

Commercial Air Travel

Key References: DODD 4500.9; DOD 4500.9-R; JFTR U3125/JTR C2204; JFTR U1200/
JTR C1200; JFTR Appendix E; 41 CFR Ch. 304; OPNAVINST 4610.8E;
OPNAVINST 4650.15; CNO memos of 15 Jul 02

Key Concepts:

- For official travel, members/dependents generally must travel in coach class accommodations on commercial airlines.
- Use of premium class accommodations (business/first class) is authorized only as noted below and, absent extenuating circumstances or emergency situations, should be approved in advance.¹
 - Business class:²
 - Only premium class is offered between origin/destination;
 - The travel is so urgent it may not be postponed and there is no space in coach on a flight in time to accomplish the mission;
 - A doctor validates medical necessity of premium class travel to accommodate member's disability/physical impairment;
 - Upgrade necessary for security purposes/exceptional circumstances making it essential to successful performance of the mission;
 - Accommodations on foreign carriers do not provide adequate sanitation/meet health standards;
 - Overall Government savings (avoiding extra subsistence costs, overtime, lost productive time, etc.)
 - Frequent flyer miles used to obtain flight;
 - Non-Federal entity pays for travel in advance and comparable in value to other similarly situated meeting attendees; or
 - Travel between CONUS and OCONUS en route to TDY where flight time (including stopovers) is greater than 14 hours **does not** automatically qualify for premium class travel--should be the exception, not the rule.³
 - First class:
 - Lower class accommodations are not reasonably available;
 - Exceptional security requirements exist;
 - A doctor validates medical necessity of first class travel;
 - First class is the only accommodation provided between origin and destination; or
 - Frequent flyer miles used to obtain flight.
- Members using premium class should not travel in uniform.
- Dependent Travel: Generally, the Government will not fund dependent travel. Exceptions: (1) there is an independent basis for the travel (e.g., spouse is Force ombudsman); (2) the dependent participates in an official event; and (3) the travel is in the national interest because of diplomatic/public relations benefits. Under this situation, invitational travel orders should be issued to support the spousal travel.
- Promotional Items:
 - Employees may keep and personally use promotional items (e.g., frequent flyer miles, upgrades, access to carrier club/facilities) obtained through official travel. These promotional items must be available to the general public and at no additional cost to the Government.
 - Benefits earned through a voluntary bump belong to the traveler while those earned through an involuntary bump belong to the Government

¹ Approval authorities for first class/business class and business class only are designated in CNO ltr Ser N09BL/4U668159 of 21 Jul 04. Approving officials may not approve their own premium travel; approval must be obtained from official's reporting senior. Consult your ethics counselor early to ensure compliance.

² When a flight has only two classes of travel, the higher class is considered first class.

³ This exception may not be used with a rest stop en route or rest period upon arrival.