

MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Governor's Office

Subject:

Commonwealth Travel Policy
(Effective January 1, 2012)

Number:

230.10 Amended

Date:

November 1, 2011

By Direction of:

Charles B. Zogby, Secretary of the Budget



Kelly Powell Logan, Secretary of
Administration

Contact Agency:

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This directive establishes policy, responsibilities, and procedures for the commonwealth's travel program. Provisions of this issuance ensure responsible stewardship of commonwealth funds while taking into account the safety and reasonable convenience of commonwealth travelers. Substantive changes are indicated by marginal dots. Issued as a companion to this directive is [Manual 230.1, Commonwealth Travel Procedures Manual](#), Effective January 1, 2012.

- 1. PURPOSE.** To establish policy, responsibilities, and procedures for the commonwealth's travel program that enable commonwealth travelers to successfully execute their essential travel requirements at the lowest reasonable cost.
- 2. SCOPE.** This directive applies to all departments, boards, commissions, and councils (hereinafter referred to as "agencies") under the governor's jurisdiction, and to all other agencies subject to *Section 216* of the *Administrative Code* that have not been exempt by the Executive Board. This includes board members, commissioners, and any other individuals reimbursed for official commonwealth travel.

3. **OBJECTIVE.** To provide an efficient and economical oversight by which commonwealth travelers can secure necessary travel reservations and accommodations in order to conduct official commonwealth business.

4. **DEFINITIONS.**

- a. **Agency Airline Card.** A purchasing card assigned to each agency to which all airline charges are automatically billed when air transportation is reserved.
- b. **Agency Assigned Travel Arranger.** An assigned individual in an agency responsible for travel planning and Travel Expense Report (TER) preparation on behalf of individuals traveling on official commonwealth business.
- c. **Agency Lodging Card.** A purchasing card assigned to each agency, used for certain overnight lodging and tax charges authorized by COTO.
- d. **BCPO.** Bureau of Commonwealth Payroll Operations.
- e. **Commonwealth Traveler.** Employees of agencies within the scope of this directive, non-commonwealth employees who perform services for the commonwealth, and other individuals who travel on official commonwealth business, but are not considered employees of the commonwealth.
- f. **Contracted Travel Agency.** The commonwealth travel service contractor that provides commercial air travel, ground travel, lodging and reservations services within the scope of contracted services.
- g. **Corporate Travel Card.** A credit card provided to employees to be used only while employee is in overnight travel status and for authorized business purposes.
- h. **COTO.** Commonwealth Office of Travel Operations.
- i. **Expense Verification Method.** A means to document costs when a receipt cannot be obtained by a commonwealth traveler.
- j. **Extended Stay.** Overnight travel status that extends 60 days or more.
- k. **Online Booking Tool.** A web-based tool used to book commercial travel arrangements for commonwealth travelers.
- l. **Overnight Travel Status.** Travel status that is more than 50 miles from both their headquarters and residence.
- m. **Preferred Property.** Hotel properties that participate in the commonwealth's travel program.
- n. **Travel Status.** When a traveler is on official commonwealth business away from home and headquarters.

5. POLICY.

- a. Neither this directive nor [Manual 230.1, Commonwealth Travel Procedures Manual](#) shall supersede the provisions of a collective bargaining agreement/memorandum of understanding or any other understanding/agreement that has been or may be developed between the commonwealth and a certified employee representative.
- b. Reservations.**
 - (1) Commonwealth travelers must make all air, ground, and lodging travel reservations through the commonwealth's online booking tool unless otherwise directed [in Manual 230.1, Commonwealth Travel Procedures Manual, Section 2.4, Train](#). Commonwealth travelers who do not have access to the online booking tool must make their travel arrangements through the contracted travel agency or their agency-assigned travel arranger. Commonwealth travelers who are not employed by the commonwealth must follow the same procedures as employees if their travel expenses are paid by the commonwealth.
 - (2) Commonwealth travelers who do not have an assigned SAP identification number are not permitted to arrange their own travel. Travel arrangements must be made by an agency-assigned travel arranger or designated commonwealth employee. The name of the agency-assigned travel arranger or designated commonwealth employee must be provided to the travel agent.
- c. **Justification.** Commonwealth travelers must confirm the lowest cost reservations that meet the itinerary and needs of the traveler, within commonwealth guidelines. Preferred vendors must be chosen where available. Business justification must be supplied when confirming arrangements that are outside commonwealth guidelines. Non-compliant arrangements will be subject to review and travel audit. Justification for reimbursement includes matching receipts, approved expense verification methods, and/or when required, explanations in the corresponding comments section in the TER.
- d. **Subsistence.** Commonwealth travelers are entitled to receive subsistence reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within prescribed maximums.
- e. **Travel Credits.** The acceptance, retention, or use of personal travel, products, or services by commonwealth travelers of promotions and offers obtained in the course of official commonwealth business is prohibited by the *Governor's Code of Conduct, 4 PA Code 7.151*, and the *State Ethics Law, 65 PS401*. Any credits, promotions, certificates, or other considerations earned in a frequent traveler program must be used for official commonwealth travel. Commonwealth travelers may not use a personal credit card in place of the commonwealth corporate travel card or agency airline card in order to gain benefits from their credit card company.

