

Department of Commerce · National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration · National Marine Fisheries Service

<b>NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE INSTRUCTION 31-104-01</b> JANUARY 1, 2004	
<b>Financial Management and Budget</b> <b>Travel, NMFSPD 31-104</b>	
<b>FOREIGN TRAVEL PROCEDURES</b>	
<b>NOTICE:</b> This publication is available at: <a href="http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/op/pds/categories/financial_management_and_budget.html">http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/op/pds/categories/financial_management_and_budget.html</a>	
<b>OPR:</b> F/MB (D. Fioravante) <b>Type of Issuance:</b> Revision, February 2014	<b>Certified by:</b> F/MB (G. Reisner)
<b>SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:</b>  Revisions include more detailed instructions, step-by-step procedures, and a review and final approval process for compliance with the foreign travel delegation, as noted in the NOAA Travel Regulation. This Procedures Directive (PD) is also revised to be consistent with NMFS Instruction 30-101-01, the directive on the structure of policies and procedures.  Signed _____ /s/ _____ March 20, 2014 Donna Rivelli Date Acting Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer	

1. Introduction. This instruction provides the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) procedures for obtaining approval of WHTI and non- WHTI foreign travel in compliance with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) foreign travel regulations, policy and procedures, and required use of the Department of Commerce (DOC) Integrated Travel Manager (ITM) system. These procedures are applicable to all NMFS Financial Management Center (FMC) and headquarters Program and Office employees.

2. Foreign Travel Procedures.

2.1 Travel Authorizations, Non-SES Employees:

- a. The NMFS FMC or Program/Office Travel Point of Contact (Travel POC) prepares the travel authorization (TA) in ITM and obtains initial approval from the Authorizing Official (*reference section 3, Authorizing Officials, and section 4, Responsibilities of Authorizing Official*).
- b. The Travel POC verifies any necessary visa requirements, obtains completed visa application, verifies passport validity, submits official passport renewal application if applicable, and verifies that the NOAA Foreign Travel Briefing/Defense Travel

Briefing (FTB/DTB) is current (*reference section 4, "Visa Requirements" and "Defense Travel Debriefing" for applicable procedures and forms*).

- c. The Travel POC routes the TA in ITM, via internal Financial Management Center (FMC) procedures as appropriate, to the NOAA Travel Office (NTO). NTO verifies the FTB/DTB is current and the passport is valid, and routes the TA to the Authorizing Official.
- d. For all travel requiring an Electronic Country Clearance (ECC), passport or visa, the Travel POC submits to the NMFS Foreign Travel Coordinator (NMFS FTC) a travel package which includes applicable copies of the following: initial approved TA, completed ECC cable form, visa and/or passport application(s), photos, gift sponsor's invitation, current FTB/DTB, completed NMFS Foreign Travel Checklist, and current flight itinerary. The Travel POC may email the travel package to the NMFS FTC at [fisheries.foreigntravel@noaa.gov](mailto:fisheries.foreigntravel@noaa.gov) (*reference section 4, "NMFS OMB Intranet" for NMFS Checklist link*).
- e. The NMFS FTC submits the ECC request to the Department of State to obtain clearance approval, and the visa application to NTO for processing, if applicable.
- f. The Authorizing Official stamps/accepts (final approves) the TA in ITM. Passports should be valid and visas and ECCs obtained prior to the Authorizing Official final approving the TA.
- g. The NMFS FTC requests retrieval of passport from NTO.
- h. The Travel POC retains the original copy of the approved TA and associated documents per the NOAA Travel Records retention policy (*reference section 4, NOAA Travel Records Retention Policy*).

## 2.2 Travel Authorizations, SES Employees:

- a. The Travel POC prepares the TA in ITM and obtains initial approval from the Authorizing Official (*reference section 3, Authorizing Officials, and section 4, Responsibilities of Authorizing Official*).
- b. The Travel POC verifies any necessary visa requirements, obtains completed visa application, verifies passport validity, submits official passport renewal application, if applicable and verifies that the FTB/DTB is current (*reference section 4, "Visa Requirements" and "Defense Travel Debriefing" for applicable procedures and forms*).
- c. The Travel POC routes the TA in ITM, via internal Financial Management Center (FMC) procedures as appropriate, to the NMFS FTC for administrative review only.
- d. For all travel requiring an ECC, passport or visa, the Travel POC submits to the NMFS FTC a travel package which includes applicable copies of the following: initial approved TA, completed ECC cable form, visa and/or passport application(s), photos, gift sponsor's invitation, current FTB/DTB, completed NMFS Foreign Travel Checklist, and current flight itinerary. The Travel POC may email the travel package to the NMFS FTC at [fisheries.foreigntravel@noaa.gov](mailto:fisheries.foreigntravel@noaa.gov) (*reference section 4, "NMFS OMB Intranet" for NMFS Checklist link*).
- e. The NMFS FTC provides administrative review of the TA in ITM, obtains visa and required cable clearances, and routes the TA in ITM to the NOAA Travel Office (NTO). NTO verifies the FTB/DTB is current, the passport is valid, and routes the

