

Volume No. 1—Policies & Procedures	TOPIC NO.	20335 – Cardinal
Section No. 20300—Cash Disbursements Accounting	TOPIC	STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS
	DATE	January 2025

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Policy

Applicability These policies apply to **Executive Branch** agencies using state funds to pay for official state travel. Executive Branch agencies are authorized to adopt more restrictive policies and procedures as approved by the Agency Head. Agencies must retain a written copy of these more restrictive policies and procedures signed by the Agency Head. All cabinet members and their staff, Agency Heads, and Executive Branch boards and commissions must comply with the State Travel Regulations, the same regulations to which all other Executive Branch employees are held accountable, except where concessions are made within these regulations.*

Legislative, Judicial, and Independent agencies may establish their own travel policies, subject to the relevant laws and written authorization by the appropriate governing body. Non-Executive Branch agencies that have adopted travel regulations, which exceed the limits contained in this topic, must maintain copies of their approved travel policies and procedures on file.

**Institutions of Higher Education that are identified as Level II and Level III are authorized to establish their own travel policies, which must be approved by the Agency Head/President. A copy of these approved policies must be submitted to the Department of Accounts.*

Expenses Must be Reasonable and Necessary The Commonwealth of Virginia will reimburse individuals traveling on official State business for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred. Travel expense accounts are open to the public and must be able to sustain the test of public review. When planning and paying for travel, there are several factors of primary concern: economy, prudence and necessity. The use of State funds to accommodate personal comfort, convenience, and taste is not permitted.

It is the policy of the Commonwealth of Virginia to limit travel costs to only those expenses that are necessary for providing essential services to the Commonwealth's citizens. Further, travelers and travel planners must seek ways to reduce the cost of travel.

Agency management must communicate state travel policies, regulations and procedures to all employees and non-state employees who travel on state business and are reimbursed with state funds. Additionally, agencies must ensure that all employee travel expenses conform to the State Travel Regulations.

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Policy, Continued

Cardinal Processing

State employees will be reimbursed for travel related expenses using the Travel and Expenses module in Cardinal. Petty cash and the Accounts Payable module may not be used for these types of reimbursements.

Non-state employees will be set up as vendors in Cardinal. Their travel related expenses will be processed through the Accounts Payable module.

Cardinal Transparency

In order to provide an increased level of transparency in the recording of travel reimbursements and to take advantage of Cardinal functionality where approved lodging, meal and incidental rate limits are already loaded in the system, Cardinal requires that each individual travel day’s reimbursement items be entered separately. However, lodging may be entered on one line within Cardinal. For example, if an individual traveled for 3 days which included 2 nights lodging, the total of both nights of lodging may be entered as one line item; however, all other expenses (including hotel taxes and meals) must be entered as a separate line item. The per diem for incidentals will always be split out as a separate line item for each day of travel.

Definitions

State Agency and Institution

Any authority, board, department, instrumentality, agency or other unit in any branch of state government. The term shall not include any county, city or town, or any local or regional governmental authority or any ‘nonstate agency’ as defined in the appropriation act.

Agency Head or Designee

An Agency Head is an officially appointed, elected or designated individual who directs, and is ultimately responsible for, the overall operations of an agency or institution.

A designee is any other person appropriately designated to act on behalf of the Agency Head. Such designation must be approved by the Agency Head in writing and retained on file within the agency. These listings must clearly identify responsibility for travel decision authority designation and adhere to the record retention policy in order to provide adequate evidentiary support of appropriate approvals for audit/review purposes. Copies of written designee listings must be provided to the Department of Accounts and appropriate auditors upon request.

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Definitions, Continued

Base Point The primary place, office, or building where the traveler performs his/her duties on a routine basis. Multiple base points are not allowed. One base point must be designated, documented, and approved (by Agency Head or designee) for employees who frequently work in multiple locations.

The employee’s residence may be assigned by the agency as the base point when it is cost beneficial to the State. In this case, the mileage driven from the employee’s residence to one or more temporary work locations, including the employee’s central office, is official state business mileage and is fully reimbursable. Agencies are expected to establish stringent administrative controls at sufficient levels to ensure that the assignment of an employee’s residence as their base point is authorized only when justifiable.

