



## TRAVEL NEWSLETTER October 2003



### [In this Issue:](#)

Incidental (IE) Per diem rate defined  
Stipend limit increases with new IE rate  
Use of Premium Class air accommodations  
Travel Costs to Increase in 2004  
Brown Shuttle Out of Business  
New Visa Rules May Reduce Foreign Flight Options

### [INCIDENTAL \(IE\) PER DIEM RATE DEFINED](#)

Effective October 1, 2003 the IE rate went from \$2.00 to \$3.00. Incidental expenses are defined as:

- Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships, and hotel servants in foreign countries.
- Transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the TDY site.
- Mailing cost associated with filing travel vouchers and payment of travel credit card billings.

### [STIPEND LIMIT INCREASES WITH NEW IE RATE](#)

With the new IE rate being increased by one dollar, the stipend rate has been affected. The rate update indicated in the July 2003 newsletter will now be revised to read:

" . . . Stipends paid to foreign exchange visitor may not exceed a combination of the lowest established lodging rate at the SURA Residence Facility [currently \$41] and the local M&IE rate [currently \$43]. Stipends may be paid only to foreign exchange visitors holding visas which allow for direct monetary payments to them."

The current Stipend rate can not exceed \$84.00 per day.

### [USE OF PREMIUM CLASS AIR ACCOMMODATIONS](#)

FTR 301-10 Premium-class-- Any class of accommodations above coach, e.g., first or business.

For official business travel, both domestic and international, you must use coach-class accommodations, except when [JLab's Accounting Manager] specifically authorizes/approves the use of such accommodations as provided below:

- (a) Regularly scheduled flights between origin/destination points (including connecting points) provide only premium-class accommodations and you certify such on your voucher; or
- (b) No space is available in coach-class accommodations in time to accomplish the mission, which is urgent and cannot be postponed; or
- (c) When use of premium-class other than first-class accommodations is necessary to accommodate your disability or other special need. Disability must be substantiated in writing by a competent medical authority. Special need must be substantiated in writing according to your agency's procedures.

- (e) The use results in an overall cost savings to the Government by avoiding additional subsistence costs, overtime, or lost productive time while awaiting coach-class accommodations; or
- (f) Your transportation costs are paid in full through agency acceptance of payment from a non-federal source in accordance with chapter 304 of this title; or
  
- (h) Where the origin and/or destination are OCONUS, and the scheduled flight time, including stopovers and change of planes, is in excess of 14 hours. (In this instance you will not be eligible for a rest stop en route or a rest period upon arrival at your duty site.);

The complete documentation on airline class of accommodations can be located in the Federal Travel Regulation section 301-10 starting with paragraph 121.

#### TRAVEL COSTS TO INCREASE IN 2004

The National Business Travelers Association (NBTA) predicts business travel costs will increase 6% in 2004, according to its annual Business Travel Cost Forecast. Airline costs will rise 5%, hotels – 3%, corporate rental cars – 2% and travel management fees will increase 6%. With Iraq, SARS and terrorist threats airline travel declined again in 2003. Those reasons coupled with the higher cost of security and fuel (from the War in Iraq) the major airlines have had another bad year. With corporate travel budget cuts in 2003 the business traveler is staying in mid-range lodging facilities rather than luxury hotels. To help improve the customer satisfaction these establishments are investing in the guest's experience with better staff, select services and amenities. Just for comparison purposes, the NBTA predicted business travel would remain flat in 2003. Based on the Lab's experience, we would tend to say airfares actually decreased, with all the price wars going on with the major airlines and the low price airlines like AirTran, Southwest and JetBlue.

Published by NBTA, the Business Travel Overview and Cost Forecast is an annual study that evaluates current and future trends in business travel.

#### BROWN SHUTTLE OUT OF BUSINESS

As of midnight 10/27/03 Brown Shuttle will no longer be operational. Airport Express (LPR) will be our new shuttle service. It appears one way fares between the Lab and Norfolk will be about \$39.00. There will be a full rate chart available soon, as soon as Warwick Travel can get the account established. In the meantime, if you have reservations on Brown they have been switched to LPR. Please make sure you make all reservations for the LPR shuttle service through Warwick Travel since they are the one with the account, SURAJlab does not have an account with the shuttle service.

#### NEW VISA RULES MAY REDUCE FOREIGN FLIGHT OPTIONS

In August Homeland Security imposed a new ruling on foreign travelers. Foreign traveler's from one foreign country who are changing planes in the U.S. en-route to another foreign country may be required to obtain a Visa. If the traveler is from countries other than Canada, Mexico, Japan or Western Europe they are likely to be required to get a U.S. Visa to change planes. What does this mean to our traveler's you ask? Well, if a Visa is required for in-transit travelers fewer people will route through the U.S. This will result in fewer flights out of U.S. airports to foreign destinations. In the year prior to 9-1-1 over 1.6 million people changed planes at U.S. airports, in the 12 months that followed 9-1-1 that number fell to 614,000. Additionally, visitors to the Lab will be required to wait longer than ever to obtain their Visa because of the in-transit traveler's in line ahead of them. Let's hope Homeland Security backs off this one or our traveler's will have an even more difficult time getting flights to conferences that are overseas.