

## **TDY Rental Vehicles**

### **What You Need to Know About Renting Vehicles and Reporting Loss and Damage**

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Here's a scenario with which you might be familiar: You are traveling for the government and take a flight to your destination. You pick up a rental car at the airport and arrive at your hotel in time to check in and register for a conference. You go to dinner with other conference attendees, and while your car is parked on the street during dinner, someone has side-swiped it and caused minor damage to the left rear quarter panel and bumper. When you turn the car in, the rental car company wants you to pay for the damage. What do you do?

Government travelers on temporary duty (TDY) are often authorized rental vehicles to perform their official travel. Questions often arise about what happens when a TDY rental vehicle sustains damage. This article informs you, the government traveler, how to limit personal and governmental liability should rental vehicle damage occur.

#### **Background Information and Resources**

The Defense Travel Management Office (DTMO) took over responsibility for the U.S. Government Rental Car Program from the Surface Deployment and Distribution Command in October 2007. Members can access features of the program such as current carrier listing, rental car rates, and a link to submit an accident/incident claim at the DTMO webpage: <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rental.cfm>

#### **Steps to Take as a TDY Traveler:**

1. First, choose a rental company that has signed a U.S Government Car Rental Agreement with DTMO. A list of participating rental companies can be found at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/rental.cfm> (cars) and <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/Docs/TRAgreementPOCs.pdf> (trucks). Check to verify that the location you are renting from is a participating location to the Agreement.
2. Next, be sure to authenticate your official travel status with the rental company by presenting travel orders or by using a Government credit card. In addition, note any other authorized users on the rental agreement. Additionally, remember that Joint Federal Travel Regulations (JFTR and JTR) require you to rent the lowest cost rental that meets the mission requirements.
3. Regardless of whether the rental is covered under a DTMO Agreement always try to rent a TDY vehicle using your government credit card. Under the credit card agreement between the Government and Citibank, insurance coverage may exist to protect the government traveler. This coverage is available in the United States and most foreign countries, although vehicles rented in Israel, Jamaica, or Ireland are not covered. The term of the rental can be for no longer than 31 days and coverage does not apply to vehicles that hold more than eight passengers. Call 1-800-418-1515 before travel to determine whether the Citibank Auto Rental Collision Damage Waiver Program will apply. Under most circumstances, you should decline insurance coverage offered by the rental company when using a government travel card.

**Steps to Take in Case of an Accident or Damage to TDY Rental:**

1. Immediately notify the car/truck rental company and request a replacement vehicle (if necessary) and instructions for the disposition of the disabled vehicle.
2. Notify the car/truck rental company, notify the police, and obtain a police report for the company. If a police report is not available, the rental agreement requires the traveler to provide the car/truck rental company with all information received from the parties involved in the accident/incident.
3. Promptly notify the location from which the car/truck was rented and complete a company accident report (if applicable).
4. Immediately notify Citibank for vehicles rented with a Government travel card to ensure Government travel card coverage in case the rental vehicle is not covered under the DTMO agreement.
5. Keep a record of the location and representative who assisted for follow-up purposes.
6. Report the incident to your supervisor to establish that use of rental vehicle was within scope of duties/employment.

Rental companies that have signed an agreement with DTMO have contracted to bear the entire risk of damage or loss to a rental vehicle used for official business by government travelers. Coverage is excluded if the traveler operates the vehicle in locations not covered under the agreement (e.g., off paved roads or across international boundaries) or misuses the vehicle (e.g., driving while intoxicated, racing, use for illegal purposes, etc.). If damage to your TDY rental vehicle occurs and the rental is covered under the Government's agreement with Citibank (regardless of whether a DTMO Agreement applies), notification must be given to Citibank within 20 days. Then, follow the requirements for filing a claim set forth in Citibank's Department of Defense Travel Card Cardholder Guide.

If damage to your TDY rental vehicle occurs and the rental is not covered under either a DTMO Agreement or a Government travel card, report the damage to your supervisor. For damage occurring within the scope of your employment, the bill may be paid from organizational TDY funds. Your supervisor should prepare a statement documenting your scope of employment at the time of the incident. When funds are available for reimbursement, your organization may then forward the claim and all documents to the Claims Office for adjudication.

Personal accident insurance, personal effects coverage, or other optional coverage may be offered to the renter but is not a prerequisite for renting a vehicle. You may not receive reimbursement for optional coverage except in very limited circumstances specified in the JFTR and JTR. The Government is not liable for damage occurring outside the scope of your employment (e.g., personal use of the rental vehicle), and you should contact your personal insurance carrier should such damage occur. DTMO recommends that you terminate the contract for official use of the rental car and obtain a new personal use contract if you intend to use the rental vehicle beyond the TDY period.

For guidance concerning TDY rental vehicle claims, contact the APG claims office at (410) 278-1853.