How to Make Rail Reservations Using DTS

Introduction

The *Joint Travel Regulations (JTR), par. 020203* outlines the transportation types most advantageous to the Government. Per the *JTR, par. 020206-O.5*, travelers should use trains when the destination is less than 250 miles away and when cost effective and consistent with mission needs. Travelers must use economy or coach accommodations when booking travel by rail. Use of any other fare type requires the Authorizing Official's approval prior to travel.

This information paper provides the steps for making rail reservations in the Defense Travel System (DTS) with the help of the Travel Management Company (TMC) for a CONUS location. AMTRAK (the only approved DoD rail passenger carrier in the Continental US) does not post live train availability to the Defense Travel System (DTS), so DTS can only display a static list of scheduled departures.

In the authorization, a traveler searches for a train, then uses the **Request TMC Assistance** option to send the information to the TMC who books the rail request and finalizes the reservations. The TMC returns the Passenger Name Record (PNR) to DTS. The PNR updates and DTS displays the rail information with the AMTRAK car numbers, dates, times, and costs along with other booked reservations (e.g., lodging). Once the authorization is approved, the TMC tickets the rail requests 3 business days prior to departure.

See the *DTS Guide 2* for more information on processing DTS documents. Refer to your local business rules for OCONUS rail requirements.

*In this information paper, "you" refers to a traveler; however, the actions described also apply to anyone who creates documents for you, such as a Non-DTS Entry Agent or travel clerk.

Getting Started

Begin by logging into DTS.

1. From the **DTS Dashboard**, select **Create New Document** (Figure 1). The window expands. Select **Routine TDY Trip**.
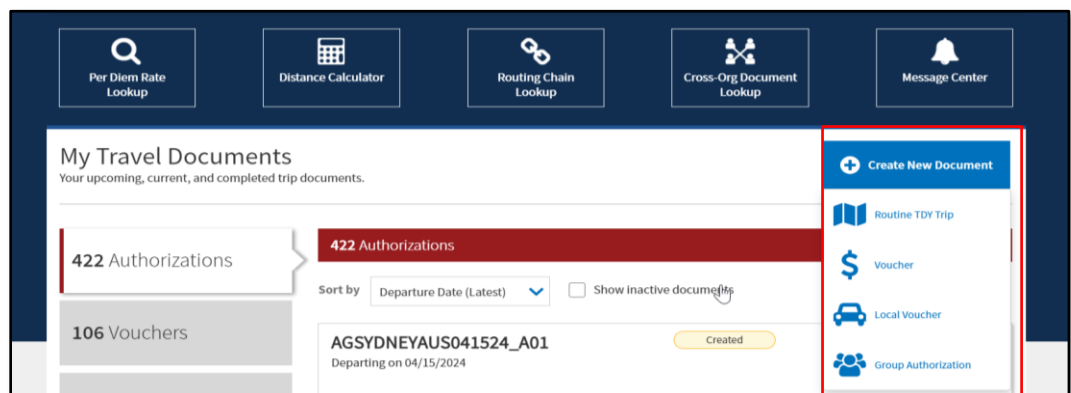

Figure 1: DTS Dashboard Screen

Getting Started *(continued)*

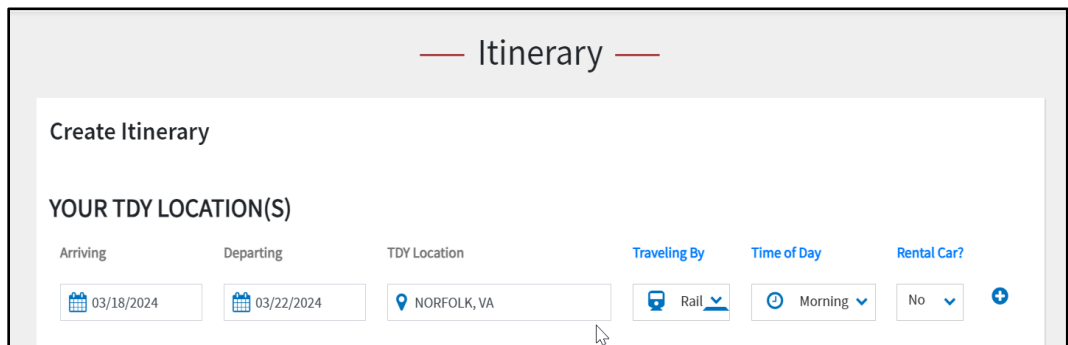2. The **Create Itinerary** page opens (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Create Itinerary Screen

   a. Under the **YOUR TDY LOCATIONS(S)** section:

      i. Enter your **Arriving** and **Departing** dates.

      ii. Enter your **TDY Location**.

      iii. Use the drop down menu to choose the **Traveling By** method. For this trip, select **Rail**.

      iv. Use the drop down menu to choose **Time of Day**.

      v. Use the drop down menu to choose **No** or **Yes** for **Rental Car**.

