



Federal Travel Regulation
GSA Bulletin FTR 24-02

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Sustainable Transportation for Official Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel

1. What is the purpose of this bulletin? This bulletin clarifies existing regulations for determining the method of transportation that is most advantageous to the Government and encourages Federal travelers to make sustainable, cost-effective transportation choices when conducting official TDY travel.

2. What is the background of this bulletin? The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum M-24-05 “Catalyzing Sustainable Transportation Through Federal Travel” (issued December 14, 2023) provides guidance for implementing Executive Order (E.O.) 14057, *Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs through Federal Sustainability*. OMB Memo M-24-05 directs Federal agencies to prioritize sustainable transportation options for official travel and lead by example as an organization working toward net-zero emissions operations by 2050.

The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) already encourages measures that promote sustainability, but the transition to clean energy provides additional opportunities for Federal travelers to support sustainable initiatives through the use of clean technologies. Title 5 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) § 5733 states in part that “[t]he travel of an employee shall be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable,” which the FTR expands upon by directing agencies to select the method of transportation that is most advantageous to the Government when cost and other factors are considered. Energy conservation is an element of sustainability and is one of several non-cost elements required to be considered by agencies when selecting the most advantageous method of transportation (FTR §§ 301-10.4, 301-70.100, and 301-70.101).

3. How can agencies reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions resulting from official TDY travel? In every case, the trip not taken is the least expensive and most sustainable. With new communication tools available to agencies, Federal employees are encouraged to consider virtual attendance at a meeting or conference. If official travel is necessary, agencies are encouraged to implement the following practices for determining the method of transportation that is most advantageous to the Government:

a. Rail. Using rail, particularly when the train uses electric locomotives rather than diesel, results in a lower GHG emissions per passenger mile ratio than other methods of transportation, particularly when going shorter distances.¹ Specifically, when traveling in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions of the United States, and in countries where regional or international rail is available and is time and cost effective (e.g., in parts of Europe and Asia), employees should be encouraged to consider rail options, especially for city pairs less than 250 miles apart. Cost effective rail transportation is one of the exceptions to the required use of a contract City Pair Program fare (FTR § 301-10.111).

b. Government-furnished automobile. The Government has invested in replacing internal combustion engine vehicles with zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs), which should be used to the maximum extent practicable where available and where adequate charging infrastructure is likely to be available en route or at the destination.

c. Rental vehicle. Based on FTR § 301-10.450(c)(3), if authorized to use a rental car on official travel, employees are authorized to rent a ZEV when the daily rental rate is equal to or less than the daily rental rate of the least expensive compact car available. If another class of rental vehicle is approved, travelers should select a ZEV where the daily rental rate is equal to or less than the rental rate of the least expensive car of the approved class of vehicle. If no ZEVs are available that meet the above criteria, consider renting a hybrid vehicle if the daily rental rate is equal to or less than the daily rental rate of the least expensive compact car available or less than the rental rate of the least expensive car of the approved class of vehicle. If no alternatively fueled vehicles are available that meet the above criteria, employees should choose the least expensive compact car available. Agencies may authorize a larger rental vehicle to accommodate multiple travelers authorized to travel together rather than authorizing a smaller rental vehicle for each of the travelers (FTR § 301-10.450(c)(4)). Employees are also authorized to have alternative fuel charging expenses reimbursed as “fuel,” which is defined in FTR § 300-3.1 as “[t]he energy source needed to power a vehicle,” and includes “petroleum, hydrogen, propane, and electricity.”

d. Privately owned vehicle (POV). Even before people were fully aware of the impact GHG emissions have on climate change, the Federal Government rarely considered POVs to be the most advantageous method of transportation. Now that the impact of GHG emissions is better known, taking steps to limit POV use, which accounts for more than half of GHG emissions from the transportation sector,² is even more urgent.

¹ See “Travel Green With Amtrak” for more information:
<https://www.amtrak.com/about-amtrak/sustainability/travel-green.html>

² Source: <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions#transportation>

e. Combine trips. Whenever possible and geographically reasonable, when agencies determine that travel is necessary and the mission takes the traveler to multiple/consecutive TDY points, agencies should consider scheduling a single trip with multiple legs or segments, instead of returning the traveler to their official duty station and conducting individual trips to each destination.

4. What strategies should employees use to act in a more sustainable manner once they arrive at the TDY location?

a. Public transportation. Public transportation should be the first option for transportation in and around the TDY location. Travelers should be familiar with subway/trains and bus routes that are available between meetings, lodging, and other locations at which business is to be conducted. When available, employees should use public buses that use alternative fuels, such as electricity or compressed natural gas, rather than gasoline or diesel to reduce GHG emissions.

b. Rental car. If employees are authorized to rent a car after arriving at the TDY location, the same guidelines for rental car choice as noted in 3(c) above should be followed. Depending on the TDY location, however, other forms of transportation may be more appropriate to use.

c. Environmentally friendly transportation network company (TNC), taxicabs, and innovative mobility technology companies (IMTC). Employees should select a ZEV if one is available from a TNC (e.g., Uber, Lyft) and taxicabs, as opposed to gasoline-fueled vehicles. If a ZEV TNC or taxicab is not available, employees should select a hybrid taxicab or TNC. If none are available, employees should select a vehicle with the highest fuel efficiency. Employees may also use IMTC options such as bike shares when available and compatible with mission needs.

d. Ridesharing. Share the ride with fellow employees. Ridesharing can include either larger TNC vehicles, taxis, or shuttle services between airports, hotels, and conferences, or meetings.

5. What is the effective date of this bulletin? This bulletin is applicable upon the date of signature.

6. When does this bulletin expire? This bulletin will remain in effect until explicitly canceled or superseded.

7. Whom should I contact for further information regarding this bulletin? Contact Ms. Jill Denning, Office of Government-wide Policy at 202-208-7642, or by email at travelpolicy@gsa.gov. Please cite GSA FTR Bulletin 24-02.

By delegation of the Administrator of General Services,

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