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**REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES – GENERAL INFORMATION**

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

**Is there a limit to the amount I can be reimbursed?** Government rates are used to estimate the reasonable costs for allowable expenses. You are expected to travel responsibly. You should take the same care in incurring expenses as you would if traveling at personal expense. Most rates are set by fiscal year (FY), 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>. You can find current rates for airfare at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-a-trip/transportation-airfare-rates-pov-rates-etc/airfare-rates-city-pair-program>. You can find current rates for rental cars at [https://media.defense.gov/2024/Mar/07/2003408481/-1/-1/0/USG\\_RENTAL\\_CAR\\_AGREEMENT\\_5\\_MAX\\_RATES.PDF](https://media.defense.gov/2024/Mar/07/2003408481/-1/-1/0/USG_RENTAL_CAR_AGREEMENT_5_MAX_RATES.PDF). {JTR010102 Guiding Principle}

**What is my financial responsibility?** You are financially responsible for excess costs, indirect routes, delays, or other accommodations that are unjustified. You are responsible for expenses incurred during unauthorized or personal travel dates as well as expenses of additional travelers. Traveling responsibly includes using the least costly mode of travel, parking facilities, public transportation, or rental vehicle. Traveling responsibly 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?** TRICARE Prime Travel Benefit reimbursement claims must be filed no later than one year after the trip ends. {Defense Health Agency Procedural Instruction (DHA-PI) 6000.05}

**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 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 submit. This form is **required** with the first travel claim received at the beginning of each FY (01 Oct). We will not need another form until the beginning of the next 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 statement may be done by checking the appropriate block on the DHA 131 form in the Patient and **Non-Medical Attendant** (NMA) Information sections. It may also be in the body of the email, fax cover sheet, or separate note if mailing claim package. A simple statement “Bank information has not changed during this FY” will suffice.

\*\*\*Department of Defense (DoD) Personnel (Active Duty and Civilian Employees) **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, account validation is still required.

**Am I authorized lodging expenses?** **Lodging expenses may be reimbursed based on your trip particulars, such as appointment times and distance traveled.** One travel day is authorized for every 400 miles **you drive. This travel day is called a stopover.** The zip code of the stopover lodging is used to

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determine the maximum lodging rate for en-route travel nights. When driving more than 400 miles one way, and you choose not to use stopover lodging, you will **NOT** be reimbursed lodging, or other expenses, in the specialty care provider (SCP) area if you arrive early. If you are required to remain in the SCP area due to medical necessity, a letter of justification from the specialist is required to validate length of stay. For non-stopover nights, the maximum lodging rate is based on the location of the SCP, not on the lodging 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 and JTR020302 Allowable Travel Time As It Affects Per Diem}

**Can I use an online booking company for my lodging?** Yes however, most on-line booking agency receipts such as Hotels.com, Travelocity, and Expedia break out the cost of the room but combine taxes and fees. If the taxes and fees are not itemized, only the itemized 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. {JTR020303 Lodging}

**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 or rooms on a vacation rental site may not have 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. They combine taxes and fees into a single line item, or they only show the tax/fee total. You can find a list of approved hotels and motels at <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/hotel>. {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: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-a-trip/lodging/fedrooms> for information.

**Am I authorized parking expenses?** Parking expenses incurred at the specialty care appointment, medical facility, hotel, food venues and airport or 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 non-food shopping, church, recreation, etc. are not reimbursable. {JTR020209 Rental Vehicle, JTR020210 Privately Owned Vehicles (POV), and JTR020212 Travel in and around the TDY Location}

**Terminal Parking** – When a privately owned vehicle (POV) is used for travel to and from a transportation terminal (airport, train station, etc.), reimbursement of the parking fees is authorized. The reimbursement for terminal parking is limited to \$100.00 (the estimated cost of two one-way taxi/Uber/Lyft fares). If a medical trip is unexpectedly extended, exceptions to the terminal parking allowance may be considered. Information related to the extension will need to be provided in writing for the Approving Official's review. {JTR020213 Ground Transportation (Table2-13)}

**Am I authorized shuttle/taxi expenses?** Taxi, Uber, Lyft, or other shuttle services may be reimbursed to get to and from the airport, medical appointments, lodging facilities, or meals. These expenses may also be reimbursed if, when driving, parking at the specialty care provider's office/facility is higher than the shuttle/taxi rate. Documentation is needed to validate these cost savings. A mandatory or customary ride sharing tip may be reimbursed up to 20% of the fare amount. Ride sharing expenses related to non-food shopping, church, recreation, etc. are not reimbursable. {JTR020212 Travel in and around the TDY Location and JTR020213 Ground Transportation}