   b. Under the **TRIP OVERVIEW** section:

      i. Enter **Leaving On** and **Returning On** dates.

      ii. Choose the radio button or the **Leaving From** and **Returning To** locations.

      iii. The **Trip Duration** field populate after entering trip dates.

      iv. The **Returning By** field populates from the **Traveling By** selection.

      v. The **Time of Day** field populates.

   c. Under the **YOUR TRIP DETAILS** section:

      i. In the **Type** field **Routine TDY Trip** should appear**.**

      ii. In the **Purpose** field choose the reason for traveling. For this trip, select **Mission - Operational**.

      iii. (Optional) Enter comments into the **Description** field.

      iv. Under the **Conference/Event Name** area, select the radio button for either **Not attending a conference** or if attending a conference choose **Other** or the conference name, if in the list.

3. Select **Continue** to save the information.

Rail Reservations

When you create the itinerary with commercial rail as a transportation mode and save the data, DTS brings you to the **Reservations**, **Select a Train** page. DTS automatically searches for trains and tries displays the search results. **Note**: If you exit DTS and come back into document, you can add a new rail reservations by selecting **Review Reservation Selections** screen, then **Add to Trip** > **Add new rail.** DTS brings you to the **Select a Train** page.

Searching for trains works a little differently than flights. The airfare is *live* availability whereas, rail is a *static* listing, so it takes a few extra steps to book rail.

1. On the **Select a Train** page, in the **Departing From** location your residence information from your traveler profile appears (Figure 3). Change the data to reflect the nearest Amtrak location. Enter a city (e.g., Washington, DC) in the **Departing From** location and not the 3-digit Amtrak code (e.g., WAS for Union Station, Washington, DC).
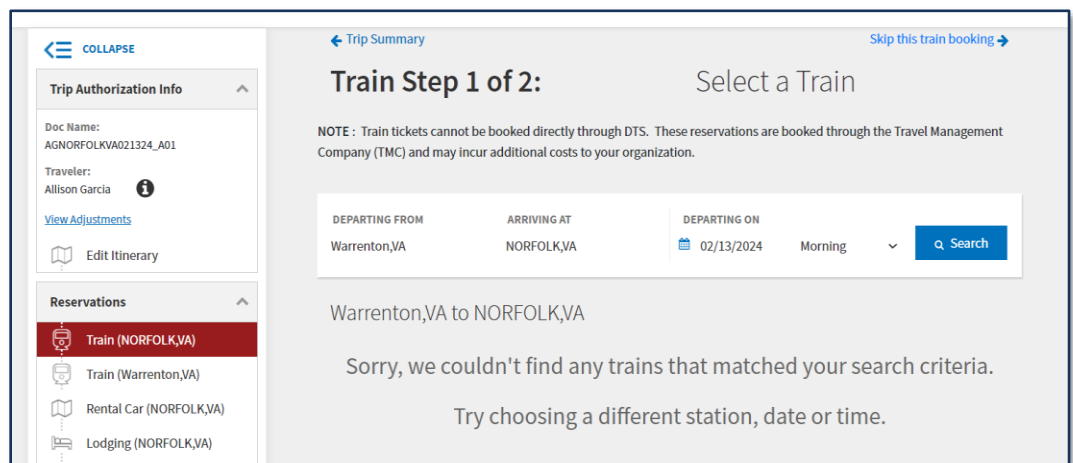

Figure 3: Train Step 1 of 2: Select a Train Screen

2. In the **Arriving At** location verify the arriving Amtrak location. Change the city, if needed.
3. The **Departing On** date is populated from the itinerary, so you don't need to enter the data.
4. Select either **Morning**, **Afternoon**, or **Evening** for departure time. **Note**: You may want to start with **Afternoon** first and then change to other times to search for trains.
5. Select **Search**. DTS searches for trains and returns the information (Figure 4).
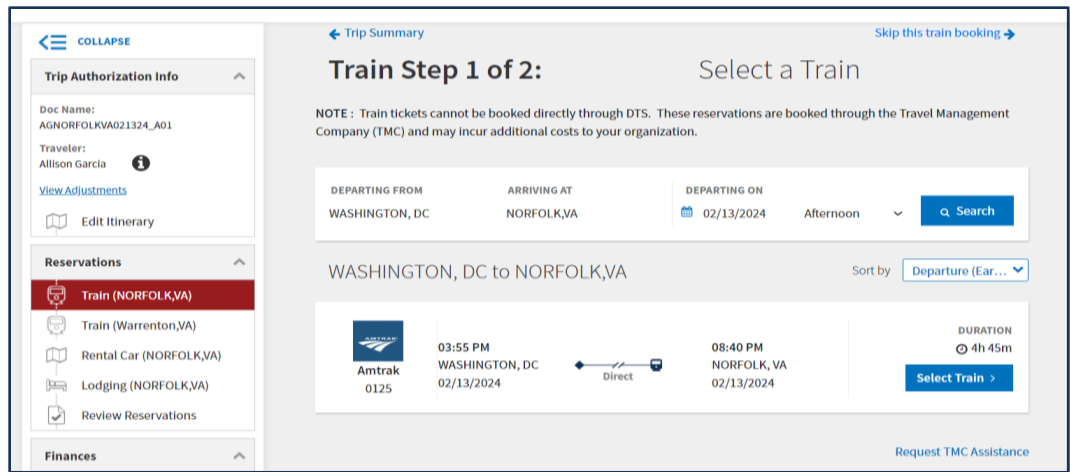
Rail Reservations *(continued)*

