

MS 812 Peace Corps Staff Travel and Transportation

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1.0 Purpose

This Manual Section sets out Peace Corps policy for domestic and international travel, transportation, the entitlements to reimbursements, and responsibilities of Peace Corps staff, including personal services contractors, and other persons traveling on Peace Corps official travel orders. The travel policy for Volunteers and Trainees is set out in MS 218 Applicant, Trainee, Volunteer Travel and Use of Hostels. Procedures implementing the staff travel program are contained in the Staff Travel Procedures.

2.0 Authorities

Sections 10(a)(5) and 15 of the Peace Corps Act (codified at 22 USC 2509(a) (5) and 2514); section 901 of Foreign Service Act of 1980 (codified at 22 U.S.C. 4081), and the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) (41 CFR Parts 300-304).

3.0 Policy

(a) It is the policy of the Peace Corps to authorize and pay for the official travel and related expenses of employees and their eligible family members in accordance with applicable travel law and regulations. This policy includes costs or expenses incurred for:

- (1) Proceeding to and returning from assigned posts of duty or temporary duty, to include shipping and storage entitlements;
 - (2) Authorized or required home leave;
 - (3) Special purpose travel including representational, medical, evacuation, visitation, in-country, educational, and invitational travel;
 - (4) Returning the remains of an employee or family member of an employee who dies abroad or while assigned within the United States; and
 - (5) Other travel as authorized and necessary to accomplish the Peace Corps mission.
- (b) Employees and their eligible family members are entitled only to actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of official travel. Travelers are expected to make a conscientious effort to minimize costs of official travel and to assume costs of a personal nature and any additional expenses incurred for personal convenience.
- (c) Travel, transportation, and related expenses under travel orders issued prior to the effective date of this Manual Section, but incurred after the effective date, are payable:
- (1) under this Manual Section; or
 - (2) under the applicable Peace Corps Manual provisions in effect at the time the travel order was issued.
- (d) Except where otherwise indicated, the FTR provisions on temporary duty travel (TDY) apply to all Peace Corps TDY.
- (e) Except for in-country staff travel, the Peace Corps reimburses for the official travel and related expenses of employees and their families in accordance with a uniform worldwide lodgings-plus per diem computation system for all official travel both domestic and international, see Travel Procedures.
- (f) For in-country staff travel, per diem rates should normally be lower than those found in the Department of State's Standardized Regulations. Rates should be set in accordance with the lodgings-plus per diem system established in the FTR, 41 CFR 301-7.6.
- (g) Emergency, unusual, or additional payment pertaining to travel and transportation that is necessary or expedient, if allowable under existing authority, may be authorized notwithstanding anything in this Manual Section.
- (h) Local transportation, including taxicabs and privately owned motor vehicles at the post of assignment, may be used for the performance of official duties that do not require a travel authorization. Such use shall be in accordance with the procedures established by the authorizing officer at the post of assignment.

- (i) All travel must be approved and authorized by the officials delegated such authority under MS 114 *Delegation of Authority* and a traveler may not approve or authorize his or her own travel.
- (j) In order to minimize transportation expenses, the Peace Corps requires the use of the services of a travel management center (TMC), which is a commercial travel agent under contract, as follows:
 - (1) For travel originating in the continental United States, all employees in the United States must use the current TMC under contract with the Peace Corps.
 - (2) For travel originating outside the continental United States, all employees may use the current TMC under contract with the Department of State or other U.S. Government agency where the employee is stationed. At locations where no TMC exists, passenger transportation services may be procured from branch offices or general agents of U.S.-flag carriers, or from travel agencies provided that the fare paid to the travel agency is not greater than the fare that would be chargeable if the services had been obtained directly from the carriers involved.
- (k) The Peace Corps requires the use of contract air carriers offering discount (city-pair) fares between certain cities, contracted for by the General Services Administration.
- (l) The primary payment instruments to be used to procure transportation for official travel are either individually or centrally billed travel cards (MS 703 and MS 706).
- (m) The Peace Corps implements and complies with the Fly America Act, which establishes as a legal requirement that all U.S. Government-financed air travel be furnished on U.S.-flag air carriers unless such travel by foreign air carrier is a matter of necessity or when U.S.-flag carrier air service is not available.
- (n) Employees and their families are not entitled to premium-class travel. Such travel is only authorized in limited situations set out in the Travel Procedures.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Chief of the Office of Administrative Services

