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★  
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Brigadier General  
The Adjutant General

**TAG POLICY LETTER 18-15\***

**15 October 2018**

**MEMORANDUM FOR See Distribution**

**SUBJECT: New Jersey Army and Air National Guard Joint Travel and Conference Policy**

**1. REFERENCES:**

- a. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, dated 9 December 2016.
- b. Joint Federal Travel Regulations / Joint Travel Regulations (JFTR/JTR).
- c. Department of Defense Financial Management Regulations (DoDFMR).
- d. Air Force Handbook (AFH) 33-337, Communications and Information – *The Tongue and Quill*, dated 27 May 2015, incorporating Change 1, dated 19 November 2015.
- e. 5 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 410.404, Determining if a conference is a training activity.
- f. Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Memorandum, Subject: Department of Defense Conference Guidance, Version 4.0, dated 26 June 2016.
- g. Department of the Army (DA) Directive 2011-20, dated 14 October 2011.
- h. Revised Guidance Related to Conferences Based on Direction from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), dated 25 November 2016.
- i. Air Force Policy Memo - Conference, dated 28 October 2011.
- j. Chief of the National Guard Bureau Instruction 8100.01, dated 29 September 2014.
- k. NJARNG DTS Business Rules.
- l. Defense Travel Management Office Army Business Rules.
- m. NJARNG Bulletin 1-12, Policies, Procedures and Responsibilities for Use of the U.S. Government Travel Card, dated 15 May 2012.
- n. NJARNG Bulletin 2-12, Disciplinary Guide for Command and Supervisory Actions for Abuse of the U.S. Government Travel Charge Card, dated 15 May 2012.
- o. Chief of the National Guard Bureau Memorandum to Chief of the Joint Staff for New Jersey, dated 22 January 2013.

**\* Supersedes TAG Policy Letter 13-1, dated 28 February 2013.**

**2. PURPOSE:** This TAG Policy Letter establishes, clarifies, and prescribes specific New Jersey National Guard Travel and Conference Policies in light of recent Directives from the Departments of the Army and Air Force as well as Chief of National Guard Bureau Instruction (CNGBI) in regards to travel and conferences. Additionally, it assigns responsibilities and provides guidance on conference hosting within New Jersey. This Policy does not replace current OMB Memorandums, DA Directives, nor CNGBI's travel/conferences policies; rather they are to be used in conjunction with this Policy.

**3. APPLICABILITY:** This TAG Policy Letter applies to all members of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMAVA) who travel in Federal status. It applies to all military and civilian employees of the NJARNG and NJANG on any Federal government orders and anyone traveling under the authority of the Invitational Travel Authorization (ITA).

**4. TRAVEL POLICY:**

a. Travel is only necessary to accomplish the National Guard mission. It does not provide an opportunity for government subsidized vacations and will never be used to provide a reward for performance.

b. All travel must be conducted in the most cost effective manner to the government.

c. Travel is based on military necessity and is neither a right nor a privilege. The Chain of Command and/or Program Manager will determine if travel is in the best interest of the Government and may impose additional controls on specific aspects of travel.

d. Family members accompanying the traveler in an unofficial status will not result in additional costs to the government or to the authorized government traveler, i.e., larger than required accommodations, rental car size, baggage fees or tips for family members, adjusting arrival/departure dates/times to provide "family time" etc. However, travelers may use leave in conjunction with travel to take advantage of special air rates as long as all personal costs are separated and paid with personal funds.

e. Travelers must have an approved travel authorization and ticket 72 hours before departure and must carry a copy of their approved travel authorization with them. Travelers must also have proof of being ticketed prior to travel. Travelers using MILAIR must have a skeleton travel authorization approved in case MILAIR breakdown or is no longer available.

f. Travelers must use the most cost effective form of transportation and must have documentation comparisons of the total cost involved with their personally-owned vehicle, government vehicle, air, rail, bus or any other form of travel including parking fees, fuel and all other expenses related to travel to support requests outside the norm.

g. Travelers may be required to do cost comparisons of alternate arrival/departure airports including time, extra mileage, parking fees, rental cars, shuttles or other means of transportation.

