Section D. Travel Claim Procedures

Introduction

The final step for any travel process is the filing of a travel claim to liquidate and reimburse travel expenditures. Two major Coast Guard commands are involved in the processing and reimbursement of travel claims: the Coast Guard Pay and Personnel Center (PPC) located in Topeka, KS and the Coast Guard Finance Center (FINCEN) located in Chesapeake, VA. PPC effectively reviews and conducts periodic audits of travel claims once they have been submitted from an order issuing authority. FINCEN effectively executes payment of the claimed expenses that have been approved for reimbursement.

D.1. Direct Deposit (DD)/Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT)

The Coast Guard makes payroll and claim reimbursements to personnel through its DD/EFT program (this includes claims for travel, damages, official expenses). DD/EFT is required for all Coast Guard active duty, Reserve and civilian personnel. It allows the Coast Guard to effect payments and reimbursements via DD/EFT quickly, securely, and directly to the bank account specified by the individual/claimant. This eliminates a lot of time, cost, and administrative overhead associated with processing, printing, and mailing payroll and reimbursement checks.

DD/EFT is mandatory for Auxiliarists. In order to receive reimbursements from the Coast Guard for expenses associated with patrols, official travel, or any other claims (e.g., equipment damage), an Auxiliarist must have established DD/EFT service. Establishing DD/EFT service is open to any and all Auxiliarists. Failure to establish DD/EFT service shall constitute grounds for denial of assignments to duty, issuance of official orders, and reimbursement of claims.

DD/EFT service can be most easily established by enrolling on the Coast Guard Finance Center (FINCEN) web site at www.fincen.uscg.mil/aux_info.htm (select the "EFT/ACH Enrollment Form" option, fill in the blanks, and electronically submit the form directly to FINCEN). In accordance with instructions on the electronic form, it can either be faxed to FINCEN (ATTN: T-16) at (757) 523-6769, or it can be mailed to FINCEN at:

Commanding Officer (opc-5c)
U.S. Coast Guard Finance Center
1430A Kristina Way
Chesapeake, VA 23326-1000

D.2. Orders, Receipts, and Claims for Reimbursement	Claims for reimbursement of official travel must be completed on the Coast Guard Travel Voucher (DD Form 1351-2). It can be found on the Auxiliary web site. This signed form, along with original travel orders and substantiating receipts, should be turned into the Coast Guard office that issued the travel orders, or the Director, within three days of travel completion. This is required so an administrative claim review may be completed before forwarding the claim for payment. The Claim for Reimbursement Form (SF-1164) should be utilized whenever possible for local POV mileage (i.e., when travel distance to an assigned unit is less than 50 miles one-way), telephone calls, and miscellaneous expenses.
D.2.a. Changes to Orders	Occasionally, circumstances change during the execution of orders. Normally, any deviation from the original orders must be approved and documented. This is accomplished by an official "Amendment to Orders" issued and signed by the order-issuing authority. An example of a required amendment to order authorization is remaining overnight at a location not designated on the original set of orders. If it becomes necessary to deviate from the stated original set of orders, the order-issuing authority must be immediately contacted to obtain approval and to amend the orders as soon as practicable. Failure to take such notification action may seriously jeopardize an Auxiliarist's entitlement to authorized reimbursements.
D.2.b. Required Attachments to the DD-1351-2	The Auxiliarist should send the following original data and retain a copy of all travel claim documentation: (1) Original of the orders. (2) Original lodging receipt. (3) Original airline ticket receipt. Original receipts for any expenses $75 or more.
D.2.c. PPC Completing the DD-1351-2	Current instructions and tips for the completion of travel vouchers are available in many different formats on the PPC–Travel web site found in Appendix I. If Internet access is not available, the order-issuing authority or Director can provide printed information for use. A self-explanatory electronic version of the form is also available on the Auxiliary web site (see Appendix I).
D.2.c.(1) Payment	Payment of travel claims will be made directly to the financial account provided on the electronic transfer/direct deposit form (FMS 2231-CGAUX). If payment has not been deposited after 30 days of submission, an Auxiliarist should contact the PPC Customer Care Branch for status at 1-866-PPC-USCG (772-8724) or via the customer care branch of the PPC web site (see Appendix I). Detailed payment and deposit status for travel expenditures is available via the online travel claim status/payment history section of the FINCEN web site (see Appendix I).

D.2.c.(2) Advance of Travel Funds (SF-1038)	Advances of funds may be requested to defer initial expenses associated with executing official Coast Guard travel. To obtain up to 80 percent of advance funding of the estimated cost of travel expenses, an approved request must be forwarded by the order-issuing authority at least seven working days prior to commencement of travel. Once the request has been approved, it is forwarded to PPC–Travel for payment. Actual payment of the advance to the Auxiliarist will be coordinated by the order issuing authority. It is imperative that a travel claim is submitted upon completion of travel to liquidate any advances and prevent debt collection activity.
D.2.d. Travel Voucher Summaries	A Travel Voucher Summary (TVS) explains reimbursed travel expenses in detail. TVSs are available at the PPC web site (see Appendix I). They may also be manually mailed upon request by the claimant to the Director to the address provided on the travel claim (DD Form 1351) if the claimant does not have Internet service. Although there is a block for an e-mail address on the travel claim (DD Form 1351), it is not used for distribution of the TVS. Detailed explanation of the TVS is available on the PPC-Travel web site (see Appendix I).
D.2.e. Errors in Reimbursement	Occasionally, situations occur where a travel claim is not reimbursed accurately. Discrepancies can occur by omitting expenses or from errors on the initial travel claim. If a discrepancy is noted in reimbursement after reviewing the TVS, a supplemental claim will normally be required to gain complete reimbursement. A supplemental claim is a new claim, with the word "Supplemental" marked at the top and bottom of the DD-1351. This signed claim must be forwarded, along with all necessary documentation, to the Approving Official who signed the original travel claim for processing by PPC–Travel. Instructions for the completion of supplemental claims are available on the PPC-Travel web site (see Appendix I).
D.2.f. Common Errors to Avoid When Filing Travel Claims	The following are common errors to avoid when filing travel claims: (1) Auxiliarist travels and resides with spouse during official travel. Auxiliarist's lodging will be reimbursed at the "single-room rate" and the lodging receipt must indicate the single-room rate in addition to the actual amount paid. (2) Official phone calls must be authorized on orders (or amendment). (3) Do not seek reimbursement for optional banquets or meals while at conferences. The daily rate paid for per-diem is for meals and incidental expenses which is the maximum allowed by law to be reimbursed. (4) Actual expense not authorized for lodging when lodging expenses exceed per-diem rate. Actual expense must be authorized on orders or an amendment to orders. Close advance coordination with the order issuing authority is critical to reimbursement.

(5) Travel authorized not to exceed cost of Government Procured Travel. Privately owned conveyance (normally referred to as POV or privately owned vehicle) mileage will normally only be reimbursed up to and not to exceed the constructive cost of what it would cost the Government to fly a member to/from a TDY site. This amount must be provided on the original orders for prompt reimbursement of member privately owned conveyance mileage expenses.

(6) Incomplete itineraries. Ensure itineraries are complete for accurate reimbursement.