Cardinal This is the official accounting and reporting system of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Commuting Mileage Round-trip mileage traveled routinely and directly by the employee between his/her residence and base point incurred on a scheduled workday is considered commuting mileage. An employee can have only one assigned base point. Commuting mileage and other commuting costs incurred on a scheduled workday are considered a personal expense and are not reimbursable. If the employee’s home is assigned as their basepoint, that employee has no commuting mileage.

Exempt Agency A state agency that does not fall under the Executive Branch of state government or whose enabling legislation establishes the organization as a separate political subdivision of the Commonwealth.

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Definitions, Continued

Expense Report Original authorized documentation for requesting reimbursement of expenses incurred by an individual while traveling on official state business. This documentation, including itemized, original hotel bills and receipts as required, provides support for reimbursement of travel expenses. While the use of the **Employee Travel Authorization and Expense Report** on the Cardinal website indicates adherence to Statewide requirements, its use is optional and substitute forms and procedures by individual agencies are allowed. The substitute form must include the Certification Statements from the Cardinal Expense Report for the Traveler and Approver and must also clearly document the following items, when applicable:

- Traveler Name
- Employee ID
- Date(s) of travel expenses
- Destination (City, State)
- Reason for travel
- Mode of Transportation
- Mileage Traveled
- Mileage rate reimbursement and justification, if necessary
- Lodging location, to include full address (if applicable, an indication of direct billed lodging to support other overnight travel expenses)
- Per Diem Amount
- Other Expenses
- Each day's expenses shown separately

Printouts or screenshots of appropriate rates for the time of travel must be attached to the Expense Report for reimbursement.

International Travel All travel to areas outside of the 48 contiguous United States.

Non-State Employee Any individual who is not employed by the State, but who is conducting official state business. This includes the members of boards, authorities, or commissions; contractors; trainers; and interview candidates.

Official Station The area within 25 driving miles of an employee's designated base point. The 25 driving miles must be measured using the most direct route.

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Definitions, Continued

Sponsored Programs

Programs funded by revenue derived from grants and contracts.

State Employee

Any elected, appointed, classified, or non-classified employee of the Commonwealth.

Travel Status

Travel outside of an employee’s official station (see above for definition of Official Station).

Trip

Any period of continuous travel between when the traveler leaves his residence or base point and returns to his residence or base point.

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Travel Reimbursement Requirements

Travel Reimbursement Requirements

Although **not all-inclusive**, the following information is **required** for expense reimbursement and must be submitted with the **Employee Travel Authorization and Expense Report (Expense Report)**.

- Authorization and Exception approvals (*See Approval and Exceptions section.*)
- Cost Benefit Analysis, when applicable (*See Cost Benefit Analysis section for further information.*)
- Approval for mileage reimbursement at IRS mileage rate when the IRS mileage rate is not considered the most cost beneficial to the agency (*See Cost Benefit Analysis section for further information.*)
- Reason for travel and explanation for any unusual fees such as charges for changing a reservation/ticket
- Confirmations of expenses if online methods were used to procure services (to confirm cost)
- Documentation to support foreign currency conversion calculations related to international travel
- Itemized receipt for lodging or comparative statement if alternative lodging is used (example: apartment lease). The final bill must be presented to show that the lodging fee was paid (example: \$0 due).
- Receipt for each business meal expenditure of \$75 or more (IRS requirement)
- Receipt for registration fees
- Reason for reserved “for hire transportation” (example: chartered transportation). Receipts required if claim is more than \$75 per instance.
- Work hours and overtime hours for overtime meals
- Approval for use of private or chartered airlines or State-owned aircraft

Travelers must keep receipts and accurate records of all expenses to ensure correct reporting and submission of travel reimbursements. Travel reimbursements should not be made from charge card statements. If a receipt is lost, every possible effort must be made by the traveler to obtain a copy of the receipt. The Fiscal Officer may approve reimbursement from a charge card statement in exceptional cases when the transaction is proven a valid travel expense. Each day’s expenses must be shown separately on the Expense Report.

