

Center for Satellite Applications and Research (STAR) Travel Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)



Version 1.0
6 March 2018

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Center for Satellite Applications and Research (STAR)

Travel Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

1.0 Overview

1.1 Scope

The scope of these Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is for all federal STAR travelers, as well as other travelers to whom STAR provides travel support. The procedures are in direct alignment with the NESDIS travel approval processes, which are interwoven into this SOP.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this SOP is to establish standardized, written travel procedures for NESDIS/Center for Satellite Applications and Research (STAR).

This SOP outlines and documents the travel process and the requirements in place for invitational, domestic, foreign, group, and conference travel under STAR. Additionally, this guide will provide direction on how to create and submit travel vouchers, which falls under the responsibility of the Traveler and Travel Preparer. The main purpose of this SOP is to provide support for the Traveler when utilizing the E2 Solutions travel system and to understand key travel timelines and requirements within NESDIS. The processes within this guide will help reduce the delays associated with rewriting and submitting travel requests.

1.3 Responsibility

The Traveler, Travel Preparer, Travel Approver, and final Travel Approver should ensure that the process defined within this document is followed accurately and consistently, so as to minimize the travel workload required to implement STAR travel, and prevent rework, and required trips from not being approved and implemented. To achieve these ends, the Traveler, Travel Preparer, Travel Approver and final Travel Approver must also ensure that the overview and best practices section of this guide be upheld.

2.0 STAR Travel Overview

This section will outline key individuals, processes, and resources vital to all Travelers and Travel Preparers new to STAR travel.

2.1 STAR Travel POC, Travel Preparers, and Division Travel Coordinators

NESDIS requires that each Program/Office have a Travel Point of Contact (POC) who is the liaison between the Program/Office and NESDIS HQ Travel. The Travel POC is responsible for providing their Program Office's travel requests, questions, and comments to NESDIS Travel HQ. Travel

correspondence should come to NESDIS HQ Travel only through the Office Travel POC. This keeps each member of the NESDIS travel team informed and will ensure a timely response.

STAR Division Travel Preparers and POC:

STAR's principal travel point of contact (POC) is Jacqui Poindexter (301-683-3336), and the designated backup for that role is Tammie Herrin.

Division	Primary Travel Preparers	Backup Travel Preparers	2nd Backup Preparers	Division Travel Coordinators
Front Office	Ana Carrion 301-683-3490	Clarissa Bennett 301-683-3491	Nolvia Herrera 301-683-3308	Tammie Herrin 301-683-3498
CoRP	Clarissa Bennett	Ana Carrion	Nolvia Herrera	Tammie Herrin
SMCD	Clarissa Bennett	Ana Carrion	Nolvia Herrera	Tammie Herrin
SOCD	Nolvia Herrera	Ana Carrion	Clarissa Bennett	Terry Sheriff 301-683-3498

STAR Office Travel Roles & Key Responsibilities

Traveler	Travel Preparer	Division Coordinator	STAR Travel POC	Budget Officer
• Provide all travel documentation to Travel Preparer • Work with Travel Preparers to prepare Travel Authorizations and Vouchers • Provide the travel preparers with your travel receipts (no later than 3 days after return from trip) • Approve on your Travel Authorizations and Travel Voucher	• Provide Travel policy and procedural guidance to the traveler • Ensure all trips are listed on the STAR Prioritized Travel List before travel arrangements are made • Confirm travel requirements for trip • Prepare the travel packages for submission to Budget Analysts, Travel POC, and Director for approval	• Travel POC for their respective divisions; • Work with the travelers to implement changes and additions to the STAR Prioritized Travel List • Send all travel changes and additions to the STAR Budget Officer via the below-stated e-mail address: NESDIS.STAR.TRAVEL@NOAA.gov	• STAR Travel POC Liaison between STAR and NESDIS HQ • Review all travel packages for accuracy • Provide all travel packages for Director approval • Work with the Budget Officer on changes and additions to be included on the STAR NESDIS HQ list from the STAR Prioritized Travel List • Update the STAR NESDIS HQ List on Google Docs • Submit travel packages to NESDIS HQ for review and approval	• Keeper of the STAR Prioritized Travel List • Make all changes to the STAR Prioritized Travel List that are received from the Division Coordinators • Work with the Director/Leadership Team to finalize all travel changes • Work with the Director to approve all final travel packages in the E2 System. • Travel Administrator for the E2 System for routing lists, travel issues, etc.

2.2 Types of Travel

Domestic

Civil Servant who is performing official Temporary Duty (TDY) travel for the government within the Continental United States (CONUS) which makes up the lower forty-eight adjoining States on the continent of North America.

Foreign

Civil Servant who is performing official TDY travel for the government in an area outside CONUS (OCONUS), and includes Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the North Mariana Islands, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States.

Conferences

A conference is a sponsored/co-sponsored meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, training or event that will involve federally funded attendee travel to which NOAA will expend funds for a group of government employees who will attend (not limited to NOAA). Conferences require certain levels of approval, depending on the expected overall total cost. To determine whether an event qualifies as a conference, use the [Conference and Group Travel Decision Flow Chart](#).

