



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240



National Policy Memorandum

Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

Number: NPM-MGMT-1

Effective: June 1, 2005

Title: Foreign Travel Policy and Procedures

Expires: June 1, 2006

1. Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform Indian Affairs employees about policies and procedures concerning official foreign travel. The Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, Policy and Economic Development (DAS-PED) is responsible by formulating policy on international issues for Indian Affairs. By coordinating approval for foreign travel, DAS seeks to assure consistency in the expression of Indian Affairs, Departmental and U.S. Government policy on international issues.

2. Scope

This policy applies to employees in the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, the Office of Indian Education Programs, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It applies to all official travel where the employee is representing the United States Government or is part of a program sponsored by the United States Government.

3. Policy

Foreign travel will be considered for approval at the discretion of only those officials listed in Part 4 below. Travel costs are to be paid by the United States Government. Due to ethics issues, payment of travel costs by non-federal sources should not be proposed for approval. Taking annual leave in conjunction with, or during the course of foreign travel is discouraged and should not be proposed.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs is responsible for providing discretionary approval of proposed foreign travel as described on the standard travel authorization form and on the Department of the Interior's form No. 1175 (referred to hereafter as DI-1175)

The Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs is responsible for providing discretionary approval in the absence of the Assistant Secretary.

The Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (Policy and Economic Development) is responsible for providing discretionary approval in the absence of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs or the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. The Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

(Policy and Economic Development) is also responsible for coordinating with officials in the Department of the Interior and the Department of State on foreign travel approved within Indian Affairs.

Employees are responsible for submitting foreign travel justifications and forms for approval at least four weeks prior to proposed travel (or six weeks when Ethics approval is needed). Employees are also responsible for knowing all of the requirements for passports, visas and other travel documents as discussed in Appendix #1 to this policy. OPED staff are available to assist with all of the above. Employees are responsible for filing a trip report with OPED within 30 days of the completion of travel.

5. Approvals

/signed/ Debbie Clark
for Michael D. Olsen
Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

6/1/05
Date

Appendix 1 Foreign Travel Guidance

Addressing international issues is one of the organizational functions of the Office of Policy and Economic Development (OPED). Traveling as a government official is different from traveling as a U.S. tourist. The United States Government expects you to perform official duties as discussed herein. Many foreign governments may expect special documentation from U.S. Government employees, also discussed herein. For this reason, foreign travel requires close coordination with many persons in the U.S. Government before, during and after travel. OPED staff can help you. Here is a list to assist the potential traveler:

Before Travel

“Official” U.S. Passport: The passport is brown with gold lettering. Many foreign governments expect U.S. government travelers to use an “official” passport, because U.S. government travelers are not tourists. Official passports are obtained by you directly from DOI’s Passport Office (Telephone: (202) 208-5292). Since you will need a passport number to properly coordinate other aspects of your travel, plan to get the passport one month before travel. If you already have an official passport, and it will expire within six months of your government travel, request a renewal at least one month before you are to begin your trip. (Some countries may deny entry if you have less than six months left on your passport).

Standard U.S. Passport. The passport is blue with gold lettering. This is the passport U.S. citizens use when they travel abroad for purposes other than U.S. Government business. The DOI Official Passport Office does not issue this passport. Obtaining this kind of passport is the responsibility of the individual traveler working with a local U.S. Passport agent. This passport should not be used when traveling as a U.S. government official. As noted above, many foreign governments expect government travelers to use an “official” passport. Under some circumstances, use of both an official and standard passport might be advisable.

Visas: Visas are the stamps or stickers that are issued by the country you will be visiting and are issued to you by that country’s embassy or consulate before travel is started. When traveling abroad, assume you will need a visa to enter the destination country. DOI’s Passport Office will determine whether a visa is needed. DOI’s Passport Office only processes visa for “official” passports only. Please allow at least two weeks to get a visa, since your passport must be physically sent to the DOI Passport Office, then couriered to the foreign embassy or consulate along with your visa application and your cashiers check to cover the visa fee (if there is one). The DOI Passport Office will also determine whether a transit visa is needed. Federal Express or DHL should be used to mail passports—never use US mail, since a US mail package/envelope will be irradiated and the passport will be damaged. *Note: In some cases foreign countries require visas for official U.S. passports but not for standard U.S. passports. If you are traveling on U.S. government business as a federal employee, you must use an official passport and obtain the required visas.*

Transit Visas: Transit visas are also stamps or stickers from countries you have to travel through to get to your destination country. You may need these when travel to or through foreign countries. DOI’s Passport Office will determine if a transit visa is needed. Just as you would for a visa, please allow at least two weeks to get a transit visa. Your passport must be physically sent to the DOI Passport Office, then taken to the foreign embassy or consulate along with your transit visa application and your cashiers check to cover the transit visa fee (if there is one). Federal Express or DHL should be used to mail passports—never use US mail, since a US mail package/envelope will be irradiated and the passport will be damaged.

