

SOUTHERN PINE

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International Travel Guidelines and Requirements

Preparation for Travel

Travel expenses will be covered as long as they are related to marketing activities approved by the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS). Travel is funded by the USDA FAS Foreign Market Development (FMD) and Market Access Programs (MAP). There are specific requirements for reimbursement under these programs.

Notification – to reserve your spot for an event, an International Event Registration form must be sent to Linda Patch via email (lpatch@sfpa.org), mail (6660 Riverside Drive Suite 212, Metairie, LA 70003) or fax (504-443-6612) **at least 45 days in advance** of the first authorized travel day of a selected event.

Travel Guidance – Once a Registration Form is submitted, staff will confirm receipt via email and send the International Guidelines and Requirements, Conduct Guide, and Post-Trip Reporting requirements. Travelers are expected to review these guidelines prior to their mission and contact staff with any questions.

One Traveler Limit – Due to high demand, event attendance is limited to only one representative per company. A second company rep may be wait-listed and be approved later if circumstances permit.

Book Air Travel Early – After your Registration Form is received and your participation confirmed, your airline reservations can be booked. Air travel must be booked **at least 45 days in advance** to secure your registration for the mission. Early booking usually yields a cheaper fare, which helps stretch limited travel resources. If air travel is not booked in time, your registration for that event may be transferred to a wait-listed traveler.

Air Travel Documents – We highly recommend the use of Julie’s Travel Desk. Please call Jennifer Davis at 503-636-5684 or email jennifer@travelcruisedesk.com, who is familiar with the FAS travel requirement guidelines. If Jennifer is not available, please ask for Gayle Bonta. Once booked, they will provide all the necessary documentation for FAS reimbursement. If you plan to go off-mission, we strongly suggest use of Julie’s Travel Desk. They provide the proper comparisons necessary for FAS reimbursement.

If you choose to make your own reservations, we require you send a DRAFT of your itinerary to Linda Patch (lpatch@sfpa.org) or Tami Kessler (tkessler@sfpa.org) for approval prior to booking your airline ticket to ensure that it complies with FAS regulations. **Tickets that do not comply with the Foreign Agricultural Service and International Guidelines cannot be reimbursed. Any off-mission excursions must be noted. If your plans change once we approve, or full itinerary was not disclosed, you may not be eligible for reimbursement.**

Once your airline ticket is booked, please email your actual ticket and/or passenger receipt showing your flight itinerary and the breakdown of the cost of your airline ticket. Documentation must breakdown the taxes, fees and base fare. **E-tickets purchased from online discount websites (Orbitz, Expedia, etc.) are not allowed.**

Use Approved Air Carriers – US flag air carriers must be used when traveling between the US and a foreign country or when available outside the US. Code share flights must be purchased through the US carrier and show the US carrier flight number. This requirement is not influenced by factors of cost, convenience, or personal travel preference.

Cancellation – Notify staff immediately if travel plans are cancelled or modified. Staff is required to send an official travel notification to the USDA FAS office located in the destination country prior to each event, and it must include an accurate manifest of mission personnel and their travel dates.

Check Visa Requirements – Countries such as China, India, and others require a visa for US travelers. Visa issuance may take considerable time, so check the destination country for visa requirements well in advance of travel. [Find visa services.](#)

Lodging – **Do not** book with hotel discounters or purchase agency travel packages. These will not provide the detailed hotel folio required by USDA FAS regulations (see Hotel Folio definition below).

No Meal Receipts – Meals are covered under a daily per diem rate set for each event city, so receipts need not be submitted. [Check meal per diem rates.](#)

Documents Required for Reimbursement

No later than 30 days following participation in a trade show, sales mission, or trade mission, the traveler must provide SPC with the following:

1. **Air Travel** – Since a copy of your airline ticket is required before you travel, we should already have this information on file. However, if you modified your itinerary or flights, you must let us know when it occurs. Change fees are not reimbursable. **Keep airline boarding passes.** These must be submitted with other receipts upon return and must match the airline ticket.
2. **Hotel Folio** – The hotel folio breaks down each day's expenses accrued at the hotel. A credit card statement or hotel reservation is not acceptable. Most hotels issue a folio at checkout, but if not provided, it is the traveler's responsibility to request one at departure. The actual hotel room charge will be reimbursed, up to the per diem amount. [Check lodging per diem rates.](#)
3. **Ground Transportation** – This includes mission-related taxis, shuttles, trains, subways, and the like. Location of origin and final destination must be written on each receipt. Rental vehicles are not reimbursable.
4. **Communications** – Per FAS rules, reimbursement for telephone/Internet charges is \$15.00 per hotel night with valid documentation from the hotel folio, cell phone bill, etc. In-flight internet costs are not reimbursable.
5. **Miscellaneous** – Document personal vehicle mileage to/from home airport with a Google maps printout. Submit the original airport parking receipt.
6. **Post-Trip Reports** – After each event, each traveler will be provided a travel template and the Event Evaluation and Matching Funds forms that must be completed and returned to finalize the reimbursement paperwork. ALL expenses and post-trip reporting must be received no later than 30 days following the eligible travel dates. Reports received after 60 days are not guaranteed to be reimbursed.
7. All expenses are subject to an after-the-fact audit by FAS compliance auditors. Expenses may be disallowed after the fact if they do not adhere to guidelines and regulations. Any traveler whose expenses are disallowed by the FAS audit will be liable for the amount that is not allowed.

SFPA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

[FAS Non-Discrimination Policy](#) [FAS Accessibility Statement](#)