Group

A group travel package is required for all travel that includes 15 or more Travelers for domestic travel and 8 or more Travelers for international travel.

Destination Locales Travel

Locations that are in the United States which are popular tourist destinations that have potential to draw political scrutiny. (California/Los Angeles metro area, San Diego, Colorado, Aspen, Florida/Orlando, Miami, Hawaii (entire state), Louisiana, New Orleans, Nevada/Reno, Las Vegas, New Jersey, Atlantic City and New York, New York City metro area).

Sponsored Travel

Sponsored travel is travel paid for by another organization outside of NOAA (sometimes incorrectly referred to as “invitational”) whereby the cost of the sponsored portion of the trip does not impact STAR cap and where fractions of a travel amount can be reimbursed to NOAA.

Invitational Travel

Someone who is not employed by the Department of Commerce and who is performing official TDY travel for the government.

Reimbursable Travel

Reimbursable travel is travel paid by another organization/entity outside of NOAA or when a donor reimburses NOAA for travel related cost.

Emergency Travel

Emergency travel applies to employees who are required to depart immediately (same day/next available flight) due to an emergency. For example, hurricane and hazmat situations.

Local Travel

Local travel is travel that is performed for official business in and around the employee's duty station and does not entitle the employee to per diem or other subsistence allowances. Mileage claims for local travel are within a 50-mile radius of the employee's residence or official duty station. The employee must reach his/her actual work site and return to his/her residence at his/her own expense.

If the employee performs official local travel during the regular work day only, the local travel costs exceeding the normal daily commuting costs will be reimbursed. The employee will be reimbursed for the miles driven, tolls, and parking fees incurred while away from the office.

Direct Pay Travel (In-Kind)

Travel is considered direct pay travel when a source outside NOAA (including another Federal agency) pays for lodging, airfare ticket and/or meals directly to vendors (e.g. hotel and airline). Traveler is not seeking reimbursement for any travel expense.

Emergent Travel*

Travel that is unplanned.

Deferred Travel*

Is travel where a specific meeting/conference was included in your quarterly target that has now been postponed and moved into a different Quarter.

*Note: A Reclama form is required for both Emergent which is expected to exceed your quarterly target and Deferred travel. The Traveler Preparer will submit the Reclama form to the Travel POC and notification to the Division Coordinator. The Reclama form is located in Section 8.5 (STAR Travel Forms Index).

Key Timelines for Headquarters

- Domestic travel requires 2 weeks to process.
- Foreign travel requires 4-6 weeks to process.
- Travel voucher must be prepared five (5) days after the traveler has returned.
- Conference packages above \$100K require 75 days to process.
- Conference packages less than \$100K require 30 days to process.
- Group travel packages require 40 days to process
- For emergency/unplanned travel, notify Travel Preparer as soon as possible.
- Destination travel requires 2 weeks to process.
- Sponsored/CD210 travel requires 4-6 weeks to process.
- Reimbursable travel requires 4-6 weeks to process.

Note: Please allow an additional up-front 2 weeks for STAR to process before submission to HQ.

2.3 STAR Planning Process and Requirements

Travel Ceiling

NESDIS assigns travel ceilings to each Program/Office. Travel ceilings are monitored within each Program/Office, as well as on a monthly/quarterly basis at NESDIS HQ. When one Program/Office is funding another Program's/Office's travel using funds that are direct-cited, the travel goes on the travel document for the office providing the funding and will count against their travel ceiling. When travel funds are received via Budget Operating Plan (BOP), travel goes on the travel document of the Program/Office receiving the funds and will count against their travel ceiling. All other travel, including reimbursable travel with the exception of Sponsored or Direct Cite, will count against the travel ceiling regardless of the origin of the funding.

Planning and Annual Process

During fourth quarter (Q4), the Director will assign travel ceiling amounts to each Division and announce priorities for the upcoming fiscal year (FY) and request projected travel. The Divisions shall collect all their travel requirements. If they cannot define definite dates, they shall provide the earliest possible date that the travel is projected and annotate that date of travel is not definite, but that this is the earliest date it could occur. Once all potential travel requirements are collected, the Division Chiefs will prioritize their travel for the FY. A Leadership Meeting will be dedicated to prioritizing travel for STAR as a whole, which will lead to an integrated annual travel plan for the office. This process will be repeated quarterly during the third month of each quarter by adjusting the executed travel budget and date projections for actuals, updating estimates of quarterly and annual plan against cap, adding approved emergent travel, and prioritizing against ceilings. If the Director determines that there is justification to request a higher ceiling, the request will be based on the plan showing the funded requirements and the unfunded requirements deemed sufficiently critical to request additional ceiling. Such requests may be made each quarter, or when emergent travel arises that warrants such a request in the judgment of the Director. In order for the ultimate approvals required, it is critical that the travel plan be complete and contain all required elements.

2.4 Travel Requests

Travelers should inform their Travel Coordinators regarding trips for the upcoming fiscal year in response to the fourth quarter call. The Travel Coordinators shall submit travel plans as soon as identified to the STAR Travel Budget Officer as soon as practicable. These requests will be added to an internal STAR travel list for Director's review and approval. Once travel has been approved for the year, STAR's travel POC will enter their entire division's travel into the Google travel log.