h. Travelers will use public transportation or low cost shuttles instead of cabs and rental cars whenever possible. Rental cars will not be authorized if adequate facilities are within walking distance of the meeting location unless justification is provided.

i. Travelers will only be reimbursed for open, economy parking lots at airports instead of covered parking decks unless they provide a statement that the deck was the only option available. Travelers will use self-park parking instead of valet parking unless they provide a statement that self-park parking was not available. If this statement of non-availability is provided by the traveler and it is later determined to be false, then it will be interpreted as intent to defraud the government and appropriate action will be taken.

j. Travelers will not claim expenses simply because they are authorized (tips, baggage fees, cleaning costs, in and around mileage etc.); they must have actually expended funds for that purpose.

k. Travelers will choose the most cost effective site location to travel to if possible. For events that occur in multiple locations (Fiscal Law, Cooperative Agreement training, etc.), travelers will choose the most cost effective location, consistent with their schedules and the needs of the government. They will not pick locations based on their desirability or for any other personal reasons.

1. Conference organizers will not use "third party planners" for conferences hosted by the NJNG except as contracted for in a no-cost contract by the Air Guard Contracting Officer or United States Property and Fiscal Office (USPFO) for New Jersey, Purchasing and Contracting Office (P&C).

m. To prevent confusion in the procurement process, conference organizers will not use "Letters of Intent" with hotels/facilities. Organizers will provide the appropriate conference request and funding document to the appropriate Air Guard Contracting Office or USPFO P&C.

n. Travelers will not use their personal credit card to pay for transportation. Travelers must use their own government travel card (GOVCC) or must contact the USPFO Commercial Transportation section or the appropriate Wing Comptroller for transportation assistance.

o. Commanders and Staff will only approve the travel of personnel that have a valid operational necessity to attend such temporary duty (TDY). When more than one traveler attends the same event, every effort will be made to reduce cost by sharing transportation and other travel expenses.

p. Refreshments for NJNG hosted conferences will normally be considered a personal expense unless there is a specific authority to provide refreshments.

q. Conference/registration fees for NJNG hosted events will only be for the appropriate costs (room rental, audio/visual devices, internet fees etc.). Under no circumstances will conference organizers mix official and unofficial events in the same conference/registration fee. Organizers desiring to have no-host socials, dining in/out or other non-official activities must make their own arrangements with the facility and must have a severable fee for that purpose.

r. Unless specifically authorized prior to travel, lodging fees will not be authorized or reimbursed above the current government rate for that locality. The NJARNG Comptroller, the 108<sup>th</sup> and 177<sup>th</sup> NJANG Comptrollers may approve Actual Expenses Allowances (AEA) for lodging up to 150%. Request for AEA's between 151% and 300% will be approved by the USPFO. Requests above 300% are not authorized.

s. All travelers are reminded that the use of the GOVCC is mandatory and all travel vouchers with supporting documentation must be submitted within five (5) days after the completion of the period of travel.

## 5. TRAVEL PLANNING PROCEDURES:

a. All NJNG members and anyone traveling on Federally-funded travel orders require travel authorization and approval in order to travel. There will be no exceptions to obtaining this approval. **Final Approval Authority** resides with:

(1) For each Air Wing: **Wing Commander.**

(2) For NJANG assigned to JFHQs: **Director of Staff-Air.**

(3) For all Army Guard: **Chief of Staff-Army.**

(4) For those assigned to the Joint Staff (including State personnel traveling on Federal Orders or ITAs):  
**Director of the Joint Staff**

b. NJNG Travelers will use the Defense Travel System (DTS) to submit authorizations for travel. DTS provides for:

(1) Level 10/15 Review Authority: This is generally the traveler's supervisor who is responsible for:

(a) Providing the first level of travel approval;

(b) Insuring that this travel policy is followed before approving travel; and

(c) Having an appointment by the USPFO-NJ (DD Form 577) on file indicating the successful completion of all relevant training.

(2) Level 25 Funding Approval Authority: This is the Program Manager responsible for approving the funds for travel. Level 25 is responsible for:

- (a) Assigning the appropriate Lines of Accounting in DTS;
- (b) Ensuring travel procedures are followed before authorizing funds to travel; and
- (c) Having an appointment by the USPFO-NJ (DD Form 577) or appropriate Wing Comptroller on file indicating the successful completion of all relevant training.

