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# OCR Deployment Travel Advance Procedures

An Additional Help for ADS Chapter 633

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## **OCR Deployment Travel Advance Procedures**

The purpose of this additional help document is to clarify the financial aspects Office of Civilian Response (OCR) travel advances.

### **Background**

The Office of Civilian Response (OCR) was created within USAID/DCHA to coordinate USAID's Agency-wide efforts to "assist foreign states and regions at risk of, in, or in transition from conflict or civil strife." USAID is one of nine civilian US Government Agencies tasked with providing these services worldwide. OCR both supports and manages these inter-agency deployments around the globe. This support includes both the rapid deployment of the Civilian Response Corps (CRC) as well as logistical and financial management support.

Many of these deployments are to regions where direct support from either an existing in-country USAID Mission or U.S. Embassy is limited and where our deployed personnel operate in cash economies where neither credit cards, travelers checks nor banking services are available.

In a typical scenario, CRC personnel will be deployed to an area experiencing civil strife or another situation that has undermined host country government operations or effectiveness. Travel authorizations will be created in Washington, and CRC personnel will be brought to Washington for training and preparation. Upon departure from Washington, these employees are issued a cash travel advance. Subsequent advances may be issued by the supporting Mission, Embassy or M/CFO/CMP.

Frequently, cashier support is difficult to provide and does not consistently deliver the required amounts of cash to the deployed personnel. The availability of transportation varies and the employee has to journey long distances, sometimes across international borders, to file a travel voucher and request an advance to replenish their cash. Where personnel are operating under such conditions, the following procedures are being implemented to minimize the amount of time the employee is taken away from the job, to establish safeguards to minimize the risk of loss or theft of the USG funds, and to further the accomplishment of the USAID mission.

### **Travel Authorization**

Travel Authorizations for OCR deployments will be created and managed from USAID Washington.

The requirement for travel advances must be stated in the travel authorization. When appropriate, the statement should include the following assertions (**633.3.2 Travel Advances**):

- The employee will be working in an area where credit card and traveler's checks are not accepted.
- The maximum cash advance authorized (i.e., 80% of 60 days, etc).
- Expenses up to 300% of allowable per diem are approved for lodging (if authorized per the procedures below).

## **Travel Advances**

Travel advances may be accomplished manually by submitting an SF-1038 Request for Advance or via E2. Either the traveler or OCR Travel may submit the request via E2.

In Washington, the manual Travel Advance Application Form will be prepared and approved by USAID/DCHA/OCR Travel Office and submitted to M/CFO/CMP for the issuance via EFT to the travelers' bank accounts. Travel advances should be limited to 80% of the estimated travel expenses for 60 days, but, under exceptional circumstances they may be issued for longer periods and for up to 100% of the estimated total cash requirement for 90 days. In the event that anticipated expenses for lodging are greater than the amounts authorized in the per diem tables, amounts up to 300% may be authorized through M/MS/TT following agency the guidance set forth in ADS **522.3.12.1.b.2**. Travel expenditures greater than 300% of the per diem amounts for lodging and meals will neither be authorized nor reimbursed. Travel advances greater than 80% of 60 days estimated expenses or for amounts greater than those allowed by current per diem tables must be authorized by the Director (or Acting Director), Office of Civilian Response, and the CFO (or designated Officer). This authorization may be accomplished by email and must include supporting calculations. See supporting documentation below.

Advances processed in Washington and disbursed by M/CFO/CMP will be EFT'd to the traveler's bank account. Once on site, subsequent travel advances may be processed by the supporting Mission and cash may be issued at that location.

Requests for subsequent travel advances may be submitted with travel vouchers even though the initial travel advance will have an outstanding balance. This will allow for a cash overlap and ensure a constant supply of cash for personnel deployed to remote locations. These subsequent advances should be accomplished through the DCHA/OCR Travel Office or by the supporting Mission.

The employee is personally responsible for cash advances received and should safeguard the cash or otherwise limit his/her exposure to loss. Per the Comptroller General's decision B-254089 (September 10, 1993) decision, there is no relief from liability due to circumstances beyond the employee's control:

"We have therefore consistently treated travel advances as loans for the personal benefit of the traveler, rather than government funds. As such, if the funds are lost or stolen while in the traveler's custody, regardless of the presence or absence of fault attributable to the traveler, the funds must be recovered as provided by 5 USC 5705, and the accountable officer relief statutes do not apply."

### **Travel Vouchers**

FTR §301-52.7 requires that travel vouchers be filed every thirty days throughout the deployment and within 5 days of completion of the deployment. Manual vouchers may be processed by the supporting Mission or DCHA/OCR.

### **Supporting Documentation**

Supporting TA financial documentation should be attached to the E2 travel authorization. Supporting documentation includes, but is not limited to, authorizations (if done outside E2), calculations to determine amounts of cash advances or anticipated actual cash expenses, lodging receipts, auto rental receipts, and translators.

If copying or scanning facilities for supporting documents are not available, the employee in a remote location may retain them until he/she returns to Washington and file them in support of the travel vouchers at that time.

It is the employee's responsibility to safeguard documents supporting claims in their travel vouchers.

### **References**

This policy guidance has incorporated guidance from

- Policies for USAID CRC-A Deployments
- Policies for USAID CRC-S Deployments
- ADS 522 Performance of Temporary Duty Travel in the U.S. and Abroad
- ADS 633 Financial Management Aspects of TDY
- FTR §301-51.201 Maximum Travel Advance
- FTR §301-51.202 Accounting for Travel Advances

- FTR §301-11.303 Maximum Reimbursement Amounts for Actual Expenses
- FTR §301-11.25 Requirements for Receipts

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