



ANY REPLY OR SUBSEQUENT REFERENCE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE
FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE FOLLOWING REFERENCE NUMBER QUOTED:-

Telephone No. 92-28600-16
Website: <http://www.mof.gov.jm>
Email: info@mof.gov.jm

MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE
30 NATIONAL HEROES CIRCLE
P.O. BOX 512
KINGSTON
JAMAICA

2009 March 27

Circular No. 10
File No. 27/026 vol ⁸
Public Expenditure Policy Co-ordination Division

Permanent Secretaries
Heads of Departments and Agencies
Chief Executive Officers of Public Bodies

RE: Revision of Procedures in Respect of Overseas Travel

The Ministry of Finance & the Public Service has reviewed the per diem rates and procedures for overseas travel. Due to fiscal constraints the Ministry cannot at this time support any increase in these rates. However, please see attached, revised guidelines and application forms which should allow for more clarity to provisions that were previously considered ambiguous.

Special note should be taken of procedures 14, 16 and 34, which speaks to proper planning of overseas travel. Ministries must therefore seek the most cost effective and economical means of travel, especially with regards to cost of accommodation and airfares.

Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Departments and Agencies are asked to ensure that these procedures are brought to the attention of all Accountable Officers.

Please be advised that the Revised Procedures for Overseas Travel and Application forms (Appendices 1,3 & 4) now supersede Foreign Travel Per Diem Procedures and Application forms contained in Circular No. 9 dated April 6, 2006 (Official Visit Abroad - New Procedures).

Sharon Crooks (Mrs)
Financial Secretary

APPENDIX 1

REVISED FOREIGN TRAVEL PER DIEM PROCEDURES

All applications for *per diem* for official visits abroad must be submitted to the Permanent Secretary of the relevant Ministry for approval in accordance with the following procedural guidelines, which must be meticulously followed in respect of the operation of the approved annual budgetary allocation for official visits abroad. These Guidelines apply to employees of Government entities, employees of Government Owned Corporations, Parliamentarians, police officers and soldiers when the public official's travel costs (including expenses and allowances) are either fully or partially met from official funds, or where the costs of overseas travel for official duties are funded from other sources (e.g. fee for service activities, full costs covered by a conference organizer, official grants and other official funds).

General Information

1. Members of the political directorate and other public officials of Government entities and Government corporations, who travel abroad on official business, will be given a per diem travel allowance to cover all expenses (i.e. hotel bills, meals, transportation, telephone calls and **other incidentals**) for the period of the proposed trip based on the approved per diem rates as set out.
2. The term "public officials" includes Civil Service and Local Government personnel; chairmen and members of para-statal boards; and the staff of para-statal entities.
3. The Ministry of Finance and the Public Service has established per diem rates for the various public officials in the political directorate and the public sector. These rates should be regarded as the maximum rates that under normal circumstances will be approved. (See Appendix 2)

Where travel cost (i.e. accommodation, meals and incidentals etc.) are below the per diem rate the actual expenses that will be incurred should be paid and not the maximum per diem.

4. In determining the per diem to be applied for, cognisance must be taken of the cost of hotel accommodation and of any special discounts or concessions that may be offered. Per diem/stipend given by sponsoring country as well as meals provided at hotel, seminar/training course should also be taken into consideration.

Where the cost of meals and incidentals only is provided by the GOJ, depending on the country visited and the cost to be incurred, an amount of US\$90 – US\$120 should be paid.

5. In all cases where the per diem applied for is in excess of the prescribed rates, appropriate justification must be submitted with the application form to the Ministry of Finance and Public Service for approval at least three **(3) working days** before the proposed date of departure.
6. Where the full cost of the trip is being sponsored by an overseas organization, a travel allowance of US\$40 per day for Parliamentarians and US\$35 per day for public officers shall be applied, up to a maximum of one month and thereafter an application of US\$10 per day to a total maximum of US2000.00.
7. Where a stipend is also given by the sponsoring country and the amount is less than the US\$35/ \$40 allocated, the difference should be given. If the amount is more than the US\$35/\$40, the allowance should not be paid. However an advance may be given to accommodate for any incidental expenses until sponsoring funds are received.
8. If the actual period of the trip is reduced subsequent to the approval of total foreign exchange, the per diem, travel allowance in respect of the days by which the tour is reduced must be refunded within seven (7) days of return to Jamaica in the foreign currency in which it was released, not the Jamaican Dollar equivalent.

