**24b. STAFF TRAVEL PROCEDURES**

Updated 9/30/2018

The USSEC Logistic Specialist’s (LS), is responsible for all international travel arrangements for USSEC staff. This includes the intra-country and Inter-regional legs of that travel in most cases. In some cases, the Regional office will book the intra-country leg but you need to confirm with the Regional office.

To begin trip preparations, a travel authorization form (TA) should be completed, approved and signed according to USSEC’s Delegation of Authority Matrix. If a group travel authorization is prepared, it is the is the traveler’s responsibility to confirm the project number is listed correctly on the group form. All travel authorizations must be approved prior to submission to logistics and must reflect the proper project number to charge against. Upon completion of the form, the form should be sent to [travel@ussec.org](mailto:travel@ussec.org) for a travel authorization number assignment. The TA will be returned to the traveler upon assignment of the authorization number.

Domestic travel is arranged on concur by the traveler. The itinerary will automatically be ticketed on the Logistic Specialist’s credit card and emailed to the USSEC travel email box.

International travel is arranged by the USSEC Logistic Specialist Team. By contacting American Express travel or a dedicated agent via email at [executivetravel@trvlnk.com](mailto:executivetravel@trvlnk.com) . Utilizing the Travel form located at **Q:\Marketing\Forms\American Express Travel Form**. All airfare is charged to the USSEC Logistic Specialist’s American Express or Diners corporate card.

A tentative itinerary is emailed to the USSEC travel desk at [Travel@ussec.org](mailto:Travel@ussec.org) and the Logistics Specialist. The airline ticket will not be issued until approval is received by the traveler. The LS will review the itinerary for compliance. Once approval is received, the LS advises the travel agent to issue the ticket. Electronic ticket/receipts will be emailed to USSEC travel email at [Travel@ussec.org](mailto:Travel@ussec.org). If the traveler has a profile, the invoice will be emailed to the traveler and LS.

**Guidelines:**

* Domestic travel must be purchased **14 calendar** days prior to the traveler’s departure date.
* International travel must be purchased **30 calendar** days prior to the traveler’s departure date.
* If tickets are not purchased within these guidelines a **14**/**30 calendar day** Exception Memo of Justification is required prior to purchase which is located at Q:\Projects\Resources\Templates & Forms\ Exception Memo Templates and approved according to USSEC’s Delegation of Authority Matrix. The traveler is responsible for his/her memo. A ticket may not be purchased prior to receiving approval.
  + For Domestic Airline travel purchases, an exception memo can be authorized on days 7 – 13. Airline tickets that are purchased 1-6 days prior to travel are not compliant and will not be reimbursed by USSEC as this would be considered a non-compliant expense to our funding partners.
  + For International Airline travel purchases, an exception memo can be authorized on days 14 – 29. Airline tickets that are purchased 1- 13 days prior to travel are not compliant and will not be reimbursed by USSEC as this would be consider a non-compliant expense to our funding partners.
* A traveler should never be booked in First Class unless it is a complimentary upgrade which must be noted on the invoice. Always book airfare according to restrictions imposed by the funding source.

**Funding Sources**:

**USB** funded travel allows business class if scheduled travel time including up to two hours of layover exceeds eight hours. Flights on foreign air carriers are allowed if flights on an American Flag carrier are cost prohibitive. Restricted to lowest economy cost for travel less than eight hours.

**FMD** funded travel allows business class if scheduled travel time includes up to four hours of layover exceeds 14 hours and the origin and/or destination are outside the US. US travel is not permitted. All flights must be on an American or European Flag carrier for flights that begin and end in the US. Restricted to non-refundable economy cost for international travel of 14 hours or less. U.S. travel is permitted for teams.

**MAP** funded travel must be on an American Flag carrier or European Flag Carrier when the flights begin and/or end in the U.S.  MAP funded travel is restricted to coach class unless the scheduled travel exceeds 14 hours beginning with the scheduled departure time, ending with the scheduled arrival time (maximum four hours layover), **AND** prior **approval from FAS** is granted prior to the purchase of the ticket.   In order to obtain the approval from FAS send an email request to Cheryl Huson ([chuson@ussec.org](mailto:chuson@ussec.org)) that includes a strong justification.  The request will be forwarded to FAS.

**EMP** funded travel is restricted to coach class regardless of scheduled travel time.  All flights must be on an American Flag carrier or European Flag carrier. U.S. only travel is not permitted.

U.S. only travel is not permitted with the exception of one escort of a foreign trade mission.  **One** home office employee **OR** one state department of agriculture employee **OR** one board member may accompany foreign trade missions and technical teams while traveling in the United States.

**The following documentation is necessary for all business class travel:**

Itinerary must show both the fully refundable and non-refundable (if applicable) business class cost and coach on the business class itinerary. Itineraries are maintained in the files with all other necessary information.

* The ticket price must be lower than the maximum cost of airline ticket on the travel authorization form.
* Lowest airfare either business or economy must be purchased.
* Travel must be by a direct or usually traveled route.

All airline charges made by the LS are charged to their American Express Corporate credit card or Diners card. Any changes made in route are to be paid for by the traveler.

**Hotels:**

Hotels rates should not exceed the allowable per diem rates. There may be occasions when the actual lodging expense is greater than the published per diem lodging rate and an Over Per Diem Exception Memo is required. This can occur for many reasons: costs increases due to local special events, limited availability, the event is held in the hotel in which the traveler would like to stay, exchange rate fluctuations, etc. If the hotel rate exceeds the per diem rate, then an exception memo is required which is located at Q:\Projects\Resources\Templates & Forms\Exception Memo Templates and is approved according to the USSEC Delegation of Authority Matrix. The memo should accommodate the Travel Authorization Form. The traveler is responsible for his/her own memo. Please note that No-Show lodging expenses are not reimbursable.

**Passports and Visas:**

Passport application/renewal forms can be obtained/processed at certain US post offices or by following the country specific instructions found at [www.traveldocs.com](http://www.traveldocs.com).

Work must begin on the visa application(s) immediately, as some require more time to process than others. Verify with Country Office (region) to determine whether a visas/letter of invitation are needed and, if so, to obtain the most current visa application requirements and form(s).