



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
2000 NAVY PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-2000

OPNAVINST 7220.13  
N130  
20 Dec 2005

OPNAV INSTRUCTION 7220.13

From: Chief of Naval Operations

Subj: MILITARY PER DIEM RATES

Ref: (a) 37 U.S.C. 404  
(b) Joint Federal Travel Regulations, Volume 1

Encl: (1) Units Designated for Essential Unit Messing

1. Purpose. Clarifies policy and procedures under which essential unit messing or secretarial-determined reduced per diem may be authorized.

2. Cancellation. This OPNAV Instruction supersedes SECNAVINST 7220.66C. The SECNAV Instruction was cancelled under a separate cancellation memo.

3. Background. This instruction is a complete revision of previous policy and should be reviewed in its entirety. References (a) and (b) authorize and prescribe certain circumstances under which authorized per diem rates may be reduced. Enclosure (1) provides a list of units designated for essential unit messing. The most common circumstances are listed below. For purposes of this instruction, only essential unit messing and secretarial-determined reduced per diem will be addressed.

a. Field Duty. Reference (b) paragraph U4102-L prohibits payment of per diem to members for duty characterized as field duty, as defined in JFTR, appendix A.

b. Duty on a Government Vessel. Reference (b) paragraph U4102-J prevents a member from receiving per diem for any period of temporary duty (TDY), temporary additional duty (TAD) or training duty aboard a government vessel when both government mess and quarters are available.

c. Members Traveling Together. Reference (b) paragraph U4000 permits several members traveling from the same point to the same destination to travel as a group from the time the member departs permanent duty station (PDS), while traveling, until arrival at TDY/TAD station (with the reverse upon return).

Per diem and actual expenses are not payable when in group travel status. However, if meals and quarters are not available, reimbursement is authorized for occasional meals and quarters under JFTR paragraph U4510.

d. Essential Unit Messing. Reference (b) paragraph U4163 prohibits payments of the meals portion of per diem to members when duty requirements make Government messing essential to the accomplishment of training and readiness, as determined by the Secretary of the Navy. That authority is delegated and implemented below.

e. Secretarial-Determined Reduced Per Diem. Reference (b), paragraph U4177 provides that the Secretary of the Navy may authorize zero per diem or a reduced rate of per diem on a case by case basis in advance of TAD or TDY when the circumstances of the travel or duty to be performed so warrant and are peculiar to the Navy.

4. Scope. The provisions of this instruction are applicable to all uniformed Navy members.

5. Discussion. Per Diem rates and actual expense reimbursement rates statistically represent average travel costs to the locality involved with the maximum limits set by law. Arbitrary reduction in those rates violates the provisions of references (a) and (b) and is patently unfair to members who would personally have to defray legitimate travel expenses above the amount reimbursable under the reduced rates.

a. Budget pressures routinely focus attention on reduction of TAD or TDY travel costs. Reducing the per diem rate paid to members within an individual command below authorized rates is not an appropriate means of effecting desired savings.

b. When command funds are insufficient to cover programmed travel, a reduction in travel, not reimbursements, is the proper course of action.

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## 6. Guidelines for Essential Unit Messing Designation

a. Essential unit messing may be required in a command, organization, or unit when it will:

(1) Enhance military readiness (e.g., the conduct of a military operation); or

(2) is necessary for the effective conduct of training

b. Military Readiness. Unit messing is required to enhance operational readiness or the conduct of military operations. Designation for essential unit messing will be applied only to established organizational units and to operational elements and detachments, not to groups or individuals or to individual service members.

(1) Organizational Units. Any military unit whose structure is prescribed by competent authority, such as a table of organization and equipment (TOE), and is specifically part of an organization.

(2) Operational Elements/Detachments. A part of a unit formed from its main organization on a temporary basis and established for a specific operational purpose for duty apart from its main organization.

c. Training. Unit messing is essential when it must occur during training, rather than during administrative time, because of an unusually high tempo of training/operations precludes normal administrative breaks or, when it is in itself, a significant part of the training. Justification must demonstrate clearly one of these rationales.

(1) Unit Training Time. A period of time when unit members are not authorized the discretion of leaving the area of training, operations, or the dining area, because of training requirements, or because the feeding process itself is a significant part of the unit's training. Movement to the messing facility may be in units or individually.

(2) Unit Administrative Time. A period of time when unit members are authorized the discretion of leaving the area of training or operations, or the dining area, during scheduled

feeding because of no operational or training requirement for their presence.

d. Members TAD or TDY to a unit listed in enclosure (1) as an essential unit mess are not entitled to the basic allowance for subsistence (BAS) and are not entitled to the meal portion of per diem because they are provided subsistence at no cost by the government.

#### 7. Guidelines for Secretarial-Determined Reduced Rate Per Diem

a. A specified reduced per diem rate may be authorized for a specific travel order when the nature or duty is such that full per diem rates will over-reimburse for the normal and necessary expenses of that travel or duty. The reduced rate authorized in such instances must be set to reimburse fully for the normal and necessary expenses of such travel or duty. Reduced per diem will never be authorized for the purpose of reducing travel costs.

b. A reduced rate for per diem may be based only on the following two criteria:

(1) the travel costs are below the per diem rate for the locale or,

(2) the circumstances of the duty to be performed at the locality involved are below the prescribed per diem rate (e.g., tuition includes meals).

c. Designation for a reduced per diem rate may be applied to individuals or to groups of individuals whose travel expenses are known to be the same. The reduced per diem must be specified in advance based on known travel expenses and applied only to a specific set of temporary duty orders. No blanket authority may be given. A minimum of 60 days for processing of request is recommended.

#### 8. Designation Procedures

a. The Chief of Naval Operations will approve the designation of units for essential unit messing and will set Secretarial-determined reduced rates of per diem.

b. Requests for essential unit messing or Secretarial-determined reduced per diem should be sent Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education) for

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Navy units via the appropriate chain of command.

c. Requests must provide full justification based on the guidelines in paragraphs 5 and 6.

9. Entitlements Approval. The entitlements portion of this instruction has been reviewed by the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee per Section E1 of DOD Directive 5154.29 of 9 March 1993.

/s/

J. C. HARVEY, JR.  
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy  
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations  
(Manpower, Personnel, Training,  
and Education)

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UNITS DESIGNATED FOR ESSENTIAL UNIT MESSING

1. Deployed Naval Construction Battalions
2. Personnel assigned to student UICs and Navy Class "A" Schools.
3. Students attending:
  - a. Naval Technical Training Center Detachment, Lackland AFB, TX (UIC 35419).
  - b. Field Medical Service School.
    - (1) Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, CA (UIC 65988).
    - (2) Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, NC (UIC 65987).
  - c. AEGIS training unit, AEGIS Combat Systems Training Center, Wallops Island, VA (UIC 41968).
  - d. Naval School of Explosive Ordnance Disposal.
    - (1) Indian Head, MD (UIC 30446).
    - (2) Eglin AFB, FL (UIC 47355).
    - (3) Panama City, FL (UIC 30631).
  - e. Naval Construction Training Center.
    - (1) Port Hueneme, CA (UIC 30633).
    - (2) Gulfport, MS (UIC 31168).