The amounts are to be calculated and credited directly to expenditure account.

9. Similarly where it becomes necessary for officers to be reimbursed for expenses incurred outside of the approved per diem, the request with (justifiable) supporting documents must be made within seven (7) days of return to Jamaica.
10. Once the annual budgetary allocation of a ministry, department, agency or public body for official travel abroad has been exhausted or fully committed, no further requests for foreign exchange should be made until the entity has applied for and has been granted a supplementary financial allocation for the year.

With respect to self financing public bodies, once the budget for foreign travel has been exhausted no request should be approved unless the Board has approved an increase in the allocation.

11. In cases where protocol demands that ministers or public officials host receptions, or requires that they engage in other forms of entertainment, application for the required foreign exchange must be submitted with the relevant particulars for approval. If the required foreign exchange cannot be accurately determined, the amount requested must be treated in the accounts as a contingency advance. In the cases of public officials, such receptions and entertainment are restricted to heads of delegations only. The amount advanced is to be accounted for in each case by the submission of actual bills to the Financial Manager of the official's ministry, department, agency, or public body within seven days of the return of the public official to Jamaica.

12. Where the full amount of the contingency advance was not utilized or is not properly accounted for, the public official must refund within seven (7) days of return to Jamaica, the unaccounted balance to the entity in the foreign exchange in which it was released and not the Jamaican Dollar equivalent.

13. Prior to authorizing official travel overseas by public officials in their respective ministries, departments, agencies and public bodies, where necessary, Permanent Secretaries, CEOs, Heads of Agencies and Public Bodies should consult with their respective Ministers.

Permanent Secretaries must consult with their respective Heads of Departments/Divisions as to the relevance of the overseas travel and the benefits to be achieved by the organisation prior to authorising official travel overseas by public officials.

14. In respect of invitations to speak at events overseas in an official capacity, public officials should ensure that the benefits that accrue to the country from these overseas visits exceed the cost of the related expenses of attending these engagements. The total cost of these trips must be within the approved budgetary allocation of the ministry, department or entity concerned. (Cabinet Decision No. 27/04 dated September 6, 2004)

15. The rates for warm clothing allowance should be applied in relation to the time of year and geographical location of the country to be visited by the officer. Warm clothing allowance is paid once every 3 years. The rates are as follows:

- i. US\$150 April – September where the duty period is less than 2 months;
- ii. US\$300 if the visit is made during the other months of the year and the period spent abroad is less than 12 months;
- iii. US\$400 where the period spent abroad is over 12 months.

Where it can be determined that the weather condition at the time of the trip does not warrant warm clothing it should not be paid. Conversely where the season of the year of the country that is visited is in the reverse to the periods set out above, then the amount assigned to that season should be applied.

16. MDAs and other public entities are required to exercise restraint in planning overseas visits. Only those trips that are considered essential to the attainment of the entity's or Government objectives should be considered. All other avenues for gaining relevant knowledge or experience should be considered before overseas travel is proposed.

Procedures for Application

17. The application for the per diem travel allowance must be made on the prescribed application form and where the total cost is within the prescribed rates, the completed

application form must be submitted to the Permanent Secretary of the ministry at least three (3) working days before the proposed date of the applicant's departure on the trip for which the foreign exchange is being sought. Where the amounts requested are above the prescribed rates sufficient time (3 working days) must be allowed for processing at the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service.