Emergent and Deferred travel - Notify the Travel Preparer and Division Coordinator as soon as defined/known. The Traveler Preparer will need to submit a Reclama form if the Emergent travel exceeds the budget for deferred travel.

Travel Requiring DAA Approval

All travel and conference questions and concerns should be submitted to STAR's Travel POC, who is responsible for contacting the NESDIS Travel office. The DAA office, nor NESDIS travel office should not be contacted directly or copied on travel correspondence. DAA approvals is required for the types of travel listed below:

- Travel that exceeds \$20,000
- Conference travel
- International travel (this includes Alaska, Hawaii and all other non-CONUS U.S. destinations – see section on Foreign travel below for further information)
- Group travel
- Travel including any applicable memos (Non-Contract Carrier, Non Refundable Air, and Request for Actual Lodging, Lateness, Blanket Travel)
- All NESDIS Director Travel including domestic and international (all SES in the Director role that are direct reports to HQ)
- Sponsored Travel/CD210
- Destination travel

Note: Only regular domestic travel will not require review/approval by DAA

Travel Requiring Deputy Under Secretary of Operations (DUS/O) Approval

- Group travel

Travel Requiring STAR Director Approval

- STAR Director reviews/approves all travel

2.5 General Best and Required Practices

Avoid

- Traveler should avoid last minute travel requests.
- Traveler should avoid submitting incomplete travel documentation to Travel Preparers
- Traveler should not contact Headquarters (HQ) directly for any reason.
- Traveler should NOT enter or submit their own TA/Voucher in the E2 system

Things to Do

- Errors and missing information will cause delay in the approval process. (Personal leave, other meetings/stops, memos, etc.) should be included in all paperwork.
- Corrections and missing information must be submitted in a timely fashion. Failure to do this will cause further delay in approval process.
- Traveler should only work with Travel Preparer in creating TA/Voucher

- All travel electronic Country Clearance (eCC) paperwork MUST match what is on your itinerary, including personal leave.

2.6 Google Travel Documentation

Travel shall not go on the Google travel log until it has been approved by STAR's Director. Furthermore, Division Chief's and Director shall not approve travel in the E2 system until the associated Google travel log entry is approved. It is imperative to be as thorough as possible in providing the required travel information (e.g. purpose of travel, event description). Any abbreviations or acronyms on the Google travel log should be spelled out. Please include the first and last names of your Travelers.

If Travelers are making multiple stops and/or will be taking leave during travel, this must be disclosed on the Google travel log.

2.7 Headquarters Travel Communication

NESDIS travel communication regarding decisions from the DAA or other updates will come via email from the STAR POC to Travel Preparers, Travel Coordinators and Travelers. These e-mails provide the latest news on travel decisions and guidance. They will also provide a date showing the next travel folder submission, and notification of the next travel meeting with the DAA and Deputy Chief Financial Officer (DCFO).

2.8 Per Diem, International rates and Meals and Incidental Expense (M&IE)

To calculate per diem and M&IE, visit [GSA Travel Resources](#).

International per diem rates can be found at the [State Department site](#).

On travel days, M&IE is calculated at 75% of the daily rate. Please include formulas in the conference breakdown Excel sheet that NESDIS Travel will provide.

2.9 Sponsored Travel/CD-210

Travel paid for with funds from outside the Federal Government requires a CD-210 (Gifts and Bequests) form. Guidance on whether a CD-210 form is required can be found at the link below:

- [NOAA Travel Gifts and Bequests Procedures](#)

CD-210s need to receive clearance from the Ethics Division at EthicsDivision@doc.gov. The Traveler shall prepare the CD-210 and submit to Ethics division requesting approval. Once received, Traveler shall send the CD-210 and the approval email to the Travel Preparer.

- [NOAA travel gift questionnaire \(pdf\)](#)

3.0 Travel Arrangements

This section will outline how to create a travel authorization/arrangements and the travel approval process.

3.1 E2 Solutions Profile Creation

E2 Solutions profile creation is the initial and vital step in the STAR travel process. [E2 Solutions](#) is an end-to-end product solution for travel and expense management provided through a web-based government-wide service. Paperless travel authorization and vouchering, travel management center services, and financial system processing for faster and more reliable traveler reimbursement. All Civil Servant staff planning for travel must be entered into the E2 System by visiting the Budget Officer requesting new account access. Once an account is established, all Travelers planning to travel are expected to create and complete a profile to initiate travel plans in the E2 Solutions system. The following profile information will need to be captured:

- Default home site and departure
- Mailing address
- Credit card information (Note: The credit card is used to hold the reservation and will not be charged. The traveler will be permitted to use a different form of payment once they arrive at the hotel destination.)
- Travel preferences
- Other features (may be optional)

During the profile creation process, the traveler is required to add the Travel Preparer's name in the E2 Solutions system. The Travel Preparer will get a notification, only if their email address is in the traveler's profile as an alternate email address field. If the Travel Preparer is unknown, then the Traveler should contact their Division Travel Preparer or STAR's Budget Analyst.

After the profile is completed within the E2 Solutions system, the Traveler must save the profile and exit the system.

