

**TRAVEL POLICY OF THE
CONSORTIUM FOR OCEAN
LEADERSHIP**

EFFECTIVE February 1, 2013

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TRAVEL POLICY CONSORTIUM FOR OCEAN LEADERSHIP

Mission Statement

Ocean Leadership's policy is to provide travelers with arrangements conducive to the efficient operation of the organization and helpful for the comfort and effectiveness of the traveler. It is Ocean Leadership's responsibility to provide timely, meaningful and accurate information to assist the traveler and process reimbursements in a timely manner, consistent with client and government regulations. It is the responsibility of the traveler to obtain proper authorization, to maintain proper documentation of expenses, and to apply promptly for reimbursement.

Travel Authorization

For Ocean Leadership Employees:

All travel for which expenses are to be paid requires advance approval. To obtain advance approval, Ocean Leadership employees must submit a travel authorization request on-line at https://site20.data-basics.net/ocean/te_start.jsp. This process involves making an estimate of travel expenses. The estimate is an estimate only and does not entitle the traveler to be reimbursed for the total of the estimate – reimbursements are based on actual expenses. The travel authorization is first approved (electronically) by the employee's immediate supervisor or program manager and then forwarded (electronically) to the chief financial officer for verification and approval.

For non-Ocean Leadership Employees:

Travel authorization requests for non-Ocean Leadership employees will be prepared by the appropriate Program Assistant/Associate and approved by the Program Director or Manager and Chief Financial Officer (or designee). Requests should be made using the Group Travel Authorization Form to include traveler names, cost code centers, total estimated travel budget, dates of meeting or travel, and meeting agenda or purpose.

Travelers who attend meetings arranged through the Ocean Leadership Travel Office will receive a travel notice via e-mail to include the meeting announcement and instructions for filing expense reimbursements online.

Travel Advances

Travelers may request an advance of funds by submitting a Travel Advance Request. In cases where the Travel Office has pre-arranged air travel and hotel accommodation, leaving only ground transportation and occasional meal expenses, Travel Advance Requests may not be granted. The standard travel advance is based on a per diem rate that covers the expense of lodging (when not billed directly to Ocean Leadership), meals, and incidentals, consistent with the guidelines described in The Reimbursement of Travel Expenses section. Additional advance funds airline tickets and other reimbursable travel expenses may be requested.

To ensure timely processing, a travel advance request should be submitted to the Travel Office at least two weeks prior to commencement of travel. A check will be mailed to the traveler no sooner than thirty (30) days in advance of the meeting's start date. Advances must be identified on the Travel Expense Report (TER).

Reimbursement of Travel Expenses – General

Claims for reimbursement of expenses incurred should be submitted on-line to the Ocean Leadership website (https://site20.data-basics.net/ocean/te_start.jsp). This requires a unique username and password that will be supplied with the travel notice, along with detailed instructions for completing the on-line Travel Expense Report (TER). Before reimbursement is made, the original receipts must be received by the Ocean Leadership Travel Office. The Travel Office will review the receipts and the on-line Travel Expense Report and, if necessary, may request additional explanation or documentation in order to fulfill Ocean Leadership's contractual obligations to the federal government or other authority. Reimbursements are not made for expenses that have been claimed or reimbursed from other sources or organizations.

Reporting Requirements

Travelers are required to submit the on-line Travel Expense Report within thirty (30) calendar days following the completion of travel and to forward the original receipts for any item over \$75.00. This includes all receipts for any airline tickets, car rental, and itemized lodging expenses incurred by the traveler. In the case of an electronic airline ticket, boarding passes (if mobile passes, make a note) and a copy of the itinerary showing costs and the name of the traveler should be submitted (if purchased outside of the Ocean Leadership Travel Office). After such time, the on-line expense form will expire and it may not be possible to be reimbursed for incurred travel expenses.

For all receipts listed in foreign currency, the Ocean Leadership online travel reimbursement system contains foreign exchange rates that are updated daily. Reimbursements will be made in US dollars (USD) except under unusual circumstances.

