

# U.S. Department of the Interior

## DOI TRAVEL NEWSLETTER

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### IN THE NEWS

#### Non-Refundable Restrictions Eased

The big six airlines recently eased restrictions on nonrefundable ticket policies, and left the industry with inconsistent rules. American, Delta, Northwest, Continental, United Airlines and US Airways changed the rule permitting travelers booked on a nonrefundable fare to apply the credit of that fare to a future flight. Travelers will have a full year from the original date of issuance to reschedule (less any applicable change fees), without losing the value of the ticket. The variation occurs regarding cancellations. American, Continental, United, and US Airways require travelers to call in advance to cancel the original domestic reservation on or before the scheduled departure date. Delta and Northwest have waived the requirement for canceling in advance.

#### Hotel Surcharges

Hotel operating costs have continued to rise over the past two years. A study recently released reported that insurance costs for full service hotels rose 62.5 percent

in the past two years. Hotels are trying to increase revenues any way they can. The easiest way to boost profits is to charge "hidden" fees.

These fees include housekeeping and turndown fees, fees for in-room safes, resort fees and even parking. Parking can add 25% or more to



your hotel bill, especially in cities. If you must have a rental car, ask the hotel if it has package deals that include parking.

#### Pilots Request More Authority

The Air Line Pilots Association is asking the Federal Aviation Administration to grant captains greater authority to remove threatening passengers and order bomb checks on planes.

Captains would make all safety and security decisions before takeoffs and after landings. Currently, airline employees and security officials may overrule captains when a plane is parked at the gate.

#### Southwest Airlines is Now the Largest Domestic Airline

Southwest airlines carried more domestic passengers in May than any other airline, marking the first time a low-fare carrier topped the monthly rankings.

Southwest jumped ahead of Delta and American for the month.

#### Who gets Searched at the Airport, and Why?

When you obtain your boarding pass, take a close look at your boarding pass. If SSSS appears on your boarding pass, you can expect to be searched. A random number of boarding passes have this SSSS code and if this appears you will be searched.

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**Data Sources for DOI Travel Newsletter:** Much of the travel industry information contained in this newsletter was obtained from public domain sources such as newspapers and the Internet, and was current at the time of publication. Travel industry information is provided solely for the use and information of DOI employees.

# DOI TRAVELER INFORMATION

## Fiscal Year-End Travel

Travelers are reminded that transportation tickets may not be purchased for travel commencing on or after October 1, 2003, until funding authority for FY 2004 is enacted. This restriction does not apply for travel involving no-year funds or multiple-year funds – since funding would already have been appropriated.

Please note that GSA contract city-pair tickets are generally issued 5 days prior to travel, while restricted fare tickets are issued (and charged) at the time travel reservations are made.

## E-Travel Contract

On August 14, the General Services Administration announced the award of a 10-year contract to Northrop Grumman Mission Systems of Fairfax, Virginia, and CW Government Travel Inc. of San Antonio, Texas. Each company has created an end-to-end online travel-management system. These systems will automate and consolidate travel processes involving travel planning, authorization, reservations, payment of travel claims, submit/fulfill vouchers for reimbursement, and voucher reconciliation into an end-to-end system. The systems are expected to reduce costs by 50 percent. GSA will immediately start testing both systems.

GSA opted for a two-system program to encourage competition and give agencies a choice on which system best suits their needs. E-travel is expected to be available for government agencies in December. A proposed revision to the Federal Travel Regulation requires all civilian agencies to use E-travel by September 30, 2006.

*NOTE: On August 29, EDS filed a protest against the General Services Administration's (GSA) E-Travel contract award. The General Accounting Office (GAO) will hear the protest and will make a decision within 100 calendar days of Aug. 29, which is Dec. 8. Once a*

**Table 1**  
Comparison of 2003 and 2004 Awards for DOI Most Frequently Used City Pairs

DOI's Most Used City Pairs	2003 Awarded Airline	2003 Standard City Pair	2003 Capacity Controlled	2004 Awarded Airline	2004 Standard City Pair	2004 Capacity Controlled	Unrestricted Coach Fare
Albuquerque-Phoenix	Southwest	\$79.00	\$39.00	America West	\$75.00	\$37.00	\$93.00
Anchorage-Fairbanks	Alaska	\$219.00	\$189.00	Alaska	\$229.00	\$189.00	\$264.00
Boise-Salt Lake City	Delta	\$89.00	\$64.00	Delta	\$89.00	\$64.00	\$256.50
Wash. DC (Reagan Nat'l)-Denver	United	\$167.00	\$123.00	American	\$196.00	\$96.00	\$1003.50
Denver-Wash. DC (Dulles)	United	\$422.00	\$390.00	United	\$410.00	\$394.00	\$516.60
Denver-Las Vegas	America West	\$110.00	\$105.00	America West	\$120.00	\$110.00	\$409.00
Denver-Phoenix	United	\$142.00	\$98.00	America West	\$122.00	\$99.00	\$409.00
Denver-Salt Lake City	United	\$108.00	\$68.00	United	\$78.00	\$68.00	\$416.50

### Reminder: Emergency Incident Travel Contacts

OWT has provided contacts to be used ONLY for Emergency Fire-fighting and other National Emergencies. For immediate emergency incident travel planning after hours, please call 866-785-5875.