3.2 Travel Arrangement Prerequisites

All Travelers must contact the Travel Preparer to notify them of the intent to travel, prior to making travel arrangements.

When the traveler profile section is completed, the Traveler can proceed to the "Shop First" section within E2 Solutions, where all travel arrangements are created.

3.3 Travel Arrangements

Travelers must obtain approval from their supervisors prior to requesting travel orders. It is important to estimate the costs of your travel as accurately as possible to avoid delays in the approval of both the travel authorization and travel voucher. Travel arrangements (hotel and air

itinerary) must be booked by the Traveler or the Travel Preparer in the E2 Solutions module.

Fed Rooms:

Fed Rooms is a GSA program that provides hotel rooms to employees who perform official TDY travel for the government and should always be the first choice for consideration. Fed Rooms offer specially negotiated federal government hotel rates with FEMA certified hotels and in addition offer:

- Rates at or below per diem;
- 4 pm day of arrival cancellation policy;
- No early departure fees;
- No advantage lodging or deposit fees;
- No minimum stay requirement; and
- No resort or booking fees.

Registration Fees:

If the registration fee includes food, it must be put on the government travel credit card and included on the travel authorization.

If the registration fee does not include any food, it must be put on the government purchase card and excluded from the travel authorization.

3.4 Travel Review

- All travel packages will be submitted to STAR's Travel POC by the Travel Preparer for review of completeness and conformance with requirements. All information must be provided in the travel package (*e.g.*, leave, CD-210 and special accommodations). Incomplete packages will be returned to the Travel Preparer for completion. Traveler must provide Travel Preparer with all required information.
- STAR has one Travel POC. All travel communication should go through the Travel POC unless otherwise directed by the Travel POC, Lead Budget Analyst or Director. No Traveler, Travel Preparer, Division Chief, or Branch Chief should contact NESDIS HQ directly about travel; doing so, may result in the travel being canceled.
- Travel POC will send an e-mail to each Traveler, Travel Preparer and their Branch and Division Chiefs announcing when the package has cleared the Travel POC, Lead Budget Analyst, and Director, and submitted to HQ for approval. The Travel POC will also send an e-mail to the same individuals once HQ approves the travel request. Final approval by the Director in the E2 Solutions system will occur once all items are correct in the system and only after DAA has approved travel. The Director will have a delegated back up if out for more than a week.
- Once travel packages leave STAR, no changes are allowed. If a Traveler believes a change is required, the respective Division Chief must justify it to Director, and the Director must

approve before any change will be submitted to Headquarters.

3.5 Senior Executive Service (SES) Travel Approval

- All SES and Directors that report to HQ must be cleared through the DAA office for all travel to include foreign and domestic
- In order for the DAA to approve SES travel, Travel Preparers must submit the travel packages to STAR's POC for review and once cleared the package is submitted to HQ.
- Planned SES travel also needs to be included on each program's respective Google Travel sheet in green.

4.0 NESDIS Requirements for Domestic Travel

This section outlines domestic travel as it pertains to travel approvals, booking hotel and air reservations, travel authorization preparation and the use of travel charge cards.

All travel must first be approved by the Traveler's immediate Supervisor, Division Chief, and Director. All travel and conference requests are submitted by STAR's Travel POC to NESDIS Travel. The DAA should never be contacted directly or copied on travel correspondence. Travel is submitted for review weekly. Meetings may be scheduled intermittently. Travel that does not require DAA approval should be entered into the Google log in white. Travel that does require DAA approval shall be entered into the Google log in green. Only the STAR Travel POC and Budget Officer can make changes to the Google log.

4.1 Hotel & Air Itineraries

Travelers or Travel Preparers must book flight and hotel arrangements in the [E2 Solutions](#) Shop First module. (Note: Traveler is responsible for any fees or charges incurred for booking air travel outside of E2 Solutions.) There is a Travel Management Center fee (TMC) charged for every domestic and foreign travel that is booked through SATO (Foreign is \$34.41 and Domestic is \$33.07). Hotel and car rental is \$15.47.

Once the hotel and air arrangements have been booked, the Travel Preparer should be notified to create the Travel Authorizations (TA) in E2 Solutions. When requesting lodging that exceeds government per diem allocations, Travelers are required to submit a memo requesting reimbursement for actual expenses through the Director to submit a memo with the Travel Approver to the DAA for approval.

- NESDIS HQ does not authorize or approve Business Class Fare. This request must go to the Deputy Under Secretary for Operations of NOAA under a reasonable accommodation request.
- Medical Disability - Employees who require choice/premium seating based on a medical disability must have a Reasonable Accommodations Certificate on file and will need to include the following statement in the Remarks section of the travel authorization each

time the employee is authorized an upgrade to choice/premium seating:
“Choice/premium seating is authorized based on medical”.

4.2 Travel Authorizations (TAs)

It is important to estimate the costs of your travel as accurately as possible to avoid delays in the approval of both the travel authorization and travel voucher. Traveler is responsible for any fees associated with booking air flights outside of E2 Solutions that could be booked in E2. The TA must include the following information:

- Traveler information: name, travel dates, locations, and purpose of travel
- Estimated expenses: airline flight, hotel tax, lodging, meals and incidentals, rental (if applicable), and miscellaneous fees
- Any leave in conjunction with travel
- Accounting: use of appropriate funds for travel and necessary accounting codes
- E2 Solutions will generate an error message if the TA is prepared incorrectly

To conclude, the TA must be approved by the Travel POC, traveler’s Budget Analyst, Division Chief, and STAR’s Director and if required DAA, DUS/O or finance before it can be submitted for ticketing.

