



# GTCC NEWSLETTER

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## References

- COMDTINST M4600.18
- JTR, U2500
- FTR, Ch. 300
- DHS Financial Management and Accounting Section 3.2.4 Travel Handbook
- PPC Travel Resources

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## GTCC

### Travel Charge Card

### Web Page

<http://www.uscg.mil/psc/bops/govtrvl/>

JPMC Travel Manager Help Line

**866-725-1184**

Verification ID must be provided.

## Airline Non-Refundable Fees

Effective 01September 2015, The Lufthansa Group – Lufthansa, Austrian, Belgian, or Swiss airlines (these four carriers are all operated by Lufthansa Group) will begin charging an additional fee. All reservations on these four airlines will have a non-refundable fee of \$17.50 that is charged by the airline as a tax. The \$17.50 will be included in the total price of the ticket. As an example, a ticket that was \$1,000 on August 31 with all taxes included will be a \$1,017.50 ticket starting on September 1.

The important part of this message is that the \$17.50 fee is non-refundable even when the rest of the ticket is completely refundable. The airlines are not providing notification that any portion of the total is non-refundable. As a result, if a traveler has a refundable ticket issued on one of these four airlines, then cancels the trip and requests a refund, CWTSatoTravel will be able to return all but the \$17.50 fee that Lufthansa Group is keeping. The online booking system will not provide any notification that \$17.50 is non-refundable as no notification is included by the airline in their pricing.

When a Lufthansa Group airline is a codeshare partner with a U.S. carrier (e.g. they are a codeshare partner with United) this fee will not apply when CWTSatoTravel is able to issue a ticket under the U.S. carrier code.

Please help relay this information to the AO's since this is something they will need to know about when processing travel claims for members whose travel is canceled or changed (kind of like submitting for the SATO fee for canceled travel). Travelers also need to be made aware so they can recover this airline fee as well as the SATO fee for a cancelled trip. Awareness is key to help avoid a delinquency.

## Use GetThere and \$SAVE

Less than 15% of CG travelers use GetThere (self service option) and instead elect to call SATO to make their travel reservations. While we clearly understand there are cases where complex travel warrants the full service option, many travelers are choosing to burn that extra \$13.30 every time they travel because they prefer to call and not use the self-service option. When the SATO contract was awarded 7/2012, we sent over 60K emails to announce the transition and updates of GetThere user profiles. Also all new CG personnel are sent a similar e-mail each month to advise they have a GETTHERE profile and the instructions on how to access/use the self-service option. This represents a total of over 60K e-mails sent over the past 3 years regarding this online self service tool. From the program level, we are trying to save travel dollars, but we cannot currently force the traveler to use the online option and stop picking up the phone.

Anything you can do from a deck plate leadership level to ensure your travelers know how to use this self service feature can only help. With your support, we can help reduce these travel expenditures. Service to Nation.

## GSA and City Pair Fares

The General Services Administration announced that it has finalized contracts with seven major U.S. air carriers that will provide discounted tickets to federal employees on official travel next year.

The newly negotiated contracts for the City Pairs program will save the government \$2.35 billion in fiscal 2016, GSA said. The program saves money by setting a fixed price for tickets up front, which is 52 percent lower than the price for comparable commercial airline tickets. The program also gives federal employees more flexibility in how they book their business trips, by eliminating added costs such as cancellation or change fees.

Next year's contracts will expand into 1,266 additional markets, GSA said. The average price for one-way tickets under the program decreased 3 percent, while commercial airfare prices have increased 3 percent so far in 2015, the announcement stated.

The program has also expanded its use of dual markets, in which there are even more heavily discounted fares for federal travelers who are able to book their tickets in advance. The number of dual-fare markets grew 24 percent to 8,564 in the fiscal 2016 contracts, GSA said.

"GSA's mission is to help federal agencies save money, and that includes getting the best price for government travelers," Federal Acquisition Service Commissioner Tom Sharpe said in a statement. "By leveraging the government's buying power through the City Pair Program, we help federal agencies reduce travel costs and save billions of taxpayer dollars."

