

# Frequent Flyer Programs



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*The information provided in this document is meant for the sole use of Active Duty service members, retirees, their families, and other personnel eligible for legal assistance from the Space Base Delta 1 Legal Office. The information is general in nature and meant only to provide a brief overview of various legal matters. Rights and responsibilities vary widely according to the particular set of circumstances in each case. Laws can vary across states, services, and civilian jurisdictions and laws change from time to time. Do not rely upon the general restatements of background information presented here without discussing your specific situation with a legal professional.*

## **FREQUENT FLYER PROGRAMS**

### **What Are My Rights and Responsibilities?**

A traveler on official business traveling at Government expense on the funds of the Air Force or another agency may keep promotional material (including frequent traveler benefits such as points or miles, upgrades, or access to carrier clubs or facilities) for personal use. The promotional material must be obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and must be at no additional Government cost. Promotional items received for travel using funds other than those of an agency are not covered by this rule. Travelers should seek guidance from those funding authorities.

### **What If I Get A Bonus or Discount Ticket?**

Bonus or discount tickets received by members or employees as a result of trips paid for by both appropriated and personal funds while on official travel may be retained by travelers for personal use. The promotional material must be obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and must be at no additional cost.

### **What Can I Do With Mileage I Accumulate on Official Travel?**

Members can voluntarily participate in frequent flyer programs while on official travel and keep frequent traveler benefits.

### **Can I Upgrade My Seat?**

On-the-spot upgrades may be accepted if they meet the gift exceptions. A service member may accept if it is generally available to the public, all Federal employees, or all military members. One cannot accept upgrades if offered because of a traveler's rank or official position. Furthermore, a service member cannot accept an upgrade while traveling in uniform; wearing a uniform will create the public perception of misuse of government travel.

### **What Happens When I Get "Bumped" Off A Flight?**

**INVOLUNTARILY:** If a traveler is involuntarily denied boarding on flight, compensation for the denied seat belongs to the Government.

**VOLUNTARILY:** If you are voluntarily bumped while on official business, you can keep the vouchers; additional benefits are not allowed to be claimed when volunteering to give up a seat. Likewise, you must pay any added expenses and take regular leave if your delay causes you to arrive late at your appointed place of duty. This voluntary surrender and the resulting delay should be reported on the travel voucher. Such voluntary delays must never be permitted to interfere with the TDY mission.

### **What About Rebates I Get From Credit Cards?**

Cash or credit rebates from personal credit cards used on official travel are not the property

of the Federal Government and may be accepted.

**What If the Airline Lost My Luggage?**

A traveler may keep payments from a commercial carrier for accompanied baggage that has been lost or delayed by the carrier. If the traveler intends to make a claim against the Government, the traveler should see the Claims Office prior to accepting a carrier's compensation. By accepting the carrier's compensation, the traveler may be accepting that amount as payment in full.