



# STATE OF MISSOURI ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

POLICY TITLE: <b>State Travel Policy</b>	AUTHORIZED BY: <b>Douglas E. Nelson Commissioner</b>
POLICY: <b>SP-6</b>	PAGE: <b>1 of 10</b>
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## **I. General Statement**

Travel to conduct state business should be accomplished in the most economical and efficient manner possible. This policy governs allowable expenses, the means by which travel is obtained and the required procedures and documentation. As indicated in this policy, other policies provide more specific guidance on certain travel topics.

This policy applies to any official or employee who travels as well as anyone who arranges, approves, pays for or processes transactions related to travel.

## **II. General Guidelines**

- A. Travel policies are intended to provide more specific guidance than the travel rules (1 CSR 10-11.010 and 1 CSR 10-11.030) and are intended to be consistent with the travel rules. It is your responsibility to seek official clarification from the Office of Administration if the meaning or application of the rules or policies is unclear.
- B. Agencies can establish their own travel policies so long as they are consistent with the statewide travel rules and travel policies. Agency policies can be more restrictive but cannot exceed what the travel rule and travel policy provide.
- C. The State pays or reimburses reasonable and necessary expenses for State travel, with proper approval by the agency.
- D. Travel is often part of the job and travel arrangements and payments are intended to be neutral to the employee with no advantage or benefit to the employee.
- E. The State's reimbursement policies are based on IRS guidelines for an accountable plan, which allows the State to reimburse employees for authorized business expenses without creating a taxable event for the employee.

- F. It is your responsibility to demonstrate that the expenses you incur or approve are reasonable and necessary. As needed, you should include explanations and documentation to fully substantiate travel expenses.

The standard you should apply is that each travel expense should stand on its own without the need to seek further explanation. In other words, an individual who did not take or approve the trip could review the trip documentation and readily understand what expenses were incurred and why and how they relate to transacting state business.

As a traveler or an approver, you are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to state travel rules and policies. Deliberate disregard for state travel rules or policies or intentionally filing or approving a fraudulent or misleading expense report are grounds for disciplinary action including termination of employment.

- G. Where feasible and appropriate, you should have the State pay travel expenses before the trip, such as airfare and registration. Eligible expenses you incur are reimbursable after the travel has occurred.
- H. The State has two credit cards (State Purchasing Card and Individual Business Travel Card) that are the preferred method of payment except where their use is not an option. Agencies should use the State Purchasing Card instead of direct bill to pay travel expenses which can be arranged or paid in advance with a credit card. Examples include registrations, airfare, lodging and rental cars under the State contract. Collision damage coverage is provided by the card issuer when the State Purchasing Card is used to pay for rental cars. Employees should use their Individual Business Travel Card to pay all other travel expenses when a credit card is an available method of payment.
- I. Travel Portal

The State operates a Travel Portal as an accountability and cost effectiveness tool. It provides information and links on travel-related areas such as policies, forms and travel vendors. It promotes greater accountability, safety and control at no taxpayer cost. The Travel Portal is accessible on the Division of Accounting home page - <http://www.oe.mo.gov/acct/>. The Travel Portal contains an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) link that provides more information about the portal.

### **III. Types of Travel Expenses**

- A. Vehicle

For travel by vehicle, you must use The Trip Optimizer or other equivalent method to calculate travel costs and ensure that employees use the most cost

effective travel option for each trip. See SP-12, State Vehicular Travel Policy at <http://oa.mo.gov/commissioners-office/policies/statewide> for additional guidance on travel by vehicle. For travel by personal vehicle, the expense report must include a copy of The Trip Optimizer report for the trip. The requirement to include a copy is waived if:

- The trip is less than the minimum number of miles that results in the Next Lowest Cost being Mileage Reimbursement or the agency makes frequent trips to this destination and employees use the lowest cost option as determined by The Trip Optimizer.
- The employee drives a personal vehicle and is reimbursed at the fleet rate.
- The agency establishes a written policy, based on The Trip Optimizer results, instructing employees on the lowest cost option for minimum number of miles and for each frequent destination.

Regarding travel in State Owned Vehicles:

- Use state issued fuel credit cards to purchase fuel for state owned vehicles. If payment by state issued fuel credit card is not an option, attach proper receipts to your expense report.
- Reasonable expenses for oil, washing, filters and other necessary services are allowable as long as you attach receipts to your expense report or provide other justification, such as for a coin operated car wash.