Saturday Night Stayover

A traveler has the option of extending a trip to include a Saturday night stay-over when it is deemed to be cost effective, i.e., when the sum of the lower Saturday night stay-over fare plus the additional travel expenses would be less than the lowest weekday fare available to meet the traveler's official schedule as determined by Ocean Leadership. Circumstances under which this would normally occur are when official business begins on Monday or ends on Friday. Pre-approval from the Travel Office is required.

Local Travel

Local Travel is defined as travel that does not include overnight lodging. Miscellaneous and transportation expenses are reimbursable as outlined in the Miscellaneous section. Meal expenses on non-overnight trips generally are not reimbursable as travel expenses. Exceptions will be approved on a case-by-case basis and only if itemized receipts are provided for actual meal cost.

Lodging

Lodging expenses will be reimbursed at actual cost up to the published government per diem rates for lodging for a given location: [Domestic Per Diem](#) and [International Per Diem](#).

Exceptions may be granted up to 125% of the published rates in keeping with Federal Travel Regulations (FTR 301-11.300a and b; also FTR 301-74). Requests for lodging that exceed 25% over the government lodging per diem must be supported with a written explanation by the traveler. The explanation must include a description of the effort that was made to obtain less expensive lodging, and why such lodging was not available. (For example, the statement "less expensive lodging was not available", without further explanation, is inadequate.) Requests for lodging that exceed 25% are subject to Contracting Officer (CO), i.e. funding agency, approval and may not be approved. If such requests are not pre-approved, the traveler will be reimbursed the published per diem rate. Requests for the 125% allowance will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

For meetings in excess of ten (10) participants, the Ocean Leadership Travel Office will select lodging and reserve a block of sleeping rooms at a negotiated rate. This information will be included in the meeting and travel logistics distributed via email. If the traveler elects to choose other lodging, the traveler's expenses will be reimbursed to the limit of the pre-selected lodging, unless that is sold out, or approval is otherwise obtained from the Travel Office. Ocean Leadership room blocks of 25 or more travelers are subject to additional per diem restrictions and may require CO approval.

Itemized receipts for lodging are required. Individual items on lodging bills, such as Internet charges for example, should be entered separately in the appropriate columns on the Travel Expense Report. Allowable lodging reimbursement will be based on a single occupancy rate. If, for personal convenience, a traveler interrupts or deviates from the official travel schedule or from the most direct and/or economical route, reimbursement of lodging expenses may not exceed that which would have been incurred for the uninterrupted travel or the undeviated schedule.

The Travel Office will determine the maximum number of lodging nights that are reimbursable, and these will be specified in the meeting and travel logistics message. For those not attending a meeting organized by the Travel Office, the maximum number of lodging nights will be the least required for the traveler to complete Ocean Leadership business, and to return to the point of origin. Prior approval must be received from the Travel Office if the maximum number of lodging nights is exceeded.

Meals

Meals will be reimbursed on a per diem basis according to the federally approved rates for the geographical destination travel point. The destination point is defined as the location where the official business will be conducted. An overnight stay is required for per diem to be claimed.

A meal per diem is a standard fixed amount per meal for which a traveler will be reimbursed during the conduct of business travel regardless of the actual expenses incurred. The per diem allowance in this policy is intended to cover expenses for meals, including tips to food servers and sales taxes as well as an incidental amount. Receipts are not required in order to claim per diem.

Meal and incidental (M&IE) per diem rates for the continental United States (CONUS) are obtained from the GSA (General Services Administration) and for other destinations from the U.S. Department of State. The M&IE per diem rate for travel days is reimbursed at 75% of the full rate for that location.

[Domestic Per Diem](#)
[International Per Diem](#)

[Domestic Meal and Incidental Breakdown](#)
[International Meal and Incidental Breakdown](#)

When a meal is furnished at a meeting location, the meal per diem should not be claimed for that particular meal. The Ocean Leadership online Travel Expense Report will show a credit for all meals provided by Ocean Leadership. Meals provided by Ocean Leadership shall not exceed per diem for that location without prior CO approval.

When, for a traveler's personal convenience, there is an interruption of travel or deviation from the official schedule or most direct/and or economical route, the per diem allowed may not exceed that which would have been incurred for the uninterrupted travel or the undeviated schedule.

