SMG 2343.2

FDA STAFF MANUAL GUIDES, VOLUME III - GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

TRAVEL

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES WHILE ON OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT TRAVEL

Effective Date: 09/06/2016

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1. PURPOSE.

This guide provides the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) policy and reimbursement procedures for miscellaneous expenses incurred while employees are on official government travel, such as baggage fees, hotel taxes, internet fees, laundry, dry cleaning, pressing of clothing, ATM fees and telephone calls home.

2. BACKGROUND.

The General Service Administration (GSA) provides authority for agencies to reimburse travelers for miscellaneous expenses while on official domestic or foreign travel incurring a minimum of one night's lodging. In addition, the GSA provides authority for agencies to reimburse travelers for laundry expenses incurred while on official travel inside the continental United States (CONUS) for at least four consecutive nights.

3. REFERENCE/AUTHORITY.

FDA policy is consistent with guidance set forth by the following policies regarding miscellaneous expenses while on official business. These include:

A. Department of Health and Human Services Travel Policy Manual, revised November of 2014, Sections 3.1.1.4, 5.1.5, 5.2.1.2, 5.2.1.5 (http://www.psc.gov/docs/default-source/travel/2012_policy_manual.pdf?sfvrsn=4)

B. Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) 41 CFR 301-53 Parts 301-11.27, 301-12.2, 301-70.300, 301-70.301, 301-73.106 (http://www.gsa.gov/portal/ext/public/site/FTR/file/FTR301TOC.html/category/21868/hostUri/portal)

C. Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) (http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/travelreg.cfm)

D. Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA) 15030-TRAV (http://www.cbca.gsa.gov/topical/t1605822.txt)

E. Staff Manual Guide 2343.1 Government Travel Charge Card Program and ATM Advance Program (http://www.fda.gov/downloads/AboutFDA/ReportsManualsForms/StaffManualGuides/UCM213746.pdf)

4. DEFINITIONS.

A. **Continental United States (CONUS)** –The 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia.

B. **Non-Foreign Area Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS)** - The States of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands and the territories and possessions of the United States (excludes the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).

C. **Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) (See International Travel)**- See Non-Foreign Area—The States of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands and the territories and possessions of the United States (excludes the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).

D. **International Travel** – The terms “international travel” and “outside the United States,” as used in this manual, are defined as meaning all travel on official duty time (except change of official stations) outside the 50 United States, Guam, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and any other territory under U.S. jurisdiction. (The term foreign travel may also be used.)

Trips to the former U.S. Trust Territories in the Pacific, which are now independent (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Marshall Islands), are considered international travel..

E. **Travel Authorization (Order)** – Written permission to travel on official business. There are three basic types of travel authorizations (orders) specified in DHHS Travel Policy Manual, Section 3.1.4: Unlimited-open; Limited-open; and Trip-by-trip.

F. **Travel Claim (Voucher)** – A written request, supported by documentation and receipts where applicable, for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of official travel.

5. POLICY.

A. General Policy

Each type of miscellaneous expense will be reported as a separate line item on the travel authorization request and needs to be pre-approved by the traveler's Center/Office Designated Approving Official. FDA travelers must provide a receipt for all miscellaneous expenses for amounts of $75 and greater. Travelers may be required to provide receipts under $75 on a case-by-case basis at the request of the AOPC. . The purpose of the receipt is to justify the amount to be reimbursed; therefore, the receipt details are required to ensure that no prohibited items are being claimed.

Travel policies and per diem rates for Commissioned Corps officers of the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) are governed by the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR).

Travel to Non-Foreign Areas follow the same rules as OCONUS travel unless otherwise stated.

