

Summer 2021

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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



Summer is in full swing and my first few months as the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) Director have kept me busy. Let me start my message with a bit of exciting news. As you'll read inside, this month we resumed travel operations in the Defense Travel Modernization (DTM) prototype. Then, on July 20, 2021, we received Authority to Proceed to the next phase of this critical DoD reform initiative. Modernization has been a long road and we still have many miles to go, but this is an important and impressive milestone. We should have even more exciting news to report shortly.

In June, travel in DTS increased 148 percent over June of last year and Government Travel Charge Card spend is making similar gains. DoD travel is making a comeback, but we continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on travel and the threat of new variants, especially the well-publicized delta variant. Inside this issue you can read about the rapidly changing COVID-19 travel environment, including the impact on the rental car industry and how your next hotel stay may be a little different. Responding to the pandemic has strengthened our relationships with the travel industry. We are optimistically looking forward to reconnecting in-person with our industry partners and many of you at GovTravels 2022. We have selected our theme: *"Rebound. Reconnect. Reimagine."* Planning is well underway for this vital stakeholder engagement event scheduled for Monday, February 28 – Thursday, March 3, returning to the Hilton Mark Center, Alexandria, VA. There's more GovTravels information inside, along with other noteworthy DoD travel news.

Rebound. Reconnect. Reimagine.

In Mr. Mansell's final message as DTMO Director he mentioned the Defense Human Resources Activity reorganization and the establishment of the Defense Support Services Center (DSSC), under which the DTMO directorate is now organized. As he stated, these changes are largely transparent to you. In fact, you probably haven't even noticed. As Mr. Mansell works to establish his DSSC front office staff and shape this new organization, we will keep him fully engaged in the business of our travel enterprise. You can look forward to seeing him again at GovTravels.

I am grateful for this opportunity to lead the DTMO and our dedicated staff and there is always much work to do. I thank you for your support and look forward to working with you as we continue to pursue our strategic goals and bring effective and efficient travel management to the DoD travel enterprise.

