vaccines accepted will include FDA approved or authorized and WHO Emergency Use Listing vaccines.

The mask requirement for travelers on airplanes, public transportation, and trains as well as in airports and other transportation hubs has been extended to at least March 18, 2022.

If traveling outside the U.S., be sure to check COVID-19 entry and exit requirement for all the countries you are traveling to during your trip, including any layovers. Destinations may require testing, preregistration, and/

or mandatory quarantine upon arrival. Country travel requirements can change frequently, sometimes during your trip.

Other Helpful Resources

- [COVID-19 Travel and Transportation Allowances Q&A](#) – Travelers with extensive itineraries or unexpected transit delays may find that they require a second negative test if their transit extends beyond 24 hours. The Joint Travel Regulations have recently been updated to allow for reimbursement for COVID-19 testing in certain circumstances. The FAQs provide insight into what is reimbursable.
- [Department of Defense COVID Information](#) – Get the latest guidance and travel restrictions impacting official travel.
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) – Learn what the CDC recommends if you have to travel.
- [Department of State](#) - Keep up with changing travel requirements and advisories before and during your trip.



Prevent Travel Card Declines: Set a PIN Before You Travel

Travelers with a Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) are increasingly being asked to enter their Personal Identification Number (PIN) when making a transaction. Often, they don't remember the number or haven't set one up.

Many cardholders think entering a PIN is only for ATM withdrawals, however, merchants are expanding their use of Chip and PIN-enabled Point-of-Sale terminals because the PIN ensures more secure transactions and helps to prevent unauthorized use of the card. Hotels often ask travelers to enter a PIN when using a travel card, and the PIN requirement is also growing at rental car locations and many other merchants.

We strongly recommend travelers establish or verify a PIN prior to travel. Travelers that received a GTCC before March 20, 2021 may need to create a PIN.

Before travel, we also recommend travelers verify that your account is active and ready to use prior to travel. Doing so will reduce the chances of declined

transactions on the travel card when trying to use it on official travel. To verify that your account is active, cardholders should check their account online or confirm with their APC that their card account is open and there is sufficient available credit based on mission needs. It is also important that you keep your contact information up to date.

How to Set Up, Verify, or Change a Travel Card PIN

- Use the online [CitiManager tool](#)
OR
- Call Citibank at the phone number on
the back of your travel card



Registration Now Open for 2022 GovTravels

Mark your calendars for the 2022 GovTravels Symposium as it returns to an in-person event Monday, February 28 through Wednesday, March 2, 2022 at the Hilton Mark Center in Alexandria, VA. GovTravels brings together experts from across the U.S. government and commercial travel industry to examine a wide range of issues that impact the government's multi-billion-dollar travel enterprise. For the past five years, the Defense Travel Management Office has co-sponsored the National Defense Transportation Association's GovTravels symposium and the tradition continues again in 2022.

This year's event is centered around the theme, "Rebound. Reconnect. Reimagine." Sessions will focus on how the government and the commercial travel industry are responding to today's challenges and preparing for the years to come. "We're excited to welcome back attendees to hear directly from travel industry leaders about how they are reimagining travel as COVID travel restrictions are lifted and travel starts to resume, and how, on the government side, travel is adjusting to this new normal," said Phil Benjamin, the Director of the Defense Travel Management Office.

We are working to finalize the agenda, but attendees can expect noteworthy keynote speakers and general session government-industry panels including:

- Keynote speaker, the **Honorable Gilbert Cisneros**, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel & Readiness, who will discuss government travel in the era of COVID and operating our way forward. His address will be followed by a panel discussion on this topic with senior government and travel industry leaders.
- Keynote speaker, **Mr. Andrew Watterson**, Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer, Southwest Airlines who will discuss the pandemic impacts to the airline industry.

- Panel discussion, "Women Leading the Industry's Efforts to Rebound, Reconnect and Reimagine Passenger Travel" lead by **Lauri Reishus**, President and CEO at the Airlines Reporting Corporation (ARC).

Those who have attended GovTravels in years past will notice that the first day is again filled with government and industry meetings. For those who may not be attending a meeting that day, we will host back to back demonstrations on DoD's new travel capability, MyTravel. This gives attendees several chances to see the technology first hand, ask questions, and learn more about the implementation across the Department.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to attend:

- **Travel Academy** – numerous educational breakout sessions aligned to several "themed" tracks that accommodate a variety of interests.
- **Exhibit Hall** – visit with travel industry vendors and Government program representatives to discuss their products and services.
- **Networking Sessions** – engage with other attendees, including government personnel and industry representatives.
- **DoD Connect** – DoD attendees have a chance to hear directly from the DTMO Director and leadership team on the state of the Defense Travel Enterprise.

[Registration for GovTravels 2022](#) is now open. Please note that proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test result will be required for entrance. For more information, visit the [NDTA GovTravels 2022 webpage](#).

