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Sent: Friday, September 25, 2020 9:55 AM

Subject: FOUO\FTR Bulletin 21-02 - Renewal Agreement Travel Waiver

Commanders/Directors:

The attached [Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\) 21-02](#) temporarily waives certain provisions of the FTR governing Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT) to accommodate US civilian employees whose RAT was delayed or suspended due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) travel restrictions. Specifically, this bulletin waives the requirement for an employee to have 12 months remaining on their successor tour of duty after return from leave in order to be eligible for RAT.

This bulletin is retroactively effective for employees whose official RAT was delayed or suspended after March 13, 2019 (one year prior to the date of the national emergency issued by the President concerning COVID-19), and who have not yet taken RAT. This FTR Bulletin will expire one year from March 13, 2020, unless extended or rescinded by the General Services Administration (GSA).

Travel restrictions related to COVID-19 in the [22 May 2020 SECDEF](#) memo (Subject: Transition to Conditions-based Phased Approach to Coronavirus Disease 2019 Personnel Movement and Restrictions) remain in effect; per the [17 June 2020 guidance](#) issued by our office exemption (k) allows travel for employees executing RAT.

This information will be posted on the [Ramstein CPO website](#) along with other extensive information on COVID-19-related HR matters. Questions may be directed to 86fss.civ-allowances@us.af.mil.

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From: USAFE-AFAFRICA/A1KC <usafea1kc.a1kccivilianpolicy@us.af.mil>

Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 1:09 PM

To: USAFE-AFAFRICA CPO Distro List <HQUSAFE-AFAFRICA.A1KC.CPO@us.af.mil>

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Subject: FOUO\FTR Bulletin 21-02 - Renewal Agreement Travel Waiver

This e-mail contains FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO)

Greetings CPOs,

The subject FTR bulletin, attached above, will be announced in the Federal Register in the near future and will be available at gsa.gov/ftrbulletins. This is pending a HAF/A1C message, but we have the green light to share for immediate implementation.

This guidance informs agencies that certain provisions of the FTR governing RAT are temporarily waived to accommodate individuals whose Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT) was delayed or suspended due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) travel restrictions. Specifically, this bulletin waives the requirement for an employee to have 12 months remaining on their successor tour of duty to be eligible for RAT.

Mr. Rittershofer and I are standing by if you have any additional questions.

Respectfully

****Teleworking four work days per week****

Christian H. Sorenson, GS-13, DAF
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"Due to COVID-19 and until further notice, I will be teleworking. So please contact me via email and I will respond as soon as possible."

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

September 15, 2020

Federal Travel Regulation
GSA Bulletin FTR 21-02

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Relocation Allowances – Waiver of certain Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) provisions for Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. What is the purpose of this bulletin? This bulletin informs agencies that certain provisions of the FTR governing RAT are temporarily waived to accommodate individuals whose RAT was delayed or suspended due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) travel restrictions. Specifically, this bulletin waives the requirement for an employee to have 12 months remaining on their successor tour of duty to be eligible for RAT.

2. What is the applicable date of this bulletin? This bulletin is retroactively effective for employees whose official RAT was delayed or suspended after March 13, 2019 (one year prior to the date of the national emergency issued by the President concerning COVID-19), and who have not yet taken RAT.

3. When does this bulletin expire? This FTR Bulletin will expire one year from March 13, 2020, unless extended or rescinded by this office.

4. What is the background of this bulletin? Federal agencies authorize relocation entitlements to those individuals listed at FTR §302-1.1. Such individuals must sign a service agreement stating that the individual agrees to serve for a minimum time period after they have relocated, as prescribed in FTR §302-2.14. Once an employee has completed their initial tour of duty, an agency may offer RAT for the employee to serve a new tour of duty at the same or different OCONUS location, if the employee meets the conditions under FTR §302-3.212.

RAT is intended to provide expenses of round-trip travel and transportation for the employee and their family members to their continental United States (CONUS) actual residence or other approved location in the U.S. for the purpose of taking leave between successive tours of duty and prior to the new tour of duty (FTR §302-3.211). An employee cannot accrue the RAT entitlement from one period of service to another if not used.

In light of the unsettled conditions throughout the world due to COVID-19, U.S. agencies and foreign countries have issued travel advisories warning U.S. citizens not to travel internationally until further notice or to delay departure until conditions are normalized. Consequently, employees and their immediate family members may be, or may have

been, required to delay taking RAT despite the employee's successful completion of their initial tour of duty and commitment to a second overseas tour of duty. As a result of the delay, employees might not have 12 months remaining in their second tour of duty upon their return from RAT as prescribed at FTR §§302-2.14(d) and 302-3.505(d)).

5. What waivers may my agency apply to the FTR provisions addressed by this bulletin?

Due to COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions, agencies may waive FTR §§302-2.14(d) and 302-3.505(d), meaning that RAT travelers are not required to have 12 months of service remaining on their second overseas tour of duty after taking RAT, in order to be eligible for RAT. This waiver does not impact the length of an employee's service agreement with their agency. For example, the employee still must 1) have satisfactorily completed their initial tour of duty and 2) complete the agreed upon period of service under their new service agreement for entitlement to RAT. An employee who fails to complete the minimum period of service under their new service agreement for reasons that are not acceptable to the agency must pay the Government all transportation and per diem expenses the employee and their immediate family received for RAT as specified in FTR §§302-3.223 and 302-3.224.

6. What should agencies do? Agencies should update their internal relocation policies, as needed, for RAT and service agreement commitment requirements.

