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CHAPTER 11. EMERGENCY TRAVEL

- 11-0101. EMERGENCY TRAVEL. Transportation and subsistence expenses may be allowed when an employee discontinues or interrupts a temporary duty travel assignment because of incapacitating illness or injury or other personal emergency.
- 11-0102. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY. The authority to authorize or approve travel under this chapter will not be delegated below the Associate Administrator or Regional Director/Administrator or District Commander levels within the Operating Administrations. Within the Office of the Secretary, only officials at or above the Departmental Officer or the Deputy Assistant Secretary levels may exercise this authority.
- 11-0103. EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITY. As soon as an employee is incapacitated by illness or injury or informed of an emergency situation which necessitates discontinuance or interruption of the temporary duty travel assignment, the employee should attempt to contact the designated travel-approving official for instructions. In the event that such contact cannot be made before travel is required, approval of the travel may be made after the fact.
- 11-0104. DEFINITIONS. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions and discussion of terms are provided as a supplement to Appendix A of this Manual.
- a. Alternate Location. An alternate location is a destination, other than the employee's official station or the point of interruption, where necessary medical services or a personal emergency situation exists. In the case of illness or injury of the employee, the nearest hospital or medical facility capable of treating the illness or injury is not considered to be an alternate location.
 - b. Family. Family means the individuals in the immediate family who are members of the employee's household at the time the emergency situation arises. For compassionate reasons and when warranted by the circumstances of a particular emergency situation on an individual case basis, this definition may be expanded to encompass other members of the extended family of an employee and employee's spouse. This may include individuals in the immediate family who are not dependents of the employee or members of the employee's

immediate household. In using this authority and deciding each case, the authorizing official must evaluate the extent of the emergency and the employee's relationship to, and degree of responsibility for, the individual(s) involved in the emergency situation.

- c. Incapacitating Illness or Injury of Employee. An incapacitating illness or injury is one that occurs suddenly for reasons other than the employee's own misconduct and renders the employee incapable of continuing, either temporarily or permanently, the travel assignment. A sudden illness or injury may include a recurrence of a previous medical condition thought to have been cured or under control. The illness or injury may occur while the employee is at or en route to or from a temporary duty location.
- d. Official Station. This includes the home or regular place of business as it pertains to experts and consultants described in 5 U.S.C. 5703.
- e. Personal Emergency Situation. Personal emergency situation means the death or serious illness or injury of a member of the employee's family or a catastrophic occurrence or impending disaster such as a fire, flood, or act of God which directly affects the employee's home at the official station or the family and occurs while the employee is at or en route to or from a temporary duty location.
- f. Serious Illness or Injury of Family Member. Serious illness or injury of a family member means a grave, critical, or potentially life-threatening illness or injury; a sudden injury such as an automobile or other accident where the exact extent of injury may be undetermined but is thought to be critical or potentially life threatening based on the best assessment available; or other situations involving less serious illness or injury of a family member in which the absence of the employee would result in great personal hardship for the immediate family.
- g. Fire, Flood, or Act of God. Fires or floods may be due to natural causes or human actions (e.g., arson) or other identifiable causes. Act of God means an extraordinary happening by a natural cause (as fire, flood, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, or other natural catastrophe) for which no one is liable because experience, foresight, or care could not prevent it.

11-0105. INCAPACITATING ILLNESS OR INJURY. An employee who interrupts or discontinues a travel assignment due to an incapacitating illness or injury may be allowed transportation expenses and per diem.

a. Continuation of Per Diem at Point of Interruption. An employee who interrupts the temporary duty assignment because of an incapacitating illness or injury and takes leave of any kind shall be allowed a per diem allowance as appropriate, not to exceed the maximum rates prescribed for the location where the interruption occurs. Such per diem may be continued for a reasonable period, normally not to exceed 14 calendar days (including fractional days) for any one period of absence. However, a longer period may be approved if justified by the circumstances of a particular case. The point of interruption may include the nearest hospital or medical facility capable of treating the employee's illness or injury. Per diem will not be allowed while an employee is confined to a hospital or medical facility that is within proximity of the official station or that is the same one the employee would have been admitted to if the illness or injury had occurred while at the official station.

