United States Department of the Interior
National Business Center
Aviation Management Directorate

Information Bulletin

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Distribution: U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau Representatives

Subject: Guidelines for Requesting Approval from the Office of the Solicitor for Senior Executive Service (SES) / Senior Federal Official Travel on Government Aircraft

This Information Bulletin (IB) is to provide information to all Bureau representatives within the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) on basic guidelines for requesting approval of SES/senior official travel through the Office of the Solicitor (SOL).

Prior written SOL approval is necessary when an SES or senior federal official or a non-federal traveler (even if an official traveler) is flying on DOI owned or operated (chartered by DOI) aircraft between two or more different points.

Key items to remember:

- Official travel, as defined in OMB Circular A-126, includes point-to-point transportation: (a) to conduct agency business; (b) to meet mission requirements; and (c) for required use travel (rare).

- “Mission travel” is narrowly defined; mission requirements do NOT include official travel to give speeches, to attend conferences or meetings, or to make routine site visits.

- Generally all Departmental travel at SES level and above is non mission official travel. SES and senior federal officials are typically on oversight visits, not performing the actual mission.

- Use of a DOI aircraft is permitted if it is the most cost effective means of travel.

- Travelers should not schedule meetings and then claim that only DOI aircraft will accommodate that schedule.

- If an SES/senior federal official boards an aircraft at Point A, overflies a site, and returns to Point A without ANY other stop*, there is no point-to-point transportation, and SOL approval is not required.
*Stops solely for refuel/bathroom breaks, with no official business conducted and no passengers picked up or dropped off, are authorized. Trips with such stops do not require SOL approval.

- All information about flights is publicly available and reported to GSA twice a year.
- If unsure, or have any questions about the trip, call the SOL in advance.

**How/When/Where to Submit SES/Senior Travel Request:**

1. All SES/senior official travel requests should be sent to the SOL - Division of General Law (DGL).

2. All requests should be sent to SOL - DGL at least a week in advance. A shorter lead time is acceptable only during emergencies.

3. Calls can be placed in advanced to the SOL - DGL to determine if an approval by the Solicitor based upon what information is required.

4. All requests should include a full and complete description of the trip purpose.

5. Requests can be faxed to 202-219-1790 FAX or emailed to Katherine.Aldrich@sol.doi.gov or Timothy.e.murphy@sol.doi.gov

6. Once the request is approved, the process listed below occurs:
   a. DGL reviews the request
   b. Surnamed memorandum to the Solicitor
   c. Solicitor will approve / disapprove

7. Generally this process takes up to 3-4 days to work through the system.

8. Fire and other emergency flights can be approved same day.

**SOL – Division of General Law Contacts:**

Katherine Aldrich, Attorney-Advisor 202-208-5007
Tim Murphy, Asst. Solicitor, General Legal Services 202-208-5216

**Additional information or assistance can be obtained through NBC-AMD’s Flight Coordination Centers. Points of contact are:**

Jan Bennett / Lark Wuerth – Alaska Regional Office (907) 271-3935 / 6032
Vicki Johnston – Boise Regional Office (208) 334-9314
Shari Moultrie – Atlanta Regional Office (770) 458-2055

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