18. The Financial Manager must certify that funds are available for each application for foreign exchange for official visits abroad.
19. The application for overseas travel must be supported by a valid travel itinerary a hotel booking and relevant documentation from the organizers setting out the details of the meeting/seminar/workshop etc. Where these costs cannot be verified, the amounts should be treated as an advance to be cleared by actual bills/receipts. In cases where official visits are being subsidized by overseas bodies or organizations, the required adjustments must be made to the application.
20. Copies of the approved foreign exchange application forms and relevant documents must be maintained by each entity on a file specific for the purpose. Proper records must be kept of all foreign exchange approved for official visits abroad.
21. Where the assistance of Missions abroad is sought to make reservations for hotel accommodation, directions must be given to the Mission regarding room rates, as these rates must be consistent with the Government's prevailing per diem rates which cover hotel accommodation and subsistence.
22. Any official stationed in an agency's office overseas, who authorizes the use of funds of the agency (held there in foreign exchange) to pay bills left there by a public official, who before leaving Jamaica was provided with foreign exchange sufficient to meet all reasonable bills, is liable to a surcharge of a sum equal to the full amount of the payment.
23. As a condition of official overseas travel, the public official must provide a travel report on return from an overseas trip. The report should state *inter alia* dates of travel and countries visited; objectives of the trip; benefits to the entity and to the public generally; recommendations and/or action plans arising from the overseas trip; and suitability of the report for inter-agency sharing. Individual MDAs and other public entities may specify the manner and procedures for submitting reports.
24. In all cases, air travel must be planned to make use of the most economical and direct route so as to avoid transfers involving costly waiting time(s). Transfers to facilitate personal needs will **only** be considered if the officer is willing to absorb the additional cost.
25. For public officials other than and Parliamentarians, air travel of less than four (4) hours flying time between departure and arrival must be at the most economy class. Trips of longer duration (straight flying time of four (4) hours and above) will be dealt with on a

case by case basis and specific approval of the Financial Secretary will be required for upgrade to business class.

26. Officers travelling should not be allowed to make their own travel arrangements. A designated officer should be responsible for making all travel arrangements.
27. When airline tickets are provided by overseas organizations as part of sponsorship for official visits abroad, expenditure of additional funds to upgrade the airline tickets must not be authorized without the prior written approval of the Financial Secretary.

Parliamentarian

28. Applications for the release of foreign exchange for Members of Parliament and Senators must be made on the application form designated "Application by Parliamentarian for the Release of Foreign Exchange for Official Travel Overseas".
29. Proposals for overseas travel must be approved by the Prime Minister after consultations with the relevant Minister. Reference should only be made to the Cabinet as a body if the purpose of the travel requires policy approval or direction. (Cabinet Decision No. 5/08 dated February 11, 2008.)
30. Ministers of State and Parliamentary Secretaries should submit their requests through the Portfolio Minister.
31. Approval for Members of Parliament should be submitted by or through the Leader of the House of Parliament
32. Prior approval of overseas travel should be sought from the Prime Minister at least seven (7) days before intended departure and should include information on the purpose of travel, duration of travel, other named members of the delegation and the associated costs of the trip.
33. The purposes of international meetings, and the positions proposed to be taken on the issues that these meetings would consider, should be clearly stated in the letter to the Prime Minister or Cabinet Submission. (Cabinet Decision No. 12/03 dated March 31, 2003).
34. Proposals concerning official overseas travel must take into consideration the benefits of the country of such travel, as well as financial constraint, time/duration, size of delegations and public perception, and such travel by Ministers must be in the interest of the country and only in regard to their own portfolio responsibilities.

These considerations relate similarly to invitations to speak at events overseas related to official capacities of government Ministers and other officials. In any event, the

aforementioned requirement for prior approval is equally applicable to such instances and should be fulfilled before acceptance of such invitations.

