

Summary: Investigation of a DOI Official's Travel and Expenses

Report Date: December 15, 2015

In November 2014, the Office of Inspector General initiated an investigation into allegations that an official working in the U.S. Department of the Interior's (DOI) Office of the Secretary extended his work-related travel over weekends without authorization. He also allegedly received a hotel reimbursement in September 2014 for personal travel, upgraded his seat on a flight without prior approval, and used his Government travel/purchase card to pay for personal taxi rides. We were further told that the official received business line authority on his Government credit card simply because he wanted to obtain Internet access during flights.

We found instances when the official did travel over weekends for events with Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, but we did not find evidence of any impropriety. We found that for the September 2014 trip, the official received the correct hotel reimbursement. We also found that he did upgrade a seat on a flight in January 2015 to an economy-plus seat without prior approval. He charged \$65.81 to his personal credit card for the upgrade and later received reimbursement. Per DOI policy, bureaus have discretion to allow this type of upgrade, but they should be preapproved.

The official also charged \$143.43 in personal taxi expenses on his Government credit card over the course of 2 months. He self-reported the charges, which he said were inadvertent, and had them placed on his personal credit card.

Finally, we confirmed that the official received business line authority because he wanted to use his Government credit card to obtain Wi-Fi access during flights instead of using his personal credit card and seeking reimbursement. The Office of the Secretary's Office of Financial Management later discovered that he had signed up for a monthly inflight Wi-Fi charge, and his business line authority was suspended. The official claimed that signing up for this charge was unintentional.

We provided this report to DOI Chief of Staff Tommy Beaudreau for any action he deems appropriate.

This is a summary of an investigative report that was issued internally to the U.S. Department of the Interior. This summary was posted to the web on February 11, 2016.