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**How will I be reimbursed for tips?** Restaurant or meal tips are included in the daily meal allowance portion of the maximum daily Meals and Incidentals Expenses (M&IE) per diem rate. See <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>. Other tips allowed as incidental expenses include **courtesy** transportation related tips (hotel/airport shuttles, park and ride, etc.), fees and tips to hotel employees, porters, baggage carriers and flight attendants. Incidental expenses are limited to a total of \$5.00 per day per authorized traveler. Tips for taxi/Uber/Lyft or other **non-courtesy** shuttle services are reimbursed **up to 20%** of the fare amount. {JTR020102 Per Diem Allowance, JTR020213 Ground Transportation, and JTR020304 M&IE Portion of Per Diem}

## RECEIPTS

**What is a valid receipt?** The receipt is a written acknowledgment that the vendor has been paid for providing goods or services. A receipt must be readable, match the amount of the claim, fall within official travel dates, and show: {DoD7000.14-R Financial Management Regulation Volume 9 Definitions}

- Name of company providing goods or services.
- Date services were rendered or purchased.
- Itemization of unit price, taxes, and fees.
- Final amount **is zero balance** and/or method of payment **made**.

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

- Fuel for personally owned vehicle. Mileage per diem will be paid instead of actual fuel expenses.
  - See <https://www.travel.dod.mil/Travel-Transportation-Rates/Mileage-Rates/>.
- Meals for DoD Personnel (Active Duty or Civilian Employee) **NMAs**. **Meal** per diem will be paid if travel is over 12 hours. {JTR020309, **Trip Length As It Affects Per Diem**, Table 2-20}

**What is a valid lodging receipt?** A valid receipt must be **itemized** and readable. It must show the lodging facility name, dates of lodging, the nightly rate, any additional charges (taxes and fees) and total amount 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 an authorized traveler (patient or **NMA**). If the patient is being admitted to the hospital, the NMA should have the receipt in his or her name. We cannot reimburse the patient any lodging expenses while in an inpatient status. A receipt is not valid unless it shows a 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. Lodging expenses are reimbursable to the individual named on the receipt. See above other lodging related Tips. {JTR020303 Lodging}

**What is a valid flight/train/bus receipt?** A valid receipt must show the carrier's name, itinerary for travel dates with airport/depot codes, passenger name(s), **itemized** unit costs, any additional charges (airport concession fees, taxes, etc.), total amount actually paid, zero balance and/or method of payment. 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, **trip** cancellation insurance, etc. are not reimbursable. Priority seating fees **may** be considered by the Approving Official with documentation showing the reason for need. {JTR010301 Receipt Requirements, JTR033007 Medical Specialty Care Travel, JTR010103 (B) Items Not Mentioned and JTR020207(A) Commercial Air, Train, Ship, or Bus Transportation}

**What is a valid rental car receipt?** A valid receipt must show the rental car agency name, dates of service, **itemized** costs, any additional charges (airport concession fees, taxes, etc.), and total amount

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paid. The pick-up and drop-off locations, dates, and times must be reasonable to support 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 vehicle return is required. Optional expenses such as additional insurance, global positioning system (GPS), satellite radio, and fuel at return to rental company are not reimbursable. Allowable rental car expenses are reimbursable to the person named on the receipt. Toll transponders may be allowed, however fees related to failure to pay tolls are not reimbursable. {JTR010301 Receipt Requirements, JTR020209 Rental Vehicle and JTR033007 Medical Specialty Care Travel}

**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 beverages 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 between authorized travelers 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. Only reasonable food and non-alcoholic drink expenses will be allowed. Please do **NOT** cut the date off 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 and drink expenses charged to the room and shown on the hotel receipt are **not** itemized and will **not** be reimbursed. {JTR033007 Medical Specialty Care Travel}

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

**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 DHA 133 Absence of Receipt form when meal, parking, toll receipts or other ancillary expenses are lost or misplaced. This statement must include an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the lost/missing receipt(s). Absence of Receipt forms are **not** allowed for flights, trains, lodging, rental car receipts or other expenses where on-line accounts will provide a receipt copy (Uber, Lyft toll transponders, etc.) {JTR010301 Receipt Requirements}

## MODES OF TRAVEL

**Do I book my own mode of travel?** Yes. You book and pay for your own travel arrangements which include transportation and lodging. The TRICARE Prime Travel Benefit is a reimbursement program. {JTR033007 Medical Specialty Care Travel}

**Which mode of travel should I use?** For distances of 400 miles or less (one way) the preferred mode of transportation is privately owned vehicle (POV). For distances more than 400 miles (one way), the preferred mode of transportation is commercial airline (economy or coach class). If you traveled by a non-preferred mode, your reimbursement will be limited to the amount the government would have paid for the preferred transportation mode or route. If it was medically necessary to have traveled by other than the preferred transportation mode, a letter from a doctor will be needed to override the potential expense