4.3 Travel Charge Card

All Travelers traveling greater than 5 times annually shall obtain a J.P. Morgan Chase (JPMC) travel charge card. Traveler is required to pay the travel card bill in full when due regardless of reimbursement status.

The following sites are helpful for providing trip cost estimates and planning itineraries:

- [Fed Travel Flight Search](#)
- [JPMC travel charge card](#)

5.0 NESDIS Requirements for Foreign Travel

A foreign area is defined as any area outside CONUS (OCNUS), and includes Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States. This section will outline foreign travel as it pertains to travel package completion, justification for travel, how to get travel approved, making travel arrangements, travel authorization preparation, electronic Country Clearance (eCC), IT security, foreign defense briefing, the use of travel charge cards, and passport/visa processing. The Traveler shall provide the Travel Preparer with all applicable foreign travel forms prior to the travel request being processed. A Lateness Memo is required when submitting foreign travel after the 4-6 week period (sample memo is attached)

5.1 Foreign Travel Packages

- Foreign Travel Packages consists of the following documents:
- Travel Justification Form
- CD-210/Invitation letter (if applicable)
- DOC Travel Gift Questionnaire and Ethics approval email (if applicable)
- Travel Authorization (TA)
- Travel arrangements (hotel, air, and vehicle reservations)
- Electronic Country Clearance (eCC) (approved)
- Foreign Travel Briefing training certificate (if applicable)
- NESDIS/STAR IT Security form
- Completion of High Threat Security Overseas Course
- Memos (Non-Contract Carrier, Non-Refundable Air, and Request for Actual Lodging. Lateness, Blanket Travel)

In addition to the list above, the STAR Google travel log should be updated to ensure that travel details (name, dates of travel, event location, purpose, and cost estimate) coincide with the foreign travel package. Once the TA is completed, the TA amount should also be updated.

Overseas Travel & Training Requirements

The State Department has released new security training requirements for travel to High Threat Risk (HTHR) Posts. The requisite training, High Threat Overseas Seminar (HTSOS) training and Foreign Affairs Counter Threat (FACT) training must be completed through the Foreign Service Institute. The additional training requirements apply to all NOAA personnel (FTEs and non-FTEs; U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens) traveling on U.S. government travel orders. Training is required for all countries except for countries in Europe and Eurasia, East Asia and the Pacific. Training for these countries will be required beginning January 1, 2019. To register for either course, work with your budget analyst to submit [OPM Standard Form SF-182 \(pdf\)](#) and vendor payment information to the Foreign Service Institute Registrar. For additional information visit the Foreign Service Institute's [HTSOS and FACT page](#) for enrollment information and sample forms.

Note: Allow at least 3 months prior to traveling to complete training.

5.2 Travel Justification

The NESDIS Foreign Travel Justification Form must be completed by the Traveler and signed by the line office Director.

Prior to obtaining a travel justification form, the Traveler may receive an invitation letter for a sponsored travel, which should be included/uploaded when applicable to their Travel Preparer.

Justification form must include:

- Traveler name and role at NOAA

- Status
- Funding Source
- Mission Goals
- Purpose and Role of participant
- Travel dates
- A list of meetings in detail (Please do not use acronyms)

5.3 Travel Arrangements

Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), Chapter 301-50 requires employees to use E2 for all travel reservations that can be booked in E2. Employees are not authorized to book reservations that can be booked in E2 through web-based systems such as Travelocity, Expedia, hotels.com, etc., Airbnb, as well as travel agents not under GSA contract. In cases where a reservation cannot be made using the on-line booking engine (OBE), employees are authorized to call the TMC directly to book reservation. Please note that reservations booked directly with the TMC will incur a higher transaction fee than when booked in the OBE. Some examples include Auto train, bush carriers, and charters in Alaska. After reservations are completed, the Travel Preparer should be notified in order to prepare the travel authorization.

- If the Traveler is being sponsored, they must submit the invitation letter from sponsoring entity (i.e., European Space Agency, EUMETSAT, etc.). In addition, all expenses that will be paid by the sponsor must be submitted on the CD-210 form.
- If Travelers are making multiple stops and/or will be taking leave during travel, this must be disclosed on their travel authorization and Google travel documents.
- All international trips require an eCC and must be approved prior to STAR's approval.
- All Travelers must be cleared from the State Department to enter the requested country of travel. An eCC must be obtained and approved through <https://ecc.state.gov/security/EccLogin.aspx>. Travelers are responsible for completing the eCC form, and should inform the Travel Preparer of completion for final review.
- Once a foreign travel trip has been approved in STAR's travel plan, a country clearance may be requested. It should be requested no later than 8 weeks prior to the start of the foreign trip. To request a country clearance, the requestor should send an email on the country clearance form to nesdis.clearances@noaa.gov, and nesdis.travel@noaa.gov.
- All employees with a government email are eligible for an eCC account. Once an eCC account has been created, the Traveler or Travel Preparer must enter all requested information, such as the official passport details, security clearance level, flights, hotels, the correct country posts and sections. The recommended sections to select for NESDIS are Environment, Science & Technology, Political, Economic, and Management.

