



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

**Food Safety
and Inspection
Service**

**FSIS Directive
3800.12**

Travel Advances

TRAVEL ADVANCES

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC

FSIS DIRECTIVE	3800.12	11/21/07
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TRAVEL ADVANCES

PART ONE—BASIC PROVISIONS

I. PURPOSE

This directive provides Agency policies, procedures, and responsibilities for all FSIS employees on issuing and collecting travel advances from the National Finance Center (NFC). This directive does not address cash withdrawals obtained from the official travel charge card via automated teller machines or bank tellers.

II. (RESERVED)

III. REASON FOR REISSUANCE

This directive is reissued to:

- A. Strengthen internal travel advance process controls.
- B. Authorize travel advances on a trip-by-trip basis.
- C. Liquidate outstanding travel advances upon completion of the individual trip.
- D. Reduce outstanding travel advance amounts.
- E. Define program responsibilities.
- F. Outline salary offset procedures to recover travel advances.
- G. Limit travel advances to employees on the Agency's payroll (no invitational travelers).

DISTRIBUTION:
All Employees

OPI:
BD – Fiscal Services Branch

IV. REFERENCES

FSIS Directive 3800.1, Temporary Duty Travel Within CONUS
FSIS Directive 3820.1, Relocation Program for Transferring Employees
FSIS Directive 3830.2, Government Travel Charge Card Program

Departmental Manual 2300-002, Agriculture Travel Regulations
41 CFR Chapters 300-304, Federal Travel Regulations
5 CFR 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch
DPM, Chapter 751, Subchapter 4, Appendix A, USDA Guide for Disciplinary Penalties

V. ABBREVIATIONS AND FORMS

The following will appear in their shortened form in this directive:

FPC	Financial Processing Center
M&IE	Meals and Incidental Expenses
NFC	National Finance Center
TMC	Travel Management Center
U.S.	United States

AD-202	Travel Authorization
AD-616	Travel Voucher
AD-616R	Travel Voucher (Relocation)

FSIS Form 3800-5 Request for Travel Advance Acknowledgement and
Acceptance Statement

VI. DEFINITIONS

A. **Adverse Action.** A severe form of administrative action including a suspension of more than 14 days, a reduction in pay or grade, or removal.

B. **Authorizing Officials.** The Administrator, Assistant Administrators, staff directors, and individuals delegated by officers to authorize the issuance of a travel advance. Delegations are held at the highest level. Employees cannot approve their own travel advance requests.

C. **Cash Withdrawal.** Monies obtained from the official travel charge card via automated teller machine or bank teller.

D. **Centrally Billed Account.** An account created by the Agency to pay common carrier charges for certain employees and situations. (**EXAMPLES:** Employees exempt from using the travel charge card, not in receipt of the travel charge card, and performing foreign travel.)

E. **Common Carrier.** Air, rail, or bus transportation.

F. **Disciplinary Action.** An administrative action including an official letter of reprimand and a suspension of 14 days or less.

G. **Disposable Pay.** An employee's compensation after legally mandated deductions (**examples:** Federal and state withholding tax or Medicare tax) withheld from the earnings. Deductions may be made from basic, special, and incentive pay. The withheld earnings do not include discretionary deductions such as:

1. Health insurance.
2. Savings bonds.
3. Charitable contributions.

H. **Invitational Traveler.** An individual authorized to travel either not employed or intermittently employed by the Government (**examples:** consultants, technical experts, or collaborators).

I. **Official Travel.** Authorized travel to conduct official business.

J. **Travel Authorization (AD-202).** Written authorization to travel on official business.

K. **Travel Advance.** An advancement of cash from NFC (**example:** electronic funds transfer) to assist in paying for travel expenses. Travel advances are made for employees ineligible for travel charge card and relocations.

L. **Travel Charge Card.** The Government-issued travel charge card for official travel and travel-related expenses.

M. **Travel Management Center (TMC).** A commercial travel firm under contract with the Agency that provides reservations, tickets, and related travel management services for employees conducting official business.

VII. **POLICY**

A. Travel advances are considered loans from the Government to employees performing official travel. An advance cannot be requested or used for any other purpose. Refund unused travel advances promptly through FPC. FSIS enforces strict procedures for collecting outstanding travel advance balances.

