



E-Travel News

September 2012
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E-Travel Cost Savings Analysis

The [FY12 E-Travel Cost Savings Analysis](#) report is posted on the [travel website](#). The FY12 report was modified to provide a well-defined breakdown of the fees paid and of the savings gained through a managed travel program. The categories conform to modern trends of capturing savings data.

Although, a side-by-side FY12 to FY11 comparison may be arduous at a glance, a comparison of like-data clearly indicates a savings. The FY12 fees are less by \$21,392 while savings increased approximately \$340,000. The total net calculated savings for FY12 is \$1,736,521.

The *Contract Savings* section of the report summarizes the air contract savings, which include Alaska Airlines, Delta, ERA, and rural carriers. Savings is determined by comparing the contract discount to

the same fare without the discount. The performance of these contracts far exceeds the cost of managed travel.



Rental Car Contracts

The [contracts](#) for Budget, Enterprise/National, and Hertz state that they "shall accept reservations made at least 24-hours in advance on local rentals and seven calendar days in advance for minivans, large SUV's and 12-passenger vans".

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Enterprise Holdings removed the surcharges for Alaska (ANC, FAI, JNU) locations for the WSCA car rates! National still has a \$6 per day franchise fee in the Alaska locations. This reduces the per-day cost of a midsize car at Enterprise to \$31.92 and National remains at \$37.92.

New to the E-Travel report in FY12 are savings from rental car and hotel contracts, and from US-Travel voids and waiver favors. Car contract savings are compared to the same vehicle type without the discount and hotels rates are compared to the federal per diem rate. Voids and waiver favors savings are provided by USTravel as they collaborate with vendors to recover some of the funds from non-refundable or non-reissuable tickets and from hotel no-show fees that would otherwise not be obtained.

The E-Travel report (Excel spreadsheet) also has tabs for each department with the same savings detail. The net calculated savings (the contract savings plus managed savings, less fees) is captured and highlighted in blue.

Itinerary Modifications

After an E-Travel Online ticket has been submitted for purchase, it may take 5-20 minutes (depending on the complexity) for the system to process the reservation. Itinerary modifications, including seat assignments, cannot be made until the ticketing process is complete and a record locator or a Final itinerary has been received.

Interrupting the process may stop the itinerary from auto-ticketing, generate error messages, or may cause some information to be omitted from the Final travel documents. Modification warnings are displayed in E-Travel Online when a pending reservation is opened.

For assistance with error messages, call the helpdesk at 877-500-4290. Missing itinerary data can be found in iBank, Virtually There, or by email to soaresearch@ustravel.com.



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We hit the sunny beaches where we occupy ourselves keeping the sun off our skin, the saltwater off our bodies, and the sand out of our belongings.

Erma Bombeck



E-Travel Online Training

Contact your [Department Travel Coordinators](#) to sign up.

September 18 - 9:45 a.m.

See E-Travel Online's User Home Page for more training opportunities by USTravel.



Labor Day - September 3

AAM 60.240 / Hotel \$300 Limit

Travelers on short-term travel status in or outside of Alaska are eligible for reimbursement of actual lodging expenses. Actual costs for short-term lodging are authorized for **moderately priced** commercial lodging. Each agency must ensure that lodging costs are reasonable and necessary and that government or other discount rates are used. Travelers must submit original itemized commercial lodging receipts with their travel authorization.

Actual lodging expenses that exceed a \$300 room rate per night, excluding taxes, must be approved in advance by the director of the Division of Finance, or, the commissioner of the Department of Administration may delegate this approval to department



commissioners. All requests shall include justification that clearly demonstrates the lodging is a government rate and cannot be acquired for less than \$300 per night. Quotes from at least three moderately priced hotels in the same vicinity should be included with the justification.

The term “moderately priced” is defined as neither cheap nor expensive, but somewhere in the middle. Lodging costs must always be reasonable and necessary. Even though a higher approval is not required, room rates of \$299 are questionable and must have adequate justification, especially when there are lower, moderately priced accommodations available in the vicinity.

Special Point of Interest

The **Marine View Bed & Breakfast in Sand Point, Alaska** advised that, effective immediately, a **non-refundable room deposit** is required for every room booking. The deposit amount is equivalent to a one-night stay.

Hotel Incidentals

Personal expenses such as meals, phone calls, or entertainment should not be commingled with purchases for lodging expenses on the state charge card.

Most hotel properties ask for pre-payment of incidentals at check-in. Properties will either place a monetary hold on the travelers personal credit card or will request a cash deposit. The amount varies per property.

Travelers who do not have a personal credit card need to be prepared to pay for extra incidental charges that occur during travel and plan accordingly.

Hotel Confirmation Code

The hotel confirmation code displayed on travel itineraries most often will not match the confirmation code in a hotel's reservation system. The code on the itinerary is provided by the Global Distribution System (GDS). When hotels receive a code from the GDS, they convert the code to a different code in their reservation system.

The GDS confirmation code means a reservation has been transmitted to the hotel. Travelers should ask for their room by name. If the hotel implies that there is no reservation, call USTravel at 866-762-8728 for assistance.

Travel E-Qs



There will be a random quarterly drawing in September for a prize from the answers submitted by September 17, 2012 to: doa.dof.e-travel@alaska.gov.

1. What is the FY12 net calculated savings amount for your department?
2. Per the rental car contracts, how far in advance should a large SUV be booked?
3. What happens if an itinerary is modified BEFORE the ticket has completely processed?
4. Is it acceptable to book a hotel room for \$299 just because the cost does not require a higher approval?
5. Which Sand Point hotel requires a non-refundable room deposit?

Contest prize winnings are considered non-cash compensation and will be included as W2 earnings.



Per Diem FAQ #23

[Per Diem FAQ #23](#) (Update in bold)

Can an employee with an Anchorage duty station receive per diem for an overnight stay in Palmer or Girdwood?

Generally not as both of these locations are within the 50-mile radius used by the State of Alaska to define travel status. However, [AAM 60.010](#) allows commissioners to approve policy exceptions for personnel within their departments based on documented circumstances or unique business requirements. Commissioners may make such exceptions to put employees in travel status for a business reason such as meeting or networking activities scheduled in the evening, or to avoid hazardous winter driving conditions. Exceptions of this nature must be in writing and include the justification. When exceptions are approved, the employee is in travel status and is entitled to lodging and an M&IE allowance. **However, they would be considered taxable to the employee as they are not outside of their duty station boundary.**

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