



**DEFENSE TRAVEL  
MANAGEMENT OFFICE**

## **Flat Rate Per Diem for Long Term TDY Frequently Asked Questions**

*The following frequently asked questions are provided in reference to MAP/CAP 118-13, Flat Rate Per Diem for Long Term TDY (JTR, para. 4250). The official policy change is available at: [http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/browse/Travel\\_Regulations/Regulations\\_Changes/Immediate/UTDCTD118-13\(R\).pdf](http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/perdiem/browse/Travel_Regulations/Regulations_Changes/Immediate/UTDCTD118-13(R).pdf). Please note that the information provided below is subject to change without notice and will be updated as necessary.*

### **I. Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. Does this policy apply to already approved authorizations for more than 30 days TDY that start after 1 November?**

Yes. The policy is effective for all travel beginning or amendments issued after 1 November 2014. Those authorizations with more than 30 days TDY will need to be modified to include the flat rate per diem.

**2. How can an amendment to travel orders for travel that began before 1 November result in flat rate per diem in accordance with JTR, para. 4250-A2?**

Amendments only affect prospective travel dates and cannot be applied retroactively. This means that if a traveler has orders to begin traveling *before* 1 November 2014 (for any length of time), the new Flat Rate Per Diem policy does not apply unless the orders are amended after 1 November 2014 that extends the number of days TDY to a single location. In this case, the flat rate per diem would only apply for the period after the order is amended beginning the day after the amendment.

- **Example 1:** *Initial TDY begins prior to 1 November and is more than 30 days (because travel begins before 1 November, the traveler is receiving full locality per diem rate).*

Travel is scheduled for 29 October to 30 November and the traveler receives lodging plus M&IE at the locality rate. The orders are then amended on 15 November to extend the trip more than 30 days. The flat per diem rate applies, but only from 16 November (the day after the amendment is issued) to 31 December (the revised end date for the TDY).

**3. How can an amendment to travel orders for travel that begins on or after 1 November result in flat rate per diem in accordance with JTR, para. 4250-A2?**

- **Example 1:** *Initial TDY begins 1 November and is more than 30 days (because travel begins 1 November, the traveler is receiving 75% of the full locality per diem rate).*

Travel is scheduled for 1 November to 2 December and the traveler receives lodging plus M&IE at 75% locality rate. The orders are then amended on 15 November to extend the trip until 31 May (over 180 days). The 55% per diem applies, but only from 16 November (the day after the amendment is issued) to 31 May (the revised end date for the TDY).

- **Example 2:** *Initial travel is 20 days and begins after 1 November (traveler is receiving full locality per diem rate because travel is less than 31 days).*

Travel began on 5 November for 20 days and the orders are then amended on 20 November to extend the trip by 45 days. On 5 November, the traveler receives up to 100% of the actual lodging cost and 75% of the meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) based on the locality rate concerned. On 6-20 November, the traveler receives lodging plus M&IE at the full locality rate. The flat rate per diem applies beginning 21 November through the end of the TDY period.

**4. What is the policy for personnel already on orders lasting more than 30 days? Are they grandfathered in or will their per diem change as of 1 November for the remaining portion of their TDY?**

The policy is effective for all travel beginning or amendments issued after 1 November 2014. This means that the flat rate per diem does not apply to personnel already on orders unless an amendment is issued after 1 November to extend the total number of days TDY. In this case, only the full days after the orders were amended would be subject to the flat rate per diem.

**5. If the travel ends on the 30th day of TDY, does the 75% rule apply?**

No. The flat rate per diem only applies for long-term TDY lasting 31 or more days.

**6. If the travel orders started in FY14, when amending them to add the FY15 Line of Accounting (LOA), should the authorization be adjusted to 75% or 55% for days after 1 November?**

No, an administrative amendment to add a new line of accounting, correct an error, add an authorization such as a special conveyance, would have no effect on the per diem unless the amendment also extends the length of the traveler's TDY beyond 30 or 180 days.

**7. The policy says “for each full day”, so does that mean that the traveler receives full per diem on day 1 (travel day)?**

On the travel day to the TDY location, the traveler receives up to 100% lodging per diem at the locality rate and 75% meals and incidental expenses (M&IE). On the date of return from the TDY location, the traveler receives 75% meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) based on the TDY locality rate.

