

GOVERNMENT CARGO RECOVERY EFFORT (GOCARE) WORLDWIDE  
GUIDELINES

1. GENERAL:

a. The purpose of this booklet is to:

- (1) Emphasize the policy for the success of the Government Cargo Recovery Effort (GOCARE), formerly known as the DOD/GSA Joint Astray Cargo Program;
- (2) Define the responsibilities and regulatory obligations for all participants;
- (3) Establish procedures for contact between GOCARE committee members (CM) and carriers;
- (4) Specify the procedures for handling astray freight and
- (5) Convey general information concerning carrier initiatives, property identification numbers, foreign military sales and legal considerations.

b. Astray freight shipments are costly to both the government and the carrier industry. They cost the government the use and value of its property and cost carriers time and money in terms of claims administration and occupied storage space. These guidelines provide commercial carriers with a point of contact, i.e., Transportation Officer (TO) or GOCARE CMs, and outlines procedures for resolving astray freight issues.

2. POLICY:

The success of the GOCARE program depends upon maintaining a strong, cooperative link between the government and the carrier industry. While the government has the obligation and right to independently verify the existence of astray freight, it also recognizes that the carrier industry is law-abiding, ethical, and conscientious. The emphasis of GOCARE is, and must be, non-adversarial. Everyone involved with GOCARE should ensure the program receives the highest visibility throughout the supply and transportation arenas. Awareness of the program's positive results provides a basis for the much-needed support of commanding officers, as well as transportation and supply personnel throughout the Department of Defense (DOD).

3. RESPONSIBILITIES:

Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), Fort Eustis, VA is the program manager for the DOD GOCARE program. GOCARE is administered in accordance with Chapter 209; paragraph C, of DOD 4500.9-R, Defense Transportation Regulation (DTR) Part II, Cargo Movement. The GOCARE committee members (CM) are the primary link between the government and the carrier industry. The continued success and improvement of the program depends upon the mutual cooperation between carriers and CMs. Participation as a committee member is an additional duty. Supervisors should be made aware of this and ensure the GOCARE participants are allowed the necessary time and means to perform these duties in a manner beneficial to the government. GOCARE CM and Chairpersons (CP) should receive appropriate recognition for their accomplishments.

a. GOCARE COMMITTEE MEMBERS will:

- (1) Serve as part of a GOCARE committee, responsible for covering a specific geographical area;
- (2) Serve as the principal point of contact between carrier representatives and the United States Government for all astray/frustrated cargo problems or questions. Establish a rapport with all local air, bus, motor, rail, and water carrier terminal managers to encourage each carrier's full participation in GOCARE;
- (3) Ensure the delivery and posting of an approved GOCARE poster in each assigned carrier terminal or warehouse and request additional posters from the CP;
- (4) Contact assigned locations on a quarterly basis, either in person or by telephone. Upon notification that a carrier has frustrated or astray government property, CMs will verify the ownership, provide a receipt to the terminal manager and make arrangements to forward the shipment to a government location. Ensure carrier(s) obtain the appropriate documentation to secure payment for all services rendered. CMs will document all calls and visits for ready reference and future use and prepare a monthly report to the CP;
- (5) Identify property and contact carrier, consignee, consignor, item manager, or other personnel to obtain appropriate documentation and disposition instructions for freight shipments. Arrange with carrier or local ITO/TMO for delivery of any recovered property;

(6) Develop appropriate freight forwarding procedures in accordance with paragraph 5 of this handbook;

(7) Record all available information for each located shipment utilizing SF 361, Transportation Discrepancy Report (TDR), in accordance with DOD 4500.9-R, Defense Transportation Regulation, Part II, Cargo Movement. Send the original to MTMC Operations Center and information copies to the committee chairperson and appropriate carrier. Keep one copy in CM file;

(8) Attend CM meetings hosted by CP as well as attending other transportation and traffic management meetings, seminars and training classes;

(9) Submit local travel funding requests for inclusion in the annual installation/activity budget planning process to permit performance of required duties.

b. COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS WILL:

(1) Supervise and coordinate actions of assigned GOCARE CMs and assign them carrier terminals and warehouses. Provide this information to the MTMC Operations Center annually NLT 15 May;

(2) Provide an updated listing of all CMs to MTMC-OPS annually NLT 15 February;

(3) Provide reporting procedure guidance to CMs. Monitor CM reporting and provide assistance and training as necessary. Provide all CMs information on training opportunities for continued professional and personal growth;

(4) Provide a quarterly status report to MTMC Operations Center/MTDC-OPCL, not later than the 15th of the month following each quarter. Reports will include:

(a) Number of carrier facilities visited/called by each CM;

(b) Number of astray shipments located;

(c) Actual or estimated value of shipments located.