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limitation. {JTR020203 Transportation Types Most Advantageous to the Government, JTR020206(M) Commercial Air Transportation, JTR020209 Rental Vehicle and JTR020210 Privately Owned Vehicles (POV)}

**Will I be reimbursed my actual airfare?** Airfare for the patient and **one** authorized **NMA** 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. You can find current rates for airfare at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-a-trip/transportation-airfare-rates-pov-rates-etc/airfare-rates-city-pair-program>. {JTR020206(J) & (M) Airplane, Train, Ship, and Bus Transportation and JTR033007(C) Medical Specialty Care Travel}

**Will I be reimbursed my baggage fees?** Airlines may charge a fee for your checked or carry-on baggage. Baggage fees are reimbursable but are limited to the first checked bag and 1 carry-on bag per person and **must** have a receipt for reimbursement. {JTR020207(C) Reimbursement for Commercial Transportation}

**Can I be reimbursed for a rental car?** When you are authorized to fly to the specialty care provider's (SCP) location a rental car is allowed for in/around travel. If the driving distance from your home to the SCP location is **more than 400 miles (one-way)**, rental cars are allowed. If the driving distance from your home to the SCP location is **400 miles or less one-way**, justification is required as to why the use of a rental car was needed. When required justification is missing or disallowed reimbursement **may** be limited to the allowed mileage rate for a POV. DoD Personnel (Active Duty/Civilian Employee NMA) see **Note** below. A compact vehicle is the standard size however larger vehicles may be reimbursed. A letter of medical justification from a doctor may be needed for larger size vehicles. Optional expenses such as additional insurance, GPS, satellite radio, fuel at return, etc. are not reimbursable. **Itemized receipts are needed for actual fuel expenses.** Pre-pay and premium fuel receipts are not reimbursable. {JTR020203 Transportation Types Most Advantageous to the Government and JTR020209 Rental Vehicle}

**Note:** DoD Personnel (Active Duty/Civilian Employee) NMAs traveling other than by the preferred mode of transportation will have a Constructed Travel Worksheet completed by our office to determine allowable expenses that are most cost effective to the government.

**Can I rent a car through an alternative peer-to-peer car sharing company? No.** Companies such as Turo, Avail, HyreCar, 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 to the owner/operator of the vehicle at a rate per mile instead of reimbursement of actual expenses. Reimbursement is calculated using the "**Other Rates**" per the Joint Travel Regulation (JTR) for the official distance between the patient's residence and the specialty provider's location. For NMAs that are DoD Personnel (Active Duty/Civilian Employee) 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 **throughout** the year due to fluctuation in fuel prices. For the current mileage rate, please go to <https://www.travel.dod.mil/travel-transportation-rates/mileage-rates>. Defense Table of Official Distances (DTOD) is used to calculate the official distance. **Rental car fuel is reimbursable based on receipts.** Pre-pay and premium fuel receipts are **not** reimbursable. {JTR020204 Distance Determinations, JTR033007(B)(1)(b)(3) POV, JTR033007(C)(1) Attendant, and JTR010205 Defense Travel System (DTS) Use}

**Note:** For DoD Personnel (Active Duty/Civilian Employee) NMAs: If you choose to use a POV vs. the preferred transportation mode the reimbursement may be limited to the amount the government would

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have paid for the preferred transportation mode or route. For non-DoD travelers: **If you choose to use a POV vs. the preferred transportation mode** a cost comparison is not required.

**Can I be reimbursed for mileage incurred in and around the specialty care appointment area?** If you have more than one day of appointments and are using your POV, you are entitled to In/Around mileage for distances traveled between the lodging facility and the specialty care provider's location. We will use the lodging addresses and appointment validation documents to calculate this allowance. *{JTR02012 Travel in and around the TDY Location}*

**What distance am I required to drive in a day?** There is no daily required driving distance described in the JTR. However, reasonable travel hours are from 0600-2400. The regulations dictate what allowances may be paid based on the Approving Official's (AO) determination. When determining daily driving distance, we can consider the appointment schedule, **driving** time, and weather conditions. One travel day is authorized for every 400 miles. If the **actual** travel days are less than the allowed, expenses related to the actual days **only** are reimbursable. When driving more than 400 miles one way, and you choose not to use stopover lodging, you will **NOT** be **reimbursed for** lodging or other expenses in the specialty care provider (SCP) area if you arrive early. *{JTR020202 Excluded Hours and JTR020302 Allowable Travel Time as It Affects Per Diem}*