1. Employees must repay entire travel advances when travel is completed or canceled.

2. FSIS begins collection on all outstanding travel advances 60 days from the date of the advance.

3. Government travel charge cardholders are not permitted travel advances except to cover limited relocation expenses.

B. Deviations from this policy may result in disciplinary or adverse actions.

PART TWO—USE AND REPAYMENT

I. TRAVEL ADVANCE ELIGIBILITY

Authorizing officials approve travel advances to eligible FSIS employees for official travel. Advances are issued in the form of electronic funds transfer monies to the traveler's designated financial institution. The following employees are eligible to receive travel advances:

- A. Employees who are ineligible for a Government-issued travel charge card or routinely travel less than twice a year (see FSIS Directive 3830.2).
- B. Employees with a pending travel card application.
- C. Employees who are ineligible for the travel card due to delinquency or abuse (**example:** travel advances will be limited to 80 percent of M&IE and miscellaneous expenses).
- D. Employees relocating to a new official duty station.

II. TRAVEL ADVANCE LIMITATIONS

A. Travel advances must not exceed 80 percent of the estimated cash expenses authorized on the AD-202, unless the 80 percent limitation will cause a financial hardship on the employee. This limitation applies to advances issued either for travel under a single trip or open (blanket) orders.

B. In cases of financial hardship, the authorizing official can authorize up to 100 percent of the estimated expenses for an individual trip. **NOTE:** The employee must provide written financial hardship documentation from an external institution, as follows:

- 1. The employee is eligible for Government funded assistance (**examples:** health care card, social services benefits, and pension).
- 2. The employee is a tenant in public housing.
- 3. The employee has previously applied for a Utility Relief Grant.

III. PERMITTED USES OF TRAVEL ADVANCES

Travelers without the Government-issued travel charge card must charge their common carrier transportation through the Agency's centrally billed account through the TMC. Travel advances are used for the following expenses:

- A. Lodging plus M&IE covered by the per diem rate or actual subsistence allowance.

B. Local transportation expenses. Examples include:

1. Local transit system fares.
2. Taxi fares.
3. Parking fees.
4. Ferry fees.
5. Bridge, road, and tunnel fees.
6. Airport parking.

C. Gasoline and other variable expenses covered by the mileage allowances associated with using a privately owned vehicle for official business.

D. Other incidental expenses covered by the M&IE allowance.

E. Relocation travel.

1. House hunting trips.
2. En route travel to report.
3. Temporary quarters.

IV. **PROHIBITED USES**

Prohibited uses for travel advances include:

- A. Charges not associated with official travel.
- B. Official travel expenses of another employee.
- C. Automotive repairs and services.
- D. The following relocation expenses:
 1. Transportation or storage of household goods.
 2. Real estate transaction expenses.
 3. Items covered under the miscellaneous expense allowance.

V. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. **Traveler.** Travel advances are used to pay reimbursable travel expenses and are subject to repayment when travel is completed or canceled. Government travel charge card holders are not permitted travel advances and must comply with FSIS Directive 3830.2. The traveling employee must:

1. Ensure that there is no outstanding advance before submitting a new travel advance request.
2. Request a travel advance for processing by submitting Form AD-202.
3. Review and sign FSIS Form 3800-5.
4. Safeguard all advanced travel funds.
5. Use travel advances for authorized purposes. (**EXAMPLES:** Transportation or lodging while in a travel status.)
6. Submit an AD-616 within 5 working days after completing a trip or every 30 days if in a continuous travel status.
7. Declare outstanding travel advance amounts on the AD-616.
8. Apply reimbursement owed to an outstanding travel advance.
9. Repay advanced funds when the advance exceeds expenditures documented on the AD-616.

B. **Authorizing Officials.** Authorize advanced travel funds when required for performing official travel. Advancement of funds is not requested or approved under any other circumstances. Maintain internal control measures to minimize outstanding travel advances. The approving official must:

1. Ensure travel advances are **only** issued to eligible employees.
2. Review outstanding advance report and ensure that there are no prior outstanding advances before approving a new advance. (**NOTE:** If the authorizing official has received a properly submitted travel voucher that accounts for the outstanding travel advance, the official may authorize a new travel advance.)
3. Ensure that the employee submits an AD-202.
4. Limit travel advance amounts in accordance with Agency policy.

5. Review and approve FSIS Form 3800-5.
6. Process travel advances in time to accommodate scheduled travel.
7. Ensure that a record is maintained of all authorized travel advances.
8. Review the AD-616 to ensure repayment of outstanding travel advances.
9. Review reports to identify employees with outstanding travel advances.
10. Notify employees of outstanding advances and possible collection action.
11. Assist in the Agency collection of travel advances.