Additional guidance on use of state vehicles is provided in SP-4, State Vehicles, at <http://oa.mo.gov/commissioners-office/policies/statewide>.

Mileage within your official domicile is allowable when it is within your normal daily job requirement and incurring mileage is authorized and approved by your agency.

Mileage by motorcycle is reimbursable at the fleet rate.

## B. Air Travel

You are expected to exercise prudent care in arranging airfare in order to obtain the lowest feasible fare. Only coach fare is allowed. You should obtain the lowest reasonable, logical airfare at least 21 days in advance. When this is not possible, document the reason(s) as part of the transaction. Air travel arrangements should be made on the basis of what benefits the State and not on accruing frequent flyer miles for an individual.

See the Travel Portal for links to specific vendors including those that offer State of Missouri discounts.

Travel in privately owned aircraft is not eligible for reimbursement and the employee's insurance is primary.

For charter flights, agencies must comply with the applicable provisions of SP-8, State Aircraft (See <http://oa.mo.gov/commissioners-office/policies/statewide>) and must:

- Obtain prior written approval of the department director.
- Contact the MSHP Aircraft Division before arranging a charter flight to determine whether MSHP can meet the agency's business need at the same or lower cost for the flight than a commercial vendor. If the agency elects to use a commercial vendor they must document the business reason.
- Document that the cost of the charter flight is less than the cost of commercial airfare or meets an essential business need that cannot be met by commercial airfare.
- Document who traveled on the flight. Only state employees are permitted on charter flights.
- Include copies of the required documentation with the payment documentation.

### C. Lodging

You are expected to select the location, type and cost of lodging that best meet the needs of the State and your work requirements. Reasonable and necessary amounts are allowed for the cost of lodging at the single room rate. In areas where comparable accommodations are available at significantly different prices you should seek prior approval before selecting higher priced lodging and document the reason(s) for selecting the higher priced lodging.

Key issues that determine hotel acceptability to the State include accountability, transparency, price, safety, convenience, ease of booking and payment, oversight and issue resolution. The Travel Portal is designed to address these issues and assist state agencies in arranging cost effective travel.

The Travel Portal lists providers that have agreed to meet State guidelines and provide preferred rates. The Travel Portal also lists the federal per diem for lodging as a benchmark to evaluate the cost of lodging in specific areas.

When state agencies use the State Purchasing Card to book lodging, they should use hotels listed on the portal. They may use direct bill when necessary, although it is a more expensive process. Employees may also pay for lodging using the Individual Business Travel Card or personal funds and seek reimbursement via a monthly expense report, subject to agency approval.

Lodging data helps ensure that the State has an effective procurement process for lodging. It is in an agency's interest to assist in this effort to know which hotels are being used, in which cities, and with what results regarding rates and number of room nights. Agencies may provide this information through the Travel Portal or by other means arranged with the

Division of Accounting. Agencies should also advise hotels they work with on a regular basis to register on the Travel Portal.

When traveling on state business in Missouri, your lodging is exempt from state sales tax. At the time of check-in, provide a copy of your agency's Missouri Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate. If you book lodging through the Travel Portal, the lodging vendor should already have a tax-exempt certificate for the State.

An itemized statement furnished by the lodging provider and documentation of payment are required for all lodging expenses.

#### D. Meals

The State has established a meal per diem standard. The rates for each meal are listed on the Division of Accounting home page - <http://www.oa.mo.gov/acct/>.

For administrative convenience, agencies may adopt a single set of rates for all destinations, either in state, out of state or both.

Employees may claim the applicable per diem rate for each eligible meal (breakfast, lunch or dinner) while in travel status. Tips on meals are part of the per diem and may not be claimed separately. Employees may not use the State Purchasing Card to pay for meals while in travel status except as authorized by the Division of Accounting and their agency. Employees must pay for meals from their own funds or use the Individual Business Travel Card. Their actual expense may differ from the applicable meal per diem.

Travel status begins when you leave your residence or domicile to travel on state business. Travel status ends when you return to your residence or domicile. You are not in travel status if any part of your trip involves a commute. When your official domicile and residence are different, the travel status begins and ends based on whichever is less.

To qualify for meal per diem when no overnight lodging is indicated, you must document on your expense report that you were in travel status for twelve (12) hours or more.

