



Department of the Interior Accident Prevention Bulletin

No. DOI APB 18-01

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Subject: Acquisition of Seat Fares

Area of Concern: Flight Safety

Distribution: All Aviation Activities

Discussion: This Accident Prevention Bulletin (APB) serves to inform of a new policy change concerning seat fare use. These changes were developed and vetted through the DOI Executive Aviation Subcommittee (EAS) and Executive Aviation Committee (EAC), respectively. On May 22, 2018, the updated version of [OPM-15 Acquisition of Seat Fares](#) was approved by the Director, OAS. Alaska locations identified in the previous policy have been removed and are no longer authorized to use seat fares. Additionally, the previous DOI APB 14-01, *Seat Fares*, dated May 23, 2014 has been rescinded.

Operational Procedures Memoranda 15 (OPM-15) establishes the definition of seat fares and the criteria by which they are allowed to be used. It also contains management criteria to ensure the appropriate application of seat fares. A seat fare is defined as the cost for a DOI employee to occupy one seat between two different airports. It's important to note that a seat fare does not include any charter or on-demand operations, and that the aircraft is not under DOI's operational control.

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, but 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 ([see list](#)) and Commuter Air Carriers ([see list](#)) similar to the old CAB economic authority and fitness determination (both managerial and financial).

353 DM 1 *Aircraft Contracting*, paragraphs 1.2A(1) and 1.2(b), refer to seat fares as being applicable to a scheduled air carrier (14 CFR Part 121). Most scheduled air carriers are large, passenger carrying airlines (commonly referred to as a "major airlines") but can include some smaller, scheduled Part 135 operations.

Significant changes in the new seat fare policy include:

- * Seat fares are allowed on scheduled 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. 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.).

Since some locations may not be available using the criteria in the paragraph above, 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:

- a) Operational requirement to transport personnel using aviation
- b) Absence of available DOI fleet or DOI contracted aircraft
- c) Bureau National Aviation Manager approval
- d) Bureau Aviation Executive approval
- e) OAS Director approval

Remember, you can't use your government credit card to purchase aviation services for DOI missions outside of the seat fare criteria. The Department uses a very thorough contracting process that incorporates standards to ensure safety, efficiency, and mission success. Purchases outside of policy ignore proactive safety measures. This needlessly increases risk to personnel and places supervisors in a very vulnerable position.

Flying on DOI carded aircraft with a carded pilot ensures that the pilot and aircraft have been inspected and are compelled to comply with the many proactive safety related provisions within that particular DOI contract. There is no instrument to compel the operator to comply with all of the established safeguards built in to those contracts if the contracting process is bypassed, nor does it afford the Department with a means to intervene if things go wrong. These requirements provide an extra layer of protection for our most valued asset... YOU!

Carded pilot – minimum of 1500 hours vice 500 hours.

Carded aircraft – oversight by DOI (Bureaus and OAS) to ensure compliance with contract.

If you have any questions, please contact your Bureau Aviation Manager.

/s/ Keith Raley
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