(d) Indicate any non-participating CMs.

(5) Attend or insure representation at the annual Chairperson meeting held by the MTMC Operations Center;

(6) Conduct periodic meetings with all assigned CMs. (Meetings should be held at least semiannually.) Prepare minutes or a summary of each meeting and retain as part of the committee's historical documents;

(7) Encourage CMs to attend loss and damage mini-freight workshops held in their geographical area;

(8) Recommend the inclusion of adequate funding in the annual installation/activity budget planning process to permit holding semiannual committee meetings;

(9) Address problems and requests for assistance to the MTMC Operations Center, as necessary.

c. MTMC OPERATIONS CENTER will:

(1) Evaluate the functioning, effectiveness and accomplishments of the GOCARE program;

(2) Provide assistance and training to all GOCARE participants, as necessary. Schedule staff assistance visits to GOCARE locations to ensure success and advancement of the program. Prepare and retain reports of each visit as part of the GOCARE historical documents;

(3) Review and analyze all GOCARE reports, identify trends or weaknesses and determine corrective actions;

(4) Inform CPs of program requirements, changes, accomplishments and problems;

(5) Host an annual meeting with the CPs or their representatives. Prepare minutes or a summary of each meeting and retain as part of the MTMC Operations Center historical documents;

(6) Schedule necessary site visits to ensure continued success and support of the program;

(7) Review GOCARE trend analyses and provide recommendations for corrective actions as necessary;

(8) Assist in the training and development of GOCARE members;

(9) Recommend changes in the GOCARE program.

4. PROCEDURES FOR CONTACTING CARRIERS:

a. Telephone contacts:

(1) When personal visits are impractical, initiate telephone contact with a carrier to ascertain the existence of astray freight. Telephone contact to ascertain the existence of astray freight may be combined with other routine calls to a carrier, but should be documented separately;

(2) The CP should set minimum guidance. Telephone contacts may be made as frequently as the CM deems appropriate, consistent with the cooperative spirit of the GOCARE program;

(3) A visit isn't required if a carrier telephonically indicates the possession of astray government cargo and provides sufficient information from the outside container markings to facilitate the disposition of the cargo. A written copy of the forwarding instructions should be provided to the carrier;

(4) In other circumstances where the carrier reports astray freight the CM should follow up with a timely visit to the carrier facility.

b. Visits to carrier terminals and warehouses:

(1) Although the government has a contractual right to conduct unannounced visits of carrier facilities, or to unilaterally insist upon a visit at a given time, such visits are inconsistent with the general spirit of the GOCARE program. As a rule, visits to carrier facilities should be coordinated in advance and schedule for a mutually convenient time;

(2) During visits to carrier facilities, the CM should observe the general condition of the facility.

5. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING ASTRAY FREIGHT:

a. If astray freight is identified clearly as belonging to the government, and shipper markings are available, the CM should contact the shipper to determine the identity of the consignee, the destination, and the applicable bill of lading reference.

(1) The CM may contact the shipper from the carrier's facility or may wait until returning to their office;

(2) The freight may be left with the carrier until the CM can provide forwarding instructions.

b. If the freight is identified as belonging to the government but there are no markings, or the markings are conflicting:

(1) The container may be opened in the presence of an authorized carrier representative to determine the existence of any packing lists or other evidence of property identification. If neither the shipper nor consignee can be identified contact the item manager for disposition instructions. If the item manager cannot be identified contact the MTMC Operations Center for assistance;

(2) The carrier should be instructed to deliver the freight to the CM's facility, pending disposition;

(3) The delivery of the freight to the CM's facility terminates the shipment, unless it quickly becomes apparent that the original GBL or a diversion to the GBL can be used for onward movement;

(4) Until it is determined the freight belongs to the government, it will remain in the carrier's possession.