B. Baggage Fees

Per FTR 301-12.2, a traveler may be reimbursed for the following baggage fees:

1. Transportation charges for authorized excess;

2. Necessary charges for transferring baggage;

3. Necessary charges for storage of baggage when such charges are the result of official business;

4. All fees pertaining to the first checked bag. In addition, charges relating to the second and subsequent bags may be reimbursed when the agency determines those expenses necessary and in the interest of the Government (see FTR 301-70.300, 301-70.301); and/or

5. Charges or tips at transportation terminals for handling Government property carried by the traveler.

Items 1 - 4 require pre-approval on the travel authorization (see DHHS Travel Manual Section 3.1.1.4). Failure to receive prior approval may result in a traveler not being reimbursed for the expense.

The FTR does not allow for reimbursement of clothing purchased to replace items lost during travel due to lost or delayed baggage, in accordance with CBCA 15030-TRAV.

C. **Internet Fees**

Expenses for internet fees must be pre-approved on the travel authorization (see DHHS Travel Policy Manual, Section 3.1.1.4). In addition, they require justification as to why the internet fee is not included in the cost of the hotel room as the majority of FedRooms properties provide free internet access. This same requirement for approval applies to fees for wireless access:

1. During a conference;

2. While at the airport waiting for a flight (whether origination or connection); or

3. During travel on rail, flight, or vessel.

These fees may be approved, after the fact, at the discretion of the traveler's Center/Office Designated Approving Official, with proper justification. Justification must include the need for the internet service, including why it was not requested in advance on the travel authorization. In addition, the traveler's Center/Office Designated Approving Official may have wireless access "air cards" available for use. Travelers should check with the appropriate Travel Office and IT department prior to travel to determine if one is available for use.

D. **Hotel Taxes**

1. CONUS Travel

   GSA does not include hotel taxes in the lodging rates that are issued as part of the per diem rates for the continental United States. Hotel taxes are a miscellaneous expense item, as stipulated in FTR 301-11.27. Travelers are required to request exemption from state and local taxes where applicable (see DHHS Travel Policy Manual, Section 5.1.5, Exemption from State or Local Tax on Hotel/Lodging Accommodations).

2. OCONUS Travel

   The Department of State includes hotel taxes in its per diem lodging rates for foreign duty areas. Hotel taxes in foreign areas may not be authorized or claimed as a miscellaneous expense item unless and until a change in policy is published by the State Department and becomes effective for travel by FDA travelers. For OCONUS travel to Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. territories and possessions, follow the CONUS policy above.

E. **Laundry, Dry Cleaning, and Pressing of Clothing**

1. CONUS Travel

   Expenses incurred for laundry, dry cleaning, and pressing of clothing during CONUS travel are reimbursable as a miscellaneous travel expense. The traveler must incur at least four (4) consecutive nights of lodging on official travel within CONUS. Travelers will be reimbursed the actual amount incurred for laundry expenses, not to exceed an amount equal to: $5 per night times the number of consecutive nights on the trip for the first 30 days at a temporary duty travel location.

   Receipts are required for all laundry, dry cleaning, and pressing of clothing claimed for reimbursement. For the HHS policy on laundry expenses incurred during Long Term Temporary Duty Assignments can be found under 5.2.1.5 and Emergency Situations can be found under 11.3.4 of the DHHS Travel Policy Manual.

2. OCONUS Travel

   Laundry, dry cleaning, and pressing of clothing expenses are covered under the Meals and Incidental Expense (M&IE) portion of the per diem set for OCONUS travel. They may not be authorized or approved as a separate miscellaneous expense item. Travelers shall not submit

a travel voucher separately for any laundry expenses when on travel to an OCONUS location. For additional information, see the Department of State travel regulations.

F. **Personal Telephone Calls Home**

1. General Policy on Personal Telephone Calls Home

   Travelers on official government travel may make brief telephone calls to their residence at government expense. Travelers shall keep the cost of telephone calls within the continental United States (CONUS) or outside the continental United States (OCONUS) to a minimum.

   a. The telephone call(s) must be placed to the traveler's residence, the temporary caretaker of the traveler's residence while he/she is on official travel, a person with whom the traveler normally shares his/her residence, a location where a dependent family member is housed (if that individual is unable to live alone), or a family member if there are no dependents.

   b. If government-provided long distance telephone systems and services (including government-issued calling cards and government cell phones) are not available, a commercial toll service may be used. If the commercial toll service does not have government-issued calling cards or cell phones, travelers should make their allowable personal call(s) from the temporary duty station before departing for the day, to avoid incurring expensive commercial telephone charges

   c. Travelers are expected to incur telephone call expenses in the same manner as a prudent person would. An average of one call per day is authorized for CONUS travel.