The Rapidly Changing COVID-19 Travel Environment

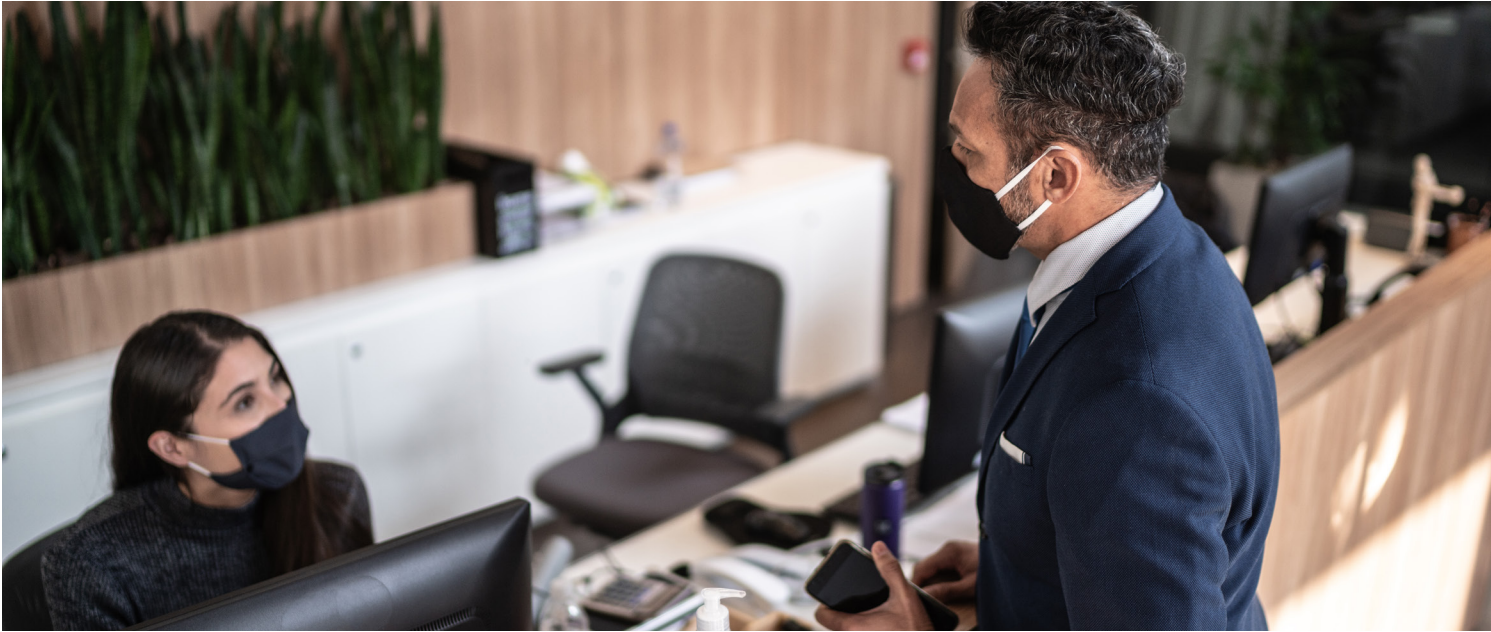


As DoD travelers are getting vaccinated for COVID-19 in ever-increasing percentages, and as installations, offices, and businesses lift mask requirements to open to pre-pandemic operations, travelers are starting to feel as if things are getting back to normal. While local health protection condition (HPCON) levels have been reduced at most local installations, Dr. Terry Adirim, the Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) for Health Affairs, has warned that the delta variant is affecting our return to normal. With the delta variant driving concern, country entry requirements across the globe may continue to change as well as air carrier, hotel, and rental car company rules. It is important for travelers to keep up with the pandemic

requirements governing your travel as rules and procedures can change without notice. Here is a list of resources to help:

- [Department of State COVID-19 Country Specific Information](#) – Review entry and transit COVID-19 testing and exposure requirements. Destinations may require testing, preregistration, and/or mandatory quarantine upon arrival. Be sure to check all the countries through which you may transit during your trip.
- [COVID-19 Travel and Transportation Allowances Questions and Answers](#) – Travelers with extensive itineraries or unexpected transit delays may find that they require a second negative test if their transit extends beyond three days, so that contingency should be taken into account. 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](#) – Stay abreast of the latest guidance impacting official travel.
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) – Learn what the CDC recommends if you have to travel.

Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) requires all air passengers arriving in the United States from a foreign country to be tested no more than 3 days before their flight departure and provide proof of the negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 within the last 90 days. Airlines are required to check passenger documentation and will deny boarding to those who fail to provide required documentation clearing them for travel. This means that travelers are required to get tested before travel and provide proof of a negative test, or show proof of a recent positive viral test and provide a letter from a healthcare provider or a public health official stating they are clear to travel. Exceptions apply for U.S. service members on official orders, provided the authority ordering the travel requires precautions to prevent the possible transmission of infection during travel in accordance with CDC guidance. Check with your local travel office for guidance.



What Can You Expect During Your Next Hotel Stay?

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, travelers became aware of the new standard hotel experience which became a norm for hotel guests worldwide: mandatory mask usage outside of one's own room, social distancing, limited housekeeping, restrictions to the number of passengers in elevators, significant changes to food and beverage offerings, and much more. Now that a majority of Americans are fully vaccinated, those restrictions are shifting, and the typical hotel experience is not as uniform. COVID-19 protocols now vary from one brand to another, from one hotel to another within the same brand, and from one locale to another.

Earlier this year, all major hotel brands aligned their mask requirements to match updated guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Just a few days ago, the general standard was that hotel guests and employees who are two weeks past being fully vaccinated were no longer required to wear masks anywhere in the hotel. Mask usage and the maintenance of six feet social distancing was, and still is, a requirement for non-fully-vaccinated patrons and employees. It is unclear how hotels will shift their mask requirements to match recent CDC guidance that masks be worn indoors even for those

that are vaccinated. Note that although a brand may not require usage for eligible guests, local restrictions may be more stringent, so check with the hotel prior to arrival for their specific rules.

There are other areas of shifting norms as well. Since the start of the pandemic, for example, we've gotten accustomed to limited housekeeping. In fact, daily laundered sheets and towels may now be a standard amenity of the past as many hotel brands rethink their policies and operations, but in different ways.

Hilton Hotels announced this summer that housekeeping will now be an optional service across its U.S. based non-luxury properties. Housekeeping will be performed only when requested by a guest during their trip. For those staying at an extended stay property, housekeeping services will be scheduled automatically on the fifth day. Most other brands limited housekeeping at the start of the pandemic as well, and some others have signaled that they may make the limited service permanent as well.

