

## TRICARE PRIME TRAVEL BENEFIT (PTB) GENERAL INFORMATION

Revised 01 May 2020

### REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES – GENERAL INFORMATION

**Will I be reimbursed for all of my travel expenses?** Only reasonable, “actual-cost” travel expenses associated with receiving specialty care can be reimbursed. These expenses may include mileage, meals, lodging, parking, tolls, airfare, baggage fees, taxicab/shuttle, and/or “authorized” rental car. The following items are not reimbursable under the PTB: non-food items, toiletries, paper/plastic goods, alcohol, tobacco, laundry/dry cleaning, gifts, and copays/cost shares.

**Is there a limit to the amount I can be reimbursed?** Government rates will be used to estimate the reasonable costs for allowable expenses. You are expected to travel responsibly and exercise the same care in incurring expenses for PTB travel that a prudent person would use if traveling at personal expense. Rates are set by fiscal year, effective October 1 each year. You can find current rates for lodging and meals at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. {JTR010102.Guiding Principle}

**What is my financial responsibility?** You are financially responsible for excess costs, indirect routes, delays, or luxury accommodations that are unnecessary or unjustified. You are responsible for expenses incurred during unauthorized or personal travel dates. Traveling responsibly includes using the least costly mode of travel, parking facilities, public transportation, or rental vehicle. It also includes scheduling travel as early as possible to take advantage of discounted transportation rates. {JTR010103.Traveler Responsibilities}

**How long do I have to submit my travel claim?** Travel reimbursement claims must be filed no later than one year after the qualifying return travel date. {TRM6010.61-M Reimbursement Of Travel Expenses For Specialty Care}

**Can I request Advance Travel Pay?** No. Travel pay advances are not available. The PTB is a *reimbursement* program. Therefore, you must pay for your own travel expenses and then submit a claim for reimbursement.

**How will I be paid?** You will be paid by direct deposit. Your payment will be directly deposited into your checking or savings account based on the FMS 2231 Direct Deposit form you submitted to us. This form is **required** with the first travel claim received at the beginning of each fiscal year (01 Oct). We will not need another form until the beginning of the next fiscal year (FY) or sooner if your account information changes. With each subsequent claim submission during the FY you will **need to validate** that your bank information has not changed. This validation may be in the body of your email, on the fax cover sheet or included as a separate note if the claim is mailed. A simple statement “Bank information has not changed during this FY” will suffice.

\*\*\*Department of Defense (DoD) Personnel (Active Duty/Civilian) **MUST** ensure their Defense Travel System (DTS) profile is updated to show the correct bank account information for their reimbursement payment. The TRICARE travel representatives are not authorized to update profiles for travelers whose DTS account belongs to another organization however the above form and validations are still required.

**Can I request a paper check instead of Direct Deposit?** No. The Department of the Treasury has determined that all payments from the federal government must be made electronically. Waivers may be requested if 1.) You were born on or before 01 May 1921, 2.) You live outside the United States, 3.) You

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have a mental impairment (doctor's note recommended) or 4.) You do not have a bank account that will support direct deposit.

**Am I authorized lodging expenses?** You may be reimbursed lodging expenses if you must travel over 400 miles, one way, per day. If you traveled 400 miles or less, one way, lodging allowance is determined based on appointment times and distance traveled. The maximum lodging rate is based on the location of the specialty care provider and not on the lodging location. For trips that are **more than 400 miles**, one way, you are entitled to an extra travel day and the stopover point hotel zip code is used to determine the lodging rate. When driving more than 400 miles and you choose not to use stopover lodging you will **NOT** be reimbursed lodging in the specialty care provider area if you arrive early. If you are required to remain in the specialty care area due to medical necessity, a letter of justification from the specialist is required to validate medically necessary length of stay. If you obtain lodging outside the specialty care appointment area because of personal preference or convenience, the reimbursement allowance is limited to the maximum rate for the specialty care provider's location. You may obtain the maximum lodging rate for each geographical area at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. {JTR0203.Per Diem Allowance and Other Computation Rules}

**Can I use an online booking company for my lodging?** Most online booking agency receipts (e.g. Hotels.com, Travelocity, Expedia, etc.) break out the cost of the room but combine taxes and fees. If the taxes and fees are not itemized, only the daily room cost is reimbursable up to the maximum per diem allowance. Booking agency fees are not reimbursable. It is best to book through the hotel directly.

