

**From:** Kratt, Paul G TAC  
**Sent:** Friday, January 31, 2003 2:42 PM  
**To:** DLL-CETAC-ALL Employees  
**Subject:** Reimbursement for Meals when Government Mess is Authorized OCONUS

**Importance:** High  
**Important for all civilians traveling OCONUS.**

The following guidance is provided only for civilian travel within the TAC AOR where government mess meals are authorized and available.

When appropriate, OCONUS travel orders should contain this remark, "Government mess meals are authorized when either government quarters or government contractor's lodging facilities are used at an OCONUS location." This remark is available in CEFMS as code #819. [Reference JTR, C4554 and C4556.] All of the following guidance presumes this situation.

Civilians in Field Duty. Civilians performing field duty will be entitled to the incidental rate only; they will not be reimbursed for commercial meals. Field duty is defined as all duty serving with troops participating in maneuvers, war games, field exercises, or similar types of operations during which the individual is subsisted in a Government mess or with an organization drawing field rations, and is provided Government quarters or is quartered in accommodations normally associated with field exercises. And further, individuals furnished quarters and subsistence obtained by contract are performing field duty when so declared by a competent official. [Reference JTR C4553.A.8. and C4554. D.]

Civilians Not in Field Duty. For civilians not performing field duty, the UFC will presume the incidental rate (all government meals furnished free of charge to the traveler) unless the traveler indicates on the travel voucher that commercial meals were purchased, in the manner prescribed below. Meals purchased at clubs, other NAFL, or at commercial meals establishments operating on post will be reimbursed as commercial meals.

The JTR clearly states that prudence must be exercised in travel (C1058). Because taxpayer money may be saved when travelers eat government provided meals instead of commercial meals, it is prudent for travelers to do so. However, civilian employees not performing field duty cannot be required to eat in a government mess. A traveler who purchases commercial meals instead of eating government provided meals for any reason (day off, being off post during eating hours, convenience, personal reasons, etc.) will be reimbursed for those meals, provided the traveler maintains an accurate daily record of which meals were purchased commercially (breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner), and reports these on the voucher.

The locality rate applies on any day a traveler purchases all meals in commercial establishments and does not consume meals in a government mess. The current locality rate in Kuwait is \$91 per day (\$73 meals + \$18 incidentals if lodging in government contractor's facilities off post).

The proportional meal rate (PMR) applies on any day a traveler consumes only 1 or 2 meals in a government mess and also purchases at least one meal in a commercial establishment. The current PMR in Kuwait if lodging in government contractor's facilities off post is \$59 per day (\$41 proportional meal rate + \$18 incidentals if lodging in government contractor's facilities off post).

The incidental rate applies on any day a traveler consumes meals in a government mess, and the PMR situation in the paragraph immediately above does not apply. The current incidental rate in Kuwait is either \$3.50 per day if lodging in government quarters on post or in field duty, or \$18 per day if lodging in government contractor's facilities off post.

Example of how to file a CEFMS travel voucher. A traveler in this situation will prepare a CEFMS voucher itinerary (screen 7.35) coding meals as DE (Deductible). *[Do not be confused by the GM code for Government Meals, which is used only when the traveler is required to pay for meals eaten in a government mess]*. Include any commercial meals purchased as exceptions on the Daily Exceptions screen 7.21. Screen 7.21 is reached from the itinerary screen by first highlighting the leg and sequence number, and then pushing the "Daily Exceptions" button. For each day enter each meal purchased. Entry of a dollar amount is optional. If this situation exists at more than one location, repeat for each location.

If a traveler is lodged off post in a leased government apartment, the traveler's CEFMS travel voucher must be coded "commercial quarters" so that the traveler will receive the \$18 daily incidental rate instead of the \$3.50 received when lodging on post.

Travelers cannot eat meals in a government mess and claim those same meals as commercial meals purchased. Such double dipping is fraudulent; both travelers and travel approving officials should be aware of the consequences of fraudulent claims. When there is a reasonable suspicion of a falsified expense for lodging, meals or incidentals, the applicable per diem or AEA shall be denied for the entire day on which the suspected expense is claimed. If payment is made before discovery of a suspected falsified expense, the employee must reimburse the Government (JTR C1305).

This guidance has been coordinated with the USACE Finance Center.

**Paul G. Kratt**

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