

Information Paper

SUBJECT: Administrative Use of Military Aircraft

1. Purpose. To provide guidance regarding the use of military aircraft.

2. References.

a. Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 4500.56, Department of Defense (DOD) Policy on the Use of Government Aircraft and Air Travel, 14 April 2009, Incorporating Change 1, 11 May 2010.

b. Secretary of the Army Memorandum, Policy for Travel by Department of the Army Officials, Army Directive 2007-1, 25 January 2007.

3. Background.

a. Government officials are required to ensure that government resources and equipment, to include military aircraft, are being properly used. Inappropriate use of military aircraft may create the public perception of misuse of government resources and result in excessive travel costs.

b. Requests for military air travel must be screened to consider factors such as the traveler, purpose of trip, cost, and type of aircraft required to determine if the request is necessary to accomplish the mission. Factors such as rank, grade, and protocol status, alone, do not justify travel on military aircraft.

4. Discussion.

a. Required Users. Certain individuals, by virtue of their position, have been designated in DoDD 4500.56 as required use travelers on military aircraft because of security reasons, secure communication requirements, and extraordinary scheduling requirements. In these cases, travel for these individuals on commercial aircraft may be impracticable. In addition to these designated individuals, the Secretary of the Army Travel Policy Memo also designates all Army four-star generals as required users.

b. Non-Required Users. On local military installations the majority of military aircraft travel concerns will likely involve non-required users who seek to either travel in another official travel status or unofficial travel status. The general rule is that commercial aircraft will be used to accomplish missions for official purposes, if commercial aircraft is reasonably available and

fulfills the traveler's arrival and departure requirements within 24 hours. Mere inconvenience in scheduling should not be the sole justification in approving a military aircraft request. Further, the aircraft used must be the least costly to accomplish the requirement. For non-required travelers, type or size of aircraft used cannot be based alone upon traveler's rank, grade, protocol status, or additional space needed to accommodate unofficial travelers.

(1) Other Official Travel. Other official travel (also called administrative travel) consists of travel for official business purposes such as giving of speeches, conducting site visits, or attending conferences or meetings. In the event commercial aircraft is not practicable, fixed-wing military aircraft may be authorized when there is: (1) a highly unusual circumstance which presents a clear and present danger to the traveler; (2) an emergency; (3) a compelling operational consideration; or (4) a cost-analysis which demonstrates that the use of military aircraft is more cost-effective than commercial air. For this exception to policy, the individual must make a written justification to the appropriate authorizing travel official for approval.

(2) Unofficial travel. Unofficial travel refers to family members, non-DoD civilians, and non-DoD Federal travelers, who are accompanying a senior DoD official on official business. This differs from space available travel because the traveler must be accompanying the DoD official and the travel costs must be reimbursed by the traveler at full coach fare. Unofficial travel authorization on a military aircraft requires a showing that the aircraft is already scheduled for an official purpose; a larger or additional aircraft is not required for the additional noninterference use; official travelers are not displaced; negligible additional cost to the Government; and the Government must be reimbursed at the full coach fare for the traveler.

c. Special Considerations.

(1) Rotary-Wing Aircraft. Unlike fixed-wing military aircraft, use of rotary-wing military aircraft requires a showing that rotary-wing travel is essential because ground transportation would have a significant adverse impact on the senior official's ability to accomplish the mission. However, this rule does not apply to use of rotary-wing aircraft for operational missions or required missions as defined in AR 95-1.

(2) Spouses. The general rule is that spouses and family members do not accompany the DoD member on official travel at government expense.

(a) Government funded travel. Government funded transportation may be considered on a case-by-case basis for spouses who are participating in an official event on an independent basis such as participation in an event as a subject matter expert or attendee at a service-endorsed approved training course. Further, government funded transportation for an accompanying spouse may also be authorized when the spouse's presence is deemed in the national interest because of the diplomatic benefits or public relations benefit to the United States.

(b) Unfunded Government Travel. If a senior DoD official is traveling on military aircraft for official business, a spouse may be authorized to accompany the DoD official in an unofficial travel status, provided the criteria in paragraph 4b(2) above is met. In accordance with these

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criteria, space must be available on the military aircraft and the government must be reimbursed at the full coach fare.

(3) Contractors. Air travel for contractors is normally at the contractor's expense. However, there are some exceptions. Contract field service representatives and personnel, who are stationed overseas and traveled overseas at government expense, may be authorized to fly back on military aircraft for personal emergencies. Military aircraft travel may also be authorized for contract field service representatives who are engaged in official business in which air travel is essential to accomplish the mission under authorized or contractor reimbursable travel.