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# TRAVEL-N-TEXAS

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## Adopted Travel Rules Become Effective July 14, 1992

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At the June 22, 1992, Open Meeting, the General Services Commission adopted final amendments to the Travel Rules. The amendments were a result of changes made by the 72nd Legislative 2nd Called Session. The rules became effective July 14, 1992. A copy of the adopted rules has been sent to your state agency travel coordinator.

Except as otherwise noted in section 125.19 of the Travel Rules, highlights of which are listed below, state agencies in the executive branch of state government shall participate in the State Travel Management Program and use the travel agency, charge card, rental car, airline, hotel, and other travel service contracts. Institutions of higher education are not required to participate in the Commission's contracts for travel agency services but are required to use all other contracts. The contracts for travel services must be used unless the conditions below exist. These conditions may be supplemented by state agency unique business circumstances.

- The traveler is already in travel status which renders the use of a contract travel agent impractical or unnecessary.
- Travel is undertaken as part of a group program for which reservations must be made through a specified source to obtain a specified rate or service.
- A travel vendor cannot provide services in the time period required to accomplish the purpose of the travel.
- A contract hotel is not available in a location that will reasonably allow the business requirements of a traveler to be fulfilled.
- A contract hotel or rental car company is unable to provide the required services because it is sold-out or does not offer services in the city being visited.
- Alternative rental car or hotel arrangements can be made at a lower total cost than the contract hotels or rental car companies. For rental cars, total costs include the base rate, loss/damage waiver protection, mileage charge, applicable taxes, surcharges and cost for comparable liability insurance protection. For hotels, the cost of the guest room net of taxes shall be used to compare total costs.
- A contract airline offers a fare lower by any amount than the contracted fare.
- A non-contract airline offers a lower published fare to the general public which results in a lower total trip cost, including travel time, to the agency. However, lower or identical airfares offered to state travelers only are not included within this exception.
- Travel is undertaken by persons with disabilities, by persons transporting prisoners or other persons in the custody of the state, or in a medical emergency.
- Use of contract travel vendors may present a security of safety risk to the traveler.

Your state agency is responsible for establishing travel procedures to comply with and implement these rules. If you have not yet received information from your agency, it will be available soon.

# VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

## Fly Across Texas With The Aircraft Pooling Board

The State Aircraft Pooling Board exists to provide safe, cost effective air transportation for state officials and employees. In addition to providing basic air transportation, there are numerous advantages to using the State Aircraft Pooling Board. Flexibility is the benchmark of the State Aircraft Pooling Board. Some of the more notable advantages are: 1) the ability to schedule flights with very little notice; 2) the ability to cancel, postpone, or change flights up to the last minute; 3) do not have to arrive at the airport 45 minutes early to obtain a confirmed seat; 4) do not have to wait for luggage; 5) no charge for airport parking; 6) do not have to miss booked flights due to delays; 6) overnight stays can be avoided due to traveling by air; 7) trips are scheduled according to user needs, do not have to arrive early or stay late due to airline schedules; and 8) passengers from two or more agencies having the same itinerary can be taken on the same flight and the size and the speed of the aircraft can be matched with passenger load and distance requirements.

Another significant advantage for using the State Aircraft Pooling Board over commercial airlines is the often overlooked area of time savings. By using the SAPB, considerable amounts of flight/layover time can be avoided. A few samples of round trip travel times from Austin are noted below.

<u>Destination</u>	<u>Average SAPB Time</u>	<u>Average Commercial Time</u>
San Angelo	1:46	6:14
Beaumont	2:07	5:10
Longview	2:11	7:12
Tyler	1:54	3:49
Wichita Falls	2:18	5:56
Harlingen	2:28	4:06

*continued on next page*

## READERS' WRITE

**Q:** Will Advisory Committee members appointed under statutory authority of state agency boards be able to use the travel office closest to where they live?

**A:** State travelers need to contact the travel coordinator in their agency to determine which travel agency(s) has been selected by their agency. If the travel agency is not in close proximity to the state agency, arrangements will be made to deliver tickets in an expedient manner.

**Q:** Is the Travel-N-Texas newsletter available in Braille for travelers who are blind?

**A:** At the present time the Travel-N-Texas newsletter is not available in Braille. The Travel and Transportation Division is currently investigating options for printing the newsletter in Braille.

**Q:** When will the next edition of the Texas State Travel Directory be distributed, and how can I receive a copy?

**A:** The 1992-93 edition of the Travel Directory will become available to state agencies on September 1, 1992. For information on how to receive a copy of the Directory, contact your state agency appointed travel coordinator.

## State Travel Management Program Statistics

October 1988 through June 30, 1992

Total Participating State Agencies

Total American Express Charge Cards Issued

Concession Fees

152

50,455

\$764,134.07

For more information on the State Travel Management Program please call Diane Harker, Manager, Travel Section at (512) 463-3559 or TEX-AN 255-3559.

## Update on STMP Travel Contracts

With the end of Fiscal Year 1992 coming up, we thought you'd like to know the current status of travel contracts between the State of Texas and the vendors under contract.

**Travel Agent Services** - Proposals submitted in response to a Request for Proposals (RFP) are currently being reviewed by an evaluation team made up of employees from state agencies and universities. Awards will be announced by September 1, 1992. Unlike the previous contract with only one travel agency servicing the state account, awards will be made to no less than 6, or more than 10 travel agencies.

**Contracted Airline Fares** - Current contracts for State of Texas airfares will expire on August 31, 1992. Because of recent changes in fare structures and the less than positive position some airlines have taken regarding all contract fares, the status of the State's contract fares after August 31 is uncertain. We will keep you advised.

**Rental Car Services** - Advantage Rent-A-Car as the primary rental car vendor and Avis Rent A Car System, Inc. as the secondary vendor are under contract with the State of Texas until October 24, 1992. Their contracts are currently being evaluated to determine if the State should exercise its option to renew for the remaining additional one year or go out for competitive bid. Again, we will notify you as soon as final decisions are made.

**Hotel/Motel Contracts** - Look for the 1992-93 Texas State Travel Directory which will be available to state agencies on September 1, 1992. The new Directory will contain approximately 850 lodging establishments from coast to coast. This latest edition will have a new look too; slightly larger in size with 5 entries per page instead of the previous 3, which will save many trees.

## HOTEL NEWS

Below is a list of hotels which did not meet the deadline to be placed in the Texas State Travel Directory. These properties would like to offer the rates listed below. Please keep in mind that these rates are based on single occupancy and could change throughout the year as the hotels are not under contract with the state through the State Travel Management Program.

Hotel	Rate
Clarion Hotel Dallas 1241 W. Mockingbird Lane Dallas, Texas 75247 (214) 630-7000	\$55.00
Howard Johnson Hotel One South Main Avenue Laredo, Texas 78040 (512) 722-2411	\$47.00
Holiday Inn 11160 Southwest Freeway Houston, Texas 77031-3698 (713) 530-1400	\$55.00
Doubletree Club Hotel Casa de Palmas 101 N. Main Street McAllen, Texas 78501	\$55.00 (Includes Full Breakfast)
Holiday Inn - Universal Studios 5905 Kirkman Road Orlando, Florida 32819 (407) 351-3333	\$63.00
Radisson Suite Hotel New Orleans 315 Julia Street New Orleans, Louisiana 70130 (504) 525-1993	\$58.00 (Includes Full Breakfast)
Ramada Hotel at Madison Square Garden 401 7th Avenue at 33rd Street New York, New York 10001-2062 (800) 223-8585 or (212) 502- 8110	\$79.00

## NEWS BRIEFS

### **Avis Appoints New National Accounts Manager**

Avis Rent A Car System, Inc. has recently promoted Kenneth W. Minnick "Ken" to the position of National Accounts Manager. Ken has been assigned to the State of Texas account which was previously managed by Jerry Filippo. Jerry has taken on some new accounts which will take him out of Texas and into Colorado part of the time. We will miss him and wish him well.

Ken worked as a Sales Development Analyst for Avis prior to moving to Houston from New York. Please join us in welcoming him as the new contract manager for the state. He may be contacted at the Houston Avis office (713) 443-9000.

### **Winner Selected in Second Annual Cover Design Competition**

Congratulations!!! are in order to Captain Robert E. Martin, for his winning entry in the second annual cover design competition. Captain Martin is employed by the Department of Public Safety in Houston. His design will be featured on the cover of the 1992-93 Texas State Travel Directory and as the logo for the 1992-93 editions of "Travel-N-Texas".

The second place winner is Dan Griekspoor who is employed by the Texas Department of Transportation. The Travel and Transportation Division would like to take this opportunity to thank all who entered the competition. The designs were all well executed; it was difficult to choose the winner.

### **Be Sure to Cancel Reservations When Travel Plans Change**

Business travel plans often change unexpectedly causing travelers to make revisions to their original itinerary. As a courtesy to the hotel, rental car company, or airline it is good to remember to call and cancel any reservations that cannot be met. Canceling reservations in advance can save you and the State of Texas unnecessary charges and preserve the State's negotiating abilities for the future.

## Late Breaking News

### **New In-terminal locations in West Texas**

Renting a car from Advantage Rent-A-Car is now more convenient in West Texas. Midland now has an In-terminal location. The rental counter is located near the baggage claim area and has been open for business since June 1, 1992. Look for another In-terminal location in El Paso as Advantage also anticipates the opening of an In-terminal location there around July 1, 1992.

### **Advantage Lowers Mini-Van Rates**

For a limited time, (through August 31, 1992), Advantage Rent-A-Car has lowered the daily rate for mini-vans from \$48.00 to \$38.00. If you're planning a summer vacation with the kids, this is a great value!

### **Houston To Host the Republican National Convention**

Houston will host the Republican National Convention this year during the week of August 17-21. Due to high demands for rental cars and hotels it would be wise to make your plans as early as possible if you plan to visit Houston from August 12th through August 23rd.

Ken Minnick at Avis Rent A Car suggests you always use the Avis Worldwide Discount (AWD) number when placing your reservations for Avis cars.

### **Days Inn New York City Has Less Than Adequate Facilities**

Travelers beware...the Days Inn New York City has been getting less than favorable comments from state travelers who have stayed there recently. Some Texas delegates who attended the Democratic National Convention in New York this summer have complained that the hotel doesn't like to use their air conditioning on a regular basis. Complaints were also made about inadequate hot water at anytime during the day and poorly functioning elevators.

# TRAVEL COORDINATORS' CORNER

## Credit Card Refund Notices (CCRN)

A Credit Card Refund Notice (CCRN) is a four-part form issued by the airlines or the travel agency when an airline ticket is returned for refund. One copy is distributed to the Airline Reporting Corporation (ARC), who forwards the information to the charge card company, American Express; one to the passenger, one to the travel agency, and one to the airline.

When a change in an airline itinerary is necessary and results in a returned ticket which has been paid for by a charge card, it is important for the traveler to request and retain a copy of the CCRN until credit is posted to the account. If the traveler has not received a credit after 30 days of the CCRN issuance, then American Express may be contacted to help research the credit. For individual charge accounts the traveler would need to send a photocopy of the CCRN to Maureen Cuevas, C/O American Express, P. O. Box 53816, Phoenix, Arizona, 85072-3816 or fax it to her at (602) 492-5426.

For BTA accounts, please send the photocopy of the CCRN to Sue Caniff, C/O American Express, P. O. Box 53816, Phoenix, Arizona, 85072-3816 or fax it to her at (602) 492-5118. In either case, if the credit isn't reflected on the next billing statement, please call (800) 528-2122 to open up a customer service case so that the CCRN amount will not be counted as delinquent.

Please contact the Travel and Transportation Division, (512) 463-3559, or TEX-AN 255-3559, if you have questions or require additional information regarding CCRN's.

## Administrative Reticketing/Reissue Fee

According to the "Travel Allowance Guide" published by the Comptroller of Public Accounts, "a state agency may pay a cancellation charge or reimburse a state employee for a cancellation charge if the charge was incurred for a business related reason. A cancellation charge that was incurred for a personal reason, such as an illness or a family emergency, is not reimbursable or payable. A cancellation charge that was incurred because a state employee negligently failed to cancel a reservation in time to avoid the charge is not reimbursable or payable."

Please remember when making travel arrangements that the airline industry is ever-changing and these fare structures may change without notice overnight.

## Vehicle Visions Statewide Fleet Management System

This fall vehicle fleet management staff from the General Services Commission's Travel and Transportation Division (TNT) will begin meeting with state agencies to implement a new automated *Statewide Vehicle Fleet Management System*. During these meetings free fleet management software will be issued, system operating procedures will be provided, and a regular schedule for reporting your agency's fleet operating data to TNT will be established.

At this time it is important for all state agencies to know that this new automated system will be operational in Fiscal 1993. Each agency must appoint a fleet management coordinator! This coordinator will be responsible for the timely transmission of your agency's fleet data to TNT and is required to certify the accuracy of that data.

Most agencies are currently planning their budgets for Fiscal 1993, 1994 and 1995. Please consider the impact of this new reporting requirement when allocating budget resources. As previously indicated there will be some staff commitment. The level of this commitment will vary according to the number of vehicles operated. Also, while fleet management software will be provided free of charge, the use of this software will require a personal computer (PC). For specific information on requirements for the fleet management coordinator, fleet management software, or PC's, please contact TNT's Manager of Vehicle Fleet Management, Ken Limbrick at 512/463-3550.

Because there are approximately 155 state agencies operating about 26,000 vehicles, interagency training and implementation is expected to take several months. The establishment of this statewide system and the submission of fleet operating data by all state agencies operating vehicles is required per Texas Civil Statutes, Article 601b, Article 14.

## TRAVEL-N-TEXAS

**Travel-N-Texas** is the quarterly travel newsletter of the Travel and Transportation Division for General Services Commission. The newsletter is distributed to State of Texas employees who travel on official state business.

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