C. **Budget Division.** Develops and communicates policy on repaying travel advances and internal control measures to minimize outstanding travel advances with district or program offices. The Budget Division:

1. Provides monthly report of travelers with outstanding travel advances to district or program officials.
2. Coordinates with approving officials and NFC on the collection of travel advances.

D. **LERD.** Monitors fraud, waste, and abuse of travel advances and determines the appropriate disciplinary or adverse action. Penalties could include written reprimands, suspensions, or removal from service.

VI. **OUTSTANDING TRAVEL ADVANCES**

Travel advances are considered outstanding if:

- A. A travel advance balance remains after submitting an AD-616 for the travel.
- B. The trip was cancelled and the travel advance has not been repaid.
- C. 60 days or more have passed since the date the advance was issued.

VII. COLLECTION ACTION

If an employee has not repaid the travel advance balance in full, collection action begins 60 days after the advance was issued.

A. Payroll deductions to recover outstanding travel advances cannot be suspended. There are no provisions to suspend deductions due to hardship circumstances.

B. Outstanding travel advances will be deducted from an employee's paycheck if an advance is not:

1. Repaid.
2. Applied to an AD-616.
3. Justified by submitting an AD-616.

C. NFC may deduct the entire balance of the employee's salary to collect an outstanding travel advance balance. If the initial salary deductions are not sufficient to liquidate the outstanding balance, deductions will continue in successive pay periods until the full amount of the outstanding travel advance balance is liquidated.

D. Deductions are made in the following order of precedence:

1. Retirement.
2. Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) Tax.
3. Federal income taxes.
4. Health benefits.
5. Regular group life insurance (excludes optional) or non-Federal life insurance.
6. State income tax.
7. City or county income tax.
8. Indebtedness to the United States (including outstanding travel advances).
9. Garnishment for alimony and child support payments.
10. Court-ordered bankruptcy payment.

11. Optional life insurance.
12. Voluntary repayment of indebtedness to the United States.
13. Other voluntary deductions (**examples:** union dues, charitable contributions, bonds, payments to financial organizations, and Thrift Savings Plan contributions).



Assistant Administrator
Office of Management

CALCULATING TRAVEL ADVANCES FOR FREQUENT TRAVELERS

1. Employee travels 2 or more times per year and has a Government travel charge card.			
	Authorized amounts on AD-202	Percent of Advance Allowed	Total Travel Advance
Common Carrier	\$1,000.00	0%	\$0.00
Lodging	\$515.00	0%	\$0.00
M&IE	\$270.00	0%	\$0.00
Rental Car	\$350.00	0%	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$125.00	0%	\$0.00
Totals	\$2,260.00		\$0.00

NOTE: Travel advances are not allowed for frequent travelers. They must use the Government-issued travel charge card.

2. Employee travels 2 or more times per year. Travel card is cancelled due to delinquency or abuse.			
	Authorized amounts on AD-202	Percent of Advance Allowed	Total Travel Advance
Common Carrier	\$1,000.00	0%	\$0.00
Lodging	\$515.00	0%	\$0.00
M&IE	\$270.00	80%	\$216.00
Rental Car	\$350.00	0%	\$0.00
Miscellaneous	\$125.00	80%	\$100.00
Totals	\$2,260.00		\$316.00

NOTE: Common carrier transportation is charged to the centrally billed account. Travel advances are limited to M&IE and miscellaneous expenses.

CALCULATING TRAVEL ADVANCES FOR INFREQUENT TRAVELERS

3. Employee travels less than 2 times per year and does not qualify for a Government-issued travel charge card.			
	Authorized amounts on AD-202	Percent of Advance Allowed	Total Travel Advance
Common Carrier	\$1,000.00	0%	\$0.00
Lodging	\$515.00	80%	\$412.00
M&IE	\$270.00	80%	\$216.00
Rental Car	\$350.00	80%	\$280.00
Miscellaneous	\$125.00	80%	\$100.00
Totals	\$2,260.00		\$1,008.00

NOTE: Common carrier transportation is charged to the centrally billed account and must not be included in the travel advance calculation.

4. Employee travels less than 2 times per year, does not qualify for a Government-issued travel charge card and has a documented financial hardship.			
	Authorized amounts on AD-202	Percent of Advance Allowed	Total Travel Advance
Common Carrier	\$1,000.00	0%	\$0.00
Lodging	\$515.00	100%	\$515.00
M&IE	\$270.00	100%	\$270.00
Rental Car	\$350.00	100%	\$350.00
Miscellaneous	\$125.00	100%	\$125.00
Totals	\$2,260.00		\$1,260.00

NOTE: Common carrier transportation is charged to the centrally billed account and must not be included in the travel advance calculation.

**COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS FOR FORM AD-202, TRAVEL
AUTHORIZATION/ADVANCE**

EMPLOYEE

Enters the appropriate information in the following blocks:

Block 1	Action code "V" for advance.
Block 2	Month, day, and year.
Block 3	AD-202 number.
Block 4	Traveler's social security number.
Block 5	Traveler's last name, first name and middle initial.
Block 6	"37" for the Agency code.
Block 7	Originating office number.
Block 8	Leave blank.
Block 9	Estimated travel dates.
Block 10	Appropriate travel code.
Block 11	"Yes" or "No", as appropriate, indicating whether the employee is a Government credit card holder.
Block 12	Leave blank.
Block 13	Official duty station.
Block 14	Residence.
Block(s) 15-19	Appropriate employment status.
Block 26	"C" for DD/EFT (direct deposit by electronic funds transfer).
Block 27	Amount of advance requested.
Block 28	"0"; otherwise, no additional advance can be requested.
Block 29	Total advance amount.
Block 30	Traveler's signature.

Block 31 Date signed.

Block 32 Salary address.

AUTHORIZING OFFICIALS

Upon review, confirm eligibility and amount requested by entering the following:

Block 35 Authorizing official's name, title, and Agency code.

Block 36 Authorizing official's social security number.

Block 37 Date approved.

Block 38 Authorizing official's phone number.

Block 39 Authorizing official's signature.

Block 40 Contact person's name.

Block 41 Contact person's phone number.

Authorizing official will submit the following for processing:

1. Submit requests for temporary duty travel advances to:

USDA FSIS FPC
PO BOX 9205
DES MOINES IA 50306-9205

2. Submit requests for relocation travel to:

USDA FSIS OM BD
1400 INDEPENDENCE AVENUE SW
ROOM 2144-S
WASHINGTON DC 20250

SAMPLE FORM AD-202, TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION/ADVANCE

Note: Traveler is liable for the value of the tickets issued until all tickets or coupons are properly accounted for on the Travel Voucher.

1. ACTION CODE (Indicate one type only)		MONTH DAY YEAR	
E = Establish A = Amend	C = Cancel V = Advance Only (Complete Sections A, E, and F Only)	2. AUTHORIZATION DATE	

SECTION A - IDENTIFICATION			
3. TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION NO.	4. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.	5. NAME (Last) (First) (Middle Initial)	6. AGENCY CODE
7. AGENCY OON	9. ESTIMATED DATES OF TRAVEL EXPENSES FROM THRU Month Day Year Month Day Year	10. TYPE TRAVEL (Indicate one type only) DM = Domestic GR = Escorted Group FG = Foreign OC = Outside Cont. U.S. FT = Foreign Transfer TS = Transfer of Station RT = Return Travel OT = Outside CONUS ToS	11. GOVERNMENT CREDIT CARD HOLDER Y = Yes N = No
8. TRAVELER OON	12. TRAINING DOCUMENT NO. (For Purpose of Travel Code 3 Only)	13. OFFICIAL DUTY STATION CITY AND STATE	14. RESIDENT CITY AND STATE (If other than official station)

SECTION B - EMPLOYMENT STATUS (Check the appropriate employment status block.)				
15. PAYROLLED BY NFC	16. NOT PAYROLLED BY NFC	17. NEW HIRE	18. SPECIAL APPOINTEE	19. NONGOVERNMENT

SECTION C - ITINERARY AND ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES															
20. FROM					21. TO					23. AUTHORIZED EXPENDITURES					
CITY	ST	CNTRY CD	CITY CD	CITY, COUNTY or REGION	ST	Subsistence Codes	CODE	LODGING	M and IE	RATE	NO. DAYS	ESTIMATED AMOUNT			
						P=Per Diem		+		= 0.00	x	= \$ 0.00			
						A=Actual Subsistence		+		= 0.00	x	= 0.00			
						S=Special Rate		+		= 0.00	x	= 0.00			
								+		= 0.00	x	= 0.00			
								+		= 0.00	x	= 0.00			
22. PURPOSE OF TRAVEL (Give explanation)												Total Subsistence		\$ 0.00	
												POV Rate			
												Rate			
												Rate			
												Rate			
												Other (Specify)			
												Unaccompanied Baggage			
												Car Rental			
												Common Carrier Tickets			
												Transportation Mode		Method of Purchase	
												Use of Non-contract Airline		Insert Code	
												Excess Fare			
												Excess Baggage			
												GSA Auto			
												24. Total Est. Expenditures Authorized		\$ 0.00	