Eligible meal is defined as follows:

- When overnight lodging is indicated:
  - Breakfast – on the day of departure if travel status begins no later than 7:00 a.m. plus any other day until you return.
  - Lunch – on the day of departure if travel status begins no later than 10:00 a.m. plus any other day where travel status continues past 2:00 p.m. until you return.
  - Dinner – on the day of departure if travel status begins no later than 5:00 p.m. plus any other day where travel status continues past 7:00 p.m. until you return.

- When you are in twelve hour travel status, eligible meal is the same as above.

As an alternative to the times listed above agencies may adopt a policy that an employee must be in travel status two hours before their normal start time in order to be eligible for a meal.

When attending a meeting or conference you may claim the applicable meal per diem for those meal times where you document that no meal was provided.

Meals served in conjunction with agency required meetings attended by officials or state employees must be documented with the names of attendees or the group name with the number attending and the specific business reason for the meeting. The business reason can be documented in the form of an agenda, program or other specific description. Any meal provided must comply with the IRS guidelines of being for the convenience of the employer. See SP-5, Agency Provided Food at <http://oa.mo.gov/commissioners-office/policies/statewide>.

#### E. Miscellaneous Expenses

You may request reimbursement for reasonable and necessary business expenses you actually incur related to travel, including:

- Taxis or other ground transportation to or from the airport and to or from meetings away from your hotel. No receipt is required for reasonable taxi fares.
- Parking
- Tips for baggage handling. Tips for taxis/shuttles should be included as part of the cost of the taxi/shuttle. Tips for meals are part of the meal per diem and may not be claimed separately.
- Transportation to attend official events outside the hotel or to get a meal.
- Toll charges for bridges and turnpikes.
- Incidental expenses such as postage, small emergency supplies, telephone, internet, fax, and other like charges when necessary for transacting state business while traveling. Attach proof of payment to your expense report.

Expenses incurred for your sole benefit, such as any type of insurance, Individual Business Travel Card late payment fees or finance charges, travel loan finance charges, personal credit card fees or dues, entertainment such as television or movie charges, bar bills, fitness membership fees, extra meals or snacks, bulk food/beverage purchases, newspapers, magazines and other like charges are not allowed as reimbursable travel expenses.

Items which have been properly purchased and invoiced directly to the State of Missouri are not reimbursable and should not be included on an expense report.

#### **IV. Reimbursement Process**

- A. You must use a Monthly Expense Report to request reimbursement of travel expenses. Attach itemized receipts for lodging expenditures, any expenditure over \$75 and any other required receipts.
- B. Normally, you should file an expense report for any month you incur travel expenses. However, for small amounts you may accumulate expenses for more than one month with the concurrence of your agency.
- C. You must properly account for trip expenses within 90 days after the end of the trip on which the expenses are paid or incurred or the reimbursement may be taxable to the employee. For expenses reported more than 90 days after the end of the trip, you must document the reason for the delay. Reimbursement is subject to the availability of funds and the agency responsible for funding has the discretion to deny reimbursement.
- D. As the person incurring the expenses you must sign the form and submit it for approval.
- E. The expense report must indicate official domicile and purpose of travel.
- F. Travel expenses are reimbursed by direct deposit to the same bank account used for your pay.
- G. The expense report must include original signatures (electronic form is acceptable) of the claimant and approver verifying that the reimbursement claim is correct. Expense accounts must be approved by an administrative superior or their delegate. In no case may the employee or the employee's staff approve the expense report.

When the approver is relying on information or approval by others such as an email, the approver should attach documentation of that information or approval to the expense report. This includes situations where the approved expense report does not include the claimant's original signature. In these cases the attached documentation should indicate the claimant has taken responsibility for incurring and claiming the expenses.

#### **V. Other Requirements**

- A. Out of State Travel

The Out of State Travel Authorization Form is required for all travel out of state, including travel paid by third parties (list the name of the third party on the form). Approval by the director, head of the department or his/her authorized representative is required. Attach a copy of the approved form

to the expense report, and to any travel related expense that was direct billed or paid on the State Purchasing Card.

When more than one individual is requesting travel to the same place on the same date and for the same purpose, the form(s) must list the individuals traveling. As needed, provide justification for multiple individuals traveling to the same place. Each individual is responsible for attaching a copy of the approved authorization form to their expense report.

If there is a substantive change to an approved out of state travel request, the change must be submitted for approval of the change prior to the travel taking place.

