

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

March 18, 2020

Federal Travel Regulation
GSA Bulletin FTR 20-05

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Premium Class Transportation Reporting Requirements

1. What is the purpose of this bulletin? This bulletin is issued in accordance with Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) §300-70.101 to inform Federal agencies of the reporting requirements for the authorized use of other than coach class, hereinafter referred to as “premium class” transportation, by Government employees, as defined in FTR §301-1.2, hereinafter referred to as “travelers,” on official business. This bulletin also clarifies which accommodations are not considered premium class and are therefore not reportable.

2. What is the background of this bulletin? The FTR requires Government travelers to use coach class accommodations unless they have an authorized exception to use the lowest class of premium class transportation required to meet their needs and accomplish the mission. FTR §§300-70.100 through 103 establish the requirements for agencies to report on the use of premium class transportation by Government travelers on official business.

3. What do the following terms mean?

a. *Coach class* - Also called economy class, steerage, or standard class, is the basic class of seating and often the lowest fare available in air, rail, or maritime travel. When a carrier offers more than one class of accommodations with distinctively different seating types, the lowest class and its variant options is considered coach class for official travel. When a carrier offers only a single class of accommodation to all travelers, such accommodation is also considered coach class.

b. *Contract City Pair Program* - A mandatory Government-wide program that provides negotiated scheduled air passenger transportation services to U.S. Government travelers on official business by certified United States air carriers, under 14 CFR Part 121, for various solicited domestic, international, and Fifth Freedom of the Air line items. The City Pair Program offers negotiated firm fixed price fares on one-way routes between airports that apply in either direction of travel. Fares are issued using one of the following fare basis code structures:

(1) *Capacity-controlled contract fares (_CA)*. Government contract coach class fare that offers deeply discounted rates. The first letter of the three-letter fare basis code will vary by airline, e.g., QCA, LCA, etc. The _CA fare is a lower cost fare

than the unrestricted coach class fare, but with limited seating availability, i.e., after the flight reaches a certain capacity of ticketed passengers the _CA fares may no longer be available. Early booking increases the likelihood of reserving a capacity-controlled fare.

(2) *Unrestricted contract fares* (YCA). Government contract coach class fare that is higher in cost than the _CA fare, but offers last seat availability, meaning, as long as coach class inventory is available to sell on the flight, the Government traveler can purchase it.

(3) *Contract business fares* (_CB). Government contract fares offered by carriers in some domestic and international routes for business class service. The first letter of the three-letter fare basis code will vary by airline.

c. *Extra-fare train* - A train that operates at an increased fare due to the extra performance of the train, i.e., faster speed or fewer stops.

d. *Premium class* - A class of accommodation above coach class. Premium class is distinguished from other classes of accommodation by quality of seating, food, drinks, ground service, and other amenities.

(1) *First class* - The highest class of accommodation offered by a passenger carrier in terms of cost and amenities.

(2) *Business class* - A class of accommodation offered by a passenger carrier that is higher than coach and lower than first class, in both cost and amenities.

4. What information must we report on the use of premium class transportation? If you are an “agency” as defined in FTR §301-1.1, you must report the following information on each trip that included at least one segment of travel where your agency authorized and paid for premium class transportation accommodations that were more expensive than the coach class accommodations for the same itinerary:

- a. Travel authorization number;
- b. Traveler name;
- c. Travel start date;
- d. Origin;
- e. Destination;
- f. Travel purpose;
- g. Exception for using premium class transportation pursuant to FTR §301-10.123 (airline), §301-10.162 (train), or FTR §301-10.183 (ship);

h. Total cost of the ticket(s) containing at least one segment of premium class transportation; and

i. Total cost of the comparative coach class ticket(s) had premium class transportation not been used.

5. How do we determine the cost of a comparable coach class ticket? You are encouraged to use your travel management center and e-Government Travel Service vendor(s) to assist with collecting the required data to be reported.

a. Airline. Use the least expensive coach class contract City Pair fare, i.e., _CA or YCA, available for the same itinerary at time of booking. If you are unable to determine whether a _CA fare was available, then you must use the least expensive YCA fare for the same itinerary. If a contract City Pair fare does not exist for that market, then you must use the least expensive, fully refundable, non-contract coach class fare for the same itinerary.

b. Train. Use the least expensive regional coach class fare for the same itinerary. If extra-fare train, such as Amtrak Acela, was authorized in accordance with FTR §301-10.164, you must use the least expensive extra-fare train fare for the same itinerary.

c. Ship. Use the least expensive class of accommodations aboard the vessel for the same itinerary.

6. Do we report the use of coach class seating upgrades? No. Pursuant to FTR §301-10.124, seats that require a fee for early boarding, additional head or leg room, seat choice, or other services or amenities within the coach class cabin, are not reported as premium class accommodations, even when paid using Government funds.

7. What other uses of premium class transportation do we not report? Do not report premium class transportation when the accommodations were paid in full through your acceptance of payment from a non-Federal source in accordance with FTR Chapter 304, paid for by the traveler with personal funds or frequent flyer points/benefits, the accommodations are a free upgrade, or the cost of premium class travel was equal to or less than the cost of coach class accommodations.

8. Are there any exceptions to the premium class transportation reporting requirement? Yes. In accordance with FTR §300-70.103, you are not required to report data that is protected from public disclosure by statute or Executive Order. However, you are required to report the following aggregate information:

a. Number of authorized premium class trips that are protected from disclosure;

b. Total cost of premium class fares paid that exceeded the coach class fare;
and

c. Total cost of coach class fares that would have been paid for the same travel.

9. When and how must we report on the use of premium class transportation? You must report to the GSA's Office of Government-wide Policy, using an electronic reporting tool found at <https://www.travel.reporting.gov/TRAVEL/TRAVELLogin>, no later than November 30 of each year. The reporting period is October 1 through September 30. Negative submissions are required.

10. What is the applicable date of this bulletin? This bulletin is applicable upon the date of signature.

11. When does this bulletin expire? This bulletin will remain in effect until explicitly cancelled or superseded.

12. Whom should I call for further information? For clarification of content, please contact Cheryl McClain-Barnes, Office of Government-wide Policy, Office of Asset and Transportation Management at 202.208.4334, or by e-mail at cheryl.mcclain@gsa.gov. Please cite GSA FTR Bulletin 20-05.

By delegation of the Administrator of General Services,

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Office of Government-wide Policy