**Can I obtain lodging through a website such as Airbnb or VRBO? No.** You must book a room that meets certain criteria. Vacation rentals do not meet many of those criteria, namely 1) Lodging facilities must be compliant with the U.S. Fire Administration Guidelines. Most people who list their homes/rooms/couches on a vacation rental site have not had their properties inspected by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. 2) Lodging receipts must be itemized with daily room costs, taxes, and miscellaneous fees. While some vacation rental websites may offer this type of receipt, many do not (e.g. they combine taxes and fees into a single line item or they only show the total tax – not a daily breakdown). {JTR020303.Lodging}

**Can I book my hotel using FedRooms.com?** If you are a Federal government employee on official or leisure travel you may book through FedRooms. Please see [www.fedrooms.com](http://www.fedrooms.com) for additional information.

**Am I authorized parking expenses?** Parking expenses incurred at the specialty care appointment, medical facility, hotel, and airport/train terminal are reimbursable. Parking will be reimbursed at the most economical rate available. Valet parking may be reimbursed if no other parking option is available or based on medical need. Parking expenses related to meals, shopping, church, etc. are not reimbursable.

**Terminal Parking** – When a privately owned vehicle (POV) is used for travel to/from a transportation terminal, the traveler is authorized reimbursement of the parking fees. However, the reimbursement for terminal parking is limited to \$100 (the estimated cost of two one-way taxicab/Uber/Lyft fares). If a medical trip is unexpectedly extended, exceptions to the terminal parking maximum may be considered. Information related to the extension will need to be provided in writing for the Approving Official's review.

**Am I authorized shuttle/taxicab expenses?** Taxicab/Uber/Lyft or other shuttle services may be reimbursed to get to and from the airport, medical appointments, and/or lodging facilities. These expenses may also be reimbursed if, when driving, the parking at the specialty care provider's office/facility is higher than the shuttle/taxicab rate. Documentation is needed to validate the cost savings of ride share versus parking. A mandatory or customary ride sharing tip may be reimbursed up to 20% of the fare amount. This tip is included in the total fare amount claimed on your travel voucher. Ride sharing

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expenses related to meals, shopping, church, etc. are not reimbursable. {JTR020213.Ground Transportation}

**How will I be reimbursed for tips?** Restaurant/meal tips are included in the daily meal allowance portion of the maximum daily M&IE (Meals and Incidental Expenses) per diem rate (<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>). Other tips allowed as incidental expenses include: courtesy transportation related tips (e.g. hotel/airport shuttles, park and ride, etc.), hotel employees, fees and tips to porters, baggage carriers, and flight attendants. Incidental expenses are limited to a total of \$5.00 per day per authorized traveler. {JTR020102.Per Diem Allowance}

### RECEIPTS

**What is a valid receipt?** A receipt is written acknowledgement that the vendor has been paid for providing goods or services. To be valid, it must be legible, match the amount of the claim, fall within official travel dates and show:

- Name of company providing goods or services
- Date specific services were rendered or purchased
- Itemization of unit price, taxes and fees
- Final amount due (zero balance) and/or method of payment

**What receipts are required for travel reimbursement?** An **itemized** receipt is required for all actual expenses. **Exceptions** include:

- Fuel for personally-owned vehicle (mileage will be paid in lieu of actual fuel expense)
- Meals for DoD Personnel (Active Duty/Civilian) non-medical attendants (per diem will be paid if trip duration is 12 hours or more)

**What is a valid lodging receipt?** A valid receipt must be legible and show the lodging facility name, specific dates of lodging, the unit/room rate, any additional charges (e.g. taxes and fees) and total amount actually paid (zero balance). The hotel check-in and check-out dates and times must be reasonable to support the specialty care appointment(s). The lodging receipt must be in the name of the qualifying claimant (patient or non-medical attendant). If the patient is being admitted to the hospital, the non-medical attendant (NMA) should have the receipt in his/her name as we cannot reimburse the patient any expenses incurred while in an inpatient status. A final bill provided by hotels as part of an express checkout that still shows an amount due is not a valid receipt because it does not show zero balance.

**Note:** Only itemized charges are considered for reimbursement. Optional expenses such as internet, pay per view movies, pet fees, etc. are not reimbursable. {JTR020303.Lodging}

**What is a valid flight/train receipt?** A valid receipt must show the airline/train carrier name, itinerary for travel dates with airport/depot codes, passenger name(s), itemized unit costs, any additional charges (e.g. airport concession fees, taxes, etc.), and total amount actually paid. Travel schedules must be reasonable and support the specialty care appointment(s). A "reservation" document is **NOT** a valid receipt if it does not show the final amount and payment information. Optional expenses such as premium class seating, priority seating, cancellation insurance, etc. are not reimbursable.