#### 6. CARRIER INITIATIVES:

a. When astray freight has been identified in a carrier's terminal or warehouse the carrier should do the following:

(1) Seek assistance from local representatives as indicated in this booklet;

(2) If the local representative is unavailable, or not known, call the toll-free "Hotline Number" 1-800-631-0434, MTMC Operations Center, Fort Eustis VA;

(3) Pending final disposition a carrier may turn the astray shipment over to the nearest military transportation office. Carriers should receive a receipt for the shipment. (This receipt will be cancelled if the freight is later returned to the carrier for onward movement.) Initiative for promptly notifying the government of possible astray government cargo will be considered a positive factor in any carrier evaluation. If the government freight became astray due to carrier error or negligence, prompt notification of its location will be considered a mitigating factor in any resultant service failure.

b. Carriers should be provided with GOCARE posters and booklets, which are available from the following MTMC Operations address:

Military Traffic Management Command

Attn: MTDC-OPCL

661 Sheppard Place

Fort Eustis, VA 23604-1644

Telephone - Commercial: (757) 878-8622 or DSN 927-8622

HOTLINE: 800-631-0434 or Email: [mtfeastrayfreight@mtmc.army.mil](mailto:mtfeastrayfreight@mtmc.army.mil)

7. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS:

a. Types of numbers that may appear on freight or on bills of lading:

(1) Government Bill of Lading (GBL) Number. This number does not appear on all U. S. Government freight, yet it is the best number to be used for tracing a shipment. If astray or frustrated cargo can be identified with a GBL number, it is easier to research. The GBL number consists of an upper case alpha character followed by seven numerical characters; for example [F-6, 052,958]. In the case of a transit GBL two upper case alpha characters followed by six numerical characters are used; for example [ET003979].

(2) Transportation Control Number (TCN). This 17-digit number (FB4420-2112-0200XXX) appears on the address label or is stenciled on the freight. This is the number most frequently used to identify freight. It also appears on the bill of lading (B/L) and provides the best means of matching freight to a B/L number. It normally appears on the B/L just above the freight description.

(3) National Stock Number (NSN). This number, (6750-00-958-8681), formerly called the Federal Stock Number, appears on the freight. It is usually stenciled on the side of the carton, but is sometimes typed on a label separate from the address. This number is useful in tracing astray or frustrated freight when used in connection with the TCN or shipment unit number for identification of the material being shipped. This number is not usually on the B/L, but may appear in certain instances.

(4) Contract Number. The purchase instrument identification contract number ( DAAA09-82-C-7042) appears on the procurement document and identifies the contract.

b. Types of numbers that may appear on household goods and unaccompanied baggage shipments: Freight carrier warehouse and terminal facilities should be checked for Department of Defense (DOD) household goods (HHG) and unaccompanied baggage (UB) shipments that may have gone astray. These are shipments belonging to DOD military and civilian personnel. There are several numbers and markings that can help identify these shipments:

(1) Personal Property Government Bill of Lading (PPGBL). This number appears on the address label or is stenciled on the container of each household goods or unaccompanied baggage shipment entering the Defense Transportation System (DTS); for example [DP602529].

(2) Transportation Control Number (TCN). This 17-digit number appears on the address label or is stenciled on the container of each household goods or unaccompanied baggage shipment entering the DTS; for example [A5063186123344JXX].

(3) Code of service. Each HHG or UB shipment is assigned a code of service. The code of service will appear on the address label or is stenciled on the container; for example [Code J, T, DPM, 4, 5, 7, and 8].

(4) Direct Procurement Method (DPM) shipments. The phrase "DPM Expedite" will appear at the top of each container in the shipment.

(5) Frustrated HHG or UB shipments should be reported to HQMTMC, Attn: MTPP-HO. Point of contact is: Mr. Alex Moreno commercial (703) 428-3495; DSN 328-3495.