5.4 IT Security Guidelines for Technological Travel

When taking a NOAA-managed mobile device outside of the United States, for either business or personal travel, the user must notify the STAR IT Security Officer or individual designated by NESDIS with the following information:

- Dates of travel
- Countries of travel including stopovers and layovers
- Identify any sensitive data that will be on the mobile device during travel
- Comply with organizationally defined practices including maintaining possession of the device at all times, disabling Wi-Fi and Bluetooth services, and such other controls as the Department of Commerce Office of Security (OSY), NOAA, or Line Office may impose; and
- The user understands that the device may need to be wiped (full device wipe to factory delivered state) upon return to the United States, prior to connection with any NOAA systems.

For more information on specific requirements, refer to the [International Travel Procedures Guidelines](#). NESDIS is requiring an additional IT form entitled “Pre and Post Handheld Devices Foreign Travel Checklist Form” along with the NOAA/NESDIS/STAR Foreign Travel IT Procedures Form. If a Traveler is not taking any electronics, both IT forms are still required with signatures of Traveler, Supervisor and Joe Brust’s signature on the NOAA/NESDIS/STAR IT form.

5.5 Foreign Travel Briefing

All foreign Travelers are required to take a Foreign Travel Briefing. This must be updated and renewed annually. This information is located on the [Commerce Learning Center](#) under required training. The briefing can also be accessed at [Dept. of Commerce Security Office website](#). In addition, Travelers are required to submit a copy of the current Foreign Travel Briefing certificate in the travel package. The Traveler cannot travel if their briefing expires within 30 days of their travel return date. Therefore, the briefing is only functionally valid for 11 months.

Travel to certain countries require additional security training which may only be purchased with a Government Purchase Card, if your planned travel falls in this category, please ensure your Travel Preparer notifies the travel Budget Officer and arranges for payment.

5.6 Official Passport and Visa Processing

The Department of State (DOS) requires federal employees traveling to a foreign location on official business to obtain an official passport. Once approved by your supervisor, first time passport applications must be submitted with the following to Nolvía Herrera 8 weeks in advance of trip:

- [DS-11](#) Passport Application (original copy with original signature)
- 2 Photos
- Travel Authorization with a foreign location
- Passport Letter
- Foreign Travel Checklist
- Foreign Defense Briefing
- Birth Certificate (Original Copy)

Passport Renewal

Travelers should begin the renewal process eight (8) months prior to their passports expiring and are not allowed to travel six (6) months prior to expiration of their passports. When renewing a government passport, the Traveler must submit the following to Nolvía Herrera 8 weeks in advance of trip:

- [DS-82](#) Passport Renewal Application (original copy with original signature)
- 2 Photos
- Travel Authorization with a foreign location
- Passport Letter
- Foreign Travel Checklist
- Foreign Defense Briefing

For both new and renewal passports, Nolvía will review and submit all documentation to NOAA Finance; for processing allow 4-6 weeks. All communication from NOAA Finance will be made through Nolvía Herrera. NESDIS is required to pay a processing fee of \$110 when attempting to renew or obtain a new passport. Passports are the property of the US government and should be given back to NOAA Finance via your Travel Preparer once the Traveler returns.

State Department Special Issuance Division - See "Passport Letter" under Travel Forms at [NOAA Foreign Travel forms](#).

These forms can also be found on the U.S. State Department website under "[U.S. Passports and International Travel](#)."

Official Visa Requirements

A Visa is a stamp affixed in a passport which allows one to enter and exit a foreign country. The processing-time for Visas is dictated by the various embassies. The general lead time for most embassies is 10 to 15 business days. If an approved travel requires a visa, employees will:

Ensure that their passport is valid at least 6 months beyond the dates of travel before applying for a Visa. Use the "Official Visa Requirements" listing (see link below) when verifying requirements for official travel and not the listing published by the Department of State (DOS). The DOS listing only applies to personal and private industry travel and differs from this listing.

Spell everything out and do not use acronyms on Visa applications; sign all Visa applications in blue ink and don't use digital or electronic signatures. Original signatures are required unless otherwise noted.

Submit recent photos that:

- Are 2"x 2" in size;
- Are in color;
- Are on photo paper and not on regular paper;

- Have a white background;
- Do not show the applicant wearing glasses; and
- Do not show the applicant smiling.

The Traveler will submit their foreign travel package and any visa paperwork to their Travel Preparer 8 weeks prior to traveling. The Travel Preparer will submit the following to NOAA Finance:

- Foreign Travel Checklist
- Foreign Defense Briefing
- Visa application
- 2 Passport photos
- Travel Authorization

The requested process time for NOAA Finance is 4 weeks. If there are any discrepancies or additional documentation required, NOAA finance will contact the Travel Preparer.

