



United States Department of the Interior
Office of Aviation Services
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Boise, Idaho 83706-3991

DOI OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM (OPM) - 15

Subject: Acquisition of Seat Fares

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Last Updated: May 22, 2018

Expiration Date: December 31, 2026

1. **Summary of Changes.** The Executive Aviation Subcommittee (EAS) reviewed on 10 November, 2022, and determined that no changes were required to the OPM.
2. **Purpose.** This OPM establishes the definition of seat fares and the criteria by which they are used. It also contains management criteria to ensure the appropriate application of seat fares.
3. **Authority.** This policy is established by the Director, Department of the Interior, Office of Aviation Services (OAS) in accordance with the provisions of Departmental Manual 112 DM 12, 350 DM 1; and Secretarial Order 3322 dated August 23, 2012.
4. **Background.** The reference to scheduled air carrier services has existed in the Departmental Manual since its inception in the mid 1970's. At that time only 14 CFR 121 certificate holders could achieve status as a scheduled air carrier. With the sunset of the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) and essential air services (subsidies) to smaller communities, air transportation started a transition that exists today. Due to the significant increased standards for performing scheduled air carrier service, 14 CFR 135 certificate holders began to achieve status as "Certificated Air Carriers and Commuter Air Carriers".

DOI agencies utilize the services of commercial air carriers to provide point-to-point transportation for their employees. It became confusing as to which 14 CFR 135 operators were eligible to sell "seat fares" as an air carrier. Now the Department of Transportation maintains a list of Certificated Air Carriers and Commuter Air Carriers similar to the old CAB economic authority and fitness determination (both managerial and financial).

5. Policy.

- A. The existing language in the 2016 OPM-15 and 353 DM 1.2A(1) are modified with the following addition:

Seat fares are allowed for point-to-point flights with a 14 CFR 135 certificated carrier on the DOT's Certificated Air Carriers or Commuter Air Carriers lists. The destination must be published as part of a scheduled service (not on-demand). The agency using these seat fares is directly responsible for payment. Seat fares will not be paid using the Aircraft Use Report, AMD/OAS-23/23E payment system.

Airplanes with tandem seating are excluded.

B. Commuter Air Carrier lists can be located [at the U.S Department of Transportation Website](#). Certificated Air Carriers can be located [at the U.S. Department of Transportation Website](#).

C. Some locations may not be available using the criteria in 4.B (1). Exemptions to the seat fare criteria will be issued on an individual basis. Exemptions require the following information: additional bureau requirements may be more restrictive:

- 1) Operational requirement to transport personnel using aviation
- 2) Absence of available DOI fleet or DOI contracted aircraft
- 3) Bureau National Aviation Manager approval
- 4) Bureau Aviation Executive approval
- 5) OAS Director approval

6. **Definitions.** The following apply to this OPM:

- A. Seat Fare is defined as the cost for a DOI employee to occupy one seat between two different Airports under the criteria listed in 4.B (1). A seat fare does not include any charter or on-demand operations, and the aircraft is not under operational control of DOI.
- B. Tandem Seating is defined as the seating in those airplanes that provide only a single seat forward and a single seat aft (e.g. PA-18 Cub, 8GCBC Scout, A-1B Husky, etc.).

Susan E. Bates
Director, Office of Aviation Services

Attachment:
Appendix 1: Exempted Locations

Appendix 1

Exempted Locations

Exempted Locations will be listed on the Office of Aviation Services website, you may refer to this page for the most current information on all exempted locations.

<https://www.doi.gov/aviation/exempted-locations>