(3) **Final Approval Authority** in DTS is responsible for providing final Authorization to travel in accordance with this policy and all applicable regulations.

## 6. CONFERENCE POLICY:

a. Holding a conference can be an appropriate method of conducting NJNG business or activities. However, Department of Defense policy requires conference planning to minimize cost to the Government and to ensure the safety and security of conference participants.

b. A "conference" is defined by the JFTR/JTR as "a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event that involves attendee travel". It also includes training activities that are defined as a "conference" under the provisions of 5 CFR 410.404. The definition does not include:

(1) Events necessary to carry out the statutory command and staff oversight functions of the NJNG, including investigations, inspections, and audits.

(2) Regularly scheduled courses of instruction or training (ATRRS, for example) conducted at a government or commercial training facility. *If the instruction or training takes place at a commercial hotel or conference center, then it is considered a conference.*

(3) Strong Bonds or Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program Events

c. In an effort to make the best use of Government funds, alternatives to conferences, such as video teleconferencing, telephone communication, email, webinars and DCO's (Defense Connect Online) should be first considered.

d. If a conference is necessary, commercial facilities will be used only when they can be proven more economical or when military or other Government facilities are unavailable when needed. Military installations or State or Federal Government facilities may not be ruled out as a conference venue solely because the facility is not available on the exact dates the conference sponsor desires to hold the conference. Efforts must be made to adjust conference scheduling to fit the availability of military or other State or Federal government facilities. If scheduling cannot be adjusted, a detailed explanation must be provided in the conference request.

e. Conferences will not be held in any facility in which the cost for lodging exceeds the lodging per diem rate for that locality unless approved in advance by the **Approval Authority** (this approval is non-delegable).

f. Refer to CNGBI 8100.01, Enclosure F, Pages F-1 through F-3 dated 29 September 2014 for specifics regarding cost considerations and how to best minimize conference costs.

g. A government employee will not commit the Government to the use of any facility, sign any agreement, or otherwise obligate the Government for conference facilities or support before approval of the conference by the conference **Approval Authority**. Sponsoring Directorate personnel may discuss space needs, collect pricing and develop cost estimates, tentatively reserve space (only if at no cost and without liability to the Government). No contract or task order related to conference requirements will be awarded and no funds will be obligated for a conference until that conference has been approved by the conference **Approval Authority**. This prohibition includes charges to be made using the GOVCC.



**7. CONFERENCE PLANNING PROCEDURES:** A Conference Approval Request Memorandum (refer to Enclosure A) must be completed and sent to the Approval Authority through USPFO, the Judge Advocate General (JAG) and the respective Chief of Staff (Army or Air, as the case may be) no later than ninety (90) days prior to the proposed conference date(s).

a. Sole Conference **Approval Authority** for Conferences below \$100,000 is the Adjutant General (TAG). TAG has delegated this Approval Authority to the Director of the Joint Staff. Conferences between \$100,000 and \$500,000 will be approved by the Director of the Army National Guard (DARNG) or the Air Guard (DANG) (as the case may be). Conferences that cost above \$500,000 will be approved by the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army or the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force (as the case may be).

b. The Chief of Staff-Army or Director of Staff-Air in their review process will provide their recommendation to the Director of the Joint Staff for approval or non-approval.

c. The USPFO-NJ and JAG (as the case may be) will review all Conference Approval Request Memorandums in order to validate the request against this policy before forwarding to the respective Chief of Staff.

d. All Conference Approval Request Memorandums will be in the format provided at Enclosure A. Instructions are also included.

e. Sponsoring commands or directorates will provide an After Action Review (AAR) to the respective Chief of Staff-Army or Trip Report (in accordance with AFH 33-337) to Director of Staff-Air within five (5) business days of completion of the Conference. Format for the AAR can be found at Enclosure B.

f. Sponsoring Commands or Directorates will document, maintain and make available to the IG a record of all conference related requests, AARs and supporting documentation.

