National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

November 20, 2006

Attn of: Office of the Chief Financial Officer

TO: Distribution

FROM: Deputy Chief Financial Officer

SUBJECT: Interim Travel Policy Changes and Modifications

In support of the Integrated Enterprise Management Program and the new e-Travel Solution that is to be implemented March 2007, we have reviewed the Agency's travel policy as it pertains to this and new Government Service Administration Federal Travel Regulations recently published. In the enclosed document, you will find National Aeronautics and Space Administration's interim policies regarding reimbursement of travel entitlements.

These policies are effective October 1, 2006, and will be integrated into the Financial Management Requirements, Volume 12, with the next update. Please disseminate these policies as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Ledetria Beaudoin at 202-358-0991 or by e-mail at ledetria.t.beaudoin@nasa.gov.

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Enclosure

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You return home voluntarily even though you are not authorized a return trip home.	Your actual transportation expenses, not to exceed what NASA would have paid you for subsistence expenses under § 301-11.23 of part 301-11 of this chapter if you had remained at your temporary duty location.

Leave in Association with TDY:

§ 301-10.22 How much annual leave may I use in conjunction with official travel?

Including days spent traveling to and from the TDY location, the total number of days spent on official government business must be greater than or equal to the number of days spent on personal business. Authorized rest periods are considered part of official travel per regulations. See FTR 301-11.20.

Days on personal business include the following:

a. Weekends not required in order to perform the job (See FTR 301-11.21).
b. Days on annual leave or any non-paid non-work status other than sick leave.
c. Holidays.

Non CPP Approval:

§ 301-10.108 What requirements must be met to use a non-contract fare?

a. Before purchasing a non-contract fare you must meet one of the exception requirements listed in §301-10.107 and show approval on your travel authorization to use a non-contract fare.

b. If the non-contract fare is non-refundable, restricted, or has specific eligibility requirements, you must know or reasonably anticipate, based on your planned trip, that you will use the ticket.

c. Your agency must determine that the proposed non-contract transportation is practical and cost effective for the Government.

Note to §301-10.108: Carrier preference is not a valid reason for using a non-contract fare.

In addition to meeting the above requirements the Deputy Chief Financial Officer (Finance) or his/her designee at your Center must determine that the proposed non-contract transportation is practical and cost effective for the Government.

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Foreign Travel:

301-2.8 What forms must be submitted to the OER for foreign travel review and coordination?

The following forms should be submitted in advance of travel as applicable:

- Advance Notification Form
- Travel Authorization
  - See 301-71.103b(9)
- NASA Form 1676, "NASA Scientific and Technical Document Availability Authorization (DAA)"
- NASA Form 1167, "Request for Approval of Foreign Training, Non-Program Travel or Gifts of Travel From Non-Federal Sources"

The submission must include, but is not limited to, the following background information, the letter of invitation(s) and purpose of the trip, the program or agenda, the URL for the conference web site (if applicable), copy of legal review of all reimbursable travel, a copy of the appropriate reviewing OER official.

Extended TDY:

§ 301-10.13 Will NASA pay transportation expenses for me to return to my official station on non-work days?

NASA will pay as follows:

If…	NASA will pay...
You are authorized a return trip home under the following circumstances: NASA requires you to return to your official station to perform official business or because it, otherwise, is advantageous to the Government; NASA will realize a substantial cost savings by returning you home; or Periodic return travel home is justified incident to an extended TDY assignment. Travelers are authorized trips home an average of every 3 weeks, NTE 17 trips per a one year assignment or the prorated equivalent rounded down for trips of a lesser duration. (See 301-11.221)	Your actual transportation expenses.

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Unused Tickets:

§ 301-10.114 What must I do with unused ticket(s) or refund application(s)?

You must notify the Center Travel Office as soon as possible so that the appropriate credits can be processed. Unused paper tickets or coupons must be returned to the Center Travel Office for a refund to be processed.

First/Business Class Travel:

§ 301-10.123 When may I use first-class airline accommodations?