#### B. Travel Expenses For Others

You may be reimbursed for travel expenses for other employees or nonemployees provided you document the specific business reason for doing so and the names of those involved. Expenses incurred for others may include such charges as a hotel charges for which a room was shared. When it is necessary to purchase a meal for a nonemployee, your reimbursement is limited to the cost of that person's meal and a receipt is required. You may claim meal per diem for yourself if it is an eligible meal.

#### C. Resident City Other Than Official Domicile

If your resident city is in some place other than the city of your official domicile you are not allowed expenses while in your resident city or mileage for travel between your resident city and the city of official domicile. You may request reimbursement for a meal charge you incur within your resident city if incurred as part of a department or agency sponsored conference or business meeting. This represents meals served to officials and employees at conferences and meetings while they are interacting and conducting state business. Any additional travel expense incurred because you reside in a place other than the official domicile is not eligible for reimbursement.

#### D. Alternate Travel Arrangements

Employees may request approval to travel by alternative means or under an alternative time frame. Examples are traveling by personal vehicle to a meeting and extending the time of travel before and/or after the meeting. The State will pay or reimburse no more than what it would have had the employee traveled by conventional means and under normal time constraints. Your request must include the following information:

- Your reason for requesting this arrangement
- Documentation of what your expenses would have been had you traveled in a conventional manner.

- A clear demonstration that this alternate arrangement is not to the detriment of the State.
- Whether or not your alternate arrangement will have you traveling at times that normally would be work times. In these cases you may need to seek approved time off.
- If you elect to drive a personal vehicle rather than fly, you must provide a comparison between the estimated total cost to drive and the estimated total cost to fly. If approved the State will reimburse the lower of your actual cost to drive or the estimated cost to fly.

Additional provisions regarding alternate arrangements include:

- Liability coverage is included in the out of state vehicle rental rate in our current contract. If there is any collision damage to an out of state, contract rental, the State Legal Expense Fund will provide coverage for the collision damage and Risk Management will work directly with the contracted rental car provider to resolve the claim.
- Only authorized passengers are permitted to ride in state vehicles, including vehicles rented under the state contract. Non-state individuals such as volunteers, spouses, and children should not be passengers in a state vehicle unless they are involved in the conduct of state business.
- If an employee personally rents a vehicle for state business travel because they want to take an “unauthorized passenger” with them in the rental, the employee must purchase liability and collision coverage through their personal auto insurance or directly from the rental company. In the event of an accident, the employee’s coverage or insurance purchased from the rental agency would provide primary coverage. Any expenses incurred beyond the rental charge and fuel are not allowable for reimbursement. Also, reimbursement for rental charges is limited to the amount the employee otherwise would pay under the statewide contract.

#### E. Travel Expenses Paid by Other Organizations

The traveler should obtain prior agency approval for travel paid by other organizations. Travel expenses that another organization will reimburse should be charged to or paid by the State either directly or through a state-issued credit card only when necessary. The agency must ensure that any expenses paid by the agency are reimbursed to the agency and not the employee.

#### F. Spouse and Family Expenses

Expenses for a spouse and family at an official business function are allowable under the following circumstances:

- This expense is limited to elected officials, judges and department directors or those designated to represent them.

- The agency incurring the expense must submit written justification in advance to the Commissioner of Administration.
- The Commissioner of Administration must approve the expense in writing before it is incurred.
- This expense must be for a legitimate business reason where attendance of the spouse is required to represent the State. State employees and officials may be reimbursed for expenses incurred by their spouses or other members of their families only as provided in state policy.
- Approval of these expenses should be attached to the applicable expense documents.

#### G. Exceptions

Agencies may request an exception to the travel policies by submitting a request in writing (email is acceptable) to the OA Director of Accounting. The following guidelines apply:

- The agency director must approve the request.
- The request must state the nature of and reason for the exception and whether the exception is one time or recurring
- For situations that may be recurring, such as the lack of receipts, proof of payment, signatures or approvals, the agency should develop an agency policy to address these situations and submit it to the OA Director of Accounting.
- The OA Director of Accounting will recommend to the Commissioner of Administration whether to approve the request and the reasons to approve or disapprove.
- The OA Director of Accounting will convey the Commissioner's decision to the agency.

Approval of exceptions that are one-time or relate to a specific individual should be attached to the applicable expense document.