2. CONUS Travel

   The Department's policy for travel personal telephone calls home during CONUS is that reimbursement should be limited to actual expenses not to exceed an amount equal to $5.00 per night times the number of consecutive nights on official business.

   If the traveler has been issued a government-issued calling card, he/she shall make the brief telephone call home using the government-issued calling card. The traveler can be reimbursed for any telephone access fees incurred, not to exceed the amount of one access charge per day. For example, if the hotel charges a $1.00 access fee each

time the phone is used, then the traveler may be reimbursed up to $1.00 per day.

3. OCONUS Travel

   The determination that telephone calls home from a foreign country will be allowed must be made prior to the beginning of travel. Once that determination is made, authorization for these calls must be made on the travel authorization.

   If the traveler is placing the telephone call home using a personal calling card, disposable phone card, calling collect, or dialing direct, the traveler can be reimbursed up to $10.00 per night.

   Due to major cost differences in foreign phone rates, if the Designated Approving Official determines that an increase above $10.00 is warranted then the frequency and estimated cost of the telephone calls must be included on the travel authorization. Major deviations beyond what is authorized on the travel authorization must be accompanied by a written justification describing the circumstances for the deviation. The Designated Approving Official is responsible for reviewing such claims and making the final determination that the amounts claimed are reasonable. If the traveler has been issued a government cellular phone and has cellular service to his/her residence, the traveler shall use the government issued cellular phone to call his/her residence.

   For OCONUS travel to Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. territories and possessions, follow the CONUS policy above. Calling conditions and rates are expected to be similar in these areas.

4. Receipt Requirements for Personal Telephone Calls Home

   If a traveler incurs cost for personal calls under this policy (i.e., does not use government-provided long distance telephone systems and services for the call(s) he/she makes on travel), the traveler must provide a receipt for those costs claimed on his/her travel voucher. Acceptable receipts include hotel bills with long distance telephone calls and numbers marked, and store receipts listing the purchase of pre-paid phone cards.

   Travelers must sign a certification to accompany the receipt(s), stating that the entire claimed expense was in fact incurred for telephone calls permissible under rules of this policy. No reimbursement is permitted for the use of a personal cellphone for CONUS travel.

However, for OCONUS travel to remote areas where long distance telephone systems are inaccessible, the use for a personal cell phone may be authorized once it is determined necessary and authorized on the travel authorization prior to departure on travel. An itemized receipt indicating the specific cost for each call is required.

5. Personal Emergencies

   Personal emergencies are defined as the death or serious illness or injury of a member of the traveler's immediate family or catastrophic occurrence or impending disaster such as fire, flood, terrorist act, or act of God, which directly affects the traveler's home at the official duty station or his/her immediate family and occurs while the traveler is at or en route to or from a temporary duty location. In this scenario, a traveler may be reimbursed (via post-trip approval) for a personal call to a party beyond those stipulated in 5.F.1, who is relevant to the personal emergency, such as a family physician or school official. When personal emergencies occur, the approving official may approve a higher amount than standard reimbursement policy limitation when the following requirements are met:

   a. Government-provided long distance telephone systems and services are not available, so that a commercial toll service must be used;

   b. A justification for a higher personal telephone expense allowance is documented on the approved travel voucher; and/or

   c. Receipts are submitted for all charges, to the extent that the calls were placed through a method that provides a receipt.

      Travelers should make personal calls during lunch, break or other off-duty periods, if at all possible. To the maximum extent possible, travelers should place calls on government-provided long distance telephone systems and services instead of using commercial toll services in accordance with the FDA policies.