This may not be as onerous for travelers as it sounds. Recent polling indicates that fully two-thirds of travelers expressed a preference for limited housekeeping. These longer-term changes may coincide with guest

preferences to limit interactions with staff, but the shift is also influenced by a growing labor shortage within the hospitality industry. According to an April 2021 jobs report from [Tourism Economics](#), leisure and hospitality employment remains 17 percent below February 2020 levels. This is six percentage points more than the next most hard-hit industry. Brands are shifting staff resources to allow them to be as productive as possible while still being able to ensure traveler safety as a top priority.

Nearly two-thirds of guests surveyed in August 2020 did not want daily housekeeping, according to a [poll conducted by Morning Consult](#) on behalf of the American Hotel & Lodging Association.

One other area in which there are noticeable differences is in hotel food and beverage. While buffets are slowly being reinstated in some breakfast rooms, grab & go and other pre-packaged breakfast options are now available more broadly than prior to the pandemic. Room service orders are now often left outside the door rather than brought into the room by staff. And hotels are finding innovative ways to provide bar service. As travelers gain acceptance of, indeed develop a preference for, some of these innovations and changes, the hotel industry will, in turn, adopt many of them on a more permanent basis.

One thing remains true across the board – the way we experience hotels has changed for good. Some pre-pandemic norms will eventually appear again, but many will not. Staffing limitations, service delivery innovations, and a more conscious understanding that many travelers have heightened personal space and safety concerns, are all combining to change the hotel experience on a long-term basis. And travelers, with a new level of health consciousness, are likely to accept and embrace many of those changes.

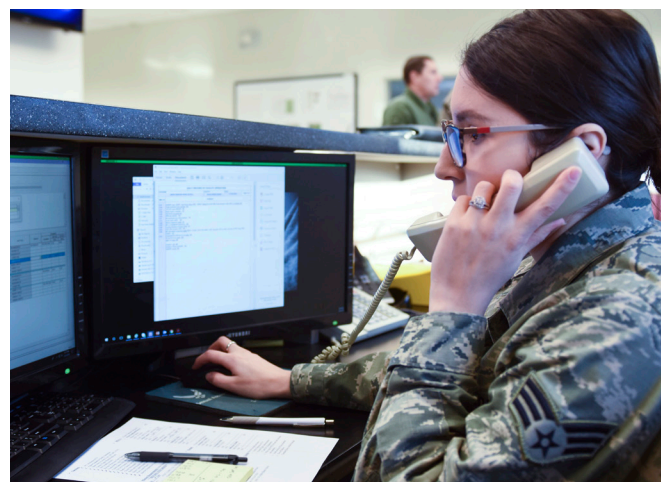
What's New with Defense Travel Modernization

On July 20, 2021, Mr. Christopher O'Donnell, Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, granted Authority to Proceed to the acquisition, testing, and deployment phase of the Defense Travel Modernization (DTM) program. Mr. O'Donnell, the Milestone Decision Authority for DTM, directed that the Defense Human Resources Activity (DHRA) provide his office a program update in one year to review program status, to include the progress of Military Department implementation and integration with their financial systems.

Travel operations in the DTM prototype resumed this month and the DHRA team is now focused on onboarding the remaining Fourth Estate organizations that use the Defense Agencies Initiative financial system. The team is implementing DTM using Agile processes to enhance functionality, incorporate additional travel types, and integrate with the Military Departments financial systems.

DTM uses a commercial Software as a Service (SaaS) to book travel, manage travel related expenses, and initiate travel-related financial transactions. It will

provide DoD with an 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 Authority to Proceed is a critical milestone. Stay tuned for more exciting news to come.





Rental Car Shortage Felt by Defense Travelers

Earlier this summer, the Rental Car Subcommittee of the National Defense Transportation (NDTA)'s Passenger Travel Advisory Council notified the Defense Travel Management Office that rental car industry efforts to restore their fleets to pre-pandemic levels have been hindered by the impact of a microchip shortage that has affected automakers' ability to meet current car production demand. This reality was echoed by industry partners that participate in the U.S. Rental Car program, which offers reduced rates and special benefits for rental cars to federal government employees and service members traveling on official business.

In response to this rental car supply shortage, the Defense Travel Management Office granted the rental car industry a temporary waiver to U.S. Government Rental Car Program policy that requires participating vendors to offer vehicles that are no more than 2 years old and have less than 20,000 miles. Under the waiver, vendors may offer vehicles that are up to 4 years old and have up to 60,000 miles. This will allow the rental car industry to extend the life cycle of vehicles currently in industry fleets. Rental Car partners have pledged to closely monitor the quality and overall maintenance of

vehicle with extended life cycles to ensure continued customer satisfaction, safety, and security.