The new rates will take effect on Oct. 1. For more information click here (<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104512>). Excerpt from [www.govexec.com](http://www.govexec.com).

## Required Use of SATO and Why

The policy on required use of the TMC (i.e. SATO) and fare selection requirements (use of a contracted fare unless authorized by the approving official on the orders) is directed by the JTR and FTR which has the effect of law. Opinion: The Government, through a lot of data over the years has determined that purchasing fully refundable, contracted fares is more advantageous. This is based on all of the flights and not just the high cost ones. Many travelers would elect to pick the cheapest ticket (non-refundable fare). But, when the trip is canceled or changed, they are held PERSONALLY responsible for the cost of the ticket since the orders did not authorize the non-contract fare. This puts our travelers in a huge risk position. By requiring the traveler who wants to use a non-contracted fare to have to go through the full service option, we are ensuring the traveler is making this election with eyes wide open, understands the requirement to have it cited on the orders and accepting the risk if it is not. Well worth the \$13.30 difference from self service to full service to prevent the downstream problems that would result if this safety net was not in place.

## GOOD TO KNOW

**GSA SP2 Charge Card Conference:** It's late in the fiscal year and you probably already assumed there will not be a 2015 GSA SmartPay Forum this year. The 2016 Forum is scheduled for next August. But don't make plans just yet. Stay tuned for more information in the following months.

**ALERT! Potential Fraud:** Although the GTCC bank is aware, you should continue to monitor the DECLINES report for transactions made by BEAUTYOFNEWYORKCOM where the attempted transaction amount is \$1036.63. You should advise your cardholders to also closely monitor accounts.



Did you know that GTCC payments can be made to a closed account? Payments can be made through personal banking resources such as online bill pay or check writing, PaymentNet, by phone and through the split disbursement feature in TPAX when submitting the travel claim. As always, payments are due by the statement due date regardless of travel reimbursement.

## PCS Season and Account Updates

PCS season is winding down and it's time to update addresses for travel cards. Over the past month we have received notification from JPMC that there have been at least 295 returned statements and cards. That's more accounts than most units have members! Email notifications regarding these returns are being sent to the cardholder at each address we can identify in DA or PaymentNet.

Each time you access an account for a cardholder, take just a minute to verify their contact information in PaymentNet. This is great customer service. Current account information is key for card renewals and replacements, billing statements, credit refunds and disputes. Validating the cardholder information can help the traveler down the road to avoid issues and possible delinquency and discipline.

Along with verifying the address information for the cardholder account, we are identifying records with invalid e-mail addresses. This includes the personal email address a cardholder designates in their account. So far over 5,500 email addresses have been identified. These bad email addresses are being updated with the cardholder's official CG e-mail address and we send each cardholder an individual e-mail detailing the change that was made and providing instructions on changing the address if they desire to use another personal e-mail address. This instruction includes how to access PaymentNet and make this correction themselves. Correct email addresses are essential to communicate to the cardholder about GTCC and travel updates as well as account information. The GTCC bank also uses the information in PaymentNet to notify cardholders of suspicious activity on the account. Duty to People.

## What is a Hierarchy?

If you are a new travel manager processing applications, or are having rushed applications returned due to missing hierarchy level 3, please make note of the following details. Level 3 travel card hierarchy is based on an accounting target unit, aka ATU. To expand the details of the hierarchy, here are what the levels represent:

Level 1 = 30001 = DHS

Level 2 = 31100 = USCG Travel

Level 3 = Unit/ATU specific

Level 4 = Lower level ATU (only 31330 & 31432 include level 4)

Level 1 and 2 are constant. These do not change and are pre-populated on the paper application form. Level 3 is your responsibility to complete on the application. You can identify your level 3 hierarchy by locating your ATU or name on the travel manager roster posted to the [GTCC website](#). This roster is updated regularly. See a related newsletter article about hierarchies in the [May 2013 GTCC newsletter](#).

## GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD PROGRAM MANAGERS

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REMEMBER \* ALWAYS PROTECT PII

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## In the Spotlight

Way to go Travel Managers!

YNCS P. Melville and YNC K. Layman—account declines

YNC M. Smith—payments to closed accounts

YNC C. Mercer—taking action on GTCC program emails

YN1 G. Jones—making changes to a travel manager account

Great questions! Thanks for asking.

Commitment to Excellence

Keep up the great work!

## New Travel Manager Resources

While there may not be formal training as you are assigned this new collateral duty, you do have quite a few tools at your fingertips. These tools and tricks can help you meet reporting and audit requirements as well as help your command and cardholders.

So what do we have available to help you?

Resources identified in the Welcome New Travel Manager email

[GTCC website](#)

[GTCC newsletters](#)

[GTCC Training Slideshow](#)

[GTCC Job Aids](#)

[Travel Manager Tool](#)

And the [Travel Charge Card Program Policy, CIM4600.18](#), chapter 1 is an easy read at only 20 pages.

Don't hesitate to contact us about any or all of these tools or how to guides. We want to help you with your new collateral duty.



# Obtaining Car Rental Coverage and Background History

We were recently informed of the fact that in Kodiak and other locations in AK, rental car companies do not participate in the Government Administrative Rate Supplement (GARS) contract. For more information about the GARS contract see the [Rental Vehicle FAQ](#).

So if the GARS program is not available, will I be reimbursed for paying for the insurance through the rental agency and not the GARS program? No. Per U2830 Special Conveyance/Rental Vehicle (Includes Rental Aircraft) Reimbursable Expenses 4.b - Rental Car Insurance in the U.S./Non-Foreign OCONUS Location: A traveler is not reimbursed for rental car insurance coverage purchased in the U.S./non-foreign OCONUS location regardless of the rental company.

Then how am I covered when renting a vehicle that is authorized on my orders?

It is a long-standing policy of the U.S. Government to self-insure its own risks of loss since 9 February 1892. The first Comptroller of the U.S. Treasury advised the Department of State as such and the policy has been restated and supported by numerous Comptroller General (CG), Defense Office of Hearings and Appeals (DOHA) adjudicated decisions for 122 years plus. The established rule is that, unless expressly provide by statute, funds for the support of Gov't activities are not generally considered for the purchase of insurance to cover loss of or damage to government property. Exceptions are found in par. 2830-M, item 3o.

The Gov't's practice of self-insurance (1892) was originally derived from then policy considerations, not positive law. The policy arose because it was felt that the Gov't's resources, operations and potential risks when conducting U.S. Government affairs made a self-insurance policy generally more advantageous to the Gov't, in that it would save the items of costs and profits which private insurers have to include in their premiums. Positive law (also refer as legislation) definition (Black's Law Dictionary) is "law actually and specifically enacted or adopted by proper authority for the government of an organized jural society."

When it comes to car rental insurance and coverage, there are separate issues between GARS, rental car damage and insurance for which different standards apply.

While car rental arrangements must be made through SATO, there are locations where reservations cannot be made this way or the merchant will not agree to participate in GARS. SATO will book the reservation for the traveler and let the traveler know whether it is a government rate to include GARS or not. Using the GTCC has an added value of its own car rental coverage. See the [VISA Benefit Guide](#) for details.

Obtaining separate rental car insurance reimbursement is not authorized for this matter. However, a claim against the Gov't is possible for rental vehicle damage while performing official travel which is not a travel voucher matter. The JTR indicates the non-DOD service's policy must determine if the claim is valid and if so, reimburse as a separate fiscal action. Refer to par. 6.F.2.m of the CG Claims & Litigation Manual for guidance, outdated JFTR references are now JTR, par. 2830-M, Special Conveyances, item 3q (2).

Please see [https://www.uscg.mil/directives/cim/5000-5999/CIM\\_5890\\_9.pdf](https://www.uscg.mil/directives/cim/5000-5999/CIM_5890_9.pdf) for the information on filing a claim. This information was shared by CGHQ, CG-1332, Travel and Transportation Compensation Division.