The Commonwealth uses GSA rates for Lodging and M&IE expenses; therefore, the correct rates must be researched and documented clearly on the Expense Report by the traveler (see **Lodging** and **M&IE** sections for further information). The approver of the Expense Report is responsible for ensuring the correct rates are presented for reimbursement, based on actual travel dates. (*Please note that the GSA rates are effective for the Federal fiscal year, which runs from October 1 – September 30 annually.*)

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Travel Reimbursement Requirements, Continued

Travel Reimbursement Requirements, continued

Travelers must submit the Expense Report to their supervisor within 30 working days after completion of the trip (See CAPP – Cardinal Topic 20336, *Agency Travel Processing*). In the case of continuous travel, the traveler must submit the Expense Report to the supervisor within 30 working days of the last day of travel for which reimbursement is requested. Employees on continuous travel must request reimbursement at least monthly. Agency procedures must be designed to process reimbursements in a timely manner to allow travel charge card payments to be made by the specified due date (see CAPP Topic 20336, *Agency Travel Processing* for further information).

By signing the Expense Report, the traveler is certifying the accuracy of all information, the legitimacy of the travel, and the appropriateness of the expenses. The signature of the traveler’s supervisor certifies that he/she agrees that the travel was necessary, and the requested reimbursements are accurate and legitimate. It is the responsibility of the fiscal office at each agency to ensure that any type of reimbursement is not paid more than once.

Cardinal Certification Statement

By approving an Expense Report in Cardinal, the agency, department or institution and its employees and agents agree to the following:

Final agency approval for expenditure transactions rests with the person granted approval authority in Cardinal. The act of approving a transaction in Cardinal means the agency certifies to the Comptroller that:

- the request for disbursement of state funds specified in the approved transaction has been reviewed by appropriate agency staff and is accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief,
- the amounts itemized are considered legitimate and proper charges to the appropriations indicated therein and are approved for payment, and
- the payment has not been previously authorized

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Travel Planning

Introduction

Travelers must prepare an estimate of the total cost of any proposed overnight travel expected to exceed \$1,500.* An appropriate member of management must authorize planned travel (including cost estimates) prior to travel, on a form acceptable to the agency. The agency may determine the appropriate member of management at its discretion. To ensure adequate planning (identification of costs and exceptions), the requirement to prepare a cost estimate for overnight travel expected to exceed \$1,500 also applies to Agency Heads and cabinet members. However, the requirement to obtain prior authorization for Agency Head and cabinet member travel applies only to cases in which exceptions must be obtained or for international travel.

Total costs including lodging, transportation, meals, conference registration, and any other travel costs or course fees must be included in the estimate. Costs of the trip that may be direct billed, such as lodging or conference registration, must also be included in the cost estimate. The estimate must accompany both the Expense Report and any applicable direct-billed vendor payment vouchers. For planned travel, the traveler must document that a reasonable effort was made to obtain efficient, effective, and cost beneficial means of travel for the Commonwealth.

**An employee or non-state employee in a position that requires frequent, similar travel to perform their job duties is exempt from this requirement. A written approval from the Agency Head stating that an estimate is unnecessary for a specific employee/position must be kept on file at the agency, for documentation purposes.*

Contractual Business

If an agency has any agreements with individuals under contract to conduct business with the Commonwealth, these expenses should be paid with an accounting voucher. When entering into such contracts, agencies should adhere to the dollar limitations outlined in this topic or clearly document the business case for any deviations. If there is no contractual agreement specific to travel and travel expenses (hotel, airfare, meals, mileage, etc.) and such expenses are incurred, the dollar limitations and documentation requirements outlined in this topic are applicable.

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Travel Planning, Continued

Internet Procurement

Usage of the Internet to procure travel services is allowed. Use caution and prudent judgment when choosing an internet travel service site. Hidden fees, significant pre-payments, or nonrefundable advances may apply that may not be reimbursable. The traveler must comply with procurement guidelines.

