

OFFICIAL TRAVEL

1. HOW IT WORKS:

Once the individual receives valid travel orders, reservations for official travel can be made. Reservations made without orders are subject to availability, the prices might change, as well as the seat availability. The commercial travel office (CTO) contractor, SATO Travel, prints all tickets. Using a "double-check" method, the commercial travel office ensures that official tickets are issued on the lowest government fare available. Most government fares are unrestricted and may be modified or refunded without problems. All official travel is on US-flag carriers, if available. Use of foreign flag carriers and restricted fares require the Transportation Officer's authorization, unless indicated on the orders. The travel office can support travelers on NATO orders, however, the member must pay and seek reimbursement through the SHAPE Transportation and Movement Section (STAMS) in the Main Building. Check with STAMS before purchasing any NATO travel tickets.

2. WHERE TO GO:

In accordance with the Joint Federal Travel Regulation, Vol. I and the Joint Travel Regulation, Vol. II, all federal employees must go to either a commercial travel office, in-house travel office, or any other GSA travel office to obtain tickets. There are three official travel offices in the BENELUX area. Well-trained personnel staff these travel offices, they will provide all the information necessary to obtain official travel tickets.

a. Official Travel-CHIEVRES is at the PX –TRA Complex at Chievres AB. Service is available on a walk-in basis. Phone number is DSN 361-5783. Fax number is 068/65.71.70.

b. Official Travel –USAG BRUSSELS is in the NATO Support Activity in Brussels, BLDG 3. The office is on first floor. Phone number is DSN 368-9722. Fax number is 368-59430.

c. Official Travel - SCHINNEN is at the 254th BSB Transportation Office, just to the right, as you enter the installation. Though primarily servicing the Netherlands and northern Germany, anybody may seek service at any travel office. Phone numbers are DSN 360-7570, or 7573. Fax number is 360-7499.

3. WHAT TO BRING:

All official tickets are issued based on receipt of valid travel orders. Individuals can make reservations without orders, but they are subject to availability - both price and seating. Have a good idea of where and how you want to travel. Changes to official travel reservations will be made only once without a change in the travel orders.

4. USE OF YOUR PERSONAL AMERICAN EXPRESS (AMEX) CARD:

Many people are issued the AMEX travel card. This may be used to purchase official travel tickets and other such services while on TDY or during PCS. The card carrier is responsible for the payment of their AMEX bill. Use of the AMEX card is subject to the restrictions outlined in the Travel Regulations. Use of a card at off-post travel agencies is not authorized, if there is a GSA approved official travel office, DOD commercial travel office, or in-house travel services available. Failure to use a Government travel office may affect travel voucher reimbursement. As general guidance, we encourage all to visit the official travel office for an official travel brief. At the travel brief, travel notices and advisories are given to the traveler, as well as what to do with unused tickets, use of non-US aircraft, and so forth.

5. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE:

The goal for processing official travel ticket requests is within five (5) working days. Tickets may be issued sooner, but there is little chance for the fares to be researched and the lowest prices to be found. Prior planning will help prevent poor customer service in Official Travel.

6. REFUNDS AND UNUSED TICKETS:

Prior to submitting a travel voucher, turn in all refunds and unused portions of the tickets to the official travel office. The official travel office will provide a statement of returned/unused tickets, which must accompany the travel voucher for processing. Failure to do so will delay travel voucher processing. Ensure a copy of the travel orders accompanies all turned in tickets.