

White House Correspondents' Association

Travel Pool: Guidelines and Practices

April 2025

The Travel Pool accompanies the President for trips outside the Washington, D.C., area. This memo focuses on the rotations used to fill the Print Pool seat and WHCA Pool seat on such trips.

I. Two rotations: Domestic and Foreign

News organizations that regularly cover the White House have the option to participate in rotations used to fill the Print Pool seat on Air Force One.

There is a Domestic Travel Pool (DTP) for trips within the United States, and a Foreign Travel Pool (FTP) for trips outside the United States.

II. Cost sharing

On domestic pool-only trips, costs for the Print seat are shared equally among all members of the DTP. Shared costs include air and ground transportation, catering and telecommunications. When a trip entails an overnight stay, travelers pay their own hotel and incidental costs.

On international pool-only trips, there is no cost sharing. Print poolers pay for all their own travel.

III. Membership

The WHCA board has sole authority to grant or revoke membership in print travel pool.

IV. Shared slots

Sharing is allowed for DTP membership slots. Partner organizations are responsible for working out which will travel when their turn comes up. If an organization that shares a slot drops out of the pool, the remaining partner becomes responsible for a full share, or it can take a new partner subject to WHCA board approval.

V. Dropping out

Members can drop out of the pool at any time by notifying the WHCA and White House press office. The member would owe its share of costs for all trips commenced before then. Cost-sharing would cease for future trips.

VI. Skipping

The Print seat is filled in alphabetical order. The DTP list is used solely for domestic trips. (See provisions in Sections X and XI.) The FTP list is used solely for overseas trips. If an organization declines its turn for any reason, it goes to the end of the line.

VII. Swapping

Swapping is not allowed. If the next organization in line opts not to take the slot, the slot goes to the next organization on the list.

VIII. Non-pool members and the Print seat

Only news organizations that participate in one or both travel pools are eligible to fill the Print seat.

IX. WHCA Pool seat

A separate rotation is maintained to fill the WHCA seat on Air Force One, formerly known as the "Magazine seat." Travelers occupying that seat are responsible for all costs. Organizations in this rotation also can fill the WHCA Pool slot on days when there is presidential travel outside Washington, D.C., but no flight. This rotation applies for both foreign and domestic travel.

Swapping is allowed in the WHCA rotation for weekend presidential getaways. Such swaps should be kept to a minimum.

Outlets in this rotation have committed to share the burden. A pattern of skipping non-news weekend trips is not compatible with membership in this rotation.[1]

X. Print and WHCA Pool seats on overnight/multiday pool-only trips

When the Print seat is filled by a news organization that is NOT part of the WHCA seat rotation, the Print pooler maintains the Print seat for the duration of the trip. The Print pool shares costs only for the Print seat. A traveler using the WHCA Pool seat pays full costs.

When the Print and WHCA Pool seats are both filled by members of both the Print and WHCA Pool rotations, those poolers can, upon mutual agreement, share duties and alternate between the Print seat, for which costs are shared, and the WHCA Pool seat, for which costs are not shared.

XI. Trips involving White House logistical support but no press charter

For a trip with White House Travel Office logistical support (such as press filing center and credentialing) but no press charter, the Print and WHCA Pool slots are filled from a rotation drawn from members of the DTP or FTP, as applicable, that sign up for the trip.

For trips up to three nights/four days that do not include a multiday news event (such as an overnight summit with a foreign leader), the Print seat will be assigned to one pooler, as will the WHCA seat,

even if there is a hotel sign-up. Exceptions to the one-pooler-per-trip system should be rare, and can be made by the WHCA president or designee. [2]

Pool shifts, including Air Force One seats and on-the-ground shifts, will be assigned to those in rotation for this trip in alphabetical order. Assignments start after the last organization in the DTP or FTP, as applicable, that occupied the designated pool slot. If a member of the DTP or FTP, as applicable, isn't on the trip and their turn comes up alphabetically, their turn is skipped.

XII. Unilateral travelers on trips with a press charter

News organizations that are on the charter get right of first refusal on pool slots during a trip of this type. Unilateral travelers who are part of the DTP or FTP, as applicable, and sign up for White House Travel Office logistical support, are eligible to pool during such a trip. If an organization on the press charter chooses to forego a pool shift to allow a unilateral traveler to take that shift, the WHCA can fold unilateral travelers into the pool in alphabetical order.

XIII. Supplemental Pool

The Supplemental Pool comprises all news organizations in the in-town POTUS Print rotation, plus any organization that has applied and met the criteria set by the WHCA for joining the Supplemental Pool.

Members of the Supplemental Pool are eligible to travel on Air Force One if a seat is unoccupied (for instance, if no member of the Radio Pool signs up for the Radio seat). When such a vacancy arises, the WHCA solicits interest from the Supplemental Pool, and provides a designated traveler to the White House for the Air Force One manifest. Travelers pay the full cost for such a seat.

Rotations as of April 2025:

Domestic Travel Pool has 14 members, including one shared slot [5]:

- 1. AFP**
- 2. Christian Science Monitor/The Guardian [6]**
- 3. Daily Mail**
- 4. The Hill**
- 5. Huffington Post**
- 6. McClatchy**
- 7. New York Times**

8. Politico

9. USA Today

10. Wall Street Journal

11. Washington Examiner

12. Washington Post

13. Washington Times

Foreign Travel Pool has 7 members:

1. AFP

2. Daily Mail [3]

3. New York Times

4. Politico

5. USA Today[4]

6. Wall Street Journal

7. Washington Post

WHCA rotation has 6 members [7]:

1. AFP

2. Daily Mail

3. New York Times

4. Politico

5. Wall Street Journal

6. Washington Post

[1] Language on limited swaps and burden-sharing added after Dec. 9, 2021, meeting of WHCA rotation outlets and adopted by WHCA board on Dec. 15, 2021.

[2] *This language was added after June 12, 2017, meeting of print travelers and ratified by the WHCA board on June 15, 2017.*

[3] Daily Mail approved for Foreign pool May 19, 2021, starting after June 2021 G-7 trip

[4] USA Today approved for Foreign pool on May 11, 2022, starting after May 2022 Japan/South Korea trip

[5] The Los Angeles Times dropped out of the DTP and FTP on February 14, 2024

[6] The Guardian replaced Dallas Morning News for the shared DTP slot with Christian Science Monitor on April 16, 2024, after Dallas Morning News dropped out and pulled out of White House coverage altogether.

[7] Time magazine was removed from the WHCA seat on Oct. 17, 2024, for violating the one-skip per year rule on non-news weekends.