*GAO decision has been made, GSA will proceed based on the results.*

To find out more about eTravel, go to the GSA web page at: <http://egov.gsa.gov>, click on eTravel News.

## 2004 City-Pair Contract Awards

The General Services Administration (GSA) has awarded fiscal year 2004 city-pair airline contracts, which are effective October 1. The contracts are awarded following a review of average

flight time, pricing, flight distribution and number of flights offered by each submitting airline. These tickets require no advance purchase and have no minimum or maximum stay requirements, travel time limits, charges for cancellations or blackout periods.

Capacity controlled fares offer prices even lower than the already discounted standard city-pair rates for a limited number of seats (*Table 1*). The restricted fares are less expensive than the standard city-pair rates. You must book early to get a capacity controlled fare, as the reduced fares are available for a limited number of seats on each flight. Capacity controlled fares do not have cancellation fees.

## Fiscal Year 2004 Per Diem Rates Announced

The General Services Administration has released fiscal year 2004 per diem rates. One significant change to note is that incidentals (IE) increased from \$2 to \$3

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for all designated destinations. The maximum per diem rate for Standard CONUS destinations increases to \$86 (\$55 for lodging and \$31 for Meals and Incidental Expenses) effective October 1, 2003.

Incidental expenses are fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships, and hotel servants in foreign countries. Also, included are transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the TDY site. Mailing cost associated with filing travel vouchers and payment of Government sponsored charge card billings.

The best way to search for hotels that offer government rates is to click on the official GSA website at: [www.policyworks.gov](http://www.policyworks.gov). Another site that is GSA approved is [hotelsatperdiem.com](http://hotelsatperdiem.com), which lists hotels that offer a rate that is at or below the per diem for that location. Another site that offers government rates is [www.cheaptripsnetwork.com](http://www.cheaptripsnetwork.com).

### Seating: Up to 40% can be Held in Reserve by the Airline

There is a misconception regarding how airlines regulate seating. Each airline has the option of holding up to 40 percent of advance seating from travel agents. The airline holds these seats for "Premier" travelers and for airport check in. All travel agencies see the same availability of seats when booking a reservation.

What can the traveler do? The traveler should reserve the trip as far in advance as possible. If the traveler does not receive the desired seating at the time of reserving, the agent or traveler should follow up with the airline directly. This advice applies to both the traveler with an unassigned seat as well as a traveler assigned to a seat that is not preferred.

If you would like to send a complaint directly to the airlines, this link contains airline websites:

[http://dir.yahoo.com/Business\\_and\\_Economy/Shopping\\_and\\_Services/Travel\\_and\\_Transportation/Airlines/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Business_and_Economy/Shopping_and_Services/Travel_and_Transportation/Airlines/).

### Budgeting for Rental Cars – Know the Right Questions to Ask



Not too long ago, a Department National DOI Burned Area Emergency Response Team - Southern States - was sent to Phoenix, Arizona, to assess the fire effects and prescribe treatments to protect lives and property. One member of the team reserved a vehicle for \$68 per day. When he returned the vehicle, he was shocked to see charges for \$340 in taxes for an 11 day period. Combining the taxes/fees with the daily rental fee the total came to almost \$100 per day or \$1,092 for 11 days. Table 2 shows the breakdown.

The Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC) indicates these fees are consistent with the terms of the car rental agreement and are acceptable. Government renters must pay all fees and taxes imposed by the state governments whenever the renter himself pays the bill for the rental (i.e. individual BOA card).

This is true even though the Government itself must later reimburse the traveler. Currently, all states tax car rentals except Virginia and Florida, but this can change anytime a state legislature wants.

