

POINT PAPER

Subj: USE OF FREQUENT FLYER PROGRAMS BY DOD MEMBERS ON  
OFFICIAL TRAVEL

1. The following applies to the use of frequent flyer programs by DOD members on official travel:

a. General. Travelers on official business traveling at Government expense, to include dependents and other persons on invitational travel orders, may now keep promotional items for personal use. Promotional items include frequent traveler benefits such as points or miles, upgrades, or access to carrier clubs or facilities. This change applies to promotional items received before, on, or after 31 Dec 01, provided: (1) the promotional items were/are obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and (2) they were/are obtained at no additional cost to the Government. (See Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee Memorandum of 31 December 2001 implementing changes authorized by Section 1116, FY02 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)).

b. Seat Relinquishing.

(1) Voluntary. A traveler may keep payments from a carrier for voluntarily vacating a transportation seat. Additional travel expenses because of voluntary "bumping" are traveler's financial responsibility.

(2) Involuntary. If a traveler is involuntarily "bumped", the traveler enters "awaiting transportation" status and is entitled to per diem and miscellaneous expense reimbursement. Any monetary compensation (meals, etc.) belongs to government. (See 59 Comp. Gen. 203.)

c. Class of Travel.

(1) Coach class will be utilized on all commercial carriers for official business; therefore, official reservations will be confirmed in sufficient time to obtain coach class accommodations.

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(2) Business-class travel. DoDD 4500.9, OPNAVINST 4610.8E, and the JFTR section U3125, state that, with limited exceptions DoD members must use coach class for official travel. Travel on business class, other than first class, is authorized under the following:

(a) When regularly scheduled flights between the authorized origin and destination points (including connection points) provide only business-class accommodations,

(b) When no space is available in coach class on any scheduled flight in time to accomplish the purpose of the official travel, which by its urgency cannot be postponed,

(c) When necessary to accommodate a traveler's disability/physical impairment, if the doctor substantiates condition in writing,

(d) When required for security purposes,

(e) When accommodations would result in overall savings,

(f) When obtained as an accommodations upgrade through the redemption of frequent traveler benefits. (When there are only two classes of service on a commercial aircraft, business class will be deemed first class.)

(g) When for overseas travel coach class is not available and foreign carrier is only alternative.

(3) First-class travel. DoDD 4500.9 states that first-class travel shall be used only when exceptional circumstances dictate and as approved, IN ADVANCE, by appropriate authority. First-class travel be may be appropriate under the following:

(a) Security or operational necessity;

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(b) Medical requirements validated by a physician in charge dictate the need for first-class accommodations.

(c) Travelers will not use first-class accommodations unless there is no reasonably available alternative. (When there are only two classes of service on a commercial aircraft, premium/business class will be deemed to be first class.)

2. Questions regarding first-class travel restrictions or frequent flyer programs should be forwarded to the Passenger Supervisor at TMO, 784-2835 or 784-2836.