In addition to other documents required by policy, the following supplementary documents must be submitted with the Expense Report when procuring services via the internet:

- A copy of the final page from the Internet site showing the total cost and confirmed service.
- Airline confirmation (ticket stub) of the type of ticket purchased (coach, business, etc.).

Payment Options

When paying for services for travel, the following methods may be used:

- Bank of America Visa Individual Liability Travel Card—may be used for all types of travel purchases (examples: hotel, transportation tickets)
- Bank of America Visa Agency Airline Travel Card—may only be used for **AIRLINE and RAIL** tickets
- Bank of America Visa Agency Purchase Charge Card (SPCC or Gold)—may be used for all types of travel purchases (examples: rail, air, hotel, rental car). Please note: The SPCC or Gold cardholder must not pay for his/her own travel expenses.
- Personal Credit Card

The Bank of America Visa card is the preferred method of payment.

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Travel Planning, Continued

Travel Involving Multiple Employees

To ensure all travel meets the test of necessity, travel involving more than three employees from a single agency to a single travel destination (domestic or international) must be approved in advance by the Agency Head or designee. This includes travel of presenters as well as attendees. These provisions apply to daily and overnight travel.

Where it is determined that a seminar, workshop or training program is essential to staff development for five or more employees, the agency shall investigate the option of bringing the trainer on site instead of authorizing employees to travel to an off-site location. The agency shall document the comparative cost of an on-site session and retain such documentation on file with the agency travel records. The agency must also explore the practicality of fulfilling the desired staff development goals through use of studio and video teleconferencing where these options may be more cost-effective.

In selecting locations for meetings, agencies shall give first preference to state-owned facilities. For meetings of policy, advisory, or supervisory boards, the selection of a meeting site should avoid the appearance of overly extravagant or luxurious arrangements.

See **Conference Procurement** guidelines.

Conference Procurement

In planning for an agency-sponsored conference, the Lodging and M&IE guidelines in these regulations must be used as a measure of reasonableness. Agencies should be prudent in selecting the most cost-effective option available. Agencies must follow the Department of General Services, Division of Purchases and Supply procurement guidelines. Documentation supporting the procurement must justify any costs in excess of the guidelines based on the overall conference procurement costs (example: free room space or other free or low-cost amenities needed for meetings).

For reimbursements where these guidelines are used, “Cost based on Procurement Guidelines” must be clearly stated on the Expense Report.

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Travel Planning, Continued

**Economic
Interest
Disclosure
Reporting**

Employees subject to economic interest disclosure reporting must meet all requirements related to travel as outlined in the Code of Virginia § 2.2-3103.1. *Certain gifts prohibited.*

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Approval and Exceptions

Lodging Exceptions

Agency Heads or designees are responsible for ensuring that travelers understand their responsibilities for making good faith efforts to secure lodging within the guidelines before requesting exceptions. Exceptions to travel regulations must be obtained prior to the travel event. Every effort should be made to request exceptions well in advance.

For all official State business travel, the Agency Head or designee is authorized to approve reimbursement in advance, for lodging up to 50% over the guidelines when circumstances warrant. An explanation of the circumstances justifying the lodging exception must be attached to the Expense Report. A justifiable situation could be when the additional cost for the conference hotel is offset by reduced local travel costs (taxi, rental car, Uber/ride sharing, etc.) between a less expensive non-conference hotel and a more expensive conference hotel.

Only the Comptroller or his designee (Deputy State Comptroller) may grant exceptions for expenses exceeding 50% over the guidelines.* Such approvals must be requested and granted prior to the travel and the approved request must be attached to the Expense Report for reimbursement. Requests for such exceptions must include sufficient documentation showing alternative lodging cost comparisons (three alternatives, at a minimum), justifying the exception. The cost comparisons must include the name and complete address of the hotels, including zip code, used for the cost comparison. Other factors that must be taken into consideration when requesting an exception are the proximity to the work/conference location and added costs of transportation, etc. These requests must be reviewed by the agency fiscal office, which must evaluate and approve the request **prior** to sending it to ComplianceAssurance@doa.virginia.gov. Compliance Assurance will ONLY accept exception requests from the agency's fiscal officer.