Miscellaneous Expenses

Any single expenditure more than \$75.00 for allowable miscellaneous expenses must have a receipt in order to be reimbursed, or a reason acceptable to your agency explaining why you are unable to provide the necessary receipt. (Expenses less than \$75.00 still need to be itemized on the Travel Expense Report.) The M&IE per diem includes an amount for incidentals such as personal telephone calls, tips to porters, transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the temporary duty site, and mailing costs associated with filing travel vouchers and payment of Government charge card billings.

Miscellaneous allowable expenses include:

1. Gasoline for rental vehicles
2. With approval of appropriate Director or Program Manager, registration fees for conferences and meetings
3. Laundry if on business in excess of 7 days (if on foreign travel, this is included in the incidental portion of M&IE)
4. ATM cash withdrawal fees
5. For international travel-visa fees, passport and passport photo charges, inoculations, departure taxes, and fees for traveler's checks and currency exchange. When a loss is incurred in currency exchange, the loss may be claimed.
6. Business communication expenses such as copying costs, business center charges, on-line web access and facsimile charges.

Air Transportation General

For Ocean Leadership Employees:

You are encouraged to use the Travel Office to arrange your corporate travel. After submitting a Travel Authorization to the Travel Office, you have the option of using the online booking tool or request that a proposed air itinerary will be emailed to you. (The online booking tool is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week while the Travel Office conducts business during normal business hours Monday through Friday.) The traveler should try to make travel arrangements as early as possible to assist in keeping costs to a minimum. The Travel Office will assist with modifications in a corporate travel itinerary to accommodate personal travel, however, if the changes are substantial, you will be asked to arrange the travel on your own. You will be responsible for any extra costs that result due to the incorporation of personal with corporate travel and you will have to purchase the entire ticket and request reimbursement for what the ticket would have cost without the personal travel incorporated.

For non-Ocean Leadership Employees:

Once authorization has been given to the Travel Office, travelers will receive a logistics notice via email on how to arrange travel. The traveler should try to make travel arrangements as early as possible to assist in keeping costs to a minimum. If a ticket is purchased independent of the Travel Office, the traveler will only be reimbursed up to the specified dollar amount in the proposed Travel Office itinerary. The Travel Office will assist with modifications in your travel itinerary to accommodate personal travel, however, if the changes are substantial, you will be asked to arrange your own air travel and you will have to purchase the entire ticket and request reimbursement for what the ticket would have cost without the personal travel incorporated.

Unused Tickets:

The traveler is responsible for notifying the Travel Office or travel agency as early as possible if travel plans change or a portion of a ticket, including Amtrak tickets, goes unused. If the traveler fails to notify the Travel Office of a cancelled trip in a timely manner, the traveler may be held personally responsible for the value of the ticket. If a traveler does not travel for Ocean Leadership within a year of the original ticket's issue date, and uses any value or portion of the ticket for non-Ocean Leadership purposes, Ocean Leadership retains the right to seek reimbursement from the traveler.

Lost Tickets:

The traveler is responsible for purchasing a replacement ticket and processing any lost ticket applications or forms with the airline and/or Amtrak.

Air Carrier Selection

Where government funds are utilized, all international travel must be booked on U.S.-flag air carriers* unless the use of a U.S. flag air carrier would not accomplish the mission of Ocean Leadership or if a U.S. flag air carrier is considered unavailable because of any of the reasons listed below. This includes any segment of the initial booking and any subsequent changes in routing while en-route.

In each case when a flight is booked on a non-U.S. flag air carrier, the Travel Office must approve its use in advance. A Certification of Unavailability of a U.S.-Flag Air Carrier form must be completed by either the traveler or the Travel Office and submitted for approval to the Travel Office before ticketing. The Travel Office will retain and attach this justification to the Travel Expense Report.

In determining availability of U.S.-flag air carrier service, the following scheduling principles shall be followed unless their application would result in the last or first leg of travel to or from the U.S. being performed by a non-U.S. flag air carrier. At least one leg must be on a U.S. flag air carrier unless one of the exceptions or conditions itemized below is applicable:

1. The U.S. flag air carrier will be used from point of origin to a final destination unless the U.S. flag air carrier does not provide through service to the final destination, in which case the U.S. flag air carrier will be used to the farthest connecting point possible.

