

DoDEA SOP 95-003A  
As amended on 02/23/04

DoDDS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE  
(SOP) 95-003 (revised)

SUBJECT: Travel Order Processing

1. Purpose: To set guidelines on the procedures for requesting travel orders, and to instruct the use of the TOPS User's Guide when using the TOPS program.
2. Applicability: This SOP applies to all DoDEA employees who are eligible for travel at Government expense.

3. Definitions:

a. Travel Order Processing System (TOPS): An automated program to process all travel orders.

b. Personnel Management Team (PMT): Geographical teams within the Human Resources Center, Services and Information Branch, responsible for the processing of all personnel actions to include travel and allowances.

c. Inquiry Tracking System (INQTRK): An automated system that tracks the processing of travel orders and allowances.

d. TOPS User's Guide: A manual created to guide the user through the TOPS program applications.

4. Procedures:

a. General Requirements:

All requests for travel orders should be submitted via TOPS which flows electronically to the Human Resources Center. Procedures for the various types of travel orders are outlined in the TOPS User's guide, field version. Upon receipt in the Human Resources Center, the requests will be reviewed, processed and forwarded to the Headquarters Comptroller Division for a fund cite. Upon completion, the orders are returned to the employee via TOPS.

b. Specific Requirements:

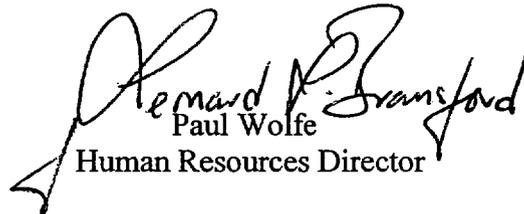
Forward the Completed DD Form 1614 through TOPS and a transportation agreement (if necessary) by fax, to your servicing PMT. Additional information

and procedures of submission of on various types of travel orders are outlined in the following enclosures:

- (1) Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT) (enclosure 1)
- (2) Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel (enclosure 2)
- (3) Educational Travel (enclosure 3)
- (4) Separation Travel (enclosure 4)
  - (a) Waiver of Transportation Agreement (attachment 1)
  - (b) Requests for Delayed Travel and/or Transportation of Household Goods Upon Separation from Federal Service (attachment 2)

5. Modifications:

- a. Modifications of this SOP may be made as warranted, but must be documented and coordinated by the Chief, Services and Information Branch and approved by the Director, Human Resources Center.
- b. In the event of conflict with the applicable negotiated agreement, the agreement will prevail.

  
Paul Wolfe  
Human Resources Director

Enclosures:  
as stated

## Enclosure 1

### Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT)

1. Definition: Travel from an overseas duty station to place of actual residence for leave purposes and return overseas between consecutive tours of duty without a break in service under an agreement (return is to the same or another overseas duty station). Travel is for the employee and the employee's immediate family members as defined in the JTR, Volume 2, Appendix A, who are residing as members of the employee's household at the time the employee performs authorized RAT. Employees/Dependents are authorized to perform RAT to an alternate destination (other than the employee's actual residence/home of record (HOR)) in the U.S., or the country of the employee's residence. If employee's actual place of residence is in the U.S., the employee must spend the majority of the RAT time in the U.S. to be entitled to RAT.

2. Procedures:

a. The employee will complete a Request for Travel Orders by completing the appropriate blocks of the DD form 1614 in TOPS. Give full name of dependents including spouse and birth dates of children. Shipment of Household Goods (HHG) may be authorized from the employee's HOR or from Nontemporary Storage (NTS) to the employee's current permanent duty station (PDS) if the maximum authorized HHG weight allowance was not shipped to the employee's PDS during the initial tour. Shipment of HHG from the employee's overseas PDS to the employee's HOR may only be authorized on RAT orders if RAT is in conjunction with a permanent change of station move or in conjunction with the early or final return of an employee's dependent. If the employee has 4 years of continuous service since a privately-owned vehicle (POV) was last shipped to the employee's PDS, the employee may request shipment of a replacement POV from CONUS in conjunction with RAT. Travel order requests should be received in the Human Resources Center no later than April 30 to ensure timely processing prior to summer recess. (This only applies to educators) The Human Resources Center is not authorized to include travel to summer workshops on RAT Orders. Employees should request temporary duty travel orders directly from the DSO for summer workshops.

b. The employee will sign and date a new renewal transportation agreement, DD-1616 for educators and DD-1617 for

GS/GM/WG/WS employees. This form must accompany the request for travel orders.

c. The completed travel order request will be forwarded electronically through TOPS. The transportation agreement will be forwarded to the Human Resources Center by fax to the appropriate PMT the day travel orders are input into TOPS.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Travel order requests should be complete and accurately reflect the employee's travel plans. Employee changes, including corrections and omissions to original travel order request will be processed only after all initial travel order requests have been completed. To ensure the quickest possible processing, all required documentation should be received with the travel order request.