The only exception to this is travel for Cabinet Members and Agency Heads. See **Approving Authority and Exceptions for Cabinet Members and Agency Heads Section, below.*

Business Meal Exceptions

Agency Heads or their designee may authorize business meal reimbursements up to 50% over the applicable per diem guideline with sufficient justification and the original, itemized receipt. Business meal reimbursements above 50% over the applicable per diem guideline are not permitted. (*See **Business Meals** for additional guidance.*)

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Approval and Exceptions, Continued

Designee Documentation As noted in the **Definitions** section, an Agency Head may designate approval authority to other individuals in writing. These designee listings should adhere to the record retention policy in order to provide adequate evidentiary support of appropriate approvals for audit/review purposes. Copies of written designee listings must be provided to the Department of Accounts and appropriate auditors upon request.

Sponsored Program Funds Exception All monetary travel reimbursements for meals, lodging, airfare, etc. funded solely from sponsored program funds are governed by the terms and conditions of the individual grant or contract. If the grant or contract is silent regarding these monetary reimbursements, the limitations in CAPP Topics 20335 and 20336 will apply. In all cases, administrative requirements cited in CAPP Topics 20335 and 20336 must be followed. “Sponsored Program” must be clearly stated on the Expense Report. (See Definitions in this CAPP Topic and CAPP Topic 20336, *Agency Travel Processing*, for further guidance).

Travel Involving the Governor To accommodate security concerns for travel accompanying the governor on trade missions or other travel involving marketing, the governor’s Chief of Staff may authorize certain exceptions to the regulations.

Agency Head Travel All non-exception-based Agency Head travel must be reviewed and approved by the Agency Head’s fiscal officer or designee prior to the travel event. This approval must accompany the Agency Head’s Expense Report.

Any exceptions to the regulations for Agency Heads for domestic or international travel must be justified and submitted in advance of the travel event to the respective cabinet secretary for approval. This approval must accompany the Agency Head’s Expense Report.

In the case of exception-based domestic or international travel by university presidents, such exception requests *must* be submitted to the Rector of the Board of Visitors.

Approval for all trips must accompany the Expense Report.

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Approval and Exceptions, Continued

Cabinet Member Travel

All cabinet and staff travel must be reviewed and approved by the Director of the Division of Executive Administrative Services. Any exceptions for domestic or international travel must be justified and submitted and approved in advance by the Director of the Division of Executive Administrative Services.

Exceptions for travel exceeding 50% of the lodging guidelines must be routed from the Director of the Division of Executive Administrative Services to the Chief of Staff for approval. This approval must accompany the traveler’s Expense Report.

When an agency is paying for the travel of a Cabinet member or staff, the agency paying the travel expenses must ensure compliance with the exception guidelines listed in this section. This includes Cabinet members or staff that fall under a separate Secretariat.

Approval for all trips must accompany the Expense Report.

Reimbursement by Exempt Organizations

When travel expenses for Agency Heads and employees of non-exempt State agencies are reimbursed by organizations that are exempt from the State Travel Regulations and exceed any of the guidelines established in these regulations, the respective Cabinet Secretary must approve the travel in advance. Reimbursement must comply with the travel policy in effect for the funding organization.

When travel expenses for Cabinet Secretaries exceed the guidelines established by the regulations and are reimbursed by similar organizations, the Director of the Division of Executive Administrative Services must approve all exceptions above the guidelines in advance. Reimbursement must comply with the funding organization’s travel policy.

The Expense Report package should include a notation “exempt organization,” a copy of the approval if the usual limits are exceeded, and documentation of the actual reimbursement.

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Lodging

Introduction

Lodging may be reimbursed when an individual is traveling overnight on official business outside his/her official station. Lodging expense reimbursement varies with the travel destination, but all expenditures must be necessary and reasonable.