- TA to the Authorizing Official. The NMFS FTC requests retrieval of Official passport from NTO.
- f. The Authorizing Official stamps/accepts (final approves) the TA in ITM.
    - i. Passports should be valid.
    - ii. Visas and ECCs should be obtained prior to the Authorizing Official's final approval of the TA.
  - g. The Travel POC retains the original copy of the approved TA and associated documents per the NOAA Travel Records retention policy (*reference section 4, NOAA Travel Records Retention Policy*).

### 2.3 Official Passports and Visas:

- a. Per NOAA Travel regulations 306-5.2 "All NOAA employees traveling to a foreign location on official business must obtain an official passport and official visas, if required, before leaving the United States" (*reference section 4, Official Passports*).
- b. Department of State security requirements dictate that all official passports must be returned to the NTO for safekeeping in the official passport repository upon completion of foreign travel. Official passports are the property of the Federal Government and are not the personal property of the traveler. Official passports must never be kept at home.
- c. The Travel POC is responsible for tracking all official passport renewals in a timely manner that is consistent with NMFS required lead times (*reference section 2, Lead Times*). The Travel POC must retain copies of all current passports and any valid visas as needed.
- d. Upon receipt of the final approved TA, NTO releases the official passport or visa to the NMFS FTC. The NMFS FTC sends the passport/visa via express mail overnight courier. Upon return from travel, the traveler returns the official passport to the Travel POC for return to NTO thru the NMFS FTC.
- e. For those FMCs that are authorized by NTO and the NMFS Office of Management and Budget to retain and secure their official passports onsite, upon receipt of the final approved TA, the Travel POC releases the official passport to the traveler. Upon return from travel, the traveler returns the official passport to the Travel POC.
  - i. The Travel POC is responsible for tracking and updating the list of employees with FMC-secured passports, and emailing the "NMFS Quarterly Report of Valid Official Passports" to the NMFS FTC at [fisheries.foreigntravel@noaa.gov](mailto:fisheries.foreigntravel@noaa.gov). No Personally Identifiable Information (PII) should be included on the report.
  - ii. Quarterly reports are due on January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15.
  - iii. The report includes:
    - 1. Travel POC Information: Line Office/Office Name, FMC organization code, FMC name, Travel POC's name, email address, telephone number
    - 2. Valid Official Passports on File:
      - a. Total number of official passports for the quarter
      - b. Name of passport holders and expiration dates (i.e., John Doe – EXP 10/12/14)

- f. Upon leaving Government service, NMFS employees must return all valid official passports to the NTO for disposition; employees do not need to return already invalid or expired official passports. Employees wishing to keep their cancelled official passport as a souvenir must return their valid official passport with a memorandum of explanation to the NTO. The NTO forwards the passport to the Department of State for cancellation. It is at the discretion of the Department of State whether a cancelled passport is returned to the traveler.

#### 2.4 Outside Reimbursement (Gift/Bequest):

The NMFS Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations (DAA/O) reviews and approves gifts/bequests from a non-federal source or a foreign donor prior to final electronic stamping/acceptance of the TA by the Authorizing Official. Gift/Bequest requests must be in compliance with DAO-239, section 9 of "Gifts and Bequests for Official Travel (*reference section 4, CD 210 Record of Gift or Bequest*).

- a. The Travel POC emails the completed CD-210, "Record of Gift or Bequest," SF-326, "Semiannual Report of Payments Accepted from a Non-Federal Source," NOAA Travel Gift Questionnaire, gift sponsor's invitation and any applicable clearance by the DOC Ethics Law and Program Division to the NMFS FTC (*reference section 4, SF 326 Semi-Annual Report of Payments Received from a Non-Federal Source*).
  - i. Complete all sections of the CD-210 and include the total or value amount of the gift.
  - ii. Do not include the total amount of the gift on the TA if the sponsor is providing travel in-kind (i.e., sponsor makes all travel arrangements). Include the total amount of the gift on the TA if the sponsor will reimburse the Government for all applicable expenses (i.e., check or wire transfer made out to NOAA Finance).
- b. The NMFS FTC conducts a hard copy administrative review of the request, obtains DAA/O approval and returns all documents to the Travel POC.

