

## Traveling during the holidays

### **Question:**

If you travel, are you expected to work during the holidays?

### **Response:**

I don't think there is really any clear cut answer to this question. One traveler I spoke to recently said she expects to work the holidays because that is when the hospitals need her the most. This is true. Hospitals need to cover for people who want to be off on the holidays.

However, as a surgical nurse, I rarely had a problem being off for the holidays as long as I told them before I took my assignment which days I needed off. Surgery is a little different in that the surgery schedule is usually cut back some during the holidays. It may depend on your specialty to some extent.

On the other hand, I took a small sample survey of 5 traveling nurses from different specialties. I asked them if they were going to be able to make it home for Christmas. To my surprise, they all said yes.

Perhaps some nurses assume the hospital won't be open to letting them go during the holidays so they don't even ask.

Another traveler recently told me he uses his availability to work during holidays as a negotiation tool in order to get the assignments he wants. He says the hospitals will usually pick you over someone else if you mention your willingness to work holidays.

Will you be able to go home for the holidays? I guess it depends on where you work. If you want to be off during the holidays, you can always ask. Make sure you ask before you take the assignment and get it in writing. Otherwise, you may find yourself reading Christmas cards at work.