Primary responsibility for ensuring the reasonableness of amounts reimbursed rests with the Agency Head or designee and the fiscal officer. This includes ensuring that all travel expenditures have been approved at the appropriate level required, as defined in these regulations.

For exceptions, refer to “Approval and Exceptions” section.

Lodging Rates

All lodging rates are governed by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). The traveler must search for the travel destination** using the search criteria on the website:

[GSA Portal](#)

***NOTE: The travel destination or lodging destination is the city or county in which the hotel is physically located. The hotel’s mailing address should not be used for verification of city/county. If the hotel is not within the city limits, the county in which it is located should be used for lodging rates. If a location is not listed in the GSA table, the standard rate applies.*

When overnight stays are required while on travel status, check, request, and confirm government rate both at the time the reservation is made and during check-in.

Reimbursement for lodging is limited to actual expenses incurred up to the guideline amount, plus hotel taxes, fees, and surcharges. Expenses in excess of the guidelines will not be reimbursed, unless approved in advance as required in the Approval and Exceptions section. Travelers who do not plan with careful consideration to these guidelines will bear the additional expense personally. In such cases, taxes and surcharges will be prorated and reimbursed only for the appropriate rate.

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Lodging, Continued

Alternative Lodging Authorization

When lodging other than hotels and motels is used (for example: apartments for extended travel trips), a comparison statement including **authorization by the Agency Head** or designee must be submitted with the Expense Report. The comparison statement should show the total cost for using the alternate accommodations and length of contract, the cost of the alternative accommodations, and net savings.

Airbnb, bed and breakfasts, or similar lodging alternatives for official state business travel is not permitted. Although Airbnb may appear to be a less expensive alternative to hotel/motel lodging, hidden charges and unnecessary fees can often cause the cost to exceed hotel costs. In some cases, the safety of travelers is a concern. With reputable hotels/motels, there is an expectation of safety within the structure, whereas there is no guarantee of minimum safety requirements being met with Airbnb, bed and breakfasts, and similar alternatives.

Unused Reservations

Communicate travel plan changes to the hotel as soon as possible when a confirmed reservation is being held. Since hotels can charge for unused reservations, these charges will **not** be reimbursed if the traveler is negligent in canceling reservations.

In emergency or unavoidable situations, reimbursement for an unused hotel room may be approved on an exceptional basis by the Agency Head or designee as long as every reasonable effort is made to recoup or avoid the cost of the hotel room.

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Lodging, Continued

Number of Persons in a Hotel Room

Generally, when two or more people travel on official State business and choose to stay in the same hotel room, the applicable lodging rate for the travel destination plus the cost charged by the hotel for any additional persons in the room will apply. Documentation from the hotel listing additional hotel charges for each additional person by room must be provided. This regulation is not intended to discourage agencies from employing cost saving measures such as multiple travelers staying in the same room. However, do not diminish the overall savings that might otherwise be obtained by upgrading to luxury or premium accommodations.

For standard accommodations, the agency fiscal officer may approve lodging rates that are less than the lodging guideline applicable to the travel destination multiplied by the number of official business travelers in the room. This approval must be made in advance of the travel event and included with the reimbursement documentation. The decision of how many travelers will be sharing a room is made at the agency level. For example, if the GSA lodging rate is \$150/night, and the hotel is charging \$250/night for the standard hotel room, then two travelers may share a hotel room at the \$250 rate as it is cost beneficial.

Advance Payments

Advance payments for direct-billed hotel/motel expenses are discouraged. Use of the state-sponsored charge card is encouraged to secure room confirmations. Actual advance payments using the travel charge card program will not be reimbursed prior to the trip. If circumstances make advance payments a necessity, advance payments are limited to one night deposit for direct bill payments.

Direct agency billing of lodging expenses (rates, taxes, and surcharges only) incurred during overnight travel is permitted. Direct billed charges are still considered travel expenditures and are governed by these travel policies and should be included with the estimated costs of the trip if the trip is expected to exceed \$1,500. A copy of the travel estimate should be included with the vendor payment. Direct agency billing of meal expenses incurred during overnight travel, including charging meals to direct-billed hotel rooms, is **not** permitted. Documentation supporting direct bills must include the name of traveler, dates, and purpose of travel.