**How is travel distance/time computed when traveling by automobile?** The authorized travel days are calculated using 400 miles per day (based on the DTOD distance between the authorized points). One travel day is authorized for every 400 miles of official distance. When the official distance is less than 400 miles one way only one day of travel time may be allowed. **{JTR010205 Defense Travel System (DTS) Use and JTR020302 Allowable Travel Time as It Affects Per Diem}** **Exceptions may include:**

- Medical necessity (letter from doctor required)
- Time of appointment (early/late) vs. Drive Time (letter from doctor may be required)

## REQUESTING REIMBURSEMENT

**How do I submit my travel documents?** You may submit your completed travel claim by E-mail, DoD SAFE, fax, or mail.

**Note:**

- **If emailing, please do NOT include social security numbers.**
- **If emailing please ensure your message, with attachments, is less than 20MB. Send multiple emails if needed, labeling 1 of 2, 2 of 2, etc. ensuring we receive all documents.**
- **If faxing, please do not highlight on documents. Highlighted areas may come across as black on faxes making the documents hard to read.**
- **if you mail** your travel packet, please keep your originals and only mail readable copies. Please ensure receipts are taped **on** paper and that tape does not cover any printing. Tape will remove the print making the receipt hard or impossible to read. Please do not staple.

## Prime Travel Benefit (PTB) & USCG

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

**Fax:** 210-536-6176

**Phone:** 1-844-204-9351 option 3, 1

**Mailing Address:** 7800 W Interstate 10, Ste. 400 San Antonio, TX 78230

**DoD SAFE** (<https://safe.apps.mil/>) is a service that makes it easy for you to exchange unclassified files (up to 8 GB) that cannot be sent through email. If you are not associated with DoD or do not have a Common Access Card (CAC) please email us and ask for a drop-off request. The SAFE site is approved

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for transfer of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and Protected Health Information (PHI) data. To encrypt your file, click on the "Encrypt Every File" checkbox and provide a passphrase when creating a drop-off. DoD SAFE does not store the passphrase nor send a copy of the passphrase to the recipients due to security reasons. **The sender is responsible for sharing the encryption passphrase with our office.**

***How do we claim shared expenses?*** Travelers can't be reimbursed for the same expense (lodging, mileage, rental car, etc.). This applies to situations where there is an NMA traveling with a patient. The shared expense is reimbursed to only one traveler. Booked expenses are reimbursed to the claimant named on the receipt. POV mileage is reimbursed to the operator of the vehicle. {JTR010302 Duplicate Payments and Fraudulent Claims}

***Can I combine the patient and NMA expenses together on one voucher?*** Due to recent changes within the Defense Travel System (DTS) we may not be allowed to combine traveler's expenses with a single claim.

- For NMAs that are DoD Personnel (Active Duty or Civilian Employee) your claim package/expenses **must be separate** from your patient's claim package/expenses. The patient's claim should be limited to their individual expenses (meals, plane tickets, etc.). See above for shared/booked expenses and POV mileage. Patient claim forms (DD1351- 2, DD1351-3, FMS 2231 Direct Deposit) **must** be in the patient's name and signature. For a minor child, claim forms need to be in their name however a parent may sign as "Parent of a Minor Child".
  - **Note: A DD 1351-3 is not required for this status' NMA claim package as their meals are reimbursed based on specialty provider's location per diem rate.**
- For **non-DoD personnel NMA and patient** claims the DD Form 1351-2 Travel Voucher should be completed in the name/signature of the adult traveler and **shared expenses (lodging, rental car, mileage, etc.) noted on this traveler's claim.** When 2 adults are traveling, the claim may be in either traveler's name with that claimant's signature.
  - **If your total shared daily meal expenses exceed the daily per diem allowance for a single traveler, we will require a claim set (DD1351-2, DD1351-3, FMS 2231 Direct Deposit) in each traveler's name/signature.**
  - **If your total shared daily meal expenses do not exceed the daily per diem allowance for a single traveler, 1 claim set can be submitted.**
  - **If you choose to submit a claim set for each traveler, we will process as needed.**
- For all claims, block 12 of the DD1351-2 should show the "Accompanied" traveler's name, relationship, and date of birth.

***Can I submit my claim through the DTS if I have an established profile?*** No. The PTB has specific lines of accounting that only the TRICARE travel representatives are authorized to use. The PTB 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 form and attached as substantiating documents. Any action taken by you in DTS will result in the AO returning your claim and delay of payment.

***Can I digitally sign my claim documents?*** Yes, a **digital** signature is accepted on all claim documents. Documents **must** be signed by either a "wet" or "digital" signature (CAC, DocuSign, PandaDoc, etc.). Choosing an italicized font for your document is **not** a digital signature and is **not** accepted by Finance. If you are unable to digitally sign, the document must be printed and wet signed prior to submitting it to our office.