



NOAA CBS

INTEGRATED TRAVEL MANAGER DISPATCH #7

Travel Manager and Obligation Numbers

Updated October 2015

Effective November 16, 2009 - Travel Authorizations submitted to your servicing Travel Management Services (TMS) provider must have a CBA obligation number noted in Block 8 for ticketing unless the travel authorization is noted with any of the following special reasons - Emergency, Mission Critical, or System Downtime. For more information on this change see Page 3 of this Dispatch.



Did you know that...?

When a Travel Authorization is electronically approved in Travel Manager it results in an obligation(s) posting into the Core Financial System (CFS)? During that same process, pertinent information relating to the obligation posting(s) is returned back to Travel Manager. This data is referred to as the Obligation Detail Information (ODI) and consists of the Centrally Billed Account (CBA) Obligation number, Traveler Purchase Order (PO) number and Organizational ID number, all of which play a vital role in both the Charge Card provider billing process and traveler claim for reimbursement.

When the ODI is returned to Travel Manager, it is:

1. Stored in the Travel Manager data base with the Travel Authorization so that
 - Travel Manager is aware that an obligation posting has occurred for the specific authorization.
 - Subsequent attempts to change (amend) the authorization will result in the appropriate obligation being modified in CFS.
 - It can be utilized during the Travel Voucher funds checking and posting process.
2. Displayed onscreen in the Comments window, providing a verification point that funding has been obligated for the authorization.

How is the Obligation Detail Information Used?

The answer to this question depends on the type of document being processed.

Travel Authorizations: The ODI is used to assist the TMS provider in their billing process.

- The CBA Obligation number is used to ensure common carrier billing charges are matched to the obligated funds and are not processed as a second hit against the Line Office budget.
- The Organization ID number, which consists of the Bureau and first two (2) levels of the CBS Organization code, is used to process any additional TMS on-site and/or after hour fees that may be incurred.

Travel Vouchers: The ODI is used during the funds check process. When a Travel Voucher is stamped SIGNED or APPROVED, Travel Manager uses the ODI to ensure

- Funding validation is occurring against the appropriate obligation.
- The appropriate obligation will be liquidated once the document is posted and approved for payment in CFS.

What if the Obligation Detail Information is not displayed on the Travel Authorization?

If the ODI is not displayed on a Travel Authorization, this indicates that either the authorization has not been electronically approved in Travel Manager or during the approval process the ODI failed to be returned to Travel Manager. In either case the Travel Authorization should not be provided to the TMS for ticketing purpose before the source of the issue has been identified and resolved

Failure to provide the TMS a Travel Authorization with properly documented ODI may result duplicate charges against your Line Office's budget for the ticket, delays in the ticketing process, and may impact travel plans.

Note: When electronically approving Travel Authorizations, it is vital that Approving Officials allow the posting process to complete. Closing the Travel Authorization or Internet browser prematurely may result in posting failures, either within CFS or Travel Manager. Approving Officials can be certain the process has completed in its entirety when the system displays the Document Preparation Home Page with the obligation posting results (Traveler PO#, CBA Obligation #, if applicable.)

How will Emergency Travel, Mission Essential, and/or System Downtime impact the ability to provide ODI data to the TMS? What's the Contingency Plan?

First, let's understand our definition of Emergency Travel, Mission Essential, and System Downtime:



1. **Emergency Travel** is an unforeseen combination of circumstances resulting in the immediate need to travel.
2. **Mission Essential Travel** is an *urgent need to travel to perform activities which are critical to achieving the Line Offices' objectives and goals*
3. **System Downtime** is an occurrence in which one or more of the CBS applications are inaccessible to users due, but not limited, to causes such as system maintenance, Internet connectivity, restricted access, unforeseen technical difficulty, etc. System downtime can impact Travel Manager and CFS simultaneously or independently.

The following provisions have been made with the TMS vendors (CWTSatoTravel and ElSol Travel) to handle emergency situations. The TMS will accept a hard copy of either the Commerce Department CD-29 Travel Authorization or the Travel Manager Default Travel Authorization form provided that:

- The Travel Authorization has been signed by the traveler's approving official
- Travel preparers must include one of the following reasons in the comments block of the Travel Authorization:
 - ✓ *"Emergency Travel - Time Sensitive - Obligation Information not Available".*
 - ✓ *"Mission Essential Travel - Time Sensitive - Obligation Information not Available."*
 - ✓ *"System Downtime - Time Sensitive - Obligation Information not Available."*

Follow this "rule of thumb" to know what form to submit:

- If Travel Manager is available, the Travel Manager Default Travel Authorization form may be used.
- If Travel Manager is not available, the Department of Commerce form CD-29 may be used.

In either case, the CBA Obligation number *will not* appear on the document you fax to your TMS.

It is important to note that when billing charges are submitted on behalf of documents processed under this contingency plan, they will be processed as "No Match" transactions resulting in a second hit against the Line Office budget. The Undelivered Order (UDO) transaction (obligated funding) will be de-obligated via standard operating procedures by personnel within the Accounting Operations Division (AOD) or upon earlier request by the Line/Staff Office.

Anytime the Department of Commerce form CD-29 is used during the interim process, users will be required to re-enter the authorization information into Travel Manager once the system becomes available.

Key Notes:

- Although Travel Manager users do not directly access CFS, its availability is crucial to document processing in Travel Manager. CFS must be available to allow actions within Travel Manager to occur such as funds checking and document posting.
- Travel Manager availability impacts whether or not users can access, create, and print documents from within Travel Manager. Should official travel orders be required during a time when Travel Manager is not available, the Department of Commerce Form CD-29 can be used in place of the Travel Manager Default Travel Authorization form. The CD Forms directory can be located at http://ocio.os.doc.gov/ITPolicyandPrograms/Electronic_Forms/index.htm
- If the CD-29 form is used during the interim process, users will be required to re-enter the authorization information into Travel Manager once the system becomes available.
- CFS availability impacts whether or not a user is able to electronically stamp a document in Travel Manager and have it result in an obligation posting to CFS. Should official travel orders be required during a time CFS is not available, the Travel Manager Default Travel Authorization form can be used; however it will not be able to receive electronic signatures until CFS availability has been restored.



On the Horizon

The Finance Office is planning to design and develop an interface which will transmit approved travel authorization data directly to the TMS for ticketing. Once implemented, the ODI is envisioned to be exchanged between Travel Manager and the TMS thereby:

- Reducing keystroke errors
- Increasing the accuracy of ACCS charges
- Reducing the number of un-reconciled transactions
- Auto initiating the authorization to ticket reservation(s).



Lessons Learned....

- The CBA Obligation Number is not populated on a Travel Authorization until it has been electronically approved/data linked into CFS.
- When faxing or emailing Travel Authorizations to the TMS (i.e., CWTSatoTravel and ElSol Travel), the CBA Obligation Number must appear in Block 8 of the Travel Authorization.
- A contingency plan is available to accommodate submitting Travel Authorizations to the TMS for Emergency, Mission Critical, or System Downtime.