For visa requirements refer to the NOAA travel website at this link: [NOAA Travel website - foreign travel page](#). It is strongly recommended that all travelers review the NOAA travel website for all current visa requirements.

6.0 Conference Travel

The Agency will expend funds, including travel and bring together a group of government employees to include two or more conference indicators: brochures, published/distributed agenda, marketed internally or externally, and/or widely gathered. This section outlines all vital information for conferences regarding travel requirements.

Conference Travel is travel to a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, training or event that involved federally funded attendee travel (non-local). The federal regulation can be found at [5 CFR 410.404](#) under Title 5, Chapter 1, Subchapter B, Part 410, Subpart D, §410.404.

6.1 Conference & Group Travel Decision

To determine whether an event qualifies as a conference, follow the [Conference and Group Travel Decision Flow Chart](#).

6.2 Conference Package Approval

Per the October 2, 2014 memo from NOAA Finance, conference packages over \$100K must be signed by the Deputy Assistant Administrator and submitted to NOAA Finance at least 75 days in advance of travel. The program/line office that has the most Travelers attending the conference is responsible for compiling the conference package for all other program/line offices. STAR's Travel POC will provide guidance on who is responsible for compiling conference package.

Conference packages should be submitted by the Division's Travel Preparer to the STAR's Travel

POC, then STAR's Director for approval, prior to submitting the conference package to NESDIS Travel. Once STAR's Director's approval is received, STAR's Travel POC will submit travel package and conference package to HQ.

When the conference is local, STAR's Travel POC must add the conference travel to the STAR's Google Travel log.

6.3 Conference Travel Package

Conference packages now have four components, including:

- Conference Approval Transmittal Form
- NESDIS DAA Synopsis
- NOAA Conference Cost Estimation Workbook; (**New**) and
- NOAA Conference Checklist (**New**)

6.4 Conference Travel Forms

Templates and samples of these forms are found at [NOAA Conference and Group Travel](#).

6.5 Conference Travel Reference Google Folder

Information on how to complete a conference package and how to calculate totals for the synopsis can be found in the [Travel Reference Folder](#), located on Google Drive.

6.6 Conference Travel Final Approval

When the conference approval is received, STAR's Travel POC will be notified. If a NOAA-wide conference (such as American Meteorological Society (AMS)/American Geophysical Union (AGU)) receives approval, but STAR's travel document does not reflect DAA approval, then the travel is still pending approval. Whenever STAR has attendees at a conference that may be attended NOAA-wide, please contact STAR's Travel POC to inquire if a conference package is already being created within STAR or by another office in NOAA. If another office is creating a conference package already, all travel documents to include TA for STAR's attendees must be compiled and sent to the office creating the package.

Note: Travelers cannot register for a conference until both DUS/O and NESDIS' DAA has approved the conference/group travel package.

6.7 Conference Guidance and Resources

- The Department of Commerce updated the [Conference Policy \(pdf\)](#) in June 2014.
- The [NOAA Conference and Group Travel Approval Process](#)
- The [October 2, 2014 Reminder on Conference Procedures \(pdf\)](#) memo

7.0 Group Travel

This section will outline the approval of group travel packages, sample and funding of travel packages.

7.1 Group Travel Package Approval

A group travel package is required for all travel that includes fifteen or more Travelers for domestic travel and eight or more Travelers for international travel.

All group travel packages must be approved by the Deputy Under Secretary of Operations (DUS/O) and sent to NESDIS Travel at nesdis.travel@noaa.gov.

Group travel packages must be submitted to NESDIS Travel 40 days in advance of the start of the trip. Therefore, you must work with your Travel Preparer and Coordinator to submit your package three business days ahead of the NESDIS deadline to allow adequate time for review and submission.

NESDIS Travel must have the group travel package signed by the DAA and submitted to the DUS/O 30 days prior to the start of the trip.

7.2 Group Travel Request and Package Template

The [group travel request template and a sample of a group travel package](#) can be found at the NOAA Travel site.

8.0 Travel Voucher

A travel voucher is a claim document that reimburses an employee for expenses incurred during business travel. This section will provide information on the use of E2 for vouchers, how to create them and to get them approved.

8.1 Travel Expenses

The Traveler must provide all documentation of expenses incurred. All receipts and supporting documents should be uploaded into E2 Solutions. Expenses include hotel, car rental, gas, toll receipts and any other transportation expenses. Receipts under \$75.00 are not required but recommended. If a credit card was used, the last four numbers of the traveler's credit card must be on the receipt.

8.2 Voucher Creation

Using the uploaded receipts from the Traveler, the Travel Preparer inputs all expenses into E2 Solutions.

- Travel vouchers must be prepared by the Travel Preparer five (5) business days after the Traveler has returned.

- Travel Preparer should ensure that all expenses incurred are populated into the expense section of the voucher creation module.
- For foreign travel where expenses were incurred in foreign currency Travel Preparer should convert the amounts to US dollars amount at the exchange rate for the days each expense was incurred.

8.3 Voucher Approval

Once the voucher has been created, the Traveler should be notified to review and attest to the accuracy of the information. Upon completion of the review, the Traveler will provide their electronic signature and begin the process for routing approval, as described below:

- Budget Analyst will review voucher for funding and accuracy.
- Traveler's Division Chief reviews and approves in E2 Solutions

Once routing and approval is complete, payment will be authorized. A confirmation email will be sent and the reimbursement will be deposited into the traveler's account.