2. When an origin or connecting point abroad is not served by a U.S. flag air carrier, a non-U.S. flag air carrier shall be used only to the nearest connecting point on a usually traveled route to connect with a U.S. flag air carrier for return to the U.S.
3. When a U.S. flag air carrier involuntarily reroutes the traveler via a non-U.S. flag air carrier, the non-U.S. flag air carrier may be used if there is no alternative U.S. flag air carrier available. The traveler should attempt to get a statement of denied boarding from the airline representative to file with the traveler's travel voucher. The traveler should certify after the fact on a Certification of Unavailability form why the U.S. flag air carrier was not used. The form must be attached to the Travel Expense Report.

* Carrier service provided on an air carrier which holds a certificate under 49 U.S.C. 41102 and which service is authorized either by the carrier's certificate or by exemption or regulation. U.S. flag air carrier service also includes service provided under a code share agreement with a foreign air carrier in accordance with Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations when the ticket, or documentation for an electronic ticket, identifies the U.S. flag air carrier's designator code and flight number.

Service by U.S. flag air carriers shall be considered not available when one or more of the following conditions exist within a scenario:

SCENARIO 1 – Travel between a gateway** airport in the U.S. and a gateway airport abroad

CONDITIONS:

1. A U.S. flag air carrier does not serve the airport of origin/destination or interchange points; or
2. Use of a U.S. flag air carrier extends the travel time by at least twenty-four (24) hours or more; or
3. Use of a U.S. flag air carrier requires a connecting layover of four hours or more; or
4. extends the travel time by six hours or more; or
5. Service on a foreign air carrier would be three hours or less, and use of the U.S. flag air carrier would at least double your en route travel time; or
6. Use of a U.S. air carrier would not accomplish the mission of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership. A memo of explanation is required.

SCENARIO 2 - Travel between two points outside the U.S.

CONDITIONS:

1. Service is not provided by a U.S. flag air carrier; or.
2. Use of a non-U.S. flag air carrier eliminates two or more aircraft changes en-route; or
3. Use of a U.S. flag air carrier extends travel time by six hours or more; or
4. use of a U.S. flag air carrier requires a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point; or
5. Service on a foreign air carrier would be three hours or less, and use of the U.S. flag air carrier would at least double your en route travel time; or
6. Use of a U.S. air carrier would not accomplish the mission of Ocean Leadership. A memo of explanation is required.

** A gateway airport in the U.S. means the last U.S. airport from which the traveler leaves or the first airport in the U.S. to which the traveler returns from abroad. A gateway airport abroad means the first airport abroad at which the traveler arrives from the U.S. or the last airport abroad from which the traveler departs for the U.S. abroad from which the traveler departs for the U.S.

When a U.S. flag air carrier is available but all coach class seats are sold out, travel should be booked in order of:

1. business class
2. first class, before booking on a non-U.S. flag air carrier.

If all fares on the preferred flight are sold out, and the trip cannot be postponed to wait for availability of a seat on a U.S. flag air carrier, a non-U.S. flag air carrier may only then be used. Should either of these two situations occur, the Travel Office must be consulted for approval and a justification should accompany the Travel Expense Report explaining why the higher class of service was used, or a certification form must be attached explaining the reason for the use of the non-U.S. flag air carrier. See also the due diligence requirements for timely booking of travel arrangements (Transportation Section, 3-01) which also apply.

Class of Service

Travelers will be reimbursed the cost of airfare for coach class accommodations only (or equivalent class, such as economy or tourist class). Exceptions to coach class travel may be authorized with prior written consent of the Travel Office under the following conditions:

1. Space in coach class is not available on a scheduled flight in time to accomplish the purpose of the official travel, which is so urgent that it cannot be postponed.
- 2 Premium class accommodations are necessary to accommodate a traveler's disability or physical impairment. This condition must be confirmed by a physician in writing. The Travel Office will provide a form (available on the website) for this purpose at the traveler's request.
- 3 the scheduled flight time (including stopovers) exceeds fourteen (14) hours for direct travel and either the origin or destination point is outside the continental U.S. ***
- 4 Coach class accommodations on non-U.S. flag air carriers do not provide adequate sanitation or health standards and the use of a non-U.S. flag air carrier is approved by the Travel Office in conformance with the Transportation Section 3-01, Air Carrier Selection, of this [Fly America Act] policy.