**8. When will these changes be inserted in the official JTR, either with a complete change or a change page at the beginning?**

The new policy will be included in the JTR issued on 1 November 2014.

**9. Will local level policy dictate what is required for Authorizing Officials to approve non-flat rate per diem or is it covered in the JTR?**

The JTR states that if a traveler is unable to find suitable commercial lodging at the reduced per diem rate, they should contact their Commercial Travel Office (CTO) for assistance. If both the traveler and the CTO determine that lodging is not available at the reduced per diem rate, the Authorizing Official may then authorize actual lodging (not to exceed the locality per diem rate). The traveler will then

receive M&IE at the reduced rate (75% for TDY of 31-180 days and 55% for TDY of 181+ days). Services and Agencies will institute procedures implementing the policies in the JTR.

**10. Are lodging taxes to be paid separately if it is less than the flat rate per diem?**

Lodging taxes are separate reimbursable expenses and are not included in the flat rate per diem computation (*See JTR, Appendix G*).

**11. Does this policy apply to non-medical attendants or does the Special Circumstances chapter still stand?**

Yes. This policy applies to all TDY travelers, except those in a COCOM or JTF AOR IAW JTR, Chapter 4, Part F.

**12. Are travelers required to itemize daily lodging expenses?**

No. When authorized flat rate per diem, travelers are not required to itemize daily lodging expenses associated with a short-term rental (e.g., rent, electric, cable, phone), unless leave days are involved. On those days, a separate computation (See JTR, par. 4155-C) is required to determine the daily cost of lodging as the traveler may not be reimbursed more than they actually spent.

**13. Will DTS automatically change the per diem if the travel is over 30 days and 180 days?**

At this time, DTS does not automatically calculate the flat rate per diem based on the length of the TDY. Travelers should follow their component guidelines for how to handle in DTS.

**14. Will the traveler be reimbursed the flat rate per diem without the receipt for lodging?**

When authorized a flat rate per diem, travelers are not required to submit a lodging receipt but may be required to validate to their Approving Official that they did incur lodging costs.

**15. Does the new flat rate per diem policy mean military members cannot be mandated to stay on post?**

No, that policy still applies. The flat rate per diem does not apply when government lodging is available AND directed, when contracted government lodging is provided at no cost, or if a traveler chooses to stay in government quarters. When staying in government lodging, the traveler will be reimbursed for actual lodging costs.

**16. How is this policy change being implemented for employees represented by a union?**

Before this change can be implemented for employees represented by a union, activities must ensure that they meet all of their bargaining obligations. To facilitate the process with the unions, please contact your servicing human resources office labor relations specialist for assistance.

**17. Is flat rate per diem paid in accordance with JTR, par. 4250 optional?**

No. effective for travel that begins on or after 1 November 2014, flat rate per diem is mandatory, even if travel orders erroneously authorize lodging plus M&IE at the locality rate. The only exceptions are when the traveler and Commercial Travel Office are unable to find suitable lodging at the flat rate. Before the approving official can authorize lodging plus M&IE at the locality rate, the approving official must certify that lodging was not available at the flat rate.

**18. If travel is to a government installation where government quarters and meals are directed and available, does flat rate per diem apply?**

No. If government quarters and meals are available and directed, reimbursement for lodging is limited to the cost of government quarters and M&IE is paid at the government meal rate or proportional meal rate, as applicable.

**19. If government quarters and meals are provided, does flat rate per diem apply in accordance with JTR, para. 4250?**

No. If government quarters and meals are provided, such as when deployed to the CENTCOM AOR, travelers are only paid the incidental expense portion of per diem (*See JTR, Chapter 4, Part F*).

**20. If a traveler voluntarily uses government quarters, does flat rate per diem apply?**

If government quarters are used, the traveler is reimbursed the actual cost for government quarters. If the government meal rate (GMR) or proportional meal rate (PMR) is not appropriate, M&IE is paid at the flat per diem rate (75% or 55%, as applicable).

**21. If a traveler doesn't pay for lodging, does flat rate per diem apply?**

The traveler must incur a lodging cost in order to be reimbursed flat rate per diem for lodging. If a traveler stays with family or friends, or in lodging owned by the traveler, he/she does not receive reimbursement for lodging and M&IE is paid at the flat per diem rate (75% or 55%, as applicable).