G. **ATM Fees**

Certain fees associated with ATM withdrawals may be reimbursed by an employee's OpDiv/StaffDiv according to their policy. These fees include but are not limited to:

1. ATM Fees for Full-Time Employees (FTE) who do not have an IBA per the HHS Travel Charge Card policy (see Section 10.2, Mandatory Use of Government Contractor-Issued Travel Charge Card);

2. When a travel charge card cannot be used due to the merchant code not being allowed.

   ATM Fees are not reimbursable when they are incurred withdrawing an advance that was direct deposited via an electronic funds transfer (EFT).These fees are considered a personal expense.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

The primary roles and responsibilities for the policy directives and required procedures within this chapter are as follows:

A. Responsibilities of the Center/Office Designated Approving Official

1. Review and approve the travel authorization including the traveler's request and justification to incur miscellaneous expenses

B. Responsibilities of the Traveler

1. Select which miscellaneous expenses they expect to incur and provide justification for those miscellaneous expenses on their travel authorization request

2. Provide receipts for all miscellaneous expenses with the travel voucher $75 and greater.

3. Provide receipts for all miscellaneous expenses with the travel voucher under $75 as requested by the AOPC.

7. PROCEDURES.

Reimbursement of miscellaneous expenses is authorized for official domestic or foreign travel incurring a minimum of one night's lodging. Reimbursement is authorized for laundry expenses incurred while on official travel inside the continental United States (CONUS) for at least four consecutive nights. Each type of miscellaneous expense will be reported as a separate line item on the travel authorization request and needs to be pre-approved by the Traveler's Center/Office Designated Approving Official. Travelers must provide a receipt for all miscellaneous expenses $75 and greater. Travelers may be required to provide receipts under $75 on a case-by-case basis at the request of the AOPC.

A. **Review and Approval Process**

Prior to travel, the traveler selects which miscellaneous expenses he/she expects to incur and provide justification for those miscellaneous expenses on their travel authorization request. Each Center/Office Designated Approving Official approves the travel authorization in Concur Government Edition (ConcurGov) , including their request and justification to incur miscellaneous expenses. All baggage fees must be pre-approved except for charges or tips at transportation terminals for handling Government property carried by the traveler. Internet fees must be pre-approved via a travel authorization that includes justification for incurring the fees.

Within five (5) working days of the completion of the official business trip, the traveler must submit their voucher claim via the ConcurGov system. If a traveler is on long-term temporary duty travel greater than 30 nights or more, a voucher must be submitted at a minimum of every 30 days.

The Center/Office Designated Approving Official will review and approve the voucher and supporting receipts for incurred miscellaneous expenses. If authorization was not received prior to travel for internet fees, the Center/Office Designated Approving Official has the discretion to approve these fees given proper justification, including why it was not requested in advance on the travel authorization.

B. **Documentation Required for Miscellaneous Expense Requests**

In the travel authorization, travelers select which miscellaneous expenses they expect to incur and provide justification for those miscellaneous expenses. Travelers need to provide receipts in their travel voucher for every miscellaneous expense $75 and greater and below $75 as requested by the AOPC. If a traveler incurs cost for personal calls under FDA policy, the traveler must provide a receipt for those costs claimed on his/her travel voucher. Travelers must sign a certification to accompany the receipt(s), stating that the entire claimed expense was incurred for telephone calls permissible under the FDA rules.

8. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This guide was signed by Peter Kelchner, Acting Director – Office of Financial Management, effective September 6, 2016.

9. Document History - SMG 2343.2, Miscellaneous Expenses While On Official Government Travel

STATUS (I, R, C)	DATE APPROVED	LOCATION OF CHANGE HISTORY	CONTACT	APPROVING OFFICIAL
Initial	09/16/2008	N/a	OC/OO/ OM/OFM	John P. Gentile, Associate Commissioner for Operations
Revision	09/06/2016	N/a	OC/OO/ OFBA/OFM	Peter Kelchner, Acting Director, OFM

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