## Enclosure 2

### Permanent Change of Station (PCS)

1. **Definition:** Travel in the interest of the government from one permanent duty station (PDS) to another PDS without a break in continuity of employment within department or agencies of the Federal government. Travel is for the employee and the employee's dependents as defined in the JTR, Volume 2, Appendix A, who are residing as members of the employee's household at the time the employee reports for duty at the new permanent duty station.
2. **Procedures:**
  - a. The employee will complete a request for travel orders by completing the appropriate blocks of the DD form 1614 in TOPS. Shipment of HHG's may originate from the employee's current PDS, HOR or some other point. Similarly, the destination for HHG shipment may be to the employee's new PDS or some other point. However, the total amount paid by the Government shall not exceed the cost of transporting the property in one lot by the most economical and direct route from the employee's last PDS to the new PDS. NTS may be authorized for the PCS move. Requests for travel orders should be completed within five days of notification of reassignment.
  - b. The employee will sign and date a new transportation agreement, DD-1616 for educators and DD-1617 for GS/GM/WG/WS employees, for PCS costs only. This form must accompany the request for travel orders. If applicable, a copy of the Management Directed/Voluntary Reassignment letter or the Transfer Program notification letter/memorandum/message affecting the transfer must be attached.
  - c. Forward the request to the appropriate PMT within the Human Resources Center.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Travel order requests should be complete and accurately reflect the employee's travel plans. Employee changes, including corrections and omissions to original travel order request will be processed only after all initial travel order requests have been completed. To ensure the quickest possible processing, all required documentation should be received with the travel order request.

## Educational Travel

1. **Definition:** Educational travel provides eligible employees one round trip each 12 month period for dependents who are full-time students (under age 23) attending an undergraduate college/university or post-secondary vocational or technical school. Educational travel may originate from either the school or the post. The initial trip to the school or post establishes the anniversary dates for future round trip travel. For example, if the student first travels from the post to the college on August 15, the student may return to the employee's overseas duty station within the following 12-month period, but will not be authorized a second round trip until August 15 of the next year. Round trips or portions of round trips not taken in each 12-month period cannot accumulate to a subsequent period. When educational travel is from the foreign post to the school, 7 consecutive days must be spent outside the United States by the child prior to departure on each educational travel trip except where the child's transportation abroad within the 7 days was not at Government expense.
2. **Procedures:**
  - a. The employee must initiate educational travel orders through the Travel Order Processing System (TOPS). The travel order request must be received in the Human Resources Center no later than 15 days prior to the scheduled travel date. Since educational travel is only authorized from the post to the school or from the school to the post, an alternate origin or destination may not be authorized.
  - b. The employee must attach certification of full-time undergraduate student status from the college or university. The letter may be sent directly from the school to the Human Resources Center via fax or electronic mail to the PMT servicing specialist. The letter must include the name of the student, the period of enrollment, and the enrollment status (full-time or part-time). The letter from the school must coincide with the semester in which the student is traveling. If the employee is unable to provide the certification letter when orders are requested, the employee may, in the interim, provide an Educational Travel Certification Letter. If the dependent attends a vocational or technical school, documentation must be submitted to show that the institution is accredited by a state department of education or regional Association of Colleges and Schools (Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, Western) leading to a degree, certification, or license. The student must be enrolled for at least nine months or 900 clock hours per school year.
  - c. The travel order request will be submitted through TOPS and the certification statement is forwarded to the proper PMT by fax.

**NOTE:** If the school letter is not provided to the Human Resources Center within 30 days of the issuance of the educational travel orders to the employee, the

