

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Reference Manual #60: Aviation Management

Chapter 14 – Use of Government Aircraft

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Reviewed by the Chief, Division of Fire and Aviation Management

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14 Use of Government Aircraft

14.1 Administrative Travel Justification and Documentation

The primary intent of this process is to ensure taxpayers do not pay more than necessary to transport government officials on government aircraft. DOI Office of the Solicitor (SOL) approval is required for Senior Executive Service (SES), senior federal officials, or non-federal travelers who travel on government aircraft.

1. SES-level employees include all civilian officials appointed by the president or civilian employees of the Executive branch.
2. Senior federal officials include all SES employees, congressional members, or their staff, etc.
3. Other travelers include state and cooperating agency officials, contractors, or their representatives including those employed by such agencies, and private citizens.

14.2 OMB Circular A-126

[OMB A-126, *Improving the Management and Use of Government Aircraft*](#), breaks official travel into three categories:

1. Mission travel is transporting people whose presence aboard an aircraft is required to perform or is associated with the performance of a governmental function such as firefighting, search and rescue, law enforcement, aeronautical research, or biological or geological resource management.
2. Required use travel involves an employee designated by the President or the head of the agency. This category is rarely utilized.
3. Other travel for the conduct of agency business. The SOL considers almost all departmental travel at the SES level and above within this category. Even when air travel is the only practical means of transportation to remote or roadless areas, SOL approval is required unless the flight is mission or required use travel.

NOTE: See [Information Bulletin 09-01 Revision 1, *Guidelines for Requesting Approval from the Office of the Solicitor for SES Travel on Government Aircraft*](#).

14.3 Requests for Solicitor Approval

[OPM-7, *Improving the Management and Use of Government Aircraft*](#), will be used for documenting cost comparisons for travel on government aircraft. The RAM or PAM will submit the request for solicitor review and approval.

1. All travel on government aircraft must have advanced authorization.
2. Three documents may be required:
 - a. Travel Authorization
 - b. [OPM-7, Appendix 6: OAS-110, *Travel Cost Analysis*](#)
 - c. Project Aviation Safety Plan

Senior executives and non-federal individuals are required to submit an OAS-110 for review and approval by SOL. A copy of this approval will be provided to the RAM and will be retained for three years. For NPS and other federal employees in the GS category, their next-level supervisor must approve their travel on the flight.

14.4 Space Available Travel

Space-available travel is using aircraft capacity that would otherwise be unused on a scheduled flight. It is generally limited to federal personnel and their families in remote locations who do not have reasonable access to regularly scheduled commercial airline service.

1. Space-available travel using NPS-operated aircraft is not allowed on special use activities.
2. The use of space-available travel, for other than the transportation of federal personnel and their families in remote locations, requires trip-by-trip approval by the Secretary of the Interior and requires reimbursement at the full coach rate fare (see OMB Circular A-126).
3. Such requests must be processed through the RAM to the SOL at least ten days prior to planned travel.