

Commercial Travel Information

Below is information for those HPSP students that will be traveling this summer and fall. Please review the information because some of you will have one or more of these problems.

MECHANICAL DELAYS: In case of mechanical delays, the airline is responsible for getting you to your destination. You should be placed on the next available flight or a different carrier. If no other flights are available, the airline should pay for lodging and meal(s) for the night using vouchers. If the agent does not mention this fact, ensure that you ask. If you are not satisfied with the agent's answer, ask to speak with a supervisor.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: Inclement weather means any weather conditions such as fog, heavy rain, and snow storm, etc., which will prevent aircraft from flying. If delay is due to an act of God, the airline has no obligation to the traveler for any type of compensation. You will be scheduled on the next flight, provided space is available. It is required to obtain a statement from the airline identifying the delay, to file with your travel claim.

CANCELLED FLIGHTS: In the event a flight is cancelled, the airline will schedule you for the next available flight, but the flight doesn't necessarily have to be on another airline.

AIRLINE COMPENSATION TO TRAVELER: If you voluntarily give up your seat, you may keep the compensation if it will not interfere with the performance of your official duties; however, any additional travel expense is the traveler's responsibility. If a traveler is involuntarily denied boarding on flight, compensation for the denied seat belongs to the Government. However, if the flight gets the member home on a different day, no additional pay and allowances or Per Diem is authorized.

CHANGES AFTER NORMAL WORKING HOURS: During non-working hours you may call the CTO/SATO After-Hours Help Desk at 1-800-359-9999 (the number is also listed on your itinerary/invoice) to request assistance in changing itinerary if the travel is within 24 hours. If outside the 24 hours, contact HPSP for assistance before contacting SSC New Orleans at 1-800-537-4617.

LOST BAGGAGE: Once your bag is declared officially lost, you will have to submit a claim. Missing the deadline for filing it

could invalidate your claim altogether. The airline will usually refer your claim form to a central office, and the negotiations between you and the airline will begin. If your flight was a connection involving two carriers, the final carrier is normally the one responsible for processing your claim even if it appears that the first airline lost the bag. Airlines don't automatically pay the full amount of every claim they receive. First, they will use the information on your form to estimate the value of your lost belongings. Like insurance companies, airlines consider the depreciated value of your possessions, not their original price or the replacement costs. If you're tempted to exaggerate your claim, don't. Airlines may completely deny claims they feel are inflated or fraudulent. They often ask for sales receipts and other documentation to back up claims, especially if a large amount of money is involved. If you don't keep extensive records, be prepared to go back and forth with airline over the value of your goods. Generally, it takes an airline anywhere from six weeks to three months to pay you for your lost luggage. When they tender a settlement, they may offer you the option of free tickets on future flights in a higher amount than the cash payment. Ask about all restrictions on these tickets, such as "blackout" periods and how far before departure you are permitted to make a reservation.

RENTAL CARS: Vehicles must be clean and maintained in safe, satisfactory operating condition, no more than two years old and have no more than 40,000 miles on the odometer. Off-terminal locations must be in close vicinity of the airport. Elapsed time to the rental office will not exceed 25 minutes from the time the traveler requests pick up service.

GPS devices requested with rental vehicles are not reimbursable.

When picking up your reserved rental vehicle and the rental car agency informs you that they do not have a rental vehicle available, request this in writing from the rental car agency. Call the CTO for assistance at 1-800-359-9999 to get another rental vehicle reserved. Without the documentation from the rental car agency they cannot be held liable for not fulfilling their contract with the government.

Always fill the gas tank before returning the vehicle. If the tank is not filled, a refueling charge is added to your bill and is not reimbursable. Some rental companies may try to entice you into accepting a "prepaid refueling charge", which is also not reimbursable.

ACCIDENTS: If you are in an accident report it to the Rental Company and police immediately. As a government traveler, you are covered under the insurance provided by the rental car agency. If the accident occurs while not in the line of official business, or you were proven to be negligent, you may be liable for any damages. Damages such as a broken windshield, flat tire, etc. will be covered by the rental car insurance. If the rental agency charges for any of these damages, provide a copy of the receipts to the NAVPTO Travel Officer, via HPSP, to obtain refunds. Provide the following information to the NAVPTO TO, via HPSP, after contacting the rental car company first:

1. Copy of orders
2. Copy of rental agreement
3. Police Report
4. Individual statement of what happened