- f. **Payment Methods.** Commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business are required to use one of the methods of payment through the course of their approved travel itineraries:
- (1) **Agency Airline Card.** All air travel will be charged to the agency airline card automatically when reserved via the online booking tool or the contracted travel agency. Commonwealth travelers are not permitted to use their corporate travel card or personal credit card to reserve air flights.
 - (2) **Agency Lodging Card.** The use of the agency lodging card for payment of hotel rate and tax must be authorized by COTO.
 - (3) **Corporate Travel Card.** Use of the corporate travel card is mandatory for employees expected to be in overnight travel status four or more times a year. Employees who have had their card canceled are not eligible for a commonwealth payment method.
 - (4) **Cash Advance.** A cash advance will be considered only after all other options of payment are explored and exhausted.
- g. **Reimbursement.** Commonwealth travelers on official commonwealth business will receive reimbursement of actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within prescribed maximums with complete justification for incurred expenses that must be included with the submission of the TER. Justification includes matching receipts, approved expense verification methods, and/or when required, explanations in the corresponding comments section in the TER. Submission of a TER must occur within 60 business days of the date of travel. Travel expenses are reimbursed by the commonwealth within 15 business days of receiving an approved TER with all applicable attachments and receipts.
- h. **Transfer Travel.** Employees eligible to receive moving expenses are also granted 30 calendar days in travel status at their new locations, to provide adequate time for locating new living quarters and to move to the new location. Agency heads may authorize, in writing, an extension to a maximum of 60 calendar days, if required by unusual conditions. The 30 calendar day allowance plus the extension must be used within the 90 consecutive calendar day period that begins when the employee is notified of the requirement to move to the new location. A copy of signed approval must be attached to the TER.

The following restrictions apply:

- The initial allowance plus any approved extension is not a flat allowance. Only the days actually needed to complete an eligible relocation may be approved.
- Employees will not be reimbursed for local personal mileage.
- Employees returning to headquarters or residence on scheduled days off or holidays will not be entitled to subsistence or lodging for those periods.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. The Commonwealth Office of Travel Operations shall:

- (1) Conduct a thorough review of commonwealth policies relating to travel to ensure that all commonwealth travel policies are consistent and recommend necessary changes.
- (2) Negotiate and manage the booking, fulfillment, advisory, and other travel related service contracts, in addition to the establishment of a network of preferred vendors.
- (3) Monitor compliance with travel policies and contracts.
- (4) Provide data to commonwealth agencies, and offer recommendations for cost-reduction and compliance, where applicable.
- (5) Authorize the use of the agency lodging card. Instructions on the use of the agency lodging card are available on www.travel.state.pa.us.

b. The Office of the Budget, Office of Comptroller Operations, Bureau of Commonwealth Payroll Operations shall:

- (1) Ensure compliance with commonwealth travel reimbursement policies by conducting post-travel audits of submitted reimbursement reports.
- (2) Reconcile monthly airline card billings to the airline usage report.
- (3) Match the agency lodging card information against the TER to ensure compliance with applicable policies.
- (4) Reimburse commonwealth travelers in accordance with policy, and upon notification from agency, withhold amounts as necessary from commonwealth travelers, forward payments to the corporate travel card issuer, and inform commonwealth travelers and their supervisors of appropriate dates and amounts being withheld.
- (5) Give approval for cash advances to commonwealth travelers.

c. Human Resource Directors shall ensure that new employees that are travelers or travel arrangers have the appropriate training.

7. **PROCEDURES.** In conjunction with this *Management Directive 230.10, Commonwealth Travel Policy*, [Manual 230.1, Commonwealth Travel Procedures Manual](#), details commonwealth travel policies and procedures to which commonwealth travelers must adhere. Refer to [Manual 230.1, Commonwealth Travel Procedures Manual](#), for more detailed direction.

This directive replaces, in its entirety, *Management Directive 230.10*, dated June 17, 2009; *Management Directive 205.30*, dated October 23, 1997; and *Management Directive 230.17*, dated March 28, 2007.