

Use of United States Flag Air Carriers

From General Services Administration 41 CFR 301-3 and 301-10

301-10.131 What does United States mean?

For purposes of the use of United States flag air carriers, “United States,” means the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories and possessions of the United States (49 U.S.C. 40102).

301-10.132 Who is required to use a U.S. flag air carrier?

Anyone whose air travel is financed by U.S. Government funds, except as provided in 301-10.135, 301-10.136, and 301-10.137.

301-10.133 What is a U.S. flag air carrier?

An air carrier, which holds a certificate under 49 U.S.C. 41102 but does not include a foreign air carrier operating under a permit.

310-10.134 What is U.S. flag carrier service?

U.S. flag air carrier service is service provided on an air carrier, which holds a certificate, under 49 U.S.C. 41102 and which service is authorized either by the carrier’s certificate or by exemption or regulation. U.S. flag air carrier service also includes service provided under a code share agreement with a foreign air carrier in accordance with Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations when the ticket, or documentation for an electronic ticket, identifies the U.S. flag air carrier’s designator code and flight number.

301.10.135 When must I travel using U.S. flag air carrier service?

You are required by 49 U.S.C. 40118, commonly referred to as the “Fly America Act,” to use U.S. flag air carrier service for all air travel funded by the U.S. Government, except as provided in 301-10.136 and 301-10.137 or when one of the following exceptions applies:

- (a) Use of a foreign air carrier is determined to be a matter of necessity in accordance with 301-10.138; or
- (b) The transportation is provided under a bilateral or multilateral air transportation agreement to which the United States Government and the government of a foreign country are parties, and which the Department of Transportation has determined meets the requirements of the Fly America Act; or
- (c) You are an officer or employee of the Department of State, United States Information Agency, United States International Development Cooperation Agency, or the Arms Control Disarmament Agency, and your travel is paid with funds appropriated to one of these agencies, and your travel is between two places outside the United States; or
- (d) No U.S. flag air carrier provides service on a particular leg of the route, in which case foreign air carrier service may be used, but only to or from the nearest interchange point on a usually traveled route to connect with U.S. flag air carrier service; or
- (e) A U.S. flag air carrier involuntarily reroutes your travel on a foreign air carrier; or

- (f) Service on a foreign air carrier would be three hours or less, and use of the U.S. flag air carrier would at least double your en route travel time; or
- (g) When the costs of transportation are reimbursed in full by a third party, such as a foreign government, international agency, or other organization.
- (h) Use of United States Flag Air Carriers.doc.

301-10.136 What exceptions to the Fly America Act requirements apply when I travel between the United States and another country?

The exceptions are:

- (a) If a U.S. flag air carrier offers nonstop or direct service (no aircraft change) from your origin to your destination, you must use the U.S. flag air carrier service unless such use would extend your travel time, including delay at origin, by 24 hours or more.
- (b) If a U.S. flag air carrier does not offer nonstop or direct service (no aircraft change) between your origin and your destination, you must use a U.S. flag air carrier on every portion of the route where it provides service unless, when compared to using a foreign air carrier, such use would:
 - (1) Increase the number of aircraft changes you must make outside of the U.S. by 2 or more; or
 - (2) Extend your travel time by a least 6 hours or more; or
 - (3) Require a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point.

301-10.137 What exception to the Fly America Act requirements apply when I travel solely outside the United States, and a U.S. flag air carrier provides service between my origin and my destination?

You must always use a U.S. flag carrier for such travel, unless, when compared to using a foreign air carrier, such use would:

- (a) Increase the number of aircraft changes you must make en route by 2 or more; or
- (b) Extend your travel time by 6 hours or more; or
- (c) Require a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point.

301-10.138 In what circumstances is foreign air carrier service deemed a matter a necessity?

- (a) Foreign air carrier service is deemed a necessity when service by a U.S. flag air carrier is available, but
 - (1) Cannot provide the air transportation needed; or
 - (2) Will not accomplish the agency's mission.
- (b) Necessity includes, but is not limited to, the following circumstances:
 - (1) When the agency determines that use of a foreign air carrier is necessary for medical reasons, including use of foreign air carrier service to reduce the number of connections and possible delays in the transportation of persons in need of medical treatment; or

- (2) When use of a foreign air carrier is required to avoid an unreasonable risk to your safety and is approved by your agency (e.g., terrorist threats). Written approval of the use of foreign air carrier service based on an unreasonable risk to your safety must be approved by your agency on a case-by-case basis. An agency determination and approval of use of a foreign air carrier based on a threat against a U.S. flag air carrier must be supported by a travel advisory notice issued by the Federal Aviation Administration and the Department of State. An agency determination and approval of use of a foreign air carrier based on a threat against Government employees or other travelers must be supported by evidence of the threat(s) that form the basis of the determination and approval; or
- (3) When you cannot purchase a ticket in your authorized class of service on a U.S. flag air carrier, and a seat is available in your authorized class of service on a foreign air carrier.

301-10.139 May I travel by a foreign air carrier if the cost of my ticket is less than traveling by a U.S. flag air carrier?

No. Foreign air carrier service may not be used solely based on the cost of your ticket.

301-10.140 May I use a foreign air carrier if the service is preferred by or more convenient for my agency or me?

No. You must use U.S. flag air carrier service, unless you meet one of the exceptions in 301-10.135, 301-10.136, or 301-10.137 or unless foreign air carrier service is deemed a matter of necessity under 301-10.138.

301-10.141 Must I provide any special certification or documents if I use a foreign air carrier?

Yes, you must provide a certification, as required in 310-10.142 and any other documents required by your agency. Your agency cannot pay your foreign air carrier fare if you do not provide the required certification.

301-10.142 What must the certification include?

The certification must include:

- (a) Your name;
- (b) The dates that you traveled;
- (c) The origin and the destination of your travel;
- (d) A detailed itinerary of your travel, name of the air carrier and flight number for each leg of the trip; and
- (e) A statement explaining why you met one of the exceptions in 310-10.135, 301-10.136, or 301-10.137 or a copy of your agency's written approval that foreign air carrier service was deemed a matter of necessity in accordance with 301-10.138.

301-10.143 What is my liability if I improperly use a foreign air carrier?

You will not be reimbursed for any transportation cost for which you improperly use foreign air carrier service. If you are authorized by your agency to use U.S. flag air carrier service for your entire trip, and you improperly use a foreign air carrier for any part of or the entire trip (i.e., when not permitted under this regulation), your transportation cost on the foreign air carrier will not be payable by your agency. If your agency authorizes you to use U.S. flag air carrier service for part of your trip and foreign air carrier service for another part of your trip, and you improperly use a foreign carrier (i.e., when neither authorized to do so nor otherwise permitted under this regulation), your agency will pay the transportation cost on the foreign air carrier for only the portion(s) of the trip for which you were authorized to use foreign air carrier service. The agency must establish internal procedures for denying reimbursement to travelers when use of foreign air carrier was neither authorized nor otherwise permitted under this regulation.