Figure 4: Train Step 1 of 2: Select a Train Screen (Updated)

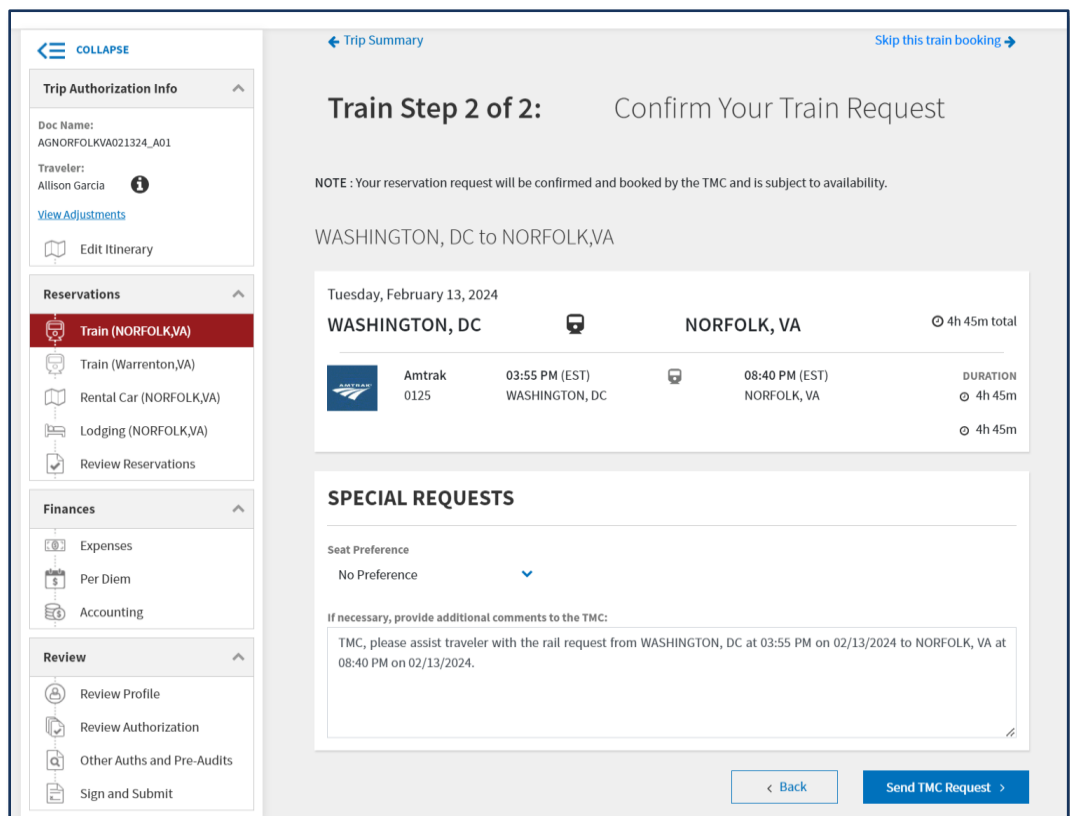6. Choose **Select Train**. The **Confirm Your Train Request** page displays (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Train Step 2 of 2: Confirm Your Train Request Screen

7. In the first section of the page, the Amtrak train number, departure and arrival locations, date, and time appear. There is no cost yet associated with the rail request.

8. In the second section of the page, the **Special Requests** displays.

Rail Reservations *(continued)*

    a. (Optional) Use the drop down menu to select **Seat Preference**.

    b. In the **TMC Comments** box don't remove the system generated comments. You can add additional comments, if needed.

9. At the bottom of the page, select **Send TMC Request** (Figure 5).

10. After you make the departure selection, you need to make the return. DTS should automatically display the **Select a Train** page (Figure 6). If it doesn't display the **Select a Train** page, go to the **Review Reservation Selections** screen and select **Add to Trip** > **Add new rail**. DTS brings you to the **Select a Train** page.

11. In the **DEPARTING FROM** location the city should display. You will need to change the **ARRIVING AT** from your residence location to the Amtrak location (e.g., Washington, DC).