Only when NASA specifically authorizes these accommodations as identified in FTR 301-10.123. Authorization for first or premium class accommodations shall be made by the Center Director or his/her designee. Agency reporting requirements for first-class travel shall comply with FTR 300-70.100.

When first-class accommodation is authorized to accommodate a disability or other special need, FTR 301-13.2(b) requires the condition be substantiated in writing by a medical authority. This is not intended to be an open-ended approval for other than coach class travel. The condition should be substantiated on a regular basis at minimum annually.

§ 301-10.124 When may I use business-class other than first-class airline accommodations?

Only when NASA specifically authorizes these accommodations identified in paragraphs FTR 301-10.124. Authorization for premium class accommodations shall be made by the Center Director or his/her designee.

When business other than first-class accommodation is authorized to accommodate a disability or other special need, FTR 301-13.2(b) requires the condition be substantiated in writing by a medical authority. This is not intended to be an open-ended approval for other than coach class travel. The condition should be substantiated on a regular basis at minimum annually.

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Rental Cars:

§ 301-10.450 When can I use a rental car?

The use of a rental vehicle must be advantageous to NASA and must be specifically authorized. Intermediate cars are the standard size rental cars to be authorized for TDY. Any upgrade should be authorized prior to commencement of travel. If other than an intermediate car is requested, justification is required stating that the traveler(s) meet one of the following conditions:

a. Four or more travelers using one rental vehicle
b. Medical disability
c. Physical need for additional space
d. Weather conditions at the TDY location
e. The default preferred car is not available

Additional justification is required for other than the lowest cost rental car company at the TDY location (airport terminal).

NOTE: You may upgrade your vehicle at your personal expense, including through redemption of promotional benefits.

Lodging Reservations:

§ 301-11.11 How do I make my lodging reservations?

Lodging reservations must be made consistent with guidance outline in FTR 301-11.11. NASA travelers should give first consideration to hotels that are participants in GSA FedRooms (http://www.fedrooms.com), formerly the Federal Premier Lodging Program (FPLP).

Dual Lodging:

§ 301-11-16 What reimbursement will I receive if I prepay my lodging expenses and my temporary duty is curtailed, canceled or interrupted for official purposes or for other reasons beyond my control that are acceptable to my Agency?

See FTR 301-11.16. If you acted reasonably and prudently in incurring the expense, and sought to obtain a refund or otherwise took steps to minimize the cost, you maybe reimbursed expenses that are not refundable, including a forfeited rental deposit. NASA will not pay your expenses if you did not try to obtain a refund, if you did not take steps to minimize the costs, or if you did not act reasonably and prudently in incurring the prepaid lodging expenses.

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Employees who are authorized per diem while on temporary duty who travel on official business outside the local commuting area can request a travel authorization for dual lodging expenses in order to defray the cost of maintaining dual temporary lodging. Reimbursement is limited to the lodging expenses at the prior location and the regular lodging and per diem at the current station. It does not authorize payment of dual per diem for a specific day, but does authorize reimbursement of the expenses incurred for dual lodging only. Travelers on extended TDY will be limited to the fixed lodging costs. Receipts are required for all dual lodging claims.

Leave:

§ 301-11.21 Will I be reimbursed for per diem or actual expenses on leave or non-workdays (weekend, legal Federal Government holiday, or other scheduled non-workdays) while I am on official travel?

See FTR 301-11.21. NASA will not pay an allowance for subsistence expenses for any paid or non-paid non-work status during your prescribed working hours unless emergency travel is involved due to an incapacitating illness or injury, in which case the rules in FTR 301-30 govern.

NASA will pay you an allowance for subsistence expenses on a non-workday when you:

a. Return to your official station or to the home from which you commute to your official station.

b. Are in a paid or non-paid non-work status, other than sick leave, at the end of the workday before the non-workday(s) and at the beginning of the workday following the non-workday(s).

c. Take leave, other than sick leave, for all of the prescribed working hours since your previous non-workday.

