



July 13, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR All DOC Travel POCs

FROM: Julie Tao, Director
Office of Financial Reporting, Internal Controls, and Travel

SUBJECT: Travel Update: CWTSato Travel Hold Times

Due to the current state of the travel industry (canceled flights, airlines reducing rather than increasing flight capacity, and pilot shortages), as it emerges from the COVID pandemic, Departmental employees have been experiencing long hold times. While CWTSato Travel is working diligently to resolve this issue, challenges continue to exist across the travel industry which has resulted in increased average call length; therefore, OFM is providing an update regarding the increase in hold times.

The Department has been in close communication with CWTSato Travel and their Travel Management Company (TMC) regarding the long hold times our Departmental travelers have been experiencing.

TMCs worldwide are finding that it is taking longer than expected to find experienced travel consultants post-COVID while travel booking activity has rapidly rebounded. These conditions are impacting the CWTSato Travel service, including longer hold times to reach travel consultants. As a result, we have worked with CWTSato Travel on the following solutions to improve our travelers' experience:

- Book online with E2 as much as possible.
- Encourage travelers to book travel well in advance to provide ample time to plan and communicate properly with a CWTSato travel consultant.
- Ensure the traveler confirms that their authorization has been timely approved with a ticketed itinerary before departure.
- Confirm that the traveler's E2 profile has the correct cell phone number and email address for communications.

What is CWTSato Travel doing to fix the issue?

- Aggressively hiring for the government customer service desk.
- Requesting customer agents work overtime to manage increased call volumes.
- Piloting call-back technology that enables callers to leave their phone numbers for a call back without losing their place in the queue. The new system will also provide callers with an estimated wait time.

While there are challenging dynamics taking place in the travel industry right now, CWTSato Travel fully understands its responsibility to adjust to the changes to raise its service levels.

Thank you for your patience as we work with CWTSato Travel through these unprecedented challenges. Please ensure your travelers watch for emails or text messages from the TMC or airlines for any flight delays or cancellations.

If you have any questions regarding CWTSato, please contact Linda Munday (lmunday@doc.gov), E2 Program Manager, at 301-355-5534, with cc to Cecelia Kizer (ckizer@doc.gov), Director of Travel Management Division, at 202-482-9079 and me (jtao@doc.gov), 202-482-0502.