Upon further research, it turns out that several U.S. cities really do rack up the fees and taxes. According to a study issued by Travelocity, the average car renter pays an extra 24.4 percent when renting a car at a major U.S. airport. The study found that the worst offender was the great state of Texas with six of the top 10 airports with the biggest difference between daily rental rates and the actual costs. California was ranked as the state least likely to surprise visitors with extra charges. The study provided the top 10 U.S. airports with the largest jump in price between daily rate and total price (see Table 3 following page):

Table 2

Type	Charge Per Day	Charge for 11 Days
<b>Basic SUV Rate</b>	\$68.00 per day	\$748.00
<b>A/P Fee</b>	11.11% (8.11 per day)	\$89.21
<b>Mandatory Charge</b>	3.50% (\$3.50 per day)	\$38.50
<b>CNTY Tax</b>	3.25% (\$2.50 per day)	\$27.50
<b>LIC Tax</b>	5.00% (\$3.65 per day)	\$40.15
<b>Sales Tax</b>	10.10% (\$8.55 per day)	\$94.05
<b>GARS</b>	\$5.00 per day	\$55.00
<b>Total</b>	\$99.31 per day	\$1,092.41

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Table 3

Airport	% Over Base
Houston Bush Intercontinental	71.7%
Dallas/ Ft. Worth International	61.1%
Austin Bergstrom	55.8%
Cleveland Hopkins	51.7%
Houston Hobby	51.7%
Kansas City	48.1%
Phoenix	48.0%
San Antonio	44.1%
El Paso	42.9%
Albuquerque	41.6%

Table 4

Airline	51-70 pounds	71-100 pounds
Alaska	\$25*	\$50*
Aloha	\$25	Does not accept
American	\$25	\$50
America West	\$50	\$80***
Continental	\$25	\$50
Delta	\$25	\$80
Frontier	\$0	\$50***
Hawaiian	\$25	Does not accept
Northwest	\$25	\$50***
Southwest	\$0	\$35-70***
United	\$25**	N/A***

\* Begins 10/1    \*\* for 51-99 lbs    \*\*\* Does not accept over 100 lbs

## Lighten the Load, or Pay More

Travelers continue to experience increased charges from most major airlines. Increases include items such as paper ticket fees, reservation change fees, and a "meals for sale" program. Another increase over the past six months is a domestic excess-baggage fee most major airlines are charging for every bag weighing over 50 pounds. Previously, the limit was 70 pounds. The new charges will help provide some extra revenue to cash-strapped carriers (Table 4).

## Trip Manager's Corner

DOI travelers continue to increase the use of Trip Manager. DOI achieved 4,440 air segments, 706 car and 487 hotel rentals in July, and 4,275 air segments, 685 car and 408 hotel rentals in August.

## What Do You Mean You Haven't Been to a Trip Manager Training Class?

Don't let that stop you! Get on board! Start making your own travel arrangements now and control your own travel plans! If you're one of DOI's many savvy Internet users, just take a few moments to familiarize yourself with the DOI online tutorial. Log onto Trip Manager at: [www.tripmanager.com/doi](http://www.tripmanager.com/doi) Then click on the TUTORIAL button and you're on your way! If you have questions, please contact your Bureau Trip Manager System Administrator: [http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/tmc\\_system\\_admin.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/tmc_system_admin.html) If you haven't completed an Omega World Travel profile, go to [www.doitravel.com](http://www.doitravel.com).

**TRAVELER PROFILE  
REGISTRATION ONLINE**

Go to [www.doitravel.com](http://www.doitravel.com), then click on the 'Profile Registration' button.

Omega World Travel will ensure your information will be available online in TripManager within 72 business hours.

... And start booking your own travel today!

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## OWT Airline Ticket Data

The following table shows updated OWT airline ticket data.

OWT Airline Ticket Data		
July 2002 – August 2003		
	Tickets Issued	Dollar Value (in millions)
Jul	17,487	\$6.24
Aug	15,428	6.69
Sep	14,661	4.69
Oct	18,406	6.77
Nov	14,273	4.61
Dec	7,453	3.16
Jan	13,609	5.50
Feb	13,460	5.44
Mar	14,468	5.80
Apr	14,577	5.88
May	13,185	5.53
Jun	10,681	4.60
Jul	11,837	5.30
Aug	11,355	4.94
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>190,880</b>	<b>\$75.15</b>

## Newsletter Topics

Are there any topics you would like to see in the DOI Travel Newsletter? If so, please let us know at [http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel\\_newsletter/feedback.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel_newsletter/feedback.html).

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**TMC Comments and Feedback Form:**  
[www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/tmc/feedback.html)

**DOI Online Quality Assurance Form:**  
[www.doitravel.com/online\\_survey.html](http://www.doitravel.com/online_survey.html)

**DOI Travel Profile:**  
[https://profiler.owt.net/doi\\_2001](https://profiler.owt.net/doi_2001)

**TripManager:**  
[www.tripmanager.com/doi](http://www.tripmanager.com/doi)

**Omega World Travel**  
[www.doitravel.com](http://www.doitravel.com)

**DOI Travel Policy**  
[www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html](http://www.doi.gov/pfm/travel.html)

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