Even though rental car companies have extended life cycle of cars, it doesn't mean that there still isn't a shortage of available rentals as leisure travel has surged over the summer months. We strongly recommend travelers take the following measures when considering a rental car for official travel:

- **Book travel as early as possible.** Early booking means it is more likely you will have rental car availability and widest selection (if you require and are approved for something other than economy class). Don't wait until the week before you expect to travel or expect to book a vehicle on the spot – there just isn't that much inventory.
- **Sign up for the U.S. Government Frequent Renter Program to by-pass the rental counter.** A shortage of cars coupled with increased travel means that lines at rental car counters are often long. Do yourself a favor and sign up for the programs to skip that line and go right to your car. To register, go to <https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rentalCarFRP.cfm>

- **Consider alternatives to renting a vehicle where practical.** Joint Travel Regulations paragraphs 020212 and 020213 and Federal Travel Regulation §301-10.420 allow travelers, when authorized or approved, to be reimbursed for public transit system fares, taxi fares, and use of transportation network companies like, Uber or Lyft (note that cancellation fees and penalties charged by transportation network companies are not reimbursable).

Until the microchip shortage is resolved and the car industry can recover, rental cars will continue to be in short supply.

Mark Your Calendars for GovTravels 2022



The National Defense Transportation Association (NDTA) in partnership with the Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) is pleased to announce that the 2022 GovTravels symposium will take place on Monday, February 28 through

Thursday, March 3, 2022 at the Hilton Mark Center in Alexandria, Virginia. NDTA is currently planning for an in-person event, but can shift to a virtual event if the pandemic situation warrants it over the next few months.

For the past five years, the Defense Travel Management Office has co-sponsored the GovTravels symposium and the tradition continues again in 2022. This year's event is centered around the theme, **Rebound. Reconnect. Reimagine.** "It will be hard to navigate away from talking about the impact and response to the pandemic but we want to shift the focus to talking about the way ahead – how the travel industry is working its way back from a downturn, how it is reconnecting and better engaging with travelers and how the pandemic is spurring innovation and a 'reimagining' of the travel landscape on both the government and industry side," said Phil Benjamin, the Director of the Defense Travel Management Office.



Exhibit hall at the 2020 GovTravels Symposium.

NDTA, together with DTMO and GSA, are working to finalize the agenda, but attendees can expect noteworthy keynote speakers from government and industry and general session government-industry panels. Returning this year is the popular Travel Academy, breakout sessions aligned to several "themed" tracks that will accommodate a variety of interests, as well as DoD Connect, where government stakeholders hear directly from the DTMO Director and his leadership team.

Registration for GovTravels 2022 opens in September. For more information, visit The National Defense Transportation Association's (NDTA) ["Events & National Meetings" page](#).



Relax. You've got TSA PreCheck®

Who's ready to get out of the house? Summer is here and travel is gradually returning to normal. Whether you're traveling on official business or for a leisure, make your travel experience smoother and faster by using the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) PreCheck lanes at the airport. TSA PreCheck is free for DoD civilians and service members, including Reservists, National Guardsmen, members of the Coast Guard, and students at the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Here's why you should use TSA PreCheck:

- No need to remove your shoes, belt, or light jacket
- No need to remove laptops or your bag of 3-1-1 liquids (3.4 ounces or less)
- 97% of TSA PreCheck passengers waited less than 5 minutes [June 2021]
- Children 12 and under can join a parent/guardian with TSA PreCheck



- It's available at more than 200 airports with 80 participating airlines nationwide

Service members are automatically enrolled but DoD Civilians must enroll to receive access to TSA Precheck. When you book your flight, enter your Department of Defense (DoD) ID number as the "known traveler number." That's the 10-digit number on the back of your common access card or CAC. Save your DoD ID number in your travel system profile to make sure you're always signed up for the program when on official travel.

For more information, see the [TSA PreCheck for Active Duty Military and DoD Civilians FAQs](#).

TSA Extends REAL ID Deadline

The Transportation Security Administration has extended its October 1, 2021 Real ID requirement deadline. Now, starting May 3, 2023, every air traveler 18 years of age and older will need a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, state-issued enhanced

driver's license, U.S. Passport or passport card, or another acceptable form of ID to present at the passenger security checkpoint in order to fly within the U.S. ID acceptance is at the discretion of the TSA Officer at the security checkpoint.



Sample REAL ID driver's license - look for the star, which may be in different colors and designs depending on your state.