12. Select either **Morning**, **Afternoon**, or **Evening** for departure time.

13. Select **Search**. DTS searches the database and if there is a train listed displays the information (Figure 6).
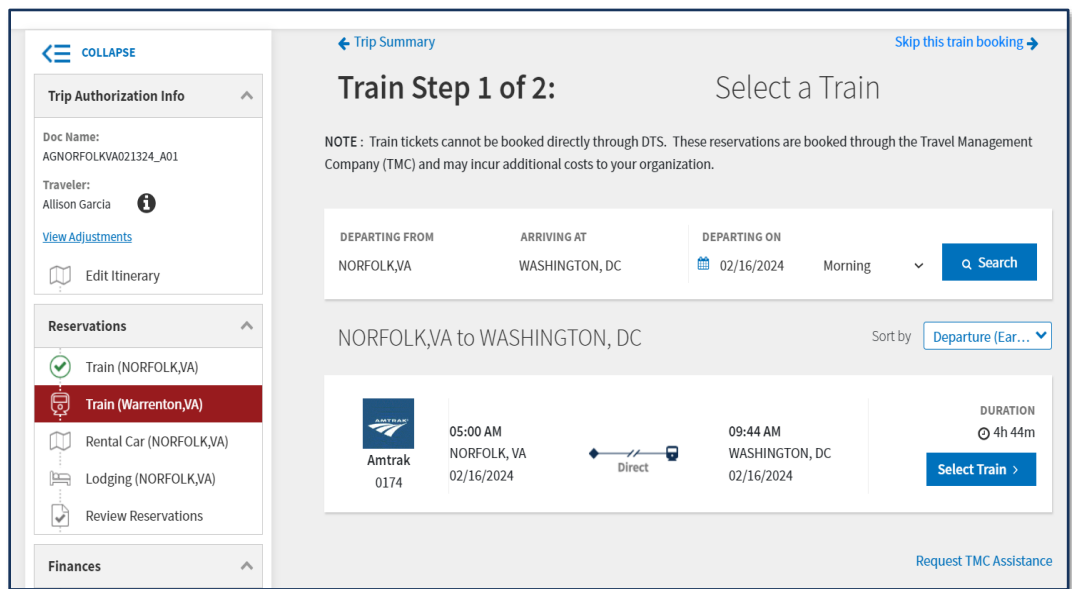

Figure 6: Train Step 1 of 2: Select a Train Screen

14. Choose **Select Train**. The **Confirm Your Train Request** page displays (Figure 7).

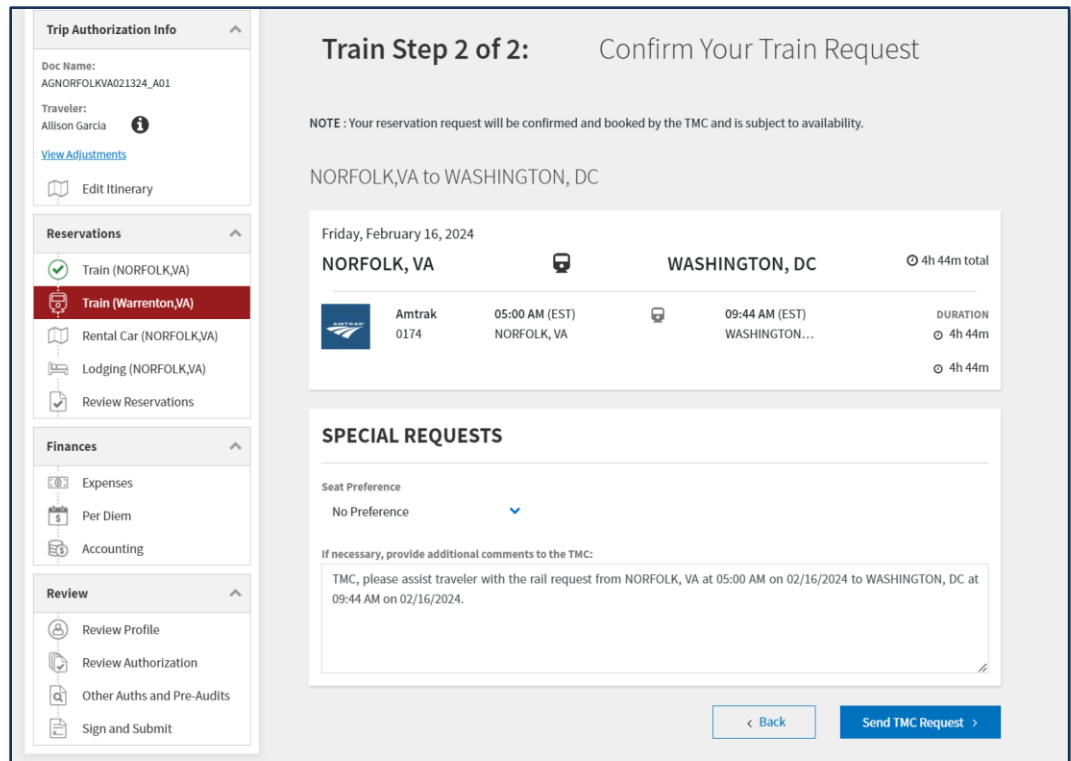**Rail Reservations** *(continued)*

Figure 7: Train Step 2 of 2: Confirm Your Train Screen

15. In the first section of the page, the Amtrak train number, departure and arrival locations, date, and time appear. There is <u>no cost</u> yet associated with the rail request.