35. Accounting Officers are requested to submit applications for the release of foreign exchange for ministerial and parliamentary travel directly to the office of the Minister of Finance together with a copy of the agreement/approval of the Prime Minister.
36. Application forms for Members of Parliament and Senators should be certified by the Minister of Finance as to the purpose of travel and class of air passages as indicated on the itinerary.
37. All Cabinet Ministers may occupy hotel suites while on official visits overseas. Where this is proposed, full particulars pertaining thereto are to be submitted to the Permanent Secretary in order to facilitate assessment and adjustment of the per diem payable as may be necessary.
38. For parliamentarians, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will decide the class of air passage in each case. With regard to ministerial travel, where feasible and where business class travel is available on an airline as an alternative to first class, business class should be used.
39. In cases where protocol demands that ministers travel with security on visits abroad for private business, the release of foreign exchange must be approved for only one security officer per minister.
40. Per diem should be paid to the spouses of selected officials, accompanying their wives/husbands on official duties abroad in circumstances where protocol requires their presence on the trip. The selected officials include the Governor General, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and the Public Service, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and any other Minister representing the Prime Minister and subject to the approval of the Prime Minister. (Cabinet Decision No.26/08 dated August 11, 2008).
41. In determining the per diem for spouses, the conditions set out at procedure No.3 should be observed and the cost for accommodation must only be included where the spouse is travelling alone on official business.

APPENDIX 2
APPROVED PER DIEM RATES PAYABLE FOR OFFICIAL VISITS ABROAD
EFFECTIVE APRIL 6, 2006

OFFICIALS	REGIONS										REMARKS
	North America	South Central America and other Caribbean Countries	CARICOM	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Africa	Middle East	Asia and Far East excluding Japan	Japan	Pacific and Australia and New Zealand	
	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	
<u>POLITICAL DIRECTORATE</u>											
a) Prime Minister and Minister of Finance	410	390	390	430	390	395	395	390	450	390	(1) These rates are based on the United Nations (UN HQ) index. Source: Int'l Civil Service Commission, New York, ICSC Database. (2) Notwithstanding the figures stated herein the amount allocated from time to time must be determined by the particular circumstances of their travelling on official business.
b) Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs	370	350	350	390	350	355	355	350	410	350	
c) Minister of Finance (where office is separate)	335	315	315	355	315	320	320	315	375	315	
d) Minister of Foreign Affairs (where office is separate)	335	315	315	355	315	320	320	315	375	315	
e) Other Cabinet Ministers	310	290	290	330	290	295	295	290	350	290	
f) Ministers of State and other Parliamentarians	270	250	250	290	250	255	255	250	325	250	
<u>PUBLIC OFFICERS</u>											
a) Permanent Secretaries and other Senior Officers	270	250	250	290	250	255	255	250	325	250	
b) Other Public Officers	250	230	230	270	230	235	235	230	305	230	

APPLICATION BY PARLIAMENTARIAN FOR THE RELEASE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR OFFICIAL VISITS ABROAD

APPENDIX 3

1. Applicant.....
(Name of Parliamentarian)

2. Official Status.....
(i.e. Minister; Parliamentary Secretary; Member of Parliament)

3. Agency Accountable.....
(Ministry; Houses of Parliament)

5. Name and Status of each person accompanying Parliamentarian (attach a list if space here is inadequate).

4. Purpose of Overseas Visit:

6. Date of Departure from Jamaica

7. Date of return to Jamaica

8. SUPPORT DOCUMENTS (Please indicate by ticking relevant box)

☐ Travel Itinerary	☐ Seminar/Course Document
☐ Hotel Booking	☐ Invitational letter
☐ Fees	☐ Others

Approved by me as to purpose of travel, and class of air passage as indicated on the itinerary, subject to Ministry of Finance clearance of the itinerary and the other details.

Minister of Finance _____ Date _____

9. In what way, and to what extent is use being made of Jamaica's Missions or offices abroad to secure the objectives that the proposed visit seeks to achieve?

10. In cases where persons at (5) form part of an official delegation to Conferences, Seminars, Negotiations, etc. name the Government Agency responsible for selecting and coordinating attendance of the delegation.

11. In cases of Conferences, Seminars, Negotiations, etc., will any persons other than those persons at (5) be attending as part of the Government delegation? If the answer is "yes" give names and status and name of organizations they represent.