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Lodging, Continued

Hotel Bills

Itemized hotel bills obtained at time of checkout and other supporting receipts for lodging expense must be included with the Expense Report. The final bill must be presented to show that the lodging fee was paid (example: \$0 due). For hotel rooms obtained through internet providers, the traveler must submit a copy of the final page from the internet site showing total cost and confirmed services. Any unusual charges must be fully documented.

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Meals and Incidental Travel Expenses (M&IE)

Introduction Generally, meals and certain incidental travel expenses are reimbursable on a per diem basis (not actual expenses) for **overnight** official business travel outside the traveler’s official station. (See exceptions for business, overtime and law enforcement meals later in this topic.)

For exceptions, refer to “Approval and Exceptions” section.

M&IE Per Diem Allowance Information regarding standard meal and incidental reimbursement guidelines (including all related taxes and tips) are provided in the **M&IE Rates** Section below. Regardless of destination, a **\$5** per diem amount is paid for each non-travel day of overnight travel for incidental expenses such as bellhop/waiter tips, valet, laundry, and transportation between lodging or business and places where meals may be taken. A prorated amount of \$3.75 (75% of the \$5 incidental per diem) is reimbursed for first and last travel days during a business trip.

The M&IE rate shall be paid directly to the traveler even where it can be shown that one traveler incurred the expenses on behalf of another. The applicable M&IE rate, or fraction thereof, is payable to the traveler without itemization of expense or receipts. Agencies may be more restrictive and pay the actual expenses up to the appropriate M&IE rate in place of maximum per diem; however, this policy must be documented and provided to the Department of Accounts and applicable auditors, when requested.

M&IE Rates All M&IE Rates are governed by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) rates located at the link below. These rates should also be used to determine the maximum meal reimbursement amounts for official business meals and/or the M&IE reduction.

The M&IE must be reduced for the applicable meal when meals are provided at no cost during an overnight travel period. Refer to the **Prorations and Reductions** section on the next page for additional guidance. The M&IE Rates listed on the GSA website include amounts for the 75% travel days. The M&IE Rates must be used unless a traveler needs to make an adjustment for provided meals, as noted in the Prorations and Reductions section.

[GSA Per Diem Rates](#)

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Meals and Incidental Travel Expenses (M&IE), Continued

M&IE Rates, continued

The following reimbursement policies apply.

- The M&IE per diem must correspond to the location specified for the overnight lodging.
- Direct agency billing of meal expenses incurred during overnight travel, including charging meals to direct-billed hotel rooms, is **not** permitted.

Prorations and Reductions

- The following link must be used to calculate prorations and deductions for meal per diems:

[GSA Per Diem M&IE Breakdown](#)

- On a travel departure or return day, 75% of the M&IE rate is reimbursed. For trips involving multiple travel destinations, base the reduction rate in effect for where the night was spent as follows:
 - Departure Day: Where you spend the night.
 - Return Day: Where you spent the night *before* returning to home base.
- When meals are provided at no cost in conjunction with travel events, the applicable M&IE rate must be reduced by the amount shown for the applicable meal in the M&IE Rate Table. For example, if the M&IE rate allows a \$69 total reimbursement, and lunch was provided at no cost, the total allowable reimbursement for that day would be \$49 (\$69 - \$20 lunch).
- However, when meals are provided at no cost in conjunction with travel events on a travel departure or return day, the full M&IE rate must be reduced by the full amount of the appropriate meals followed by a 75% prorating of the balance. For example, if the M&IE rate allows a \$69 total reimbursement, and lunch was provided at no cost on a travel departure or return day, the total allowable reimbursement for that day would be \$40.50 [(\$69 - \$15 lunch = \$54) \$54 * .75 = \$40.50].
- A prorated amount of \$3.75 (75% of the \$5 incidental per diem) is reimbursed for first and last travel days during a business trip.

