DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON DC 20310

19 MAY 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS OF HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

SUBJECT: Revision to Premium-Class Policy and Procedures

It is the policy of the Department of Defense and the Department of the Army that transportation resources be vigorously managed to prevent the misuse or perception of misuse of those resources. The Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC) issued changes to the Joint Travel Regulations and Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JTR/JFTR) March 2, 2004, that significantly changed the way our officials travel using commercial aircraft, most notably, premium-class travel. The enclosure to this memorandum revises and further clarifies the policy for Department of the Army officials when traveling on commercial aircraft in accordance with the changes to the JTR/JFTR. This change supersedes paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Secretary of the Army's Policy for Travel by Department of the Army Officials, dated March 26, 2003 and change 1, dated August 13, 2003, and will be implemented immediately Army-wide.

I urge you to widely disseminate this document and recognize that the Army will remain in full compliance with Army, Department of Defense, and federal transportation policies at all times. I have authorized approval levels for the use of premium-class, less than first-class, to be the commanders of three and four-star MACOMs, who may delegate to their two or three-star MACOM chiefs of staff and/or deputy commanders. All other officials, regardless of rank, will process through the HQDA Travel and Transportation Office (SAAA-SO (Travel Policy Office)), to the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. All first-class travel will be approved at my level, in accordance with the JTR/JFTR. The authorized individuals will comply with the new OSD-mandated reporting requirements described in the attachment.

I will continue to work with our civilian and military officials to ensure that the travel policies governing the use of commercial and military aircraft, as well as ground transportation resources, are current and provide us with the appropriate level of guidance and protection to fully meet our vital mission goals.

R. L. Brownlee

Enclosure

R. L. Brownlee
Acting Secretary of the Army

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"Paragraph 3 revision has been reviewed by the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee in accordance with DoDD 5154.29, dated 9 March 1993, as PDTATAC Case 040421."

This directive supersedes Paragraph 3, Commercial Air Travel, Secretary of the Army Policy for Travel by Department of the Army Officials, dated 26 March 2003, and Change 1, dated 13 August 2003. All other paragraphs of the 26 March 2003 directive remain in effect until revised or superseded.

3. COMMERCIAL AIR TRAVEL

a. Commercial air travel must be conducted using contract fares via a contracted commercial travel office. "City-Pair" fares must be used at all times, unless specific criteria in JFTR, par. U3145 and JTR, par. C2002 can be met. "City-Pair" fares represent "best overall value", not necessarily lowest fare, therefore considerations beyond solely the ticket cost to the government must be made prior to booking any transportation with a non-contract carrier. Consideration should include total time of travel, time in layovers, lost work time to the government, and similar cost-increasing factors. Exceptions to the use of a non-contract carrier must be clearly specified on the individual's travel orders/authorizations. Instances where non-contract fares can be used are as follows:

1) Space or a scheduled contract flight is not available in time to accomplish the purpose of travel, or use of contract service would require the traveler to incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs that would increase the total cost of the trip;

2) The contract carrier's flight schedule is inconsistent with explicit policies of individual federal departments and agencies to schedule travel during normal working hours

3) A non-contract (DoD approved) carrier offers a lower fare available to the general public, the use of which results in a **lower total trip cost to the Government, to include the combined costs of transportation, lodging, meals, and related expenses**. NOTE: This exception does not apply if the contract carrier offers a comparable fare and has seats available at that fare, or if the lower fare offered by a non-contract carrier is limited to Government and military travelers on official business and only may be purchased with a Government procurement document (e.g., a GTR), contractor issued charge cards, or centrally billed account.

4) Rail service is available and that service is cost effective and consistent with mission requirements;

5) A lower through fare, special fare, commutation fare, excursion fare or

reduced-rate roundtrip fare is available to the general public and:

a) the agency determines prior to the member's travel that this type of service is practical and economical to the Government; and

b) in case of a fare that is restricted or has specific eligibility requirements, it is known or can reasonably be anticipated, based on the travel as planned, that the ticket will be used.

b. Coach class. The primary mode of transportation used for official travel by all Army officials is commercial coach-class. In all cases, premium-class travel must be treated as an exception to policy, and approved by only authorized officials, as stated in c. below.

c. Premium-class (less than First-class). There is no longer any blanket authorization to use premium-class (less than first-class) air travel for overseas travel for any DOD officials, military or civilian. All official travelers, regardless of rank or grade, must provide a written justification for each request for the use of premium-class (less than first-class) travel. In all cases, individual travel orders/authorizations must include a statement(s) that clearly identifies the appropriate citation(s) from JFTR, par. U3125 or JTR, par. C2204 to each travel order/authorization that clearly provides full justification for the use of premium class travel. Travel orders/authorizations not showing specific citations from the JFTR/JTR must be returned without approval. In addition, the traveler's statements on the travel order/authorization must identify the actual cost increase to the government for the use of premium-class travel and specify why bulk-head coach class seating, or standard coach-class seating cannot be used in lieu of the more expensive accommodations. The authorizing/order-issuing authority for each traveler, specified in d. below may authorize use of premium-class (less than first-class) commercial travel only when the statements above have been properly added to each travel order/authorization, and in complete compliance with one or more of the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) or Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR) exceptions.

A summary of the current JFTR/JTR exceptions are listed below, but travelers must use the appropriate citations from the JFTR/JTR when completing their orders/authorizations as the information below is subject to change.

1) Regularly scheduled flights along the route provide only premium-class seats;

2) No space is available in coach, and travel is so urgent it cannot be postponed;

3) Necessary to accommodate a member's disability or other physical impairment substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority **(In each**

instance of premium travel based on medical condition and/or disability, the physician's documentation must be dated within three months of the travel, and include a signed statement from the physician stating that premium-class accommodations are required; further, the traveler must document the unique reason why commercial coach bulkhead seating and/or two coach class seats cannot be used in lieu of the higher cost premium-class service. Blanket approval for premium-class travel based on medical condition or disability must not be permitted. Medical documentation is required, and must conform to the attached sample document at Attachment 1);

4) Travel on a foreign flag carrier has been approved by the normal authorizing/order-issuing official in accordance with the JTR/JFTR and the sanitation or health standards in coach are inadequate, as determined by Department of State or the Department of Defense;

5) Overall savings to the Government result by avoiding additional subsistence costs, overtime, or lost productive time that would be incurred while waiting for available coach seats;

6) Travel costs are paid by a non-federal source;

7) Obtained through the redemption of frequent traveler benefits (See section 4, Frequent Flyer Miles); or

8) Travel is direct between authorized origin and destination points (one of which is OCONUS), which are separated by several time zones, and the scheduled flight time is in excess of 14 hours, (including stopovers between flights) **AND** the traveler must conduct official business immediately upon arrival without sufficient time for a "rest period" **AND** justification exists for not departing earlier to accommodate a rest upon arrival. NOTE: If the stopover is an overnight stay, that disqualifies the traveler from using business-class. A rest stop en route is prohibited when travel is authorized by premium-class, less than first class accommodations. When this authority is exercised, a traveler is not authorized a rest period upon arrival at the duty station. The traveler is, however, permitted a short, reasonable time to check into a hotel and freshen up if necessary. This justification must not be used in lieu of scheduling coach-class accommodations that allow for authorized rest stops en route or at the destination. When returning from TDY, premium-class (less than first-class) travel must not be authorized simply because the total flight time (including stopover) is in excess of 14 hours, or in time to meet routine office responsibilities.

NOTE: A reasonable time to check into the hotel and freshen up is defined, for this policy's purposes, as an opportunity immediately upon arrival to freshen up, change clothes and/or check into housing accommodations. It does not include

time permitted for sleeping or lengthy delay upon arrival before commencement of official duties.

9) Security concerns exist that make such travel essential to the successful performance of the mission.

NOTE: When an airline flight only has two classes of accommodations, the higher class, regardless of the term used for that class, is considered to be first-class. Subsequently, any class of travel other than coach-class is subject to the conditions of this policy.

d. Authorized Approval Officials. In accordance with DOD Directive 4500.9 the SA, or his designee, is the approving authority for requests for premium-class (less than first-class) travel for those officials within the Headquarters, Department of the Army. Requests by officials of the Secretariat and ARSTAF must be submitted through the Chief, HQDA Travel and Transportation Office (SAAA-SO (Travel Policy)), to the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army; Three and Four-star MACOM Commanders and their three-star or two-star Deputy Commanders or Chief of Staff, are authorized to approve premium-class (less than first-class) travel requests by their subordinates. This authorization for approval cannot be redelegated. **Per JFTR, par. U2000 and JTR, par. C2000, no official, regardless of rank or position, may approve his or her own use of premium-class travel.** All other DA officials must process requests through appropriate Command channels through the Chief, HQDA Travel and Transportation Office (SAAA-SO (Travel Policy)), to the Administrative Assistant for approval. All documentation, including justifications, approval signatures and similar paperwork will be retained by the approving authority's office for a period not less than five years.

e. First-class. Within the DA, the SA is the sole approval authority for first-class travel paid by government funds or by a non-Federal source pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 1353. All requests for the use of first-class travel in these instances must be fully justified under the appropriate provision of the JTR/JFTR and submitted through the AA to the SA. In all cases, when only two classes of accommodations are available, the higher class, regardless of name, is first-class.

f. The senior traveler must provide justification and amend the travel order/authorization in accordance with 3. c., above. Approved requests must be maintained for five years for audit purposes.

g. **Reporting Requirement.** OSD has directed that a semi-annual report be submitted from each Service Secretary no later than 30 April and 30 September of each fiscal year. To accomplish this requirement, each authorizing official must provide a report to the HQDA Travel and Transportation Office (SAAA-SO

(Travel Policy)), no later than 15 April and 15 September, that provides detailed data on each request approved during the prior six month period. This report must include the following data elements for each instance of approved premium-class travel:

Data Element

Basic ID
- Name
- Grade
- Last 4 SSN

Unit ID
- Service
- Organization

Transportation Mode (0 = Air 1 = Ship 2 = Train)

Purpose of Travel (Use JFTR/JTR, Appendix H Codes)

Origin (City, State)

Destination (City, State)

Beginning Date of Travel

Fare Paid

Coach Fare

Ticket Issuing Location

Justification (USE CODES)

Approval Authority

GSA Purpose of Travel Codes

0 = Site Visit
1 = Info Meeting
2 = Training
3 = Speech/Presentation
4 = Conference
5 = Relocation
6 = Entitlement Travel
7 = Special Mission Travel
8 = Emergency Travel
9 = Other

First Class Justification Codes

F1	Lower class not available in time
F2	Medical
F3	Security
F4	Mission
F5	Only first class provided
F6	Non-Federal source

Business Class Justification Codes

B1	Lower class not available in time
B2	Medical
B3	Security
B4	Mission
B5	Only first class provided
B6	Non-Federal source
B7	Foreign flag coach not adequate
B8	Overall savings
B9	Over 14 hours AND immediate official business, no earlier departure possible

4. GRATUITIES (Incl. FREQUENT FLYER MILES) RECEIVED FROM COMMERCIAL SOURCES

a. General. Promotional material including frequent traveler benefits (frequent flyer miles, and hotel and rental car 'points') earned by Army travelers on official business at agency expense may be kept for personal use. The promotional material must be obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and must be at no additional government cost. The use of non-contract carriers solely to gain personal frequent traveler benefits is strictly prohibited.

b. USING FREQUENT FLYER MILES FOR UPGRADE TO BUSINESS OR FIRST-CLASS. FFM earned during official travel may be used to upgrade official or personal flights to business or first-class accommodations provided that military uniforms are not worn and there is no public advertisement of rank or grade.

Note: An Army traveler must not deliberately delay a return from TDY or increase mission cost to the government to take advantage of offered commercial travel benefits. A traveler may only delay a return from TDY if there is no impact to an Army mission (i.e., a delay from Saturday to a Sunday return, when both days are scheduled non-duty days for the traveler, and the traveler is either on an approved pass or leave) and no increased cost to the government. All expenses incurred as a result of excess costs, additional delays, circuitous route planning or unnecessary luxury accommodations not covered completely by personal FFM are the sole financial responsibility of the traveler and not reimbursed.

ATTACHMENT 1

STEPS TO FOLLOW WHEN A DOD TRAVELER REQUESTS PREMIUM-CLASS FLIGHT ACCOMMODATIONS DUE TO A DISABILITY OR OTHER PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

STEP 1 – The traveler completes Part I, Traveler's Statement of Disability or Other Physical Impairment, and submits it to the authorizing/order-issuing official (AO).

STEP 2 - The AO reviews Part I, considering the cost, alternative means to accommodate the traveler's condition and the requirement to accomplish the mission. The AO notifies the traveler if the traveler's premium-class travel is to be pursued. The traveler is instructed to have Part II of the premium-class travel package completed by competent medical authority (licensed medical practitioner).

STEP 3 – The traveler's physician completes Part II to provide acceptable medical evidence to support or refute the premium-class claim and returns Part II to the traveler.

STEP 4 – If physician indicates that premium class travel accommodations are necessary, the traveler forwards the completed documents, Parts I and II (Part II physician's assessment must remain sealed) to the AO. If the physician indicates that premium-class travel accommodations are not necessary, the traveler informs the AO and the premium-class approval process stops.

STEP 5 – AO forwards Parts I through II to the appropriate premium-class approval authority for signature/approval.

STEP 6 - The premium-class approval authority completes Part III, approving or denying use of premium-class travel. A copy of the complete package (Parts I, II, and III) will be retained in the office of the premium-class approving official for audit purposes, and a copy of Part III will be forwarded to the AO.

STEP 7 - If premium-class travel accommodations are approved, the AO must ensure the travel order/authorization is annotated to show: Business- or First-Class (as appropriate) travel was approved for medical reasons; the name and rank of approving official; the cost difference between coach-class; and, the approved premium class accommodations. The traveler is informed accordingly.

STEP 8 - With a copy of the approved premium travel order/authorization, the traveler can make travel arrangements through the CTO.

NOTE: With limited exceptions, medical information about the traveler must be kept confidential. Information can be confidential even if it contains no medical diagnosis or treatment course and even if it is not generated by a health care professional. Medical information is not to be kept in regular personnel files. Rather, keep medical information in a separate medical file that is accessible only to designated official personnel. Medical information stored electronically must be similarly protected (e.g., by storing it on a separate database).

PART I - TRAVELER'S STATEMENT OF DISABILITY OR OTHER PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

(Read Privacy Act Statement (located at bottom of page) before completing form)

1. Traveler's Name (last/first/middle):_____
2. Travelers Rank:_____ 3. Last 4 SSN:_____ 4. Service/Agency:_____
5. Organization:_____
6. Work Phone Coml and DSN:_____
7. Email Address:_____
8. Mode of Travel (Air, Ship, Train):_____
9. Travel Purpose (See Premium Class Travel Reporting Instructions, Item G)_____
10. Location where Premium Class Travel Segments Start and End (enter all segments)

Origin:_____Destination:_____

Origin:_____Destination:_____

Origin:_____Destination:_____

11. Date Travel to Begin:_____
12. Fare for Premium Travel: $_____13. Fare for Coach Class: $_____
14. Ticket Issuing Location (Name and Location of Commercial Travel Office (CTO)):_____

15. Reason for Requesting Premium Class Travel, Reference JTR/JFTR, par.:_____
16. Describe your medical condition (i.e., disease, disability, or other physical impairment) and how it interferes with traveling in coach-class.

17. Give the approximate date (month/year) your medical condition began to affect your ability to travel without special travel accommodations.

18. What is the expected duration of your medical condition?

19. What reasonable accommodation (e.g., bulkhead seating, two adjoining coach seats, seat cushion, aisle seat, etc.) could be made so that you would be able to travel in coach class?

_____

_____

CERTIFICATION AND CONSENT BY TRAVELER

I hereby certify that all statements made above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I hereby give my permission for the release of information about my service and medical condition(s) (i.e., disease and injury) to authorized agency officials and medical consultants.