Use Your Travel Card for Meals – Stay Policy Compliant + Earn Rewards

When traveling on official business, how should you pay for meals? Cash? Personal airline rewards credit card? Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC)? Travelers are often confused by this question because they are unaware that the Government Travel Charge Card Regulations and the underlying Public Law, 105-264 (The Travel and Transportation Reform Act), require use of the travel card to pay for all travel expenses, including meals. DoD recently improved reporting in this area to better allow APCs to track non-use of the travel card for meals.

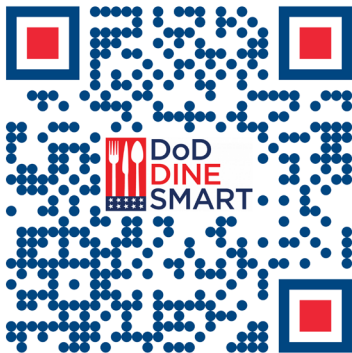
As tempting as it may be use a personal card for meal expenses, travelers can now earn points redeemable for gift cards for using their travel card. DoD DineSmart operates through Dinova, a dining marketplace of over 18,000 restaurants, to offer a frequent dining program, which earns the Department rebates each time a traveler uses their travel card to pay at a participating restaurant. Now, travelers can receive an added perk just for following policy through DoD Dine Smart Traveler Rewards. Each time a traveler charges their meal to their travel card, they earn points that can be redeemed for gift cards. Points are earned based the total cost including tax and tip.

To earn rewards, travelers must first register at dod.dinova.com. Points are automatically tracked so travelers don't have to use any special codes or show government ID. To make it easy to find participating restaurants near TDY locations, travelers can download the Dinova mobile app which is DISA-approved for use on government devices.



Contrary to the 'myth' that we hear from some travelers, DTMO does not retain detailed information on meal purchases when using the travel card or when dining at participating DoD Dine Smart restaurants. The data we receive from Citibank and Dinova only includes the name and location of the restaurant and the total amount paid. Also, on the rare occasion when a receipt for meals is required to be submitted with the travel voucher, only the restaurant and total amount spent is required, not detailed information about what was purchased.

It's easy to use the travel card to pay for meals and travelers can earn rewards at the same time. Enroll now, use your GTCC, and earn rewards! For more information, visit the [DoD Dine Smart](https://dod.dinova.com) webpage.



Scan now to sign up!

Did You Know?

Travel spend without meal spend is considered travel card misuse and a reportable travel policy violation.



Motorcoach Driver Shortage Delays DoD Training & Missions

The COVID-19 pandemic's reduction in travel continues to disrupt the passenger travel industry in ways not always readily apparent. For the bus transportation industry, the already existing driver shortage is being exacerbated by driver retirements and losses to other industries like trucking, delivery services, public transportation, etc. A bus driver shortage has impacted military surface moves used for training and shuttle transportation.

We recommend that Transportation Officers (TOs) submit their movement request through the Group Operational Passenger System (GOPAX) as far in

advance as possible, and to be flexible with move dates and times. This gives bus carriers ample time to find drivers and work around already tight schedules.

TOs can use the new "Travel Information" section in GOPAX to add detailed, special requirements about the move including flexibility in move dates and times. The Travel Information section works similarly to the public comments section, and allows for useful/customization which can be a great tool for facilitating communication between the unit and the carrier.

To help prevent last-minute cancellations and allow time to make alternative arrangements, TOs should confirm the move with the carrier 48 hours before the start of the move. For assistance in contacting approved carriers, please go to the [DoD Approved Carrier List](#), contact the DoD Bus Team for assistance at dodhra.mc-alex.dtm@mbx.military-bus-program@mail.mil



A [TO Checklist](#) is available to help TOs gather the details necessary prior to requesting a move in GOPAX.

We Hope You'll Never Need Us, but If You Do, We're Here.

The program managers for the U.S. Rental Car Program know how important it is to have someone available when you need assistance. That's why we provide two different ways for federal travelers to reach us if you are in an accident, need assistance with overcharges, or just want to provide feedback on a recent rental car experience.

Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool

The Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool is a web-based application that allows travelers who rented a vehicle through the U.S. Rental Car Program to report an accident, document loss or damage, address overcharges, and provide customer service feedback on rental car companies.

Travelers can access the Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool by visiting our Rental Car webpage and looking for the "Report an Accident" button. To access the tool, you will need a Passport account. Once in the tool, review the consent page carefully and ensure you have completed the required preliminary reporting and collected the right documentation before you start the process of submitting a report.

Once the report of an accident, damage, or overcharge is submitted, a member of our Rental Car Program team will review the information and contact the



Rental Vehicle Assistance Tool

- Report an accident
- Report loss or damage
- Address rental car company overcharges
- Seek assistance with issues related to a rental car

traveler if any additional information is needed. Issues are typically settled within approximately 30 days, with the exception of some OCONUS incidents.

Customer Service Questionnaire

A traveler can submit feedback on a recent rental experience at any time through the Rental Car Customer Service Questionnaire. On the rental car webpage, look for the "Submit Feedback" button which will launch a questionnaire where you can rate your recent rental experience or report a service issue.

If you have any questions, email our Rental Car team at dodhra.mc-alex.dtmo.mbx.rental-car-program@mail.mil

Ensure You're Covered

To ensure you are covered under the terms and conditions of the U.S. Rental Car Agreement, book your rental through your Agency's official travel system or through your government-contracted Travel Management Company. If you are unable to use one of those channels, you may also book a rental car at the counter however, you must advise the counter agent you are a federal government traveler and verify that the government rate and \$5 dollar per day GARS (Government Administrative Rate Supplement) appears on your rental contract. If the government rate or GARS is not listed on your rental contract, or if the vehicle was used in an unauthorized manner, you may not be covered if in an accident. You may be asked to present your travel authorization/orders or a Government Travel Charge Card to validate official travel status.



Together We Can Improve the DoD Travel Experience

Over a year ago we launched a Defense Travel Enterprise Customer Satisfaction Survey to collect traveler feedback on an array of DoD commercial travel programs, including travel management companies, airlines, rental cars, and the travel card.

Frankly, our response rate has been low. We know everyone is bombarded with surveys for everything from a doctor's office visit to brake repairs, but we ask that if you receive ours that you take the time to complete it. Your participation will truly help us identify problem areas, influence and shape requirements for future defense travel programs and services, and improve your overall travel experience.

Here's how you can help:

1. After you travel, watch your inbox for a survey invitation link. Emails are sent on a biweekly basis to a random sample of DoD travelers with qualifying travel vouchers.
2. Block out time in your schedule to fill out the survey. It's okay to do this during the workday...it only takes 10 minutes or less.
3. Complete the survey as soon as possible while travel details are still fresh in your mind.

The survey is anonymous, so this is your chance to really tell us what you think. Your feedback provides critical insights into commercial travel and vendor performance.

DoD Preferred Commercial Lodging in 2022

Did you know that hotels apply for the DoD Preferred hotel program every year? Even hotels already in the program must re-apply, which makes the program competitive, ultimately benefitting the traveler. Hotels compete with rates, amenities, and flexible policies. The DoD Preferred team uses those criteria as well as in-person site visits, customer satisfaction scores, and traveler feedback to select high quality hotels for the program each year.

Here's what you can expect in 2022:

- **Updated rates:** on January 1, 2022 the maximum reimbursable amount will change in many sites, so be sure to consult the updated rate chart (to be posted in mid-December)

- **Updated hotels:** an updated listing of participating hotels will also be available in mid- to late-December
- **Locations:** DoD Preferred sites remain at 71 for 2022

Check out [our website for updates](#).



DoD Preferred Video Series – Subscribe & View

Over the last year, DTMO has created a series of [YouTube videos](#) to help DoD travelers and the hotel industry better understand the Integrated Lodging Program and its commercial lodging program, DoD Preferred. With seven videos already produced and two more on the way, the video series informs and entertains.

In the Tips for Travelers series, DoD travelers and travel administrators learn about the program, governing policy, how the hotels are selected, and what to expect when they stay at a DoD Preferred hotel. There's even a video to explain when state sales tax is exempt for hotel stays.

In the Tips for Hotels series, hotel industry partners learn about the DoD Preferred selection criteria, the process for applying for the program, and yes, what to do when travelers tell them they aren't displaying in DTS.



To develop the videos, we reviewed the questions we receive most from both travelers and hoteliers. "We looked at the questions we are asked most and made those the focus of the videos. We wanted to bring some life to what could otherwise be boring, dry answers online or through email" said Beth Carver, DoD Preferred Program Manager.

Watch the videos...you'll learn something new!

Check out the video content below, subscribe to the [DTMO YouTube channel](#), and watch for future installments of this nine-part video series.

Tips for Travelers:

- Integrated Lodging & DoD Preferred
- State Sales Tax on My Hotel Stay
- Mythbusters
- Integrated Lodging Program Policy – (coming soon!)

Tips for Hotels:

- Resolving Hotel Display Issues
- About DoD Preferred
- DoD Preferred Selection Overview
- Information for Accepted DoD Preferred Hotels
- DoD Preferred & FedRooms – (coming soon!)

The Defense Travel Dispatch is a quarterly newsletter published by the Defense Travel Management Office. Reproductions are permissible for official use only. References to any commercial products and services in this article are not an endorsement or Government sanctioning of those non-Federal entities, services, or products.

Subscribe to our mailing list or view past editions at www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/dispatch.cfm