



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
FOR MANAGEMENT

January 8, 2008

M-08-07

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Clay Johnson 
Deputy Director for Management

SUBJECT: Use of Premium Class Travel

On September 28, 2007, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported numerous instances of improperly authorized or justified uses of premium (first and business) class travel by Federal travelers.¹ Due to the high cost of premium class travel, it is crucial for Federal travelers to understand Federal travel policies. This Memorandum is a reminder to the heads of Departments and Agencies of the premium class travel requirements, and to reinforce the importance of having clearly defined internal controls in place regarding when the use of premium class accommodations is appropriate.

The Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) govern Executive branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense. These regulations are intended to ensure that official travel is conducted in a responsible manner. FTR [§301-10.121](#) - [§301-10.124](#) detail the conditions that must be met in order to use premium class accommodations. Agency personnel (e.g., the approving official) also have a responsibility to ensure that other conditions surrounding the request for and use of premium class accommodations are reasonable and necessary given the circumstances of the travel and/or the cost of the travel.

The General Services Administration (GSA) is in the process of revising the FTR in consideration of some of the recent GAO findings. In addition to any future government-wide regulatory requirements, I am also asking that you internally implement the following premium class travel policies immediately:

- Require that premium class travel requests for all agency personnel, including senior-level executives be approved by an individual at least at the same level as the traveler, or by an office designated to approve premium class travel;
- Develop and issue internal guidance that explains when mission criteria and intent call for premium class accommodations;
- Define what constitutes a rest period;

¹ *Premium Class Travel: Internal Control Weaknesses Governmentwide Led to Improper and Abusive Use of Premium Class Travel*, GAO-07-1268. (Washington, D.C., September 28, 2007).

- Require annual certifications of a disability, unless such disability is lifelong;
- Restrict premium class travel for both temporary duty and permanent change of station travel (relocations) when the employee is not required to report to duty the following day; and,
- Prohibit blanket travel authorizations for premium class travel, unless the traveler has a certification of disability.

To ensure greater transparency and accountability for all premium class travel, GSA is also in the process of preparing agency guidance to collect and report on business class travel, similar to the existing first class travel report requirement. The Office of Management and Budget will also begin working with Executive branch agencies to develop a risk-based review, reporting, and audit framework for premium class travel. This framework will be consistent with the risk-based approach to assess the effectiveness of internal controls described in OMB Circular A-123, Management's Responsibility for Internal Control, and its appendices.

Please confirm, in writing, no later than March 31, 2008, that you have implemented, at a minimum, the internal controls bulleted above. Your response should be sent to Danny Werfel, Acting Controller, at fiareports@omb.eop.gov . If you believe existing controls are in place and that additional controls are unwarranted, please also make that assertion in writing.