Travel to Permanent Duty Station:

§ 301-11.23 Are there any other circumstances when my Agency may reimburse me to return home or to my official station for non-workdays during my TDY assignment?

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Receipts:

§ 301-11.25 Must I provide receipts to substantiate my claimed travel expenses?

Yes. You must provide a lodging receipt and a receipt for every authorized expense over $75, or provide a reason acceptable to your agency explaining why you are unable to furnish the necessary receipt(s). See also FTR § 301–52.4.

Note to 301–11.25: Hard copy receipts should be electronically scanned and submitted with your electronic travel claim when your agency has fully deployed ETS and notifies you that electronic scanning is available within your agency (see § 301–50.3 of this chapter). You must retain receipts to support a claimed travel expense while electronic imaging is not available.

Reduced Per Diem:

301-11.201 Under what circumstances may my agency prescribe a reduced per diem rate lower than the prescribed maximum??

In regard to FTR 301-11.201, some examples of when NASA has established a special reduced rate at a rate below the maximum per diem rate are the following:

1) You are furnished one or more meals a day and/or lodging at no cost or nominal cost by the Government, for example: A NASA directorate may sponsor training at the Wallops Flight Facility in which they provide all your lodging and your evening meal on the first day of travel, three meals a day for the full days of training and breakfast and lunch on the last day of travel. In this instance, if you are informed of these arrangements beforehand and decide to attend the training your reimbursement will be reduced by GSA's predetermined amount for each meal provided.

2) You are performing an extended temporary duty assignment under the following criterion:

a. Extended TDY Assignments. Authorized assignments of a duration greater than 30 days. For assignment of more than 180 days, NASA requires an analysis of allowances with the assignment as an extended TDY, temporary change of station or permanent change of station by the Deputy Chief Financial Officer (Finance).

Note: Per IRS Publication 463, Long Term assignments in excess of one year at the same location, regardless of the duties being performed, are considered to be income by the IRS and NASA, as an employer, is obligated to report all reimbursements as income to the employee, from the point that it can be reasonably determined that the assignment will exceed 365 days. A series of assignments to the same location, all for short periods, but that together cover a long period may be considered an indefinite assignment and therefore taxable.

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§ 301-11.204 How is my reimbursement rate affected when a TDY assignment of 30 days or less is extended beyond 30 days?

There will be occasions where legitimate unforeseen circumstances require the initial TDY assignment to be extended. If the extension is for less than 30 additional days, the traveler may continue to be reimbursed under the lodging plus system. Extensions must be authorized by the cognizant authorizing official. However, if the extension exceeds 30 days or an additional extension is requested, the traveler must be reimbursed at the rate prescribed for the extended TDY assignment. The reimbursement rate change will be effective on the date the authorizing official makes the determination that an extension is required. The per diem rate will be determined based on the length of the extension. Extensions must not be authorized for the purpose of simply maintaining a higher per diem rate in view of the GSA requirement to establish a reduced per diem rate in extended TDY situations.

§ 301-11.206 How is my reimbursement rate affected when it is determined that an extended TDY travel assignment will last more than 180 days?

If during an extended TDY assignment NASA management decides that the duration of the assignment will exceed 180 days, an analysis of allowances with the assignment will be performed to determine whether it is more advantageous to the Agency to continue as an extended TDY, temporary change of station or permanent change of station.

§ 301-11.213 What allowances are covered by the reduced per diem rate?

NASA will authorize the traveler a per diem rate that provides:

a. An efficiency or one bedroom furnished apartment.
b. Or if not available, an unfurnished efficiency or one bedroom apartment plus the rental of appropriate and necessary furniture.
c. The cost of connection, use and disconnection of utilities.
d. Monthly telephone use fee (does not include installation and long distance calls).
e. Basic cable TV service.
f. Cost of reasonable maid service and cleaning charges.
g. The cost of prepared meals; breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Note: NASA has no authority to pay per diem expenses for any family members who are not NASA employees at the extended TDY site. An employee who decides to take family members along on the extended TDY assignment should be prepared to pay for all their related expenses.