You can get a REAL ID from your state driver's licensing agency. The state website will define what documentation is required. At a minimum, you must provide documentation showing: 1) Full Legal Name; 2) Date of Birth; 3) Social Security Number; 4) Two Proofs of Address of Principal Residence; and 5) Lawful Status.

Helpful resources

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about REAL ID
- TSA: www.tsa.gov/real-id, call 866-289-9673 or @askTSA
- DHS: www.dhs.gov/real-id or email REALID@hq.dhs.gov

Dining Traveler Rewards – Too Good to Be True?

Is the new DoD Dine Smart Travel Rewards program too good to be true? It is! Sign up to earn rewards points that can be redeemed for gift cards to retailers (like Target and Amazon) or restaurants (like Outback and Jersey Mike's) just for using your travel card when dining on official travel.

DTMO has partnered with Dinova, a dining network with restaurant relationships throughout the United States, to offer DoD Dine Smart to DOD travelers.



No need to submit receipts, or present IDs or coupons. DoD Dine Smart Traveler Rewards are tracked automatically based on your travel card charges. It's that easy, and it only takes two minutes to enroll. Sign up today!



ENROLL

Sign up for DoD Dine Smart Traveler Rewards at dod.dinova.com



SEARCH

When you're on official travel, use the Dinova mobile app (DISA-approved for DoD mobile devices) to search the 18,000+ participating restaurant locations (you can filter by type of food, location, and even by restaurant safety protocols)



DINE+CHARGE

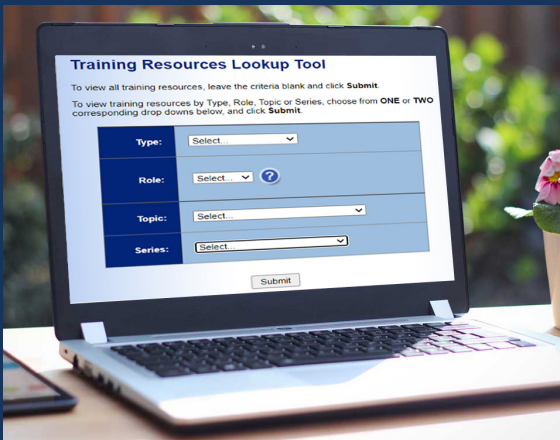
Enjoy your meal and use your Government Travel Charge Card to pay – all TDY meals at Dinova restaurants count



EARN

Get one point for every dollar you spend, including food, beverages, tax, and tip!

Need to Brush Up on Your Travel Training?



Are you resuming official travel? It may be time to brush up on your skills and the easiest way to do that is to use our [Training Resources Lookup Tool](#). Search by topic, series, role, or type to find helpful travel training resources and reference materials.

GSA Announces FY22 City Pair Fares



The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) recently announced the award of the Fiscal Year 2022 City Pair Program contracts, which sets airfares for the coming year for commonly traveled federal traveler routes. In addition to offering considerable discounts, City Pair Program fares allow the federal government maximum flexibility and includes benefits such as, no cancellation or change fees, last seat availability, and no blackout dates.

This year, the City Pair Program offers a 49.8% discount on comparable commercial fares. Contracts were awarded to eight airlines, Alaska Airlines, American, Delta, Hawaiian Airlines, JetBlue, Silver Airways, Southwest, and United, and covers 91.7 percent of government markets.

The FY22 program also includes:

- 2,698 markets awarded with non-stop service. City Pair Program solicited all eligible non-stop service markets traveled by government travelers awarding 95.5%.
- Over 92 percent of all route awards have two discounted fares, which provide flexibility for immediate travel and more deeply discounted fares for booking flights early.

This City Pair Program contract award represents one of the largest government-wide contracts awarded by GSA each year, and it's the single largest strategically sourced procurement for negotiated airfares in the world. Leveraging the government's buying power, the City Pair Program is projected to save the federal government an estimated \$1.1 billion in FY 2022.

DTMO Launches Updated Carrier Movement Reporting Tool

In June, the Defense Travel Management Office launched an updated version of the Carrier Movement Reporting (CMR) Tool, the application that bus carriers use to report monthly data. The new tool streamlines how carriers submit their mandatory, monthly data reports, making the process easier and more intuitive. This data is key to effective program management.

To help carriers navigate the updated tool, a new CMR Tool User Guide is available at https://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/CMR_Users_Guide.pdf. Additionally, a series of training videos on how to operate the new CMR tool is located on our [“DoD Bus Program: For Carriers” YouTube playlist](#).



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