SIGNATURE (Do not print) **Date**

Privacy Act Statement

In compliance with the Privacy Act of 1974, the following information is provided: Basic authority for requiring the requested information is contained in 5 USC §§5701-5733, particularly §§5721-5733, 30 USC §905 and Executive Order 9397. Disclosure of the data by you is voluntary. The principal purpose for the collecting the data is to determine the amount to reimburse a traveler for expenses incurred in connection with temporary duty travel. Information may be transferred to appropriate Federal, State, local, or foreign agencies when relevant to civil, criminal, or regulatory investigations or prosecutions. There is no personal liability to you if you do not furnish the requested information; however, we shall not be able to reimburse you for your expenses.

PART II - PHYSICIAN'S STATEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

The individual identified on the next page is requesting medical documentation that will be evaluated, along with other information, in connection with his or her request for an upgrade in air travel to premium class (business-class/first-class) as a reasonable accommodation. Please specify in your report the physical and environmental requirements connecting the identified disability or other physical impairment and the requested accommodation and whether alternative means, such as bulkhead, aisle seating or two adjoining coach class seats, may accommodate the traveler's condition.

The applicant is responsible for any cost incurred in connection with providing this documentation.

A new medical examination is not necessary if your records provide adequate documentation no more than six months old, or 12 months for validated permanent disability or physical impairment.

Please provide the medical documentation requested under "MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS." It is important that you respond to every item. If there is not sufficient space for your response, please provide a continuation sheet that indicates the corresponding item number for the information you are responding to. If an item is not applicable to the applicant's medical condition, enter "Not Applicable." After completing the form, please provide your medical stamp on the form, along with your signature.

Enclose your report and any attachments in a sealed envelope marked "MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION – PRIVILEGED – PRIVATE." Please provide it directly to the applicant.

PART II - MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

The Following Information is Provided On (full name of traveler): _____

1. Diagnosis of Disability or Physical Impairment Associated with Premium Class Accommodations:

_____

_____

2. Clinical findings that relate to the reason for travel upgrade from the most recent medical evaluation, including any of the following which have been obtained: findings of physical examination; results of laboratory tests; X-rays; EKGs and other special evaluations or diagnostic procedures; and, in the case of psychiatric diseases, the findings of mental status examinations and the results of psychological tests.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Assessment of current clinical status, relevant medications prescribed, and plans for future treatment: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. What is the expected duration of the disability or physical impairment?

_____

5. What is the probability that the individual will suffer injury or harm if he or she is not accommodated? Explain the medical basis for your conclusion.

_____

_____

6. Explain the relationship between the traveler's request for premium-class travel and the traveler's medical condition(s). Can the medical condition(s) be accommodated by any means other than travel in premium class? If the answer to any of the following questions is no, please fully explain the reasons for your response and the relation to the traveler's medical condition.

a. Can the traveler's medical condition(s) be accommodated by travel in bulkhead seating? Yes or No.

b. Can the traveler's medical condition(s) be accommodated by travel in aisle seating? Yes or No.

c. Is the traveler medically able to tolerate seating in coach class for any period of time? Yes or No.

If the answer to this question is yes, please state the maximum duration._____

d. Can seating in coach class with periodic movement around the cabin accommodate the traveler's medical condition(s)? Yes or No

e. Can the traveler's medical condition(s) be accommodated by periodic in-flight exercises designed to minimize the physical impacts of the flight? Yes or No

f. Can the traveler's medical condition(s) be accommodated by purchase of two adjoining coach seats? Yes or No

7. Does the traveler require an attendant for medical services during travel, and if so, is it necessary for the attendant to be constantly with the employee while en route?
_____ If so, explain the duties of the attendant during the time of travel.

_____

_____

8. Physician's Recommendation:

_____ Approval

_____ Approval with modifications as noted below.

_____ Denial based on reasons below.

Comments:

9. Physician's stamp:

_____

Signature Date

_____

Phone Number

_____

E-mail Address

PART III - PREMIUM-CLASS TRAVEL APPROVAL AUTHORITY DETERMINATION

The request for First-Class/Business-Class travel for (enter full Name of traveler)_____ is approved/disapproved.

_____ _____

Type Full Name, Rank and Office symbol of Premium Class Approving Official

Date

_____

Premium Class Approving Signature