#### 2.5 Premium Class Travel (CD-334):

The NMFS DAA/O approves all premium class travel prior to final electronic stamping/acceptance of the TA by the Authorizing Official. Premium class travel is defined as business or first class travel accommodations for air, train, and ship travel. First-class accommodations will not be approved except for serious medical conditions, which must be documented by a competent medical authority on a CD-334, "Request for Approval of Extra Airfare Accommodations" and annually re-verified (*reference section 4, Transportation Expenses; reference section 4, CD-334 Request for Approval of Extra Airfare Accommodations*).

- a. The Travel POC submits a hardcopy of the completed CD-334 to the NMFS FTC to initiate the approval process.
- b. If the premium class request is based on a medical disability, the Travel POC provides a copy of the "Reasonable Accommodation" from the NOAA Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (RAC).
- c. The NMFS FTC conducts a hard-copy administrative review of the request, obtains DAA/O approval, and returns the CD-334 to the Travel POC.

#### 2.6 Invitational Foreign Travel:

The NMFS DAA/O pre-approves all requests for invitational travel prior to final approval (electronic stamping/acceptance) of the TA by the Authorizing Official. Invitational travel approval requires a TA only. The ECC or FTB/DTB is not required for these travelers. NMFS is not responsible for the issuance of any passport and/or visa for travelers on invitational foreign travel. Invitational travelers are expected to obtain personal tourist passports and/or visas on their own. NMFS reimburses travelers for passport and visa fees when approved on the TA.

- a. The Travel POC submits a request for pre-approval of invitational foreign travel to the NMFS FTC. The justification must indicate the work performed by the traveler, why that function cannot be performed by anyone else, and the impact of not authorizing the travel.
- b. The NMFS FTC conducts a hard-copy administrative review of the request after the Travel POC enters the TA into ITM. The NMFS FTC obtains DAA/O approval, and returns the request to the Travel POC.

#### 2.7 Lead Times:

- a. Foreign Travel: Allow 5 weeks prior to the departure date for all submitted foreign travel packages to be processed by the NMFS Office of Management and Budget. All foreign travel packages submitted without 5 weeks lead time must include a late travel justification memorandum addressed to the NMFS Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer from the Regional Administrator, Science Center Director, or Program/Office Director explaining why the deadline was not met.
- b. ECC: Allow 4 weeks prior to departure for ECC requests to be coordinated by NMFS FTC for processing and approval by the Department of State.
- c. Passports:
  - i. Allow 6 weeks prior to departure for all foreign travel packages containing a DS-11, "First Time Passport," application. This applies to employees who have never been issued a passport, either personal or official, or who were last issued a passport more than 15 years prior.
  - ii. Allow 4 - 6 weeks prior to departure for all foreign travel packages that contain a DS-82, "Passport by Mail," application for either the renewal of an existing official passport or new request for an official passport (using the employee's current tourist passport as birth evidence).
  - iii. Allow 4 - 6 weeks prior to departure for all foreign travel packages containing a DS-64, "Lost or Stolen U.S. Passport," and a DS-11 application for official passport replacement requests.
  - iv. Allow at least 7 business days for official passport retrieval requests. Official passport retrievals are requested by the NMFS FTC and submitted to NTO. NTO requires a copy of the approved TA and current FTB/DTB as proof of Official Travel Duty for a traveler. For official passport retrievals only, a copy of the TA and FTB/DTB can be emailed to the [fisheries.foreigntravel@noaa.gov](mailto:fisheries.foreigntravel@noaa.gov) with a cc to NMFS FTC. (*reference section 4, "Official Passports" for all forms*)
- d. Visa: Allow a minimum of 15 business days for the processing of a visa application, with the exception of the following countries:

- i. 2 – 3 weeks to obtain visas for China, Spain, or Vietnam;
- ii. 6 weeks to obtain visas for Russia or India; and
- iii. 8 weeks to obtain visas for Cuba (*reference section 4, “Visa Requirements” for all forms*)
- e. Outside Reimbursement (Gift/Bequest): Allow approximately 10 business days to obtain DAA/O approval.
- f. Premium Class Travel: Allow approximately 10 business days to obtain DAA/O approval.
- g. Invitational Travel: Allow approximately 10 business days to obtain DAA/O approval.