## Enclosure 4

### Separation Travel

1. **Definition:** Travel from an employee's overseas permanent duty station (PDS) to place of actual residence for separation from Federal Service upon satisfactorily completing the period of service requirement prescribed in an agreement. A separation action (i.e. resignation, retirement) must be executed before the employee leaves the OCONUS area.
2. **Procedures:**
  - a. The employee will complete the request for travel orders by completing the appropriate blocks of the DD form 1614 in TOPS. The employee is entitled to travel and transportation allowances from his/her OCONUS PDS to his/her actual place of residence (home of record (HOR)) at the time of Initial appointment of transfer to the OCONUS PDS. Travel and shipment of HHG may be authorized to an alternate destination anywhere in the world up to the constructive cost of such allowances from the employee's PDS to the employee's HOR. Employee is liable for any excess costs. Travel order requests should be completed and submitted to the Human Resources Center as soon as possible to ensure timely receipt.
  - b. The employee must attach a signed copy of the resignation or retirement SF-52. If applicable, a Request for Waiver of Transportation Agreement must be sent in advance (see attachment 1).
  - c. If the employee desires to delay travel and/or transportation of household goods upon separation, a request for approval for the delay (see attachment 2) must be requested in writing in advance, and explain the reason for the delay. Requests for waivers of the transportation agreements or for delayed travel and transportation of HHG should be forwarded to the proper PMT by fax.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Travel order requests should be complete and accurately reflect the employee's travel plans. Employee changes, including corrections and omissions to original travel order request will be processed only after all initial travel order requests have been completed. To ensure the quickest possible processing all required documentation should be received with the travel order request.

orders will be canceled and the employee will be indebted for the cost of the trip.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Travel order requests should be complete and accurately reflect the dependent's travel plans. Employee changes, including corrections and omissions to the original travel order requests will be processed only after all initial travel order requests have been completed. To ensure the quickest possible processing, all required documentation should be received with the travel order request.

## Attachment 1

### Procedure for Requesting a Waiver of a Transportation Agreement

#### Application Procedures:

An employee who has not completed the period-of-service requirement specified in his/her initial or renewal transportation agreement may request a waiver. If the request meets one of the acceptable reasons outlined in the Joint Travel Regulations, Volume 2, a waiver may be approved.

- Step 1. Send a written request for a waiver of your transportation agreement to your servicing PMT. Requests may be emailed or faxed. The request must provide specific reasons for seeking the waiver and must include documentation to support the request. For example, an employee who is separating because of retirement should submit the SF-52, Request for Personnel Action, to verify the date of intent to retire from Federal Service. If there is a medical reason, appropriate medical documentation must accompany the request. Requests should be submitted sufficiently in advance of the projected date of separation to allow for administration review and processing. Endorsements from principals or supervising officials, though not required, may serve to support the request.
- Step 2. An employee, who has requested a waiver of his /her transportation agreement, should expect to receive a response in writing from the Chief of the Human Resources Center within 2 to 3 weeks following the date of submission. If a response is not received within this time frame, the employee should immediately follow-up with the servicing PMT to ensure the original request was received. Responses will be faxed or emailed to the employee.
- Step 3. If the employee's request for waiver of his/her **initial** agreement is approved, the employee should submit a request for separation travel orders through TOPS. If the employee's request for a waiver of his/her initial agreement is denied, no travel orders will be issued as return travel and shipment of HHG will be at employee's own expense.

If the employee's request for a waiver of his/her **renewal** agreement is approved, the employee should submit a request for separation travel orders through TOPS. If the employee's request for a waiver of his/her renewal

agreement is denied, the employee should submit a request for return shipment of HHG and POV only through TOPS as return travel of the employee and the employee's eligible dependents will be at the employee's own expense.

## Attachment 2

### Procedure for Requesting Delayed Travel and/or Transportation of Household Goods Upon Separation from Federal Service

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#### Application Procedures:

An employee who wants a delay in travel and/or transportation of household goods (HHG) must submit a request in writing via fax or email to the PMT. The request must state the specific reasons for the delay. If the employee meets the conditions as specified in the DoD Joint Travel Regulations, Volume 2, the delay will be authorized and reflected on the employee's separation travel orders. Normally, a delay in travel not in excess of 90 calendar days is considered a reasonable period of time for delay of travel. Under unusual and extenuating circumstances, a delay in travel and transportation of HHG may be authorized up to 2 years from the date of the employee's separation date. Regardless of the circumstances, this is the maximum delay that may be authorized by the governing regulations.

- Step 1. The request for a delay in travel and/or transportation must be forwarded in advance of the request for separation travel orders. The request should be sent directly to the servicing PMT. Requests may be emailed or faxed.
- Step 2. Employees should expect to receive a response in writing from the Chief of the Human Resources Center within 2 to 3 weeks following the date of submission. If a response is not received within this time frame, the employee should immediately follow-up to ensure the original request was received. Responses will be faxed or emailed to the employee with the original hard copy mailed directly to the employee.
- Step 3. If the delay in travel and/or transportation of HHG is approved, a statement indicating the authorized period of delay in travel and/or transportation of HHG will be included in the remarks section of the separation travel orders. If an employee does not commence his/her return travel and begin transportation of HHG prior to the date approved on the travel orders, the employee will be considered to have forfeited their eligibility for return travel and transportation at government expense.