Ethics: Due to ethics issues, payment of travel costs by non-federal sources should not be proposed for approval. If travel costs are proposed to be covered by a non-federal entity, OPED must also coordinate

with the ethics officials for Indian Affairs and ethics officials in the Department. Add an additional two weeks of lead time to the travel authorization approval process.

Annual Leave: Taking annual leave in conjunction with or during the course of foreign travel is discouraged and should not be proposed by the traveler. Sightseeing during off-duty hours, including weekends is acceptable as long as it is consistent with State Department travel advisories and does not interfere with the performance of duties for the U.S. delegation. Do not make plans for after-hours or weekend activities until you have arrived at your destination and know what you will have to do. Pursuant to Federal Travel Regulations, prior approval may be given for a rest day following travel that exceeds 14 hours, from “wheels up” to “wheels down” (for example: to Asia or Southern Africa).

Country Clearance: The U.S. Embassy in the country you propose to visit must approve all official government travel and needs to receive all of the basic information for your trip (who, what, when, where, why, and how.) Such information is sent through a formal communication called a “cable” (telexes are used for communications with the embassies in Canada and Mexico) Provide the information to OPED staff for coordination with the Department’s Office of International Affairs at least one month prior to the scheduled travel. This is required of government travelers and is also for your safety. It may also be possible to use this process to arrange for special services in the foreign country, for example contract interpreters.

Certification of Foreign Travel: All employees on official government travel must submit for approval a Department of the Interior form, Number DI-1175 (DI-1175). Three signatures of approval are needed (the head of your part of the bureau, the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, and the Assistant Secretary – Policy Management and Budget (PMB).) OPED staff can provide you with an electronic copy of this form and will coordinate PMB approval following AS-IA approval. Do not leave the US without obtaining all of the signatures. Also, travel vouchers cannot be processed without the properly completed form. Allow at least four weeks for processing a DI-1175 through the officials in Washington, D.C.

Foreign Currency: Your personal bank can probably order a packet of small bills for you to use on your first day for food and taxis. It takes about a week to get such a packet. Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) are common in airports and adjacent facilities. Once you arrive in your destination country, use ATMs to draw money for a day or two, rather than carrying large sums of cash with you. You will need your personal identification number (PIN) just as you would here at home. Government credit cards automatically process the conversion rates for dollars to the local currency and ATM service fees are usually less expensive than an exchange office or bank. Access fees may also be charged, too, just as they are in the U.S. Keep notes on the cost of reimbursable items so that you calculate their U.S. dollar value later.

Foreign Travel Information Security, Advisories: The U.S. Department of State posts both general travel information for specific countries, as well as travel warnings. These are accessible through State’s internet homepage located at <http://www.state.gov/travel/> OPED can also assist you in obtaining additional information.

During Travel

The U.S. Delegation: Follow the lead of the head of the delegation. If a U.S. Embassy “control officer” is also assigned to the delegation, comply with the officer’s instructions. Members of a U.S. delegation are representing the U.S.; therefore any inappropriate behavior can result in disciplinary action by the head of the U.S. delegation, including immediate termination of travel. Be courteous and helpful to the delegation. Typically, delegations have early morning pre-meetings and evening review meetings. Plan to attend all delegation meetings. Taking jet lag into account, strive to do your best as the expert in your subject matter. Once you arrive abroad, adopt the local schedule as quickly as possible to minimize jet lag.

Work Papers: If you are a member of a U.S. delegation, you will probably have working papers in addition to the notes you will take. All of the work papers and notes in your possession should be treated as sensitive and viewed only by other U.S. delegation members. Keep them in a place where they cannot be stolen easily or observed as you read them. If you take a computer on travel, take steps to assure that it is not stolen or that your data is not observed while you are on the computer or accessed when you are away from the computer.

Phone Calls and Email: Ask the hotel operator or front desk about phone charges before you make calls. Hotels in foreign countries sometimes charge a connection fee plus rates per fraction of a minute, and may even charge you for attempting calls whether or not they go through. Rates can be very expensive and add up quickly. Whenever possible, buy a calling card in the country you are visiting and use it to call home.

In some countries, phone conversations might be listened to and email messages might be read by the government of the country you are visiting. You might not know that you are being monitored. In your communications, do not disclose sensitive information such as U.S. government positions, and avoid criticizing the country you are visiting, as well as any personal information you would not want to be observed by a third party.

Personal Considerations: Find out whether your personal appliances will handle a 220-volt electrical system and if a plug adapter is needed.

Drink and use bottled water to avoid illness, even when tooth brushing. Regarding food, plan to have breakfast each day since lunch may not be possible and your dinner break may be after restaurant closing time. Keep some nutritious snacks and drinks with you to tide you over between meals. To prevent gastro-intestinal illnesses, make sure the meats that you eat are well-cooked, only eat fruits and vegetables that have been peeled or cooked, e.g. avoid salads, unpeeled fruits, etc.), and only consume pasteurized dairy products (including cream served with coffee or tea).

Regarding cell phones, if you have a multi-band cell phone that connects to GSM and GPRS-type networks, it is likely that you can use your cell phone in Europe. Other locations are not predictable. Before trying to use a cell phone abroad, call your cell phone company to enable your phone, and find out what charges you will incur to make and receive calls.

After Travel

Travel Voucher: File your voucher in a timely manner as you would any other travel. Be sure to use U.S. dollar values in your voucher. Don't wait for your billing statement. It is recommended that you call the toll-free number on your U.S. Government credit card and ask the agent to tell you what your charges were during your travel abroad. The agent will quote you the charges in U.S. dollars and you can use these values on your travel voucher. If not all of the charges have been posted, ask the agent to quote you the first exchange rate posted and use this rate to calculate the U.S. dollar values.

Trip Report: A trip report is required. Please provide OPED with a copy. A lengthy report is not necessary. A one or two page report covering the standard analytical questions is usually sufficient (who, what, when, where, why, plus how). Such a report helps to justify your travel. If the purpose of your travel is to produce a report, others in the Department might benefit from your reported findings. OPED will assist in getting appropriate information to DOI's International Affairs staff for sharing with other bureaus and offices.

Notes on Various Countries

Please remember that traveling on behalf of the United States is a privilege with special obligations. You are an employee on duty and are subject to regulation by the Department of State. Personal

communications with U.S. Embassy personnel in advance of travel is not a substitute for the procedural requirements set forth above for Indian Affairs.

Prior to departure, employees should consult the *Consular Information Sheet* for the specific country, the *Worldwide Caution Public Announcement*, and the travel publication *A Safe Trip Abroad*, all of which are available on the Department of State's website at: <http://www.state.gov/travel/>

Canada: When traveling by airplane to Canada as a government traveler, it is advisable to use an official passport or your standard (tourist) passport. The only accepted alternative documentation is an official copy of your birth certificate and a government- issued photo identification card. It is recommended that you take both your Interior employee badge as well as your drivers license, since your badge identifies you as an official and your drivers license tends to establish that you are a current resident of the U.S. Because non-U.S. citizens can get drivers licenses, licenses do not prove citizenship. Most airlines will decline boarding to persons without a passport or the birth certificate/identification documents.

Upon arrival at a Canadian airport, you will show your passport or documents to a Canadian customs agent. On your return, if you are in a major city such as Vancouver or Montreal, U.S. Department of Homeland Security may be operating in the airport terminal. If so, you will present your documents to the DHS officials in Canada. Otherwise, you will present your documents to DHS officials at your destination airport in the United States.

Mexico:

The following information comes from a 2005 announcement from the Department of State.

U.S. citizens are urged to be especially aware of safety and security concerns when visiting the border region. Thousands of U.S. citizens who cross the border each day do so safely, exercising common-sense precautions such as visiting only the legitimate business and tourism areas of border towns during daylight hours. It is strongly recommended that you stay away from neighborhoods in or near red-light districts and areas where drug dealing occurs. If you're not sure, don't go.

U.S. citizens who are victims of crime in the border region are urged to contact the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. consulate for advice and assistance.

Updated information on travel to Mexico is available at the website <http://www.usembassy-mexico.gov/emenu.html> and by telephone at 1-888-407-4747.