Name and Status

Organization

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13. Amount of foreign exchange requested
(state *per diem* for each person)

14. If foreign exchange is being sought in
(13) for contingencies or for purposes other
than living expenses, state reasons to justify
the request.

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12. Allowances in terms of cash or services to persons at (5) from overseas sources (sponsors and/or other) Government during the course of visit (specify sum or type of service). Vague answers such as "part of expenses" will not be accepted.

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15. Cost of Air Ticket
(state class)

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16. Is any Jamaican Government Mission or office abroad
expected to make its vehicle(s) available for use by the applicant
or the delegation (tick)

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Yes

No

17. I certify that funds are available from the approved allocation of JS.....
for official visits abroad to meet the cost at (13), (14) and (15) if approved at those levels.

18. Approved by Permanent Secretary

Financial Manager.....Date.....

Date.....

ITINERARY AND SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

NAME OF ORGANIZATION:

NAME(S) OF OFFICIAL(S).....

DESTINATION:

APPOINTMENT CONFIRMED						
DATE	PLACE	PURPOSE OF VISIT	APPOINTMENT CONFIRMED			OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED
			TIME	CONTACT	NATURE OF BUSINESS	

AUTHORIZING OFFICER

PERMANENT SECRETARY.....

DATE.....

DATE.....

**APPLICATION FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE
FOR OFFICIAL VISITS ABROAD**

(All questions relevant to your application must be answered)

1. APPLICANT _____
(Ministry; Department; Statutory Body; Public Enterprise)
2. NAME AND STATUS OF EACH PERSON PROCEEDING ABROAD
Name Status
-
-
-
-
3. DATE OF DEPARTURE FROM JAMAICA _____
4. DATE OF RETURN TO JAMAICA _____
-
6. SUPPORT DOCUMENTS (Please indicate by ticking the relevant box)
- ☐ Travel Itinerary ☐ Seminar/Course Document
- ☐ Hotel Booking ☐ Invitational letter
- ☐ Fees ☐ Others
7. If the purpose of visit is to purchase or select goods, give details
8. In what way, and to what extent is use being made of Jamaica's Missions or Offices abroad to secure the objectives that the proposed visit seeks to achieve?

9. In cases where persons at (2) form an official delegation to Conferences, Seminars, Negotiations etc. name the Government agency responsible for selecting and coordinating attendance of the delegation.

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10. In cases of Conference, Seminars, Negotiation etc., will any persons other than those at (2) be attending as part of the Government delegation? If the answer is "yes" give names and status and name of the organizations they represent.

Name & Status Organization

.....
.....

Financial

11. Allowances in terms of cash, services or other benefits to persons at (2) from overseas sources (sponsors and/or other Governments) during the course of visit (specify sum or type of service). Vague answers such as "part of expenses" will not be accepted.

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12. Amount of Foreign Exchange requested. (State per diem for each person).

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13. If foreign exchange included in (12) for contingencies or for purposes other than living expenses, state reasons to justify the request.

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14. Cost of Air Tickets (state class).

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15. Is any Jamaica Government Mission or Office abroad expected to make any of its car(s) available for use by the applicant? (tick)

Yes

No

16. In cases where Applicant at (1) is not a Government Minister, the comments and recommendations of the portfolio Ministry must be given in this Section.

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Permanent Secretary

Ministry of

17. I certify that funds are available from the approved allocation JS for official visits abroad to meet the cost at (12) and (14) if approved at those levels.

Financial Manager

Date

18. Approved on the following basis:

.....

Financial Secretary

Date

OFFICIAL VISITS ABROAD

ITINERARY AND SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

NAME OF ORGANIZATION:

NAME(S) OF OFFICIAL(S) _____

DESTINATION:

DATE	PLACE	PURPOSE OF VISIT	APPOINTMENT CONFIRMED			OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED
			TIME	CONTACT	NATURE OF BUSINESS	

AUTHORIZING OFFICER: _____

PERMANENT SECRETARY: _____

DATE: _____

DATE: _____