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Meals and Incidental Travel Expenses (M&IE), Continued

**Prorations and
Reductions,
continued**

When meals are included with registration or lodging expense as part of a package, the number and type of meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) must be recorded on the Expense Report. If a continental breakfast or reception is offered as part of the travel event and the food/timing is sufficient to serve as a meal, the traveler must reduce the per diem by the appropriate allowance amount. If a breakfast is offered at no charge by the hotel and the traveler does not partake in the breakfast due to any *reasonable* circumstance (e.g. early work hours do not allow for participation in the provided breakfast, the food provided was not adequate, the traveler’s dietary needs were not met, etc.), then the traveler must notate this on the Expense Report. If a meal is offered as part of a conference and the traveler has medical restrictions, the traveler should make every effort to have the conference facilitate his/her needs by the deadline specified by the conference. If the conference does not honor the request, the traveler is not required to deduct the applicable meal allowance from the per diem. However, the traveler must include a note or other documentation with the Expense Report documenting this information.

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Meals and Incidental Travel Expenses (M&IE), Continued

Allowed Expenses

Taxes, fees, and surcharges paid by the traveler for lodging.

Internet Access, Hotel Business Center Charges (copying or printing), and Facsimiles for official business purposes and paid for by the traveler may be claimed on the Expense Report. A full explanation must be stated on the Expense Report accompanied by supporting documentation.

Tolls and parking fees are reimbursable when paid for by the traveler in the course of conducting official State business. A receipt is required for reimbursement claims where each individual claim is greater than \$75 per instance. Reimbursement *must* be claimed as an “other expense” on the Expense Report.

Funeral attendance expenses are reimbursable for one employee selected by the Agency Head or designee to represent the agency. Lodging and M&IE are allowed if the representative is considered to be in travel status and an overnight stay is required.

Disallowed Expenses

Disallowed expenses include:

- Lost or stolen articles
- Alcoholic beverages
- Damage to personal vehicles, clothing, or other items
- Services to gain entry to a locked vehicle
- Movies charged to hotel bills
- All expenses related to the personal negligence of the traveler, such as fines (parking tickets, unpaid tolls, etc.)
- Entertainment expenses
- Travel Insurance (Personal injury or loss, trip interruption / cancellation, etc.)
- Towing charges, and
- Expenses for children, spouses, and companions while on travel status.

The above list is not all-inclusive. Travelers should use prudent judgment and remember that all travel expense accounts are open to the public and must be able to sustain the test of public review.

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Non-Travel Related Meals

Business Meals Generally, meal expenses must involve an overnight stay to qualify for reimbursement. In these instances, the traveler must adhere to the travel regulations outlined earlier in this topic for meal reimbursement.

Individuals who are not in a travel status are eligible for meal reimbursement if they participate in a business meal. Individuals in travel status may occasionally attend meals that qualify as business meals.

Such meals occur while the individual is conducting official business and must:

- Include documented pre-approval by Agency Head or designee.
- Involve substantive and bona fide business discussions and include the original, itemized receipt.
- List by name all persons involved in the meal and the reason for the meal. If the reimbursement is for a group of conference participants, identify the number of people fed and an explanation of additional meals, if necessary (example: coverage of walk-ins).
- Be reimbursed for actual expenses up to the amount shown for the applicable meal in the M&IE Rate Table on the GSA website, excluding the incidental allowance. (See **Business Meal Exceptions**)
- For individuals in travel status, the per diem allowance applicable to the business meal must be clearly excluded from the daily reimbursement.
- Delivery costs and a reasonable tip (up to 20%) are reimbursable as long as the total cost does not exceed the allowable per diem for the meal.

Official business meals are state sales tax exempt per the [Virginia Department of Taxation's Tax Bulletin 16-3](#).

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Non-Travel Related Meals, Continued

IRS Reporting Requirements for Business Meals

Non-Law Enforcement Personnel

Business meal reimbursements which are not related to overnight travel, and are made under an accountability plan, are not generally considered by the IRS to be reportable income. Employees are responsible for reviewing and conforming to current IