



United States  
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Agriculture

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Business Services

Information  
Technology Division

Riverdale, MD  
20737

To: All APHIS Employees

June 3, 2016

From: Gary S. Washington  
APHIS Chief Information Officer

Subject: Foreign Travel Requirements and Taking Government Furnished  
Equipment (GFE) on Travel

This memo provides interim guidance and requirements for taking government furnished equipment (GFE) on international (referred to as foreign) travel. Foreign travel, whether for business or pleasure, poses additional risks to mobile technology being utilized while on travel status. In response to recent events, including the OPM data breach, we must be more vigilant in protecting ourselves and our equipment. Also, users must be aware and understand that when they are on foreign travel, they are subject to the laws of the visited country. In many countries, there is no expectation of privacy and wireless devices (e.g. laptops, tablets, and mobile phones) are particularly vulnerable to interception and malware infection. In the coming months USDA will be providing additional guidance on foreign travel requirements. In the meantime USDA has recommended agencies provide this interim foreign travel guidance to all of their employees and contractors.

**For any employee or contractor that possesses a Top Secret/Special Compartmental Information (TS/SCI) clearance and travels to a foreign country for business or pleasure:**

1. You must report foreign travel to the APHIS Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) as follows:
  - a. Foreign travel must be reported in advance of departure via electronic form to the Information Security Branch (ISB) Security Management Team at [isb.security.management.team@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:isb.security.management.team@aphis.usda.gov);
    - i. The form can be found under *APHIS Forms* at: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/wps/portal/aphis/resources/forms>;
    - ii. This form is currently being updated. However, until the revisions are complete, please use the existing form. You may omit entering any part of your SSN and disregard the instructions on the top of the form until it is updated to be APHIS specific.
  - b. See below for the requirements that you must follow for taking any GFE such as a laptop, tablet, iPad, or mobile phone on any business or personal foreign travel;



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- c. Foreign travel threat briefings are available from the USDA Office of Homeland Security (OHSEC) Personnel and Documents Security Division (PDSO) or the APHIS Emergency Management Safety and Security Division (EMSSD), Emergency Management and Homeland Security Branch;
  - i. if you select APHIS EMSSD, please contact Jim Orr at [james.e.orr@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:james.e.orr@aphis.usda.gov) for additional information;
- d. For some destinations, threat briefings are required (for example: China, Russia, and other U.S. State Department watch-list countries).

For any employee or contractor that possesses a **Top Secret (TS), Secret (S), or Confidential (C), or you do not possess a clearance**, reporting official or personal foreign travel is voluntary, but encouraged. However, the requirements shown below for taking GFE on any foreign travel still applies. If you wish to report your foreign travel, follow the process delineated in 1(a) above. If you wish to receive a foreign travel safety and security briefing, please follow 1(c) above.

**Requirements for taking GFE on travel:**

1. For **official foreign or domestic travel** the employee or contractor may take GFE if necessary; if any GFE is taken on foreign travel, see #3 below; domestic travel does not require additional precautions;
2. For **personal foreign or domestic travel**, no GFE such as a laptop, tablet, iPad, or mobile phone may be taken unless the employee's supervisor (or contractor's Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)) has approved such in writing and in advance. Prior to travel, the supervisor or COR must forward their approval via email along with the Foreign Travel Form described in 1(a) above (if the travel is to a foreign country) to the ISB Security Management Team at [isb.security.management.team@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:isb.security.management.team@aphis.usda.gov);
  - a. The traveler's phone number and/or computer machine name should be entered in the *Describe Travel* block of the Foreign Travel Form;
  - b. Exceptions include personnel whose job function (e.g. HPAI personnel, procurement or Public Affairs personnel) require they maintain their GFE at all times.
3. The ISB Security Management Team will coordinate with the APHIS Technical Assistance Center (ATAC) to ensure any equipment being taken out of the U.S. is properly configured and secured for foreign travel;
  - a. Mobile phones and iPads may be wiped and then reconfigured prior to and immediately upon return to work depending on the destination country;
  - b. Laptops and tablets will be checked for security posture and scanned prior to and immediately upon return to work;
  - c. Additional measures may be required for mobile phones and/or tablets and laptops when travelling to some countries (e.g. China, Russia, and other U.S. State Department watch-list countries).



Preparing a mobile phone or laptop for foreign travel may take up to a week. Please plan accordingly or you may not be able to travel with your equipment.

Should you have any questions or require more information, please contact the APHIS CISO, Michèle Thomas, at [michele.j.thomas@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:michele.j.thomas@aphis.usda.gov).

References:

1. Departmental Regulation 3170-001, *End User Workstation Configurations*, dated 05/12/2015
2. Departmental Regulation 3440-002, *Control and Protection of Sensitive Security Information*, dated 01/30/2003
3. Departmental Manual 3530-005 - *Encryption Standards*, dated 02/17/2005
4. Departmental Manual 3550-002, *Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) Information Protection*, dated 02/17/2005
5. Departmental Regulation 3580-003, *Mobile Computing*, dated 09/24/2013

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