

# Department of Energy (DOE) Non-Refundable Airfare Guide March 2026

**This guide provides quick reference for DOE official travel. For full policy, refer to FTR and DOE travel directives.**

## **Travel Authorization**

- ❖ Travelers should be 99.9% certain of travel before selecting a non-refundable ticket.
- ❖ Travelers must have written or electronic authorization prior to incurring any travel expenses. If it is not practicable or possible to obtain an authorization prior to travel, your agency may approve reimbursement for specific travel expenses after travel is completed.

## **Making the reservation**

The FTR states that all government travel must be arranged using the online booking tool offered by ETS, unless extenuating circumstances prevent such use. Travelers must use the agency's existing Travel Management Service (TMS) to make all travel arrangements. **FTR §301-50.1**

## **Payment of airfare**

All non-refundable tickets should be placed on the DOE Centrally Billed Account (CBA).

## **Approving Non-Refundable**

Reservations will auto-cancel if authorization is not stamped APPROVED within 24 hours.

## **Responsibility**

Travelers can be held financially responsible for any unauthorized travel expense.

- ❖ FTR §301-10.101 states that travelers may be held financially responsible for their travel transactions if the transaction is not in compliance with the FTR.
- ❖ Please refer to DOE Notice "Travel using the Government's Contract City-Pair Airfares and Non-Contract Air Fares (including non-refundable air fares)", for additional information about penalties and fees associated with changes to non-refundable tickets.

## **Price change**

- ❖ Any changes will result in airline penalties and fees.

Non-refundable ticket prices are not guaranteed. Carrier tariffs change frequently throughout a 24-hour period and are never guaranteed. The closer you get to departure, the higher the price.

## **Contract fare**

Contract fares do not change within a fiscal year. These fares are the result of negotiations between the government through GSA and the airlines. The contract fares are set each October.

## **Program Office Accountability**

The employee and approving official must be fully aware of the terms and conditions of the non-refundable ticket.

The program office and the travel approving official are responsible for ensuring that the unused non-refundable ticket is only used for official business on a future trip, and it is not used by the employee for personal use. The program office must maintain a list of unused non-refundable tickets and provide the list to the Office of Travel Management upon request.

## **Weather and Mechanical Airline Issues**

If non-refundable flights are canceled due to weather or mechanical problems, or travelers are bumped from the flight for any other reason, travelers are required to utilize the alternate flight assigned by the airline. The TMS may assist with flight changes, and the traveler will accrue additional fees. Airlines must accommodate travelers.

- ❖ Travelers are advised to stand in line, while calling the airline or the TMS for assistance.

## **Seats**

Non-refundable seats may NOT be upgraded. Non-refundable seats are very limited; seats may not be desirable for the traveler.

## **Pointers for Successful Use of Non-Refundable Tickets**

Travelers should be 99.9% certain of their itinerary.

Non-refundable fare prices increase as the travel date gets closer.

Non-refundable airfares should be ticketed within 24 hours of booking. This does not guarantee airfare will be available. Airline prices may change frequently throughout a 24-hour period and are never guaranteed until ticketed.

## **Additional Fees**

All changes to non-refundable itineraries may result in the following airline penalties and fees which can consist of:

- ❖ Minimum \$100.00 change fee, i.e. change of departure/return, or cancellation.
- ❖ Differences between the original ticket price and the new ticket price.
- ❖ Full ticket plus the cost of the departure/return ticket when flight is missed.

## **ADTRAV Profiles**

All travelers MUST have accurate traveler profiles in the ETS for the TMS to track unused tickets.

## **Values of Unused Non-Refundable Tickets**

Non-refundable fares are not refunded to DOE or the program office if a traveler does not travel or does not use all tickets associated with their reservation.

Fully unused tickets may be credited for the value of the ticket and the credit is typically, available for 1 year from the date the ticket was issued (not date of travel). Credits are not transferable between travelers or airlines. Conditions may vary. Penalties and fees apply when fully unused tickets are utilized.

Partially used tickets have NO value for future trips. If travelers use the outbound or return ticket, the unused ticket has no value. The carrier will negate the value of the ticket and show the reservation as a "no-show."

Reservations must be cancelled or the value of ticket is lost. This applies to outbound and return segments.

If you are late for your outbound flight, the carrier will indicate traveler as a "no-show."

If a traveler leaves the Department before using the credit, the cost for the unused ticket is lost.

Additionally, ADTRAV conducts a side-by-side comparison between the contract fare and the non-refundable fare to ensure that the lowest fare to the government is ticketed.

## **Useful Telephone Numbers & Email**

Travel Policy Questions, Travel Card, Concur Help Desk

**Phone:** (301)903-2500 Option 4

**Email:** [Travel.Management@hq.doe.gov](mailto:Travel.Management@hq.doe.gov)

ADTRAV (24 hours) ..... 1-888-205-2369

**Email:** [doedc@adtrav.com](mailto:doedc@adtrav.com)

## **Policy Guidance 2011 for Air Fares**

Travel Using the Government's Contract City-Pair Air Fares and Non-Contract Air Fares (including non-refundable air fares) [Policy Guidance 2011 for Air Fares.docx](#)

**Concur Reference/Help**

<https://gotravel.doe.gov/PolicyAndAccounting.html>

**DOE Travel Manual**

<https://www.directives.doe.gov/directives-documents/500-series/0552.1-DManual-1A-chg1-ltdchg>

**Federal Travel Regulation:**

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-41/subtitle-F>

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