

FAQs: TRICARE Prime Travel

What travel expenses can I claim? The TRICARE Prime Travel Benefit allows for reimbursement of authorized reasonable travel expenses including: fuel, meals, lodging, parking, tolls, air fare, excess baggage fees, taxi/shuttle, and authorized rental car.

Can I request a travel advance? No. Travel advances are not available under the Prime Travel Benefit.

Can I get reimbursed if I travel earlier or later than authorized? Expenses incurred outside of the authorized travel dates are not reimbursed by the government. If the change in travel dates was medically necessary and properly justified / documented by your primary care provider or specialty care provider, then your claim will be re-evaluated by the approving official.

Do I have to arrange my own air transportation? You may book and purchase your own air transportation. Air fare is reimbursable up to the government rate only.

Do I arrange my own lodging? Yes. You are responsible for ALL travel arrangements.

How do we handle common expenses? Common expenses such as lodging, lodging taxes, rental car and fuel should be reflected on only one form - either the patient's or the non-medical attendant's (NMA)s DD Form 1351-3. No expenses may be claimed by more than one party. All other claimed expenses (e.g. meals) must be specific to either the patient or the NMA and should be included in their respective forms.

Can you tell me more about Meals?

- Reimbursement is based on actual receipts up to the meals per diem. NMAs who are active duty service members (ADSM) or U.S. Government civilian employees (GE) are reimbursed based on meals per diem with proper authorization provided on the ADSM or GE NMA Memorandum Form.
- Common meal receipts may be split based on the actual expense for each claimant. All expenses (including their taxes and tips) for unauthorized parties cannot be reimbursed.
- Tips and service charges are added to the cost of the meals. They are not reported separately.
- Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.
- If food is purchased at a grocery store, the entire receipt must be included with a total of food items. Non-food items and their taxes cannot be claimed for reimbursement.
- Food receipts must be appropriate and reasonable. Itemized meal receipts from restaurants must be submitted along with proof of payment.
- If hospitalized, it will be assumed that meals are provided by the facility.

How about Transportation?

- Beneficiaries are expected to use the least costly mode of transportation available that adequately meets the patient's needs.
- Air / rail travel / rental car must be authorized to be reimbursed and will be determined upon receipt of the complete reimbursement request packet.
- Use of privately owned conveyance (POC) is reimbursed from actual gasoline receipts. NMAs who are active duty service members or U.S. Government civilian employees are reimbursed based on the government mileage rate with proper authorization provided on the ADSM or GE NMA Memorandum Form. The patient and NMA cannot both be reimbursed for the same travel expense. That is, actual gas expense can only be claimed by one authorized traveler. Or mileage alone may be claimed by an authorized active duty service member or government employed NMA, in lieu of actual gas expense.
- "When, for personal preference, a POC is used instead of common carrier transportation for official travel, travel reimbursement is computed at the TDY mileage rate...plus constructed per diem..." (JFTR Chapter 3, U3310.A.1)
- Fuel Reimbursement: Actual fuel expense that is incurred to transport the authorized traveler(s) from the patient's home of record (site of origin), to the referred specialty care provider's location (destination site), and back, may be eligible for reimbursement. Fuel will not be reimbursed for any dates outside the approved timeframe. Travel in-and-around the destination should be limited to the minimum necessary to satisfy the medical needs of the trip.
 - Fuel receipt requirements (all supporting receipts must be provided):
 - **On the day travel begins:** Fill the gas tank before leaving the site of origin (regardless of the amount of gas currently in the tank). The amount of this receipt is not reimbursable since no authorized travel has yet begun. This receipt will establish a common starting point, and it will enable proper calculation of the actual fuel expense incurred during the authorized portion of the trip.
 - **During the trip:** Add gas as needed.
 - **Immediately upon return to the site of origin:** Refill the gas tank (regardless of the amount of gas currently in the tank). This receipt will establish a common endpoint to the fuel consumed during the trip.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Fuel consumed within the authorized dates of travel, after the pre-departure fill-up, and inclusive of the final-return fill-up, is eligible for reimbursement. Legible receipts are required for reimbursement of any claimed travel expenses.

What is a valid receipt? A valid receipt is a written acknowledgment that the vendor has been paid for providing goods or services. It must be original and legible. It must show:

- a. The name of the company providing the goods or services.
- b. The date(s) the specific services were rendered or items purchased.
- c. The unit price.
- d. The final amount due and that it was paid.
- e. The name of the claimant and zero balance for all lodging and rental car receipts.

As a government employee with an established Defense Travel System (DTS) profile, my travel authorization was entered through DTS. Can I enter my travel claim through DTS?
No. The Prime Travel Benefit has a specific line of account that only TRICARE has authorization to use. Please complete your travel packet and return all required documents for review and entry into the DTS by the Prime Travel Staff.

Where do I submit mail my travel vouchers? Make sure you keep copies of all documents for your records before submitting them to TRICARE Regional Office – West, Attn: Prime Travel, 401 West A Street, Suite 2100, San Diego, CA 92101-7908. You may also fax them to our office to: (619) 231-4245, however if any of the information is not legible we may ask you to submit them by regular US Mail.

How do I get a hold of the Prime Travel Staff? There are four ways to contact us:

- (1) By mail at the above address;
- (2) By phone at (800) 449-6408;
- (3) By fax at (619) 231-4245; or
- (4) By e-Mail at trow-primetravel@trow.tma.osd.mil