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Volume 7, Issue 6

June 2015

Lodging and Car Rental Reminders

Summer in Alaska has arrived, which translates to full airplanes and hotels, and empty car rental lots around the state.

Lodging

Anchorage, in particular, is a problem for State travelers this summer.

Despite the continual increase in hotels being built in Anchorage, the rising demand for rooms have resulted in a substantial increase in summer rates.

Rates at several Anchorage hotels were over \$200 per night in early May. In June, those same hotels are over \$300 per night.

Hotels are collaborating with organizations that block a large number of rooms for long periods. These agreements have affected the State's Preferred Hotel Program.

CTM has been working with

participating hotels to keep the negotiated rates down, but some properties have dropped out of the program and others have reduced the number of rooms they will offer.

[AAM 60.240](#) reminder: Lodging expenses that exceed \$300 per night, excluding taxes, must be approved in advance by the director of the Division of Finance. Requests shall include justification that clearly demonstrates the lodging cannot be acquired for less. Quotes from at least three moderately priced hotels in the same vicinity should be included with the justification.

Vehicles

Car rental agencies are also experiencing an increase in business this summer.

It is important to note that booking vehicles under the state rental car contract is not mandatory, but it is highly

recommended. The benefits include unlimited liability and collision coverage. Your department may be responsible for costs to repair if the state rental contract is not used and damages to the vehicle occur. To avoid liability, the arranger should substantiate that no contract rentals were available. Contract rates can be identified in E-Travel online by the icon. ★★★

The in-state contract with Budget provides the lowest rate, but there is limited availability and reservations must be made 24 hours in advance.

The contracts with Hertz, National, and Enterprise are nationwide. Direct billing can be arranged for travelers without a One Card. For more information, contact the [ETMT](#).

If a vendor is not available in E-Travel, the traveler arranger may use the Special Instructions box on the checkout page or contact the vendor directly to check availability.

Three things cannot be long hidden:
the sun, the moon, and the truth. ~ Buddha ~

Alaska Airlines: Preferred Plus Seating

In early May, Alaska Airlines launched a Preferred Plus seating option to accommodate travelers that do not have elite mileage plan status.

Any traveler can purchase Preferred Plus seating, not just elite mileage plan members.

The price for Preferred Plus seating varies by the length of the flight (terms and conditions apply).

State travelers should be advised that the State of Alaska will not pay for premium seating fees. Refer to the [Travel FAQ Reimbursements #11](#).

Preferred Plus seating is complimentary for all elite members (Gold 75K, Gold, and MVP); however, there will be fewer exit row seats to select from.

Preferred Plus seating can be

purchased upon check-in, at a kiosk, via the Alaska Airlines app, or with a customer service agent and will include early boarding privileges.

For more information about the program and frequently asked questions; visit [Alaska Airlines](#) and [Preferred Plus seating Q&A](#).



IRIS Information

IRIS will go live in July with the finance and procurement phase of the project. E-Travel processes will initially not be affected, but there will be some changes for state employees that reconcile travel transactions.



- * The AKSAS Account Code 73819, used to clear CTM (USTRavel) travel agent service fees will not be used in IRIS.
- * In IRIS the required accounting element to post CTM (USTRavel) service fees is Object 3069.
- * There are two travel documents in IRIS. The system does not require the use of these documents to process travel. Contact your Finance Officer for department specific requirements regarding the Travel Authorization Purchase Order (TAPO) and the Travel Authorization Payment Request Commodity (TAPRC).
- * The IRIS team has created instructor led training. Enrollment is open in [LearnAlaska](#). The IRIS Accounts Payable Bundle includes three courses.

Alaska Airlines has partnered with an innovative and creative organization that uses reclaimed materials, such as airplane seats, to make bags, purses, passport covers, and more. [Read the full article here.](#)

This bundle is recommended for any state employee whose job responsibilities include processing accounts payable items and processing PCard transactions.



By the end of the year, AKSAS will be sunset. This change will affect E-Travel.

Programmers are developing a system to replace the current AKSAS/ODF process in which traveler profiles are created and travel arrangers are assigned.

The ETMT will inform Department Travel Coordinators as more information becomes available.

E-Travel Enhancements

Traveler Profile

A new feature is available in E-Travel Online for travelers with elite mileage status that do not want to be automatically upgraded to first class.

Travelers or travel arrangers can select from the dropdown menu at the bottom of the **Personal Information** section of the travel profile to permanently opt out of automatic upgrades. Travel arrangers will no longer have to check the box for each trip on the check-out page.

Residual Values

CTM has created a process to store and redeem the residual value of unused tickets that are exchanged for a lower fare. Exchanges with a resid-

ual value of \$200 or greater will be reported on the monthly unused ticket report.

Travel arrangers can request to use a residual value in the special instructions box in E-Travel Online or calling an E-Travel agent.

E-Travel Online Training Enrollment

Rural Vendors: Jun 9 - 10:30
Full Basic Training: Jun 25 - 9:30

- Login to [LearnAlaska](#)
- Enter *etravel* in the search box.
- Select **E-Travel Online Training**
- Select desired training date
- Select **Enroll**

To access the WebEx and phone bridge on training day, login to [LearnAlaska](#) within 15 minutes of the start of the session.



Test your E-Travel Knowledge!

Send your response to the [ETMT](#) by **Jun 19** and your name will be entered into the quarterly drawing.

1. What is the policy on lodging rates that exceed \$300 per night?
2. What may happen if a car contract is not booked and damages to the vehicle occur?
3. Will the State pay for Preferred Plus seating?
4. How will Preferred Plus seat affect elite mileage plan members?
5. In IRIS, what Object will be used to post CTM service fees?
6. How will E-Travel be affected by IRIS go live?

E-Travel Management

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