

HOURS OF WORK FOR TRAVEL

References: 5 CFR 550, 5 CFR 551, OPM website and documents, Federal Register 5 CFR Part 550, DOD Field Advisory guides and Cyberfeds Labor Relations Publications.

Definitions:

Basic Work Requirement:

The basic work requirement is the number of hours an employee must work or otherwise account for by leave, holiday hours, excused absence, compensatory time, LWOP or time off as an award.

Under 5 USC 6122, a work schedule includes designated hours and days when an employee must be present for work.

Travel:

Defined to mean officially authorized travel, that is, travel for work purposes that is approved by an authorized agency official or otherwise authorized under established agency policies. Employees should be scheduled to perform official travel during their regular tours of duty to the maximum extent possible.

Travel Status:

Time in a travel status includes the time an employee actually spends traveling between the official duty station and a temporary duty station, or between two temporary duty stations, and the usual waiting time that precedes or interrupts such travel.

Bona fide meal periods during actual travel time or waiting time are NOT creditable as time in a travel status.

If an employee experiences an extended (i.e., not usual) waiting time between actual periods of travel during which the employee is free to rest, sleep, or otherwise use the time for his or her own purposes, the extended waiting time is NOT creditable as time in a travel status.

Travel between home and a temporary duty station:

If an employee is required to travel directly between his or her home and a temporary duty station outside the limits of the employee's official duty status, the time the employee would have spent in normal commuting (home to work and work to home) must be deducted from any hours of work outside the regularly scheduled administrative work day/week.

If an employee is offered one mode of transportation and is permitted to use an alternative mode, or who travels at a time or by a route other than that selected by the agency, the agency must determine the estimated amount of time in a travel status the employee would have had if the employee had used the mode offered or traveled at the time and route selected by the agency. In determining time in a travel status the agency must credit the employee with the lesser of the estimated time in a travel status or the actual time in a travel status.

Examples (from OPM and Cyberfeds):

1. Sally's regular tour of duty is Mon-Fri, 0730-1600. If she leaves work at 1030, Tues to catch a flight at 1200, she is compensated for travel time between 1030 and 1600 because those hours are within her regular tour of duty. She does not arrive at temporary duty station until 1730; travel compensatory time applies for 1600-1730hrs.
2. What about time left over between the end of a trip and the end of the employee's tour? Suppose your employee arrives back home at 1500 and the normal end of the workday is 1600. Does the employee have to report to work or take leave? This is within a supervisor's authority to excuse this time without charge to leave because it would be impractical to have the employee report to duty for such a short period. Had the arrival time home been 1200 then a substantial part of the day could have been performing work or the employee could take appropriate leave.

3. (Q10 from OPM Comp Time Travel Memo). When is it appropriate for an agency to offset creditable time in a travel status by the amount of time the employee spends in normal commuting between home and work?

A: If an employee travels directly between his or her home and a temporary duty station outside the limits of the employee's official duty station (e.g., driving to and from a 3 day conference), the agency must deduct the employee's normal home-to-work/work-to-home commuting time from the creditable travel time. The agency must also deduct an employee's normal commuting time from the creditable travel time if the employee is required outside of regular working hours to travel between home and a transportation terminal (e.g., an airport) outside the limits of the employee's official duty station.

4. (Q5 from OPM Comp Time Travel Memo). An employee compensatory time off for travel only for those hours spent in a travel status. What qualifies as time in a travel status?

A: Travel status includes only the time actually spent traveling between the official duty station and a temporary duty station, or between two temporary duty stations, and the usual waiting time that precedes or interrupts such travel.

Logic test: What amount of compensatory time does an employee receive on a non-work day for travel?

a. If the flight departs at 1300 on a Sunday and arrives at temporary duty station at 1700. The employee would be allowed approximately (depending on home-to-work commute time and location of airport) 1130 to 1700 as compensatory time.

b. Same scenario for travel on a work day. 0730-1130 would be hours worked (or appropriate leave taken for hours not worked because not in a travel status yet), 1130-1600 would be travel time compensated by work schedule hours and 1600-1700 travel compensatory time.