

# ELECTRONIC TRAVEL DOCUMENTS PROCEDURE

## I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Travel Manager and the National Automated Travel System (NATS) automates' the travel accounting process from authorization through reimbursement. This enables the agency to have a more efficient, almost paperless travel processing system. The process consists of Travel Manager, which is a commercial off-the-shelf software (COTS) interfaced with, NATS, an in-house developed module for document tracking and integration with the Departmental Accounting and Financial Information System (DAFIS). The system also enables travelers or their designees to prepare travel authorizations and vouchers and determine the status of processing from their personal computers.

The NATS application is web-based and is located on the financial systems intranet. It is maintained and operated by the William J. Hughes Technical Center, Accounting Branch, ACT-32, and supports all travelers serviced by the William J. Hughes Technical Center. Post audits are performed after payments are made, using statistical sampling techniques.

All organizations serviced by the Technical Center Accounting Office including tenants and field sites are on Electronic Signature.

## II. POLICY

### A. Travel Manager

All travel will be processed using Travel Manager software, which will primarily be operating in a client-server environment connected to the William J. Hughes Technical Center's Accounting Branch, using the Local Area Network (LAN).

### B. Use of Travel Manager Electronic Signature Process

Each employee who travels or will approve travel for someone else is required have an Electronic Signature PIN in Travel Manager, which he/she will use to electronically sign travel authorizations and vouchers. When a document is signed, Travel Manager attaches a signature value to the document. This value is derived and encrypted from a combination of the user's signature and key data elements of the document. Users will protect their private key. Under no circumstances should a user give their private key to anyone. IF A USER THINKS THAT THEIR PRIVATE KEY HAS BEEN COMPROMISED THEY SHOULD IMMEDIATELY CONTACT THE ACCOUNTING BRANCH.

The private key is an 8 to 16-character string containing at least one digit established by the user when they log into Travel Manager 8.0 for the first time. The private key is not stored in the database and should only be known to the user.

### **C. Exceptions to Use of Electronic Signature**

Paper documents will be accepted for the following:

1. Employees that are on extended TDY/details (Employee must be identified to the Accounting Branch in advance)
2. Employees whose normal duty location is other than the Technical Center (employee must be identified to the Accounting Branch in advance)
3. Emergency travel in which it was not possible to have the travel authorization approved electronically (authorizations only). An electronic approval of the authorization should be completed after the fact. All vouchers must be electronically approved.

### **D. Reimbursement via Automated Clearing House (ACH)**

Reimbursements will be paid via ACH. This eliminates the Government's expense and the inconvenience of processing check payments and will expedite reimbursements to the travelers.

### **E. Self Approval Not Authorized**

The structuring of the routing lists in Travel Manager is such that the system will allow for self-approval of travel documents. However, **self-approval of travel vouchers is not authorized**. Approving officials must have an alternate electronically approve their vouchers.

### **F. Document Retention**

Since NATS has been designed to reduce the administrative burden and expense of a paper-based process, the documents are created, routed, approved, signed and stored electronically. Under this "paperless" system, the traveler is required to retain a copy of their travel voucher and all pertinent documentation (applicable receipts, authorizations, amendments, etc.) for a period of 6 years 3 months from the travel completion date, in accordance with FAA Order 1350.15B, Records Organization Transfer and Destruction Standards.

Per section 301-52.6 of the FAATP, applicable receipts must be retained which would include lodging, common carrier transportation, car rental and any expense greater than \$75. These receipts are required to be located at the traveler's official duty station.

### **G. Standard Travel Authorization/Voucher Numbers**

A standard numbering scheme for travel authorizations will be used. The numbering scheme is necessary for the automated interface from Travel Manager to NATS to DAFIS. The first step in preparing a travel authorization is to obtain a travel order number. This number is obtained by using the Travel Order Number Generator (TONG) located at <http://abinet.act.faa.gov/tonumber/default.asp>. This is a twelve digit number (FY/ Cost center/ random number/ S, M or T).

### **H. Travel Voucher Inquiry System (TVIS)**

The TVIS system provides the capability for travelers to access the status of voucher reimbursement on-line. In addition, travelers can look up current per diem rates through the Travel Manager software as well as the GSA policy works website, <http://intraweb.tc.faa.gov/Webpages/Finance>. This will save phone calls to the Accounting Branch.

## **III. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. Travelers Responsibility**

Each traveler should review for correctness and electronically sign his/her own travel voucher, regardless of whether he/she prepared the document. Each traveler may access the Travel Voucher Inquiry System (TVIS) to inquire when their voucher has been paid.

### **B. Administrative Officer's Responsibility**

The Administrative Officer (AO) should review travel documentation for correctness. Their review should ensure proper accounting fund citations are used. Some AO's are given responsibility to formally review travel vouchers and electronically sign the documents in Travel Manager prior to the respective Approving Official electronically approving them.

### **C. Approving Official Responsibility**

The Approving Official should review and verify the itinerary and expenses on travel authorizations and vouchers and electronically sign those documents.