16. In the second section of the page, the **Special Requests** displays.

    a. (Optional) Use the drop down menu to select **Seat Preference**.

    b. In the **TMC Comments** box don't remove the system generated comments. You can add additional comments, if needed.

17. At the bottom of the page, select **Send TMC Request** (Figure 7).

Additional Reservation Selections

After you complete the **Rail** request, you should make any additional reservations based upon policy and your travel needs (e.g., rental car (if approved), lodging).

1. **Rental Car** -

    a. If you indicated a rental car (i.e., **Create Itinerary**), DTS displays **Select A Rental Car** screen. DTS defaults to the closest airport for rental car pick up. When using rail as the travel mode to the TDY location, you may need to use TMC assistance to book an off airport rental. See the *DTS Guide 2* for more information on booking a rental car in DTS.

    b. If you didn't select **Rental Car**, DTS brings you to the **Select Lodging** screen.

2. **Lodging** -

a. Based upon policy, DTS displays the lodging options on the **Select Lodging** screen. The default listing is by **TDY Location**, but you can change the search.

b. Book your lodging according to the *JTR* and your travel needs. See the *DTS Guide 2* for more information on booking lodging in DTS.

Review Reservation Selections

View the reservation requests to verify your choices meet your travel needs. To do so, on the **Progress Bar**, select **Review Reservations.** The **Review Reservations Selections** page appears. The top part of the page provides **Trip Details** including **Trip Type**, **Dates**, **DTS/TMC Confirmation ID** or Passenger Name Record (PNR) locator number(s), and **Lodging Cancellation History** if applicable (Figure 8).
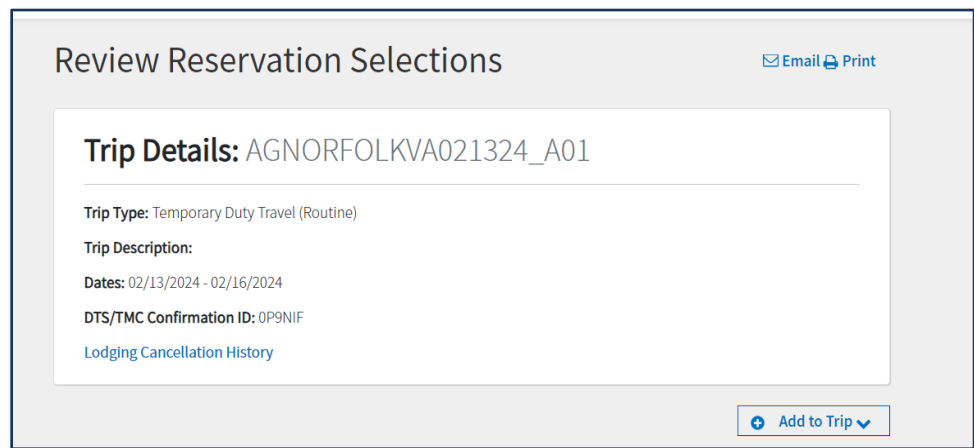

Figure 8: Review Reservations Selections Screen

- Select **Add to Trip** if you need to search for and book additional reservations (Figure 8). Make the selections and return to the **Review Reservations Selections** page.

The next section displays your reservation selections (Figure 9). From this screen you can:

- Select **Book** to return to the **Reservations** module and make a new reservation (Figure 9). In this example, the traveler didn't book a **Rental Car**.
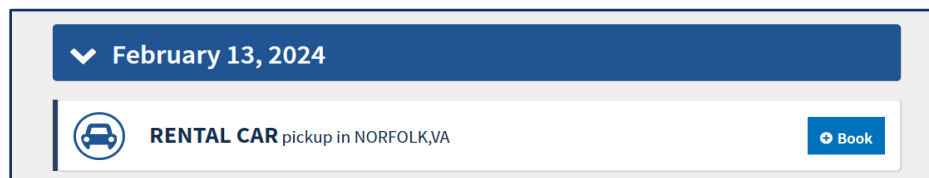

Figure 9: Review Reservations Selections Screen (Continued)

- View the reservation details (Figure 10 and Figure 11).

**Review
Reservation
Selections
*(continued)***

o Notice in Figure 10, for **Lodging** DTS displays **Booked,** the **Confirmation Number**, **Daily Cost**, and **Estimated Total** (Lodging) **Cost** along with other hotel specfic details.