**What is a valid rental car receipt?** A valid receipt must show the rental car agency name, specific dates of service, itemized unit costs, any additional charges (e.g. airport concession fees, taxes, etc.), and total amount actually paid. The pick-up and drop-off locations, dates, and times must be reasonable to support

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the specialty care appointment(s). The car must be the least expensive compact car OR be properly justified. A contract for rental car services signed when renting a car is **NOT** a valid receipt because it only shows estimated charges and does not necessarily show the final amount. The final receipt received at return is required. Optional expenses such as additional insurance, global positioning system (GPS), toll transponder, fuel at return, etc. are not reimbursable.

**What is a valid meal receipt? Itemized** receipts **MUST** be provided to verify each food item purchased. If you dine at a restaurant where the payment portion of the receipt is separate from the itemized portion, we need **both** portions with the claim package. The itemized portion is needed for audit purposes to validate that we are not reimbursing any alcoholic beverage expenses and to validate the number of allowed diners. The payment portion is needed as this is usually the only place where the tip is indicated. The payment portion alone is **not** a valid receipt. Shared meal receipts may be split based on the actual expense for each claimant. Indicate on the shared receipt which items belong to which claimant by placing name or initials next to respective expenses. If food is purchased at a grocery store, the entire **dated** receipt must be included. However, only reasonable food and non-alcoholic drink expenses will be allowed. Please **do NOT** cut the date off of a grocery receipt. Many times it is located at the very bottom of the receipt. Make sure you are providing receipts for gas station or convenience store food/drink purchases. When purchasing food/drinks/snacks at a hotel market, registration desk or hotel restaurant please ask for an itemized receipt. Food/drink expenses charged to the room and shown on the hotel receipt are not itemized and will not be reimbursed.

**Can I use my bank/credit card statement in place of a receipt?** No. Data available from bank/credit card statements may provide proof of payment, but do not provide the level of detail required, such as itemized costs.

**What if I don't have a receipt?** If you forget to get a receipt or lose a receipt, you should first contact the service provider (airline, rental car agency, hotel, etc.) to get a replacement receipt. As a courtesy, the PTB program will make a one-time exception to policy for new travelers and allow travelers to provide a statement when meal, parking or toll receipts are lost or misplaced. This statement must include an explanation of the circumstances and contain all of the information that would be included in a valid receipt (e.g., service provider name, date(s) of service, itemized costs, and total amount paid).  
{JTR010301.Receipt Requirements}

## MODES OF TRAVEL

**Do I book my own mode of travel?** Yes. You are expected to book and pay for your own travel arrangements to include transportation and lodging.

**Which mode of travel should I use?** For distances 400 miles or less, one way, the standard transportation mode is privately-owned vehicle (POV). For distances over 400 miles (one way), the standard transportation mode is commercial airline. If you prefer to travel by a non-standard mode of travel, you may do so but your reimbursement will be limited to the amount the government would have paid for the standard transportation mode and/or route. {JTR020206(M) Commercial Air Transportation}

**Can I be reimbursed for a rental car?** 1.) Rental cars are allowed when flying; 2.) If the distance from home to the specialist location is more than 400 miles one way and it is medically necessary to drive, a justification letter from a doctor is needed; 3.) For distance more than 400 miles one way, if driving is not medically necessary, rental car expenses may be allowed if within the amount the government would

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have paid for the standard transportation mode and/or route. A cost comparison will be completed by our office when determining allowances; 4.) If the distance is 400 miles or less, the use of a rental car must be pre-authorized **prior** to travel and justification must be provided as to why the rental car is needed. Without justification reimbursement is limited to the allowed mileage rate for a POV. A compact vehicle is the standard size however larger vehicles may be reimbursed. A letter of medical justification from a doctor is needed for larger size vehicles. Optional expenses such as additional insurance, GPS, satellite radio, toll transponder, fuel at return, etc. are not reimbursable. Itemized receipts are needed for actual fuel expenses. Prepaid fuel receipts are **not** allowed. {JTR020209 Rental Vehicle}, {JTR020210(A) Reimbursement for Privately Owned Automobiles or Motorcycles}

**Can I rent a car through an alternative peer to peer car sharing company?** No. Companies such as Turo, Uber, Lyft, Getaround, etc. offer this peer to peer vehicle rental option. Peer to peer car sharing is not reimbursable under the PTB program.