*** When a flight exceeds 14 hours in duration (total flight time), Ocean Leadership may purchase for the traveler, subject to program funds, the least expensive economy fare class ticket that ensures the traveler is able to use their personal frequent flyer miles to upgrade.

Receipt Requirements

If you purchase your airline ticket independent of the Ocean Leadership Travel Office you must submit your airline passenger receipt (indicating total expense, boarding passes, and class of service used) and the emailed airfare quote from the Travel Office with your expense report. For on-line travel purchases, alternate documentation provided by the airlines or on-line travel agency is allowable. If your ticket was purchased through the Ocean Leadership Travel Office, it is not necessary to include the passenger receipt; however, it is strongly recommended to provide original boarding passes. If mobile passes are used, please make a note on the TER.

Personal Routing

Personal trips taken before, during, or upon completion of Ocean Leadership business, will be at the expense of the traveler. When the traveler's routing differs from the official scheduled routing, the following will apply: If the routing expense is greater, the difference will be paid by the traveler. If the routing expense is less, only the lesser amount will be reimbursed.

Frequent Flyer Miles

Travelers may retain frequent flyer miles which may be used in their judgment.

Ground Transportation - Vehicle Rental

Ocean Leadership employees may request the use of a rental automobile by annotating this on their travel authorization forms. Travelers who are not Ocean Leadership employees must request authorization to rent a car from the Travel Office prior to travel. Factors taken into consideration for granting the request include, but are not limited to: distance of travel to a final destination, availability of alternate ground transportation, time of travel, and other factors determined by the Travel Office.

A receipt, including the rental agreement, for an automobile rental must be submitted with the Travel Expense Report. The cost of the rental will be reimbursed at the intermediate car class rate, unless justification is provided on the Travel Expense Report showing the need for a larger vehicle. Gasoline expenses purchased for the rental car will be reimbursed as miscellaneous travel expenses. Non-Ocean Leadership employees who rent automobiles must purchase the liability and physical damage insurance coverages offered in the rental contract. These insurance expenses are reimbursable.

Ocean Leadership employees need not purchase insurance for automobiles rented within the U.S. and Canada. Ocean Leadership insurance provides protection in such circumstances. For all other destinations, Ocean Leadership employees must purchase car rental insurance.

Personal Vehicle

The expense of transportation by personally owned vehicles will be reimbursed on a mileage basis at a rate based on prevailing Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rates. The prevailing reimbursement rate will be indicated on the on-line Travel Expense Report. Mileage reimbursement is based on travel by the most direct route between the departure and destination points.

The reimbursement of personally owned vehicle expenses will be provided to the extent that the costs of vehicle transportation and related travel expenses (en-route lodging, meals, miscellaneous expenses, parking fees and toll charges, etc.) do not exceed the cost of coach class air fare plus related travel expenses. In this instance, the traveler should notify the Ocean Leadership Travel Office in advance in order to facilitate the documentation of comparable coach class airfare plus related travel expenses. When total mileage for any given date exceeds \$75.00, address-to-address directions must be provided with the TER as documentation.

Taxicab, Bus, Train

Taxi, bus, and train fares must be itemized. Limousine service will be used only when other practical means (i.e., train, bus, airport or hotel shuttle service) are not available or limousine service is more economical. Receipts are required for any single fare more than \$75.00.

In Washington DC, Ocean Leadership has arrangements with two taxi cab companies for direct-billing of taxi service for official Ocean Leadership business. Please check with the Travel Office for details.

Parking Fees and Toll Charges

Parking fees and toll charges are reimbursable. Receipts are required for any single expense more than \$75.00.

Unallowable Expenses

Because Ocean Leadership receives most of its funds from federal sources, the following expenses are generally unallowable:

1. Entertainment or social activity expenses
2. Alcoholic beverages
3. Traffic fines
4. Personal items, even if purchased due to lost/delayed baggage
5. Field trips and associated expenses such as lodging, registration fees, transportation, and meals.
6. Additional cost for family members or others beyond the single room rate for lodging.

Other

If an Ocean Leadership employee is required to travel for business purposes, it is understood that individual housing will be provided for the traveler. At no time should an Ocean Leadership employee be required to share accommodations with a fellow employee when performing work related travel.