Figure 10: Review Reservations Selections Screen (Continued)

o Notice in Figure 11 and Figure 12 for **Rail**, the departing train is first followed by the return train request. DTS displays **Pending**, there is <u>no</u> **Confirmation Number**, and the **Total Cost** is zero. The request is awating **TMC Assistance.**

Review Reservation Selections *(continued)*

Figure 11: Review Reservations Selections Screen (Continued)

Figure 12: Review Reservations Selections Screen (Continued)

- **Cancel** incorrect reservations (Figure 12). You can remove an item, by selecting the **red Cancel** (Reservation type) link. Make a new reservation and then return to the **Review Reservations Selections** page to check the inforamtion.

Review Reservation Selections *(continued)*

The bottom of the **Review Reservations Selections** page provides the **SUMMARY OF TRIP COSTS** (Figure 13). The **Estimated Trip Cost** information will change after you add expenses, and after the **TMC** works the reservations and the PNR information updates in DTS (**CTO BOOKED** stamp).
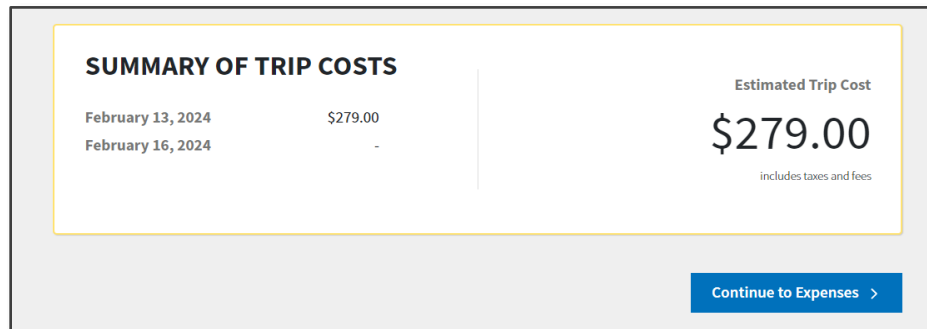
SUMMARY OF TRIP COSTS

		Estimated Trip Cost
February 13, 2024	$279.00	**$279.00**
February 16, 2024	-	includes taxes and fees

Continue to Expenses >

Figure 13: Review Reservations Selections Screen (Continued)

Finalizing the Authorization

Once you complete the reservations, you finalize the authorization using the standard process. See *DTS Guide 2* for more details on processing authorizations.

1. Enter estimated expenses. At the bottom of the **Review Reservations Selections** page select **Continue to Expenses** or on the **Progress Bar**, select **Expenses**. On the **Enter Expenses** page, you can **Add** estimated expenses.

    If you need attach documents or receipts here are the steps depending upon the type of material (e.g., memo, leave forms, receipts).

    a. On the **Enter Expenses** page, select **Add** and the **Add New** window appears.

    b. In the **Expense Category** window, choose **Documents**. Select the appropriate document type such as a **Contructed Travel Worksheet** (e.g., CTW) or **Memo**.

    c. Select **Attach Document**.

    d. Enter **Notes**.

    e. Select **Add**.

    OR

    a. On the **Enter Expenses** page, select **Details** to attach a record or reciept to an entered **Expense**.

    b. **Browse** for or drag and drop to include an attachment.

    c. Select **Details** again to close the window.

2. View the **Per Diem** table. Edit the appropriate lodging row, if you have leave or other items affecting your lodging and M&IE amounts.

3. (Optional) View **Accounting**. Select **Add** LOA to choose a line of accounting for the trip based upon your local business rules.

4. Select the **Reivew Trip Authorization** page. Check the information and then proceed.

Finalizing the Authorization *(continued)*

5. Review the **Other Auths and Pre-Audit** page. Justify any flags and add comments were appropriate.

6. Continue to **Sign and Submit** page. The **Digital Signature** screen opens. View the information.

   a. Under **DOCUMENT STATUS**, check the box next to, I agree to **SIGN** this document.

   b. (Optional) **Add Comments** to the AO.

   c. Select **Submit Completed Document** to attach the displayed stamp. Unless DTS detects a problem with the document, it provides a successful message.

   Note: Reservation requests go to the TMC first before the document routes for approval.

Monitoring the Authorization

Once you **SIGN** the authorization, you need montior your trip.

Begin by logging into DTS.