(1) Receipt of Payments from Other Federal Sources. If, while in travel status under circumstances described in this chapter, the employee receives hospitalization (or is reimbursed for hospital expenses) under any Federal statute (including hospitalization in a Veterans Administration or military hospital) other than 5 U.S.C. 8901-8913 (Federal Employees Health Benefits Program), the per diem allowance for the period involved shall not be paid or, if paid, shall be collected from the employee.

(2) Documentation and Evidence of Illness. The type of leave and its duration must be stated on the travel voucher. No additional evidence of the illness or injury need be submitted with the travel voucher except that required by the leave regulations of the Office of Personnel Management and the Department.

b. Return to Official Station or Home. When an employee discontinues a temporary duty assignment before its completion because of an incapacitating illness or injury and returns to official station or home, expenses of appropriate transportation and per diem while en route shall be allowed for return travel to the official station. Such return travel may be from the point of interruption or other point where the per diem allowance was continued. If, when the employee's health has been restored, the agency decides that it is in the Government's interest to return the employee to the temporary duty location, such return is considered to be a new travel assignment at Government expense.

c. Travel to an Alternate Location and Return to the Temporary Duty Assignment.

(1) Conditions and Allowable Expenses. When an employee, with the appropriate approval, interrupts a temporary duty assignment because of an incapacitating illness or injury and takes leave of absence for travel to an alternate location to obtain medical services and returns to the temporary duty assignment, reimbursement for certain excess travel costs may be allowed as provided in (2), below. The nearest hospital or medical facility capable of treating the employee's illness or injury will not be considered an alternate location.

(2) Calculation of Excess Costs. The reimbursement that may be authorized or approved under (1), above, shall be the excess (if any) of actual costs of travel from the point of interruption to the alternate location and return to the temporary duty assignment, over the constructive costs of round trip travel between the official station and the alternate location. The actual cost of travel will be the transportation expenses incurred and en route per diem for the travel as actually performed from the point of interruption to the alternate location and from the alternate location to the temporary duty assignment. (No per diem is allowed for the time spent at the alternate location.) The constructive cost of travel is the sum of transportation expenses the employee would reasonably have incurred for round trip travel between the official station and the alternate location (had the travel begun at the official station) plus per diem calculated for the appropriate en route travel time. The excess cost that may be reimbursed is the difference between the two calculations.

11-0106. PERSONAL EMERGENCY SITUATION.

- a. Return to Official Station or Home. When an employee discontinues a temporary duty assignment before its completion because of a personal emergency situation, expenses of appropriate transportation and per diem while en route may be allowed, with the approval of the appropriate official (paragraph 11-0102), for return travel from the point of interruption to the official station. If, when the personal emergency situation has been resolved, the agency decides that it is in the Government's interest to return the employee to the temporary duty location, such return is considered to be a new travel assignment at Government expense.
- b. Travel to an Alternate Location and Return to the Temporary Duty Assignment. When an employee, with the approval of the appropriate official (par. 11-0102), interrupts a temporary duty assignment because of a personal emergency situation, and takes leave of absence for travel to an alternate location where the personal emergency exists, and returns to the temporary duty assignment, reimbursement may be allowed for certain excess travel costs (transportation and en route per diem) to the same extent as provided for travel due to incapacitating illness or injury of the employee.

11-0107. PROCUREMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

- a. Use of Discount Fares. The discount fares offered by contract air carriers in certain city pairs, as well as other reduced fares available to Federal travelers on official business, should be used to the extent possible for travel authorized or approved under this chapter.
- b. Return to Official Station. When the employee is authorized emergency return travel to the official station from the point of interruption or discontinuance of the travel assignment, appropriate transportation services may be purchased by the agency or the employee. The unused return portion of round trip transportation tickets procured for the travel assignment will be used if appropriate for the mode of transportation required for the emergency travel. If not used, the employee will ensure that all unused tickets are accounted for properly.

- c. Travel to Alternate Location. Employees generally will be required to use personal funds for emergency travel to an alternate location and return to the temporary duty assignment. However, the Department-authorized travel charge card may be used for this purpose. If the employee does not have sufficient personal funds available and is not a charge card holder, the employee may be furnished either transportation or an appropriate travel advance by the agency. The employee, upon completion of the emergency travel, will reimburse the Government for any cost of such transportation or travel advance that is above the amount of allowable reimbursement.