**What will I be reimbursed for mileage/fuel?** Mileage/fuel for POV is reimbursed at a rate per mile instead of reimbursement of actual expenses. Reimbursement is calculated using the "Other Mileage Rate" per the Joint Travel Regulation (JTR). For NMAs that are DoD Personnel (Active Duty/Civilian) reimbursement is calculated using the "TDY Travel" rate. The mileage rates are usually updated once in each calendar year. However, on occasion a special adjustment has been made within the year due to fluctuation in fuel prices. For the current mileage rate, please go to <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/otherratesMile.cfm>. The Defense Table of Official Distances (DTOD) is used to calculate the official distance. Rental car fuel is reimbursable based on receipts. Prepaid fuel receipts are **not** allowed. {JTR033007(B)(1)(b)(3) POV}, {JTR033007(C)(1) Attendant}, {JTR010205 Defense Travel System (DTS) Use}

**Can I be reimbursed for mileage incurred in and around the specialty care appointment area?** If you are using your POV, you are entitled to official local in/around mileage for distances traveled between the lodging facility and the specialty care provider's location **only**. We will use the lodging address(es) and appointment validation documents to calculate this allowance.

**What distance am I required to drive my POV in a day?** Reasonable travel hours are from 0600-2400. There is no daily required driving distance described in the JTR. The regulations dictate what allowances may be paid based on the Approving Official's (AO) determination. When determining daily driving distance, you should consider the appointment schedule, drive time, traffic conditions, routing, weather conditions, and your safety. {JTR020202 Excluded Hours},

**How is travel distance/time computed when traveling by POV?** The authorized travel days are calculated using 400 miles per day (based on the DTOD distance between the authorized points). One travel day is allowed for each 400 miles of official distance. When the official distance is less than 400 miles only one day of travel time is allowed. {JTR020302.Allowable Travel Time} **Exceptions include:**

- Medical necessity (documentation required)
- Early Appointment vs Drive Time (documentation required)
- Late Appointment vs Drive Time (documentation required)

**Will I be reimbursed my actual airfare?** Airfare for the patient and one authorized non-medical attendant may be reimbursed. DoD policy requires coach (economy) class travel accommodations be used. Airfare is reimbursed up to the maximum rate allowed for government travel. {JTR020202 Excluded Hours}, {JTR020206(M) Commercial Air Transportation}

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***Will I be reimbursed my baggage fees?*** Airlines may charge a fee for your checked or hand-carried baggage. Baggage fees are reimbursable but are limited to two bags per person and must have a receipt for reimbursement.

### REQUESTING REIMBURSEMENT

***How do I submit my travel documents?*** You may submit your complete travel reimbursement packet by E-mail, fax, or mail. **Note: If mailing your travel packet, please keep your originals and only mail clear/dark legible copies. If E-mailing please do NOT include social security numbers.**

#### Prime Travel Benefit (PTB) & USCG

E-mail: [DHA.TRICAREPTB@mail.mil](mailto:DHA.TRICAREPTB@mail.mil)

Fax: 210-536-6176

Phone: 1-844-204-9351

Mailing Address: 7800 IH-10 West, Ste. 400  
San Antonio, TX 78230

***How do we claim shared expenses?*** No two travelers can be reimbursed for the same expense. This applies to situations where there is a NMA traveling with a patient (i.e. lodging, rental car, etc.). The shared expense is reimbursed to only one traveler. {JTR010302.Duplicate Payments and Fraudulent Claims}

***Can I bundle the patient and NMA expenses together on one voucher?*** Yes. The DD Form 1351-2 Travel Voucher or Subvoucher should be completed in the name/signature of an adult traveler. If claiming expenses for two travelers (patient and NMA) block 12 should have the "Accompanied" block checked along with completion of block 12a and 12b with the second traveler's information. When claiming meal expenses the DD Form 1351-3 will be needed, one for each traveler, separating meal expenses. Groceries may be indicated on one 1351-3 form and these will be reimbursed as available to either traveler. **Note:** A DD 1351-3 is not required for NMAs who are DoD Personnel (Active Duty/Civilian) as their meals are reimbursed based on specialty provider's location per diem rate.

***Can I submit my claim through the DTS if I have an established profile?*** No. The PTB has a specific line of accounting that only the TRICARE travel representative is authorized to use. The TRICARE travel staff will create your travel authorization in DTS and upload your supporting documentation for review by the AO. We will also complete **ALL** DTS required signatures. Your signature is included on the DD1351-2 forms and attached as substantiating documents. Any action taken by you in DTS will result in the AO returning your claim and delay of payment.