7. Whom should I call for further information? For further information or clarification of content, please contact Mr. Rick Miller, Office of Government-wide Policy (M), Office of Asset and Transportation Management (MA), at (202) 501-3822 or by email at travelpolicy@gsa.gov. Please cite FTR Bulletin 21-02.

By delegation of the Administrator of General Services.

DocuSigned by:

CAD3199EC3F0432...

Jessica Salmoiraghi
Associate Administrator
Office of Government-wide Policy



**PER DIEM, TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION
ALLOWANCE COMMITTEE**
4800 MARK CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 04J25-01
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17 September 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: CIVILIAN ADVISORY PANEL

SUBJECT: CTD for CAP 47-20 (I) -- "Implement GSA COVID-19 Waiver of 12 Month Remaining Service Requirement for RAT"

1. Purpose: This item revises JTR, Part H, to implement Federal Travel Regulation Bulletin 21-02. Services and Agencies may waive the requirement that civilian employees must have 12 months remaining on their successive tour after return from leave in order to be eligible for renewal agreement travel. This authority applies to civilian employees whose renewal agreement travel was delayed or suspended due to COVID-19 travel restrictions on or after 13 March 2019. This authority is temporary and expires 13 March 2021, unless extended or rescinded by GSA.
2. This revision is forwarded for information purposes. No coordination is required.
3. Staff initiated this revision.
4. This revision is effective on 16 September 2020.
5. Action Officer: Scott Laws (david.s.laws2.civ@mail.mil)

Joel T. Ridenour
Chief, Policy and Regulations Division

Attachment:
Joint Travel Regulations Revisions

cc:
Civilian Board of Contract Appeals
Defense Travel Management Office
General Services Administration

Joint Travel Regulations Revisions

CHAPTER 5: PERMANENT DUTY TRAVEL (PDT)

PART H: RENEWAL AGREEMENT TRAVEL (RAT) (CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES)

A civilian employee, and the civilian employee's accompanying dependent, may be eligible to receive travel and transportation allowances for returning home between tours of duty OCONUS.

0550 RAT LEAVE

This Part applies to a civilian employee serving tours of duty OCONUS, including the specific RAT provisions for civilian employee serving tours of duty in Alaska or Hawaii. A Service's or DoD Component's written guidance applies regarding the civilian employee's leave status while on RAT.

055001. Eligibility Requirements

A. All Areas OCONUS, Except Alaska and Hawaii. A civilian employee must meet the requirements in this paragraph to be eligible for RAT. Before departure from the PDS OCONUS, a civilian employee must have satisfactorily completed the tour of duty (see [Tour Lengths](#)) and have entered into a new written service agreement for another tour of duty at a PDS OCONUS. To be eligible for renewal agreement travel, a civilian employee must have a minimum period of at least 12 months of service remaining from the date of return to the same or different PDS OCONUS ([FTR §302-2.14](#)). The new service agreement covers costs for travel to the civilian employee's actual residence or alternate location according to this Part and return, and any additional cost paid by the Government due to the civilian employee's transfer to another PDS OCONUS for the tour immediately after the RAT.

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055003. RAT Denial or Delay

RAT ordinarily is performed between tours of duty OCONUS. A DODEA teacher cannot be forced to delay RAT. The time when leave is granted to perform RAT must adhere to appropriate personnel guidance. The civilian employee's commander OCONUS may authorize or approve later RAT within a tour of duty if leave is granted according to personnel guidance ([B-232179, October 6, 1989](#)).

A. RAT Denial. RAT at Government expense may not be denied to a civilian employee who has earned it. However, civilian employees other than DODEA teachers may be denied RAT when the civilian employee meets any of the following conditions:

1. Is being processed for separation.
2. Is going to be involved in a RIF.
3. Has a removal action pending.
4. Has been reassigned to a U.S. position.
5. Is to be reassigned to a position in the CONUS in connection with a rotation on a similar program that precludes a required period of service completion under a renewal agreement.

Joint Travel Regulations Revisions

B. Delay at Management's Request. Management may request a civilian employee to delay RAT by extending the initial tour, or tour then in effect, up to 90 days for good reasons, such as if the civilian employee is engaged on a project that is scheduled for completion within a reasonable time. Sufficient time must remain in the civilian employee's renewal-agreement tour following RAT for him or her to serve at least 12 months upon return to the PDS OCONUS. This is after shortening the length of the renewal-agreement tour by the number of days that the initial tour was extended.

C. Delay at the Civilian Employee's Request. A civilian employee may request an extension of the initial tour or the tour then in effect to permit scheduling leave to accommodate personal or job-related reasons acceptable to, and permitted by, the commander concerned OCONUS. After performing RAT and returning to the PDS OCONUS, the civilian employee's tour is either 12 months or the length of the renewal-agreement tour for the PDS concerned shortened by the number of days the initial tour was extended, whichever is greater.

D. Limits on Assignments OCONUS. A delay in performing RAT should not be authorized if the resulting extension to the new tour, or the requirement to serve 12 months following the return to the PDS OCONUS, requires the civilian employee to remain at the PDS OCONUS beyond any 5-year limit, or other limit, on assignments OCONUS contained in personnel guidance. A delay in RAT may be authorized if the civilian employee is not affected by, or has been released from, the 5-year limit, or other limit, on assignments OCONUS.

E. Delay Due to COVID-19. This paragraph is effective for civilian employees whose RAT was delayed or suspended due to COVID-19 travel restrictions on or after 13 March 2019 and who have not yet taken RAT. The Service or Agency may waive the requirement to have 12 months remaining on the successive tour of duty. This waiver does not impact the length of a civilian employee's service agreement with their Service or Agency. This authority expires 13 March 2021, unless extended or rescinded by GSA (See FTR Bulletin 21-02).