**8.** Point of contact for this TAG Policy Letter is the USPFO, COL Angelo M. Capolupo at (609) 562-0210.



JEMAL J. BEALE  
Brigadier General, NJ Army National Guard  
The Adjutant General

DISTRIBUTION: A, B, C, F

2 Encl

**ENCLOSURE A – CONFERENCE APPROVAL REQUEST MEMORANDUM**

**[Letterhead]**

[Office Symbol]

[Date]

MEMORANDUM THRU: USPFO-NJ  
 Chief of Staff-Army / Director of Staff-Air *(as appropriate)*

FOR: Director of the Joint Staff

SUBJECT: Request Approval for [Conference Identification]

1. Conference Information:
  - a. Conference Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Conference Title: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Conference Date(s): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Conference Security Classification Level: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Conference Justification and Cost-Benefit Analysis: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Conference Location: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Conference Attendees:
  - a. NJ attendees (total): \_\_\_\_\_  
 NJ Senior Officials: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Non-NJ attendees (total): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Senior Officials: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Number of attendees traveling outside local commuting area to the conference: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Total Estimated Cost of the Conference:

a. Administrative Costs:	\$	
b. Facility Costs:	\$	
c. Per Diem Costs:	\$	
d. Airfare:	\$	Airfare cost will be determined on an average of at least ten (10) airports using City Pairs ( <a href="https://cpsearch.fas.gsa.gov/cpsearch/search.do">https://cpsearch.fas.gsa.gov/cpsearch/search.do</a> )
e. Travel Costs:	\$	Includes travel to and from the airport, baggage fees, airport parking, rental car, etc.

[Office Symbol]

[Date]

SUBJECT: Request Approval for [Conference Identification]

f. Security Costs:	\$	
g. AV / IT Costs:	\$	
h. Honoraria Costs and Awards:	\$	
i. Per Person and Total Costs of Provided Meals:	\$	
j. Per Person and Total Costs of Provided Light Refreshments and Other Food/Drink:	\$	
k. Other Expenses:	\$	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE:</b>	<b>\$</b>	

7. An explanation of any meals, refreshment, or other food and drink to be provided at Government expense: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Cost Saving Features: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Funding Sources:

a. Appropriated fund sources: \_\_\_\_\_

b. Conference fee collection: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Conference Fee Collection Procedure (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

11. Legal Opinions (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

12. Conference Proponent Point of Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature Block]  
(Head of Sponsoring Organization)

USPFO Review / Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

CoS-Army / DoS-Air (as appropriate): Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommend: Approval \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproval \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of the Joint Staff: Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFERENCE APPROVAL REQUEST FORM INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Conference Information:
  - a. Conference Sponsor: self-explanatory.
  - b. Conference Title: self-explanatory.
  - c. Conference Dates: self-explanatory.
2. Conference Classification Level: Security classification level required for all or a portion of the conference. If the conference is above the "For Official Use Only (FOUO)" classification level, then identify available classified storage facility.
3. Conference Justification and Cost-Benefit Analysis: State the purpose of the conference and provide an explanation of why the purpose cannot be accomplished by providing information to the potential attendees via email, Army Knowledge Online (AKO), video/teleconference, or other less costly alternative. Explain efforts to coordinate conference timing, location, and objectives with other conferences. Provide a detailed and credible cost-benefit analysis, including an explanation of other options considered (video teleconference, webinars, etc.). Information on site selection should be included in the written conference approval request memorandum. Conference requests must include a certifying statement by the conference sponsor that the travel is essential and the objectives of the conference cannot be satisfactorily accomplished less expensively by correspondence or other means.
4. Conference Location: For a conference not held on a military installation or Government- owned or leased space, state the conference location and the rationale for the location choice. The rationale must address efforts to seek a conference venue on a military or Government installation, justification for not using a military of Government installation, and explanation of efforts to reduce cost in selecting a particular location over other locations.
5. Conference Attendees:
  - a. NJ attendees (total): Personnel (military and civilian) and any NJNG contract or State employees.
  - b. Non-NJ attendees (total): Personnel (military and civilian) and other persons who are not employed, or assigned to, the NJNG.
  - c. Number of attendees traveling outside local commuting area to the conference: self-explanatory.
6. Total Estimated Cost of the Conference:
  - a. Administrative Costs: self-explanatory.
  - b. Facility Costs:
    - (1) This is the total cost of conference rooms used in conjunction with the conference. These costs include the charges, if any, for the main conference room area, breakout rooms, administrative working areas, storage areas, or private meeting space required during the conference.
    - (2) This cost does not include the cost of individual room lodging charges for conference attendees, unless the room is being provided to a conference speaker or other official participant as part of the cost of conference.
    - (3) If there is no separate charge to the Government for conference facilities based on the number of individual lodging commitments for the conference or other complimentary basis, then include a short statement that describes the basis for providing facilities at no cost as a complimentary item in accordance with facility normal business practices.
    - (4) If like refreshments are included in the cost of the conference rooms(s), then there must be a statement that the cost of light refreshments is non-separable and non-negotiable from the cost of the room and the cost of the room is the same whether or not light refreshments are provided.

