

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL MANUAL SYSTEM

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SUBJECT: Tour Renewal Agreement Travel for Employees
in Alaska and Hawaii

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The law pertaining to tour renewal agreement travel (variously known as vacation leave travel and Public Law 737 travel) for employees assigned to Alaska and Hawaii was amended by Public Law 97-253, September 8, 1982, and Public Law 97-346, October 15, 1982. The purpose of the changes made by these laws is to significantly reduce the amount of tour renewal agreement travel that Federal agencies can authorize for employees assigned, appointed or transferred to Alaska or Hawaii after September 8, 1982, except when it is determined that such payment is necessary for the purpose of recruiting or retaining employees for service in these States. When tour renewal agreement travel is authorized, the law limits payment to two round trips beginning within 5 years after the date the employee first begins any period of consecutive tours of duty in Alaska or Hawaii.

The law requires the head of each agency, under regulations developed by the General Services Administration (GSA), to develop policies and procedures for determining when it is necessary to authorize payment of tour renewal agreement travel. GSA guidelines for agencies in developing those policies and procedures are found in GSA Bulletin FPMR A-40, (Federal Travel Regulations) Supplement 7, which states that "this authority must be used sparingly and only when required to fulfill agency staffing needs to accomplish the agency's mission." The Bulletin contains information on the travel entitlements of both employees assigned to Alaska and Hawaii before September 8, 1982, and employees assigned after September 8, 1982.

In accordance with the requirements of the public law and the implementing GSA regulations, the following are the policies and procedures for the Department of Transportation. These requirements are retroactive to September 8, 1982, and shall be applied to employees assigned, appointed or transferred to a post of duty in Alaska or Hawaii after that date.

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A. BLANKET AUTHORIZATIONS

(1) Alaska

A review of the recruitment and retention situation in Alaska indicates that for certain categories of positions it is in the interest of the Department to authorize payment of tour renewal agreement travel. Accordingly, Operating Administrations are authorized to pay tour renewal agreement travel without prior approval for the following positions:

a. Positions covered under a manpower shortage category as prescribed by FPM Chapter 571 on the effective date of the agreement. This authorization covers both positions which have been listed in FPM Chapter 571 by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and positions which have been determined to be a shortage category under the terms of the Master Delegation Agreement between the Department and OPM (see Departmental Personnel Manual Chapter 981).

b. Positions covered under 5 USC 5303, Special Pay Rates for Recruiting and Retention, on the effective date of the employment agreement.

c. Positions for which the Office of Personnel Management has authorized a direct hire authority which is in effect on the effective date of the employment agreement.

If an Operating Administration feels that it has sufficient basis for requesting blanket authority for other positions in Alaska, it may submit a request to the Departmental Director of Personnel and Training, OST. The request must be submitted by the headquarters level of the Administration and include the following information:

- The title(s), series and grade(s) of the position(s) for which blanket authority is requested;
- The geographic location(s) of the position(s);
- The anticipated number of employees who would be authorized tour renewal travel each year under this blanket authority;
- A detailed justification for the request, which must include documentation of the Administration's past recruitment and retention problems in filling the position(s), its current (or most recent) recruiting efforts and the results of those efforts. If the request is based on remote geographic location, there must be a discussion of how conditions at the remote location affect recruitment and retention for positions.

(2) Hawaii

It has been determined that the Department has not experienced significant problems in the recruitment and retention of employees in Hawaii. Therefore, no blanket authorizations are being made for employees assigned, appointed or transferred to Hawaii.

B. INDIVIDUAL AUTHORIZATIONS

Operating Administrations may authorize tour renewal agreement travel on an individual employee basis when it can be clearly demonstrated that such payment is necessary for the purpose of recruiting or retaining the individual employee involved. The authority to make such a determination is delegated to the headquarters level of the Operating Administrations, and may not be redelegated.

The following information must be provided to the Administration's headquarters in support of a request for approval of a request for tour renewal agreement travel for an individual employee:

- Employee's name;
- Title, series and grade of the position;
- Organizational and geographic location of the position;
- Date on which the position was vacated;
- Recruiting efforts undertaken to fill the position, and the results of those efforts;
- Other pertinent information, e.g., the number of similar and/or identical positions; attrition rates for these positions; historical problems in recruiting and retaining employees in the position; factors relating to the geographic location of the position which affect recruitment and retention.

In considering these individual case requests, Operating Administrations must take care to follow closely the requirements and intent of the revised legislation to reduce the amount of tour renewal agreement travel.

C. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Operating Administrations will be required to submit an annual report to the Office of Personnel and Training, OST, on the use of tour renewal agreement travel. Reports will be due November 15 of each year

and will cover the previous fiscal year, except that the first report, due November 15, 1984, will cover the period September 9, 1982 through September 30, 1984. The content of the report will be detailed in a separate DPM Bulletin.

Questions concerning tour renewal agreement travel should be directed to Denise Schossler, Personnel Policy Division (M-16), on 426-4135.



Acting Director of Personnel and Training