If audited the Travel Preparer must send a copy of all receipts, the voucher, and the ticketed air reservation to finance at aodtravel@noaa.gov for review before the traveler can be reimbursed.

Note: Travelers should retain travel receipts for 5 years before discarding.

8.4 Personal Time While on Official Travel

3.13.8.1 Annual Leave (FTR §301-11.21) - If an employee chooses to use leave during a period of official travel, the leave must be pre-approved and the signed TA should reflect the dates of planned leave when the traveler is on off-duty status. The number of days of leave must not exceed the total number of days of the TDY travel (e.g., if the length of the official Government trip is 5 days, the traveler can take up to a maximum of 5 days of personal leave during the official travel). Travelers will not receive M&IE for days during which total hours of leave is more than half of the traveler's normal work hours (e.g., if the Traveler normally works 8 hour days and takes 5 hours of leave one day, he/she will not receive M&IE for that entire day). If annual leave was taken without authorization on the TA, an amended TA must be prepared and approved prior to preparation of the travel voucher.

3.13.8.2 Combining Personal Travel - A Traveler who wishes to perform personal travel in conjunction with official travel must prepare a cost estimate clearly depicting the costs of the two separate portions of the trip. The Traveler must then submit the cost breakdown to the approving official to document the intent to combine official and personal travel. Travelers may work directly with the airlines to make their personal arrangements. Travelers may not utilize contract city-pair fares for personal travel under any circumstances. The Traveler must bear all charges and fees associated with the personal travel and use a personal credit card to pay all charges and fees associated with the personal travel.

8.5 Terminology

Budget Analyst – The individual within the budget office who verifies funds availability for travel request.

eCC Country Clearance – Country clearance that must be obtained via State Department's Electronic Country Clearance System (eCC).

Ethics Office – Department of Commerce division of ethics that oversees and approves all sponsored travel/ gifts of bequest.

Foreign Travel Check List – Form required for travel that is sponsored by a source other than NOAA. This form must be completed, and forwarded to the DOC ethic division for approval.

Google Travel Doc – Document shared by NESDIS HQ Budget Office which reflects the travel approval or status of approval by the NESDIS DAA.

NOAA Foreign Travel Office – Office Responsible for processing Official Passports and Visa applications.

Official Passport – Official document required for travel to another country on official government business.

Travel Forms – required forms for requesting travel approval, Travel Preparer assistance, and travel authorization. Forms include, but not limited to; CD-210 (for sponsored travel), travel Justification, request for travel authorization, and request for conference attendance.

Travel Gatekeeper – responsible to ensure Google Travel doc is updated and approved by the NESDIS DAA

NESDIS Travel Preparer – staff member designated to provide travel assistance (e.g. create travel authorization, voucher processing, obtaining travel document approvals, and travel customer service assistance to Traveler and/or Approver.

NESDIS Travel Team – responsible for answering questions and providing guidance for all travel, conference packages, group travel, funding and CD-210s.

U.S. State Department Website – website used to obtain the required forms, and responses for questions asked regarding foreign travel.

Visa Requirements – a specific entry requirement for entering in some countries.

Accellion – Department of Commerce (DOC) secured document routing module.

9.0 External Links and Documents

Web sites and linked documents outside of STAR's management referenced in this document.

[STAR Travel Forms](#) – Google drive repository of STAR travel forms

[Conference and Group Travel Decision Flow Chart](#)

Pages: 6, 19, 20, 21

[GSA Travel Resources - Per Diem & M&IE](#)

Page 10

[International Per Diem Rates](#)

Page 10

[CD-210 Guidance \(pdf\)](#)

Page 10

[CD-210 Form – NOAA Travel Gift Questionnaire \(pdf\)](#)

page 11

[E2 Solutions](#)

Page 13

[JPMC Travel Charge Card](#)

Page 14

[Fed Travel Flight Search](#)

Page 14

[OPM Standard Form SF-182 \(pdf\)](#)

Page 15

[Foreign Service Institute HTSOS and FACT page](#)

Page 15

[eCountry Clearance \(ECC\)](#)

Page 16

[NOAA CIO International Travel Procedures Guidelines \(pdf\)](#)

Page 17

(requires NOAA e-mail ID & password)

[Commerce Learning Center](#)

Page 17

[DOC OSEC Foreign Travel Briefing](#)

Page 17

[DS-11 First-Time Passport Application \(pdf\)](#)

Page 17

[DS-82 Passport Renewal Application \(pdf\)](#)

Page 18

[Passport Letters for DS11 and DS82](#)

Page 18

[U.S. State Dept. Passports Website](#)

Page 18

[NOAA Visa Requirements](#)

Page 19

[Conference Travel as Training - Federal Regulation](#)

Page 19

[Conference Travel Reference](#)

Page 20

[DOC Conference Policy June 2014 \(pdf\)](#)

Page 21

[DOC Reminder on Conference Procedures \(pdf\)](#)

Page 21

[NESDIS Travel Reference Folder](#) – Google Docs