1. From the DTS **Dashboard**, under **My Travel Documents**, locate the authorization.

2. To view the document, go to the **Reivew Trip Authorization** page. Verify TMC action:

   a. **Under Trip Details for**: Review the **Comments From Travel Agent** (Figure 14).The TMC tyically provides the details below, but is based upon your specific TMC contract.

      i. Rail ticket cost.

      ii. Information on ticketing and ticket by date to prevent loss of reservations.
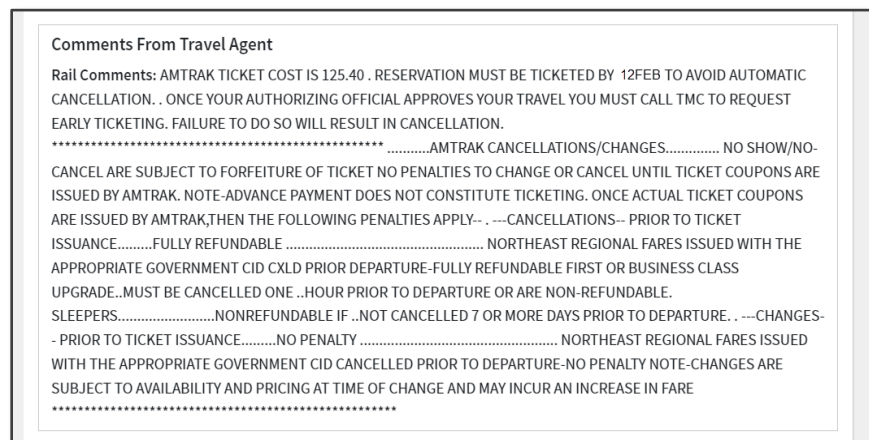
      iii. Amtrak cancellations and changes rules.

Figure 14: Review Trip Authorization Screen (TMC Comments)

   b. Under the **TDY Location 1,** DTS reflects the following (Figure 15):

      i. The *staus bubble* Rail Booked.

      ii. The **Confirmation Number**, **Amtrak Car Number** (e.g., 0125), and **Estimated Total Cost.**

Monitoring the Authorization *(continued)*

iii. The TMC books the round trip travel and PNR udpates information in DTS. DTS displays **Estimated Total Cost** displays on the first **Train** segment row.
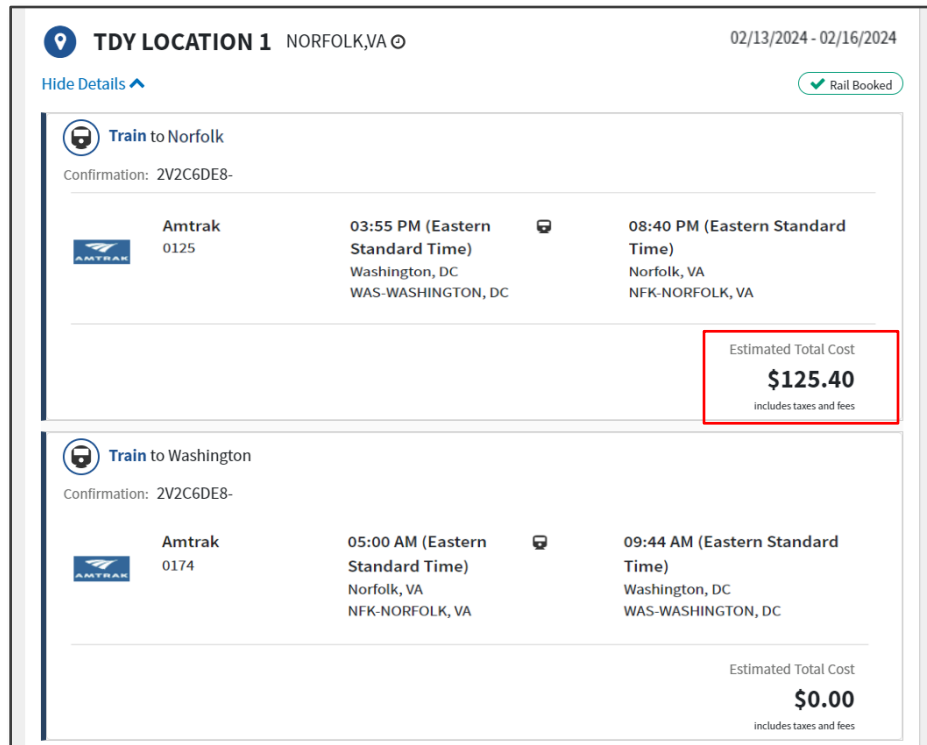

Figure 15: Review Trip Authorization Screen (Rail Cost Displays)

c. Under the **Reservation Expenses** section, the **Train** information appears (Figure 16). If the cost is $75.00 or more, DTS idicates **Receipt Required** along with date, payment method, and costs on the rail row.
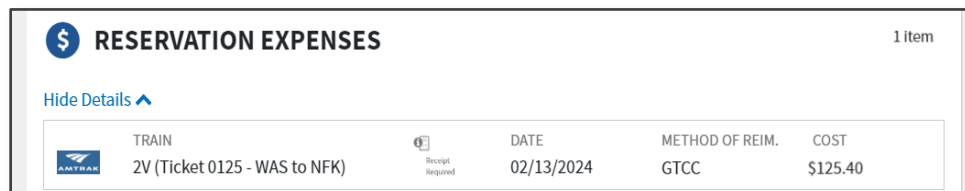

Figure 16: Review Trip Authorization Screen (Reservation Expenses)