SECTION D - ACCOUNTING CLASSIFICATION									
25. Distribute Total Estimated Expenditures from Section C to the applicable Purpose of Travel Code and Accounting Classification line.									
PURPOSE OF TRAVEL CODES		ACCOUNTING CLASSIFICATION			PERCENTAGE				
1 = Site Visit	6 = Relocation	11 = Pre-employment							
2 = Information Meeting	7 = Entitlement/Home leave	12 = First post of duty							
3 = Training attendance	8 = Special mission travel	13 = Rest & Recuperation							
4 = Speech or presentation	9 = Emergency travel	14 = Educational							
5 = Conference attendance	10 = Other travel	15 = Informal training							
THESE PERCENTAGES MUST EQUAL 100%									

SECTION E - TRAVEL ADVANCE											
26. ADVANCE REQUEST METHOD (Select one method only)					32. ADVANCE MAILING ADDRESS OPTIONS						
C = Check or DD/BET	T = Travelers Checks	I = Imprest Fund	E = Emergency (Wire)	W = Wire Confirmation	S = Embassy Issued Advance	L = Embassy Collect Advance	SALARY ADDRESS	T&A CONTACT POINT	SPECIAL ADDRESS (Required for new hires, special appointees, and non-Government travelers)	FOREIGN ADDRESS	TRAVEL EFT ACCOUNT
							1. (35)				
							2. (35)				
							3. (City) (20)	State (2)	Zip Code (9)		
27. AMOUNT OF ADVANCE APPLIED FOR					33. IMPREST FUND CASHIER						
\$					SOCIAL SECURITY NO. SIGNATURE						
28. BALANCE FROM PREVIOUS ADVANCE					34. ADVANCE RECEIVED (Cash or Travelers Checks)						
\$					DATE RECEIVED (Month Day Year) APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE						
29. TOTAL ADVANCE AMOUNT \$ 0.00											
30. APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE					31. DATE APPLIED FOR (Month Day Year) SEE PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT ON REVERSE						

SECTION F - AGENCY APPROVAL											
35. APPROVING OFFICER'S NAME AND TITLE (Last, First, Middle Initial) (Type or Print)					AGENCY CODE		36. SOCIAL SECURITY NO.		37. DATE APPROVED (Month Day Year)		38. PHONE (Area Code & No.)
39. APPROVING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE					40. CONTACT PERSON'S NAME					41. PHONE (Area Code & No.)	
42. REMARKS											

Upon completion and approval, submit original to: USDA -- National Finance Center, P.O. Box 60,000, New Orleans, LA 70160

FORM AD-202 (USDA) (Rev. 11/96)
Exception to SF 1038 approved by GSA 11/20/96

**SAMPLE FSIS FORM 3800-5, REQUEST FOR TRAVEL ADVANCE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

**REQUEST FOR TRAVEL ADVANCE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
AND ACCEPTANCE STATEMENT**

NOTE: THIS STATEMENT MUST ACCOMPANY THE AD-202, TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION/ADVANCE

Travel advances are only used to pay for official travel expenses and must be repaid at the completion of travel for which the advance was received. An advance may not be requested, or used for any other purpose.

Traveler must submit form AD-616, Travel Voucher within 5 working days after completing a trip or every 30 days if in continuous travel status, apply reimbursement owed to outstanding travel advance and repay advanced funds when advance exceeds expenditures documented on the travel voucher by submitting a check made payable to the National Finance Center (NFC) and attaching it to the travel voucher.

If advance balance is not paid in full, collection action will begin 60 days after the date of the advance. Outstanding travel advances will be deducted from an employee's paycheck.

NFC will deduct, if necessary, the entire balance of the employee's salary in order to collect the outstanding advance balance. If the initial salary deductions are not sufficient to liquidate outstanding balance, deductions will continue in successive pay periods until the full amount of the outstanding travel advance balance is liquidated.

Employees requesting a travel advance should read and familiarize themselves with the contents of **FSIS Directive 3800.5, Travel Advances**. Questions concerning the request for travel advance should be addressed to your District/Program office.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the above policy:

Signature of Employee

Date

Amount of Advance

Signature of District/Program

Date