#### 8. FOREIGN MILITARY SALES/SECURITY ASSISTANCE MATERIAL:

a. Freight forwarders within the CONUS who handle foreign government Security Assistance Shipments should be visited to provide assistance when these shipments may have gone astray. These shipments contain Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Security Assistance Material. The sponsoring service is readily identifiable by the first position of the Requisition Number, Document Number, or Transportation Control Number (TCN). The first position will be one the following:

- (1) B - for Army. For example, BNE09599109X002XXX;
- (2) D - for Air Force. For example, DKSH4V90904932XXX;
- (3) K - for Marine Corps. For example, KATP9490337600XXX;
- (4) P - for Navy. For example, PKS10091525004XAX.

b. When astray FMS freight is found at a freight forwarder's facility, CMs should contact the appropriate DOD sponsoring service's FMS International Logistics Control Office (ILCO), as shown below:

(1) ARMY: U.S Army Security Assistance Command, Attn: AMSAC-OL-LS-CS, Bldg. 54 ,  
3rd Street and M. Avenue, Suite # 1, New Cumberland PA 17070-5096. Telephone commercial (717-770-

6843/658; DSN 977-6843/6588; message address - CDRUSASAC NEW CUMBERLAND PA//AMSAC-OL-LS-CS//.

(2) NAVY OR MARINE CORPS: U.S. Navy Inventory Control Point (NAVICP), CODE P753111, 700 Robbins Avenue (Bldg. 4B), Philadelphia PA 19111-5095. Telephone commercial (215) 697-5002/115/5001; DSN 422-5002/1155/5001; Toll-free 1-800-356-6890; Fax (215) 697-0766, Attn: NAVICP, Code P753111; message address - NAVICP PHILADELPHIA PA//P75311//.

(3) AIR FORCE: Headquarters AFMC/LGTT, Transportation - Policy Division, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base OH 45433-5999. Telephone commercial (937) 257-7910/2919; DSN 787-3422/2919; Toll-free 1-800-448-0361; Fax (513) 257-3371, ATTN: ILC/XMRD, message address - HQAFLC WPAFB OH//DSTTI//.

## 9. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS.

### a. Right of access to carrier facilities:

(1) MTMC Operations has a contractual right of access to carrier facilities. This includes the right to insist upon a given time and date to conduct a visit or even to make a visit unannounced. Such a right of access may, however, result in a serious imposition on the carrier and is generally inconsistent with the cooperative spirit of the GOCARE program. This right of access should be used sparingly, for good cause only, and only after coordination with a GOCARE CP.

(2) This right of access is normally contractual only. A refusal of the carrier to permit this access may give rise to a breach of contract, but does not entitle the CM to employ force to enter the terminal or warehouse.

### b. Title to government cargo:

(1) Title to government property is not lost through unauthorized, negligent, or even criminal activity on the part of a government employee;

(2) Title to government property remains with the government even after the carrier pays a claim for the [full] value of the property. Only an authorized representative of the government can transfer title to the property;

(3) If astray freight is discovered after the carrier has paid a claim for the property, the cargo should be delivered to the original consignee, if applicable, or to the CM's facility. The carrier may be entitled to a refund of its claim payment.

c. Freight in the hands of another carrier:

If astray government freight is located in a carrier's warehouse, but is contractually the responsibility of another carrier, the proper carrier shall be notified of the location of the freight and its responsibility for that freight. Any compensation for services performed by the carrier in whose warehouse the freight is located shall be the responsibility of the original carrier.

d. Commercial warehouses and non-carrier facilities:

Astray government freight may end up in the possession of a business other than a carrier. Such a non-carrier entity may be a commercial warehouse, a surplus store, a salvage operation, a "frustrated freight consignor", or some similar business. Such freight is subject to different procedures and legal constraints.

(1) A CM who is told or otherwise discovers astray government freight in a non-carrier facility should take steps to recover the freight, with the cooperation of the non-carrier, if possible. The CM should not routinely inspect or visit such non-carrier businesses without coordination with the CP.

(2) There is normally no contractual right of access to a non-carrier facility on the part of a CM; however, a non-carrier may consent to such an inspection or search. A CM must never try to force his or her way into a non-carrier facility against the wishes of the non-carrier.

(3) When property is clearly identifiable as [classified] government property, its immediate return to government possession may be demanded under the Espionage Act (18 U.S. Code sec. 793). No other property shall be demanded without the prior approval of MTMC-JA.

(4) A non-carrier who legitimately comes into possession of government property may be entitled to some measure of compensation; however, no promises of such compensation shall be made without prior coordination with MTMC-JA.