2.8 Travel Voucher:

- a. The traveler submits voucher information to the Travel POC, who prepares the travel voucher in ITM and obtains required approvals.
- b. The Travel POC provides the traveler with a copy of the signed travel voucher, if requested.
- c. The Travel POC’s office retains the original travel record, per the NOAA Travel Record Retention Policy (*reference section 4, NOAA Travel Record Retention Policy*).

3. Authorizing Officials.

<b>Science Positions:</b>	<b>Authorizing Officials:</b>
Chief Scientist	Assistant Administrator (AA) Alternates: DAAs
Senior Executive Service (SES) Center and Program/Office Directors Scientific & Technology/Professional (ST) positions Senior Level (SL) positions	Chief Scientist (primary) Alternates: DAAs
Non-SES employees of Centers and Programs/Offices	Applicable Center Director or SES level Program/Office Director (primary) Alternates: Chief Scientist, DAAs

<b>Non-Science Positions:</b>	<b>Authorizing Officials:</b>
DAAs (Regulatory Programs and Operations)	Assistant Administrator Alternate: Chief Scientist
Senior Executive Service (SES) Regional Administrators and Program/Office Directors	DAA for Regulatory Programs (primary)
SES Office Directors (Management and Budget, Office of Law Enforcement)	DAA for Operations (primary) Alternates: DAAs, Chief Scientist
Non-SES employees of Regional Offices and Programs/Offices	Applicable Regional Administrator, DAAs, or SES level Program/Office Director (primary)

4. References. This section includes websites for NOAA Corporate Services and NMFS headquarters information about NOAA travel regulations, visa requirements, official passports, and other travel-related information.

## Websites

### NOAA Travel Office home page:

- [http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/Travel\\_Home.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/Travel_Home.html)

### Responsibilities of Authorizing Official:

- <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/docs/TR.301-1.PDF>
- Scroll to section 301-1.23

### NMFS OMB intranet page:

- <http://home.nmfs.noaa.gov/mb/travel/index.htm>
- Click on “NMFS Checklist” link to download form

### Visa Requirements (for official passports):

- <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/FT.html>
- Scroll to “Official Visas”

### Official Passports:

- Go to: <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~finance/docs/TR.%20306-5.pdf>
- Scroll down to section 306-5.1

### Defense Travel Briefing (also referred to as “Foreign Travel Briefing):

- <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/FT.html>
- Scroll to “Foreign Travel Requirements”
- The Defensive Travel Briefing is in Chapter 306 – 3.5.

### NOAA Travel Authorizations:

- <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/docs/TR.301-2.pdf>
- Travel Authorizations is in Chapter 301 – 2.1.

### CD 210 Record of Gift or Bequest:

- [http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/TF.Common\\_Travel\\_Forms.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/TF.Common_Travel_Forms.html)
- Scroll to “Gift or Bequest”

### CD 334 Request for Approval of Extra Airfare Accommodations

- [http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/TF.Common\\_Travel\\_Forms.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/TF.Common_Travel_Forms.html)

- Scroll to “Airfare”

**SF 326 Semi-Annual Report of Payments Received From a Non-Federal Source:**

- [http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/TF.Common\\_Travel\\_Forms.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/TF.Common_Travel_Forms.html)
- Scroll to “Gift or Bequest”

**NOAA Travel Gift Questionnaire:**

- [http://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2013/april/commerce\\_travel\\_gift\\_questionnaire-2013-noaa.pdf](http://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2013/april/commerce_travel_gift_questionnaire-2013-noaa.pdf)

**Transportation Expenses:**

- <http://www.wfm.noaa.gov/workplace/PremClassTravelRegs.pdf>
- Scroll to section 301-10.126 regarding premium class travel

**Foreign per diem rates:**

- [http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](http://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp)

**NOAA Travel Record Retention Policy:**

- <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/finance/docs/TV.NMFS.pdf>

**Office of General Council – Ethics Law and Program Division Travel Gift FAQ:**

- [http://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2013/january/travel\\_gifts-awae-2013-e\\_0.pdf](http://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2013/january/travel_gifts-awae-2013-e_0.pdf)