



File Code: 6500**Date:** May 12, 2022**Route To:****Subject:** Travel and Lodging Guidance for Incident Response**To:** Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Deputy Chiefs, and WO Directors

Agency leadership recognizes the challenges faced during emergency response due to traffic fatigue under unusual weather when traveling to assignments or not having established sleeping and/or support facilities available. Therefore, in compliance with Federal Travel Regulations, the Forest Service authorizes the following options contained in this memorandum through calendar year 2022 and supersedes all previous related memorandums.

The flexibilities contained in this memorandum are intended to apply specifically to wildland firefighters and personnel supporting wildland fire. Additionally, in the event of all hazard incidents beyond fire (e.g., hurricanes) during the effective period of this memo, these options will also apply to Forest Service responders and support personnel directly addressing all hazard incidents.

Emergency per diem for TDY locations within 50-miles of duty station

Provide emergency per diem for temporary duty (TDY) within the local travel area (7 U.S.C 2228). Emergency conditions may include wildfire, hurricanes, other disaster response and support that would endanger a traveler's health or safety if the individual were to return to their duty station or residence. The traveler should attempt to obtain pre-authorization whenever possible. However, the primary concern is for the traveler's safety and the agency may grant post-travel approval on a case-by-case basis. Justification should be signed by the line officer and uploaded in ETS2 to the voucher.

Lodging Costs

First line supervisors currently have the authority to approve lodging costs on an actual expense basis not to exceed 150% of the [applicable maximum per diem rate](#). (Meals and incidental expenses amount remain the posted GSA rate.) Due to the significant increase in lodging costs across the United States and the urgent requirement for travelers to quickly report to an assignment, this authority for first line supervisors has been increased to 300% (enclosure). The traveler will be responsible for any costs over 300% of the applicable per diem rate. This exception is only applicable for wildland fire suppression and all hazard response travel.

Privately Owned Vehicles (POV)

First line supervisors may authorize travelers to use their privately owned vehicle (POV) in lieu of a common carrier, without submitting the *Constructive Travel Using Common Carrier Cost Comparative Statement* ([FS-6500-6](#)).



Nonconventional lodging

In the absence of government provided or conventional lodging under the [Federal Travel Regulations](#) (FTR), the Forest Service authorizes the use of [nonconventional lodging](#) (e.g., Airbnb, VRBO, HomeAway) to support incident responders. Individual travelers may reserve outside of ETS2 or by contacting the CFO Travel Helpdesk for reservation assistance. Travelers requiring nonconventional lodging reservations for a group must request assistance from the CFO Travel Helpdesk.

Government Travel Card

A government-issued travel charge card is required to make travel arrangements in ETS2 or with BCD Travel for each individual traveler. Travelers can request a card at the [Travel Compliance SharePoint](#) and follow instructions.

Traveler Assistance

All travelers can receive assistance by logging into ETS2, calling the 24/7 BCD travel line (800-877-6120), or contacting the CFO Travel Help Desk (877-372-7248, option 3) Monday through Friday, 8:15 am – 4:15 pm Mountain Time.

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Chief Financial Officer

Enclosure: Calculation of 300% Per Diem Limit