## **IV. DOCUMENT PREPERATION PROCEDURES**

### **A. Document Preparation Approval and Processing**

Travel authorizations and vouchers are created and processed in Travel Manager. Travel Manager tracks electronic documents by designating a status at each step in the process. In the following description, the status of a document after each step in the process is indicated in bold type.

### **B. Travel Authorization Preparer (traveler or administrative personnel)**

1. Obtain a travel order number from the TONG system.
2. Create the authorization using Travel Manager software (**CREATED**).
3. Save the document.
4. Creator electronically signs the authorization using his/her electronic signature pin (**SIGNED**).

### **C. Voucher preparation (traveler or administrative personnel)**

1. The traveler completes the voucher by selecting "voucher from authorization" from the drop down menu in Travel Manager (document status is "CREATED" in Travel Manager).
2. The traveler signs the document by entering his/her own electronic signature PIN (status changes to SIGNED).
3. The traveler saves and routes the voucher to the next level of review.
4. The traveler may monitor their travel voucher within Travel Manager to ensure routing is completed and the voucher is data linked to Accounting.
5. The traveler prints the voucher and places in his/her file with the authorization and all receipts.

### **D. Travel Approving Official**

1. Approving Official is notified by cc:Mail that a document is waiting for approval.
2. Approving Official logs into Travel Manager. A message appears "Documents are waiting for your review."
3. Approving Official "reviews" and enters the electronic signature pin code to change the status to APPROVED or DISAPPROVED.

If the approving official determined that the document should be revised, he/she may make the change. This individual may enter comments and "return" the authorization to the creator. The document returns to the creator with a notice of the adjustment date, time, and name of the person who adjusted it. The original data and all adjustments are stored as a permanent part of the record.

## **V. AUDIT PROCEDURES**

### **A. Accounting Entries**

The interface between Travel Manager and NATS and from NATS to DAFIS, are processed on a daily basis. The Accounting Branch manually updates NATS for travel documents processed that were not entered into the Travel Manager central database. The NATS application generates the entry into DAFIS. Travel advances, if needed, are processed directly into DAFIS.

### **B. Travel Audits**

The Accounting Branch conducts three types of audits:

1. Monthly 1% random sample of Electronic Signature Vouchers.

A 100% audit on a random sample of 1% of Electronic Signature vouchers filed each month is performed. These vouchers are audited manually with receipts requested from the traveler. The NATS reports option includes a feature, which selects the statistical sample of vouchers for post-audit.

2. Periodic Electronic Signature Audits

The Accounting Branch will periodically conduct detailed electronic signature post audits as necessary to determine the success of the electronic signature process. All documents may be subject to an audit.

3. Audits of Vouchers greater than \$2,500, Division Managers and higher, and all ACT-30 personnel.

All travel vouchers greater than \$2,500, Division Managers or higher and ACT-30 personnel are automatically "suspended" in NATS and held for pre-audit. The Accounting Branch, ACT-32, monitors this suspense report, on a daily basis. Hard copies are requested of pertinent travel documents so that we can perform 100 percent audits. Payment is made on these vouchers once the audit has been completed. If the Accounting Branch does not have the receipts within 5 working days, the administrative officer or secretary of the applicable organization is notified.

Currently, Travel Manager/NATS interface cannot "flag" foreign travel vouchers to the suspense file. Organizations are instructed to send copies of foreign travel documents

to the Accounting Branch at the same time that the vouchers are electronically approved for payment.

### **C. Pre-Audit Notification to Traveler**

1. When a voucher is identified for audit, Accounting will notify a traveler by cc:Mail requesting copies of their travel documentation be submitted to the Accounting Branch within 15 days.

(a). If the documentation is not provided within 15 days, on the 16th day ACT-32 will send a second notification through cc:Mail to the traveler. This message will explain that travel documentation must be sent to ACT-32 for audit within 30 days of the initial notification. If the traveler does not submit requested documentation within the prescribed timeframe, the Accounting Branch will offset the amount paid from any future vouchers submitted by the traveler. If the individual travels rarely, the Accounting Branch will recoup the amount using standard debt collection procedures. If a person is on extended TDY, our request for documentation will be deferred until the traveler returns.

(b) If documentation is not received within 30 days of the initial notification, the payroll deduction process will commence and the travelers' supervisor will be notified through cc:mail.

### **D. Post-Audit Notification of Findings**

1. After the audits are completed by ACT-32, travelers with the following results will be notified through cc:Mail;

(a) Fail (underpayment) – Explanation of the findings. A payment of \$##.## will be made by the Technical Center to the traveler within 30 days. Underpayment amounts less than \$50 will not be paid.

(b) Fail (overpayment) – Explanation of the findings. Please send remittance to the Accounting Branch within 15 days. Overpayment amounts less than \$50 will not be collected.

4. In the event of an overpayment and the traveler has failed to remit the amount of the overpayment to Accounting within 30 days of notification of the audit findings, the payroll deduction process will commence and the travelers' supervisor will be notified.

5. In the event of an underpayment, Accounting will pay the traveler the unclaimed difference within 15 days of the audit. Underpayment amounts less than \$50 will not be made.