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§ 301-11.214 What does NASA authorize when two spouses are performing an extended TDY assignment during the same timeframe at the same location?

In instances when two spouses are officially authorized to perform an extended TDY assignment during the same time frame at the same location, the following will be authorized:

a. One spouse will be authorized 65 percent of the maximum per diem rate established for the TDY location.

b. The accompanying spouse will be authorized 75 percent of the Meals and Incidental Expense Allowance (M&IE) only, established for the location rounded up to the nearest dollar. The additional 10 percent of the daily M&IE allowance should cover any additional lodging expenses, such as utilities, incurred by the spouse while occupying the same lodging facility.

c. This additional M&IE allowance will not be authorized for assignments of convenience to the employee. The decision as to whether the assignment is one with no additional M&IE allowance or an assignment which includes the additional M&IE allowance will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the staffing needs of the NASA Centers and the employment qualification of the employees involved.

§ 301-11.221 May I be authorized to return to my permanent duty station for personal reasons while on an extended TDY assignment?

Yes, periodic return travel home is justified incident to an extended TDY assignment. NASA allows for a trip home an average of every three weeks away on an extended TDY assignment, not to exceed 17 trips per a one-year assignment or the prorated equivalent rounded down for assignments of a lesser duration. For example, a six month assignment should not exceed 8 trips. For these authorized trips home you may use the Government contract city-pair fares and travel during work hours without taking any form of leave.

You may always return home voluntarily more often than every three weeks. However, you may NOT use the Government contract city-pair fares for these trips and you may NOT use your Government contractor provided charge card to pay for the expenses. You must also travel on your own time or take appropriate leave for missed duty hours.

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§ 301-11.222 Under what circumstances may my authorized per diem rate be adjusted?

If the Center DCFO or NSSC official determines that authorizations have been manipulated for the purpose of providing the employee with a higher per diem rate, the following adjustment will be made based on the length of the assignment:

If the total length of assignment is over 30 days and subsequent weekly, biweekly, or monthly authorizations or combinations of these have been issued solely for the reason of providing a higher per diem rate, the traveler will be reimbursed starting at 12:01 a.m. on the day after arrival at the extended TDY location 65 percent of the maximum per diem established by GSA.

§ 301-11.225 May I be reimbursed for the shipment of unaccompanied baggage in connection with my extended TDY assignment?

Yes, if:

a. It is justified in connection with your extended TDY assignment.
b. The unaccompanied baggage being transported is 350 pounds or less.
c. The assignment is greater than 30 days.
d. The baggage will be transported in a manner that is most cost-effective to the Agency.

1) When Driving:
   - Travelers may ship (UPS/Federal Express, etc.) ground service up to 350 lbs. in addition to what they can carry in their POV, if authorized.

   - Travelers may rent a trailer (U-Haul, etc.) to carry any additional items to the extended TDY location. However, a cost comparison is required from the traveler showing that renting a truck is more advantageous to the government than the cost of airfare plus excess baggage or POV plus shipment of 350 lbs.

2) When Flying:
   - Excess baggage is allowed up to 350 lbs, justification is required.

Foreign Currency Fee:

§ 301-12.1 What miscellaneous expenses are reimbursable?

NASA will reimburse as a miscellaneous expenses all items listed in FTR §301-12.1 or any fees absolutely necessary for the completion of travel when they have been authorized and/or approved by the Agency.

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Excess Baggage:

§ 301-12.2 Will NASA pay me for any excess baggage charges I may incur?

Yes, NASA will pay all charges listed in FTR 301-12.2, however, justification for the excess baggage is required by NASA.

Advances:

§301-51.204 How will I receive my travel advance?

NASA travelers can only receive travel advances through the Government-issued travel card ATM advances. Exceptions are limited to the following:

a. Travelers without a Government-issued travel card.
b. Foreign travelers going to locations in which access to Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's) is limited.

For the exceptions listed above, travelers will coordinate with the Center's Travel Business Process Lead in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.