3. View the **Digital Signature** page for the **CTO BOOKED** stamp (Figure 17).

a. You should see following stamps **CREATED**, **SIGNED**, **CTO SUBMIT** and **CTO BOOKED**.
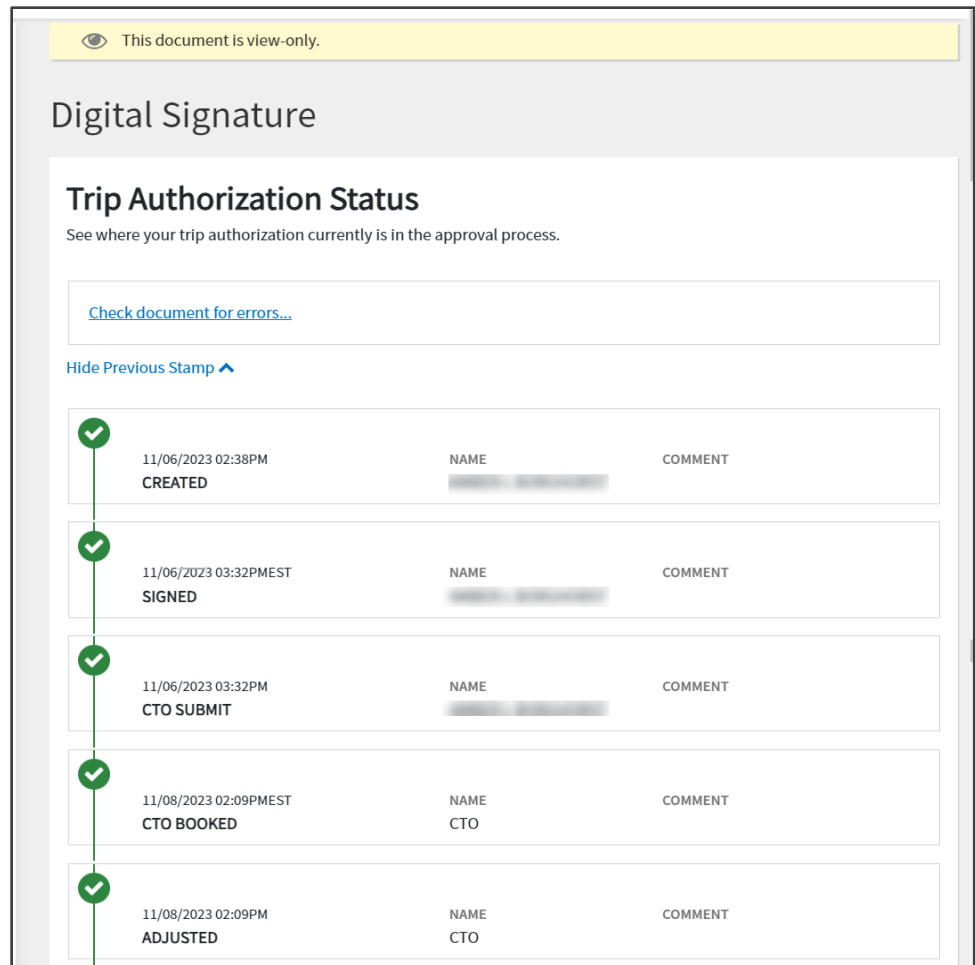
Monitoring the Authorization *(continued)*

Figure 17: Review Reservations Selections Screen (Continued)

4. Later, check your document for Authorizing Official (AO) action.

   a. View the **Digital Signature** page for the **APPROVED** stamp.

   b. Reach out to the AO, if you are close to the departure date and your authorization is not yet **APPROVED**.

5. Check your document for the TMC action. After your document is **APPROVED** and three business days prior to travel, the TMC tickets the reservations. **Note**: Unapproved documents with reservations are subject to reservation cancellation.

   a. View the **Digital Signature** page for the **CTO AMENDMENT** stamp. **Note**: Your document may reflect **CTO BOOKED** again instead of **CTO TICKETED** for Rail documents.

   b. Verify you receive the TMC email with a copy of the invoice.

   c. Retain the TMC invoice for voucher purposes.

References

The DTMO website provides several travel resources. To see the full list, go to the main *Training* page and search the *Training Search Tool*. Below are some references:

- DTS Guide 2: https://media.defense.gov/2022/May/11/2002995241/-1/-1/0/DTS_Guide_2_Authorizations.PDF

- DTS Guide 3: https://media.defense.gov/2022/May/11/2002995240/-1/-1/0/DTS_GUIDE_3_VOUCHER.PDF

- Trifold - Update Authorization: https://media.defense.gov/2022/May/13/2002996882/-1/-1/0/UPDATINGITINERARYAUTH.PDF

- Trifold - Update Voucher: https://media.defense.gov/2022/May/13/2002996883/-1/-1/0/UPDATINGITINERARYVOU.PDF