The Chief of the Office of Administrative Services (M/AS) has overall responsibility for managing and supervising the Peace Corps travel and transportation program, the implementation of this Manual Section, and the development of procedures regarding payment and reimbursement of travel and transportation expenses. The Chief M/AS is responsible for providing all policy direction and advice regarding travel issues. The Chief M/AS exercises management and supervision of the staff travel program.

4.2 Chief of the Transportation Division

The Chief of the Transportation Division (TD), who reports to the Chief M/AS, is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the staff travel program. The Chief/TD manages the personnel who process travel requests and assures that the processing of travel and reimbursement requests is handled in a fair and expeditious manner. The Chief/TD provides guidance, training, and other support to Peace Corps staff who use the travel services made available under this Manual Section.

4.3 Approving Officer

The Peace Corps official who has been delegated the authority to approve and, under certain circumstances, to authorize official travel and transportation. Approving Officers for different types of travel are set out in Attachment G to MS 114. Approving Officers are required to exercise their authority in accordance with this Manual Section and the implementing procedures.

4.4 Authorizing Officer

The Peace Corps official who has been delegated the authority to authorize official travel and transportation. Authorizing Officers for different types of travel are set out in Attachment G to MS 114.

4.5 Employees

Employees and their eligible family members traveling under official travel authorizations are expected to use the most direct and expeditious routes consistent with economy and reasonable comfort and safety. They are expected to exercise good judgment in the costs they incur for all official transportation expenses to the same extent as if they were personally liable for payments. Claims by an employee against the Peace Corps for travel costs incurred are audited and approved according to this standard.

The traveler is responsible for:

- (a) The correct performance of official travel;
- (b) The payment of any charges incurred through failure to comply with the governing procedures, regardless of who may have assisted the traveler in making travel arrangements; and
- (c) Any excess costs resulting from circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations or services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business.

5.0 Binding Implementing Procedures

5.1 Implementing procedures for the staff travel program authorized in this Manual Section are set forth in the Travel Procedures and have the same effect as a Manual Section as stated in

paragraph 3.0 of MS 002, i.e., they constitute the authoritative Peace Corps statement implementing policies governing travel.

5.2 The binding implementing procedures must address the overall administration of the Peace Corps staff travel and transportation program, travel authorizations, guidelines for procurement of travel and transportation, per diem rules, TDY allowances and application, relocation travel rules, family travel, special circumstance travel, and other matters necessary to implement this Manual Section.

5.3 The Chief M/AS must establish an inter-office committee (Committee) to review and recommend revisions of this Manual Section and to review and make changes to the Travel Procedures, provided that they are consistent with this Manual Section. The membership of the Committee must include representatives from the Offices of Management, Global Operations, the Chief Financial Officer, Health Services, Volunteer Recruitment and Selection, Safety and Security, and other offices that the Chief M/AS deems appropriate.

6.0 Controls

M/AS is responsible for:

- (a) Providing training and guidance on the staff travel program to employees and approving and authorizing officials.
- (b) Reviewing and monitoring travel to ensure that it is appropriate and consistent with this Manual Section and the Travel Procedures.
- (c) Assuring that the Travel Procedures reflect current Federal rules and guidance on travel matters.
- (d) Establishing, in coordination with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, internal controls for approving and authorizing travel.
- (e) Reporting any misuse or abuse of travel benefits to the user's supervisor, Office of Inspector General and Human Resource Management.

7.0 Effective Date

The effective date of this Manual Section is the date of issuance.