- c. Per Diem Costs: For the conference location.
  - d. Transportation/Travel Costs: Anticipated costs to the Government for transportation and travel of all attendees to the conference paid by U.S. Government appropriated funds.
  - e. Security Costs: self-explanatory
  - f. AV / IT Costs: The cost of facility-provided and/or contracted services for audiovisual and/or information technology support for the conference.
  - g. Honorarium Costs and Awards: Guest speaker, lecturer, or panelist fees for attendance at the conference. Honorarium does not include any U.S. Government-paid speaker travel expenses.
  - h. Per Person and Total Costs of Provided Meals: self-explanatory.
  - i. Per Person and Total Costs of Provided Light Refreshment and Other Food/Drink: self-explanatory.
  - j. Other Expenses: Any remaining costs related to the conference that have not been captured in any of the other subparagraphs listed above.
7. An explanation of any meals, refreshments, or other food/drink to be provided at Government expense:
- a. Description of content of meals/light refreshments, when they will be served, including an explanation as to why Government provided meals/light refreshments are a necessary expense.
  - b. Necessary Expense Determination: In order to provide one or more meals at Government training, conferences, or other events, the authorizing official (the conference **Approving Authority**) must be provided adequate information on the Itemized Conference Cost Statement to determine and approve the purchasing of meals as a necessary conference expense.
8. Cost Saving Features: self-explanatory.
9. Funding Sources: Include both appropriated fund sources by appropriation, (i.e., 2060, 2065, 3840) and any proposed conference fee sources. If the Conference Proponent expects to collect fees from attendees, exhibitor fees, or other fees paid by individuals or non-Federal entities to attend the conference or participate in conference related activities, provide an estimated amount of such conference fees expected to be collected by the Conference Proponent.
10. Conference Fee Collection Procedure (if applicable): If conference fees are to be collected, indicate if a conference planner of the sponsoring activity will collect the fees. Indicate when the fees will be turned over to the budget analyst/resource manager, i.e. prior to the conference, after the conference, or both, and whether the conference fees will be turned in on a periodic basis (monthly or weekly).
11. Legal Opinions (if applicable): Attach a copy of any legal opinions regarding issues that arise pertaining to the proposed conference.
12. Conference Proponent POC: self-explanatory.



**ENCLOSURE B - AFTER ACTION REPORT (AAR)**

**[Letterhead]**

[Office Symbol]

[Date]

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief of Staff-Army / Director of Staff-Air (*as appropriate*)

SUBJECT: After Action Report for [Conference Identification]

1. Name and description of conference: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date(s) and location of conference: \_\_\_\_\_
3. The estimated costs to NJNG for the conference (from planning memorandum): \_\_\_\_\_
4. The actual costs to NJNG for conference: \_\_\_\_\_
5. The total of any conference coordinator fees: \_\_\_\_\_
6. The total conference fees collected (not including any non-reimbursable personal fees): \_\_\_\_\_
7. The total of fees used to pay for expenses of the conference: \_\_\_\_\_
8. The total of excess fees deposited as a miscellaneous receipt: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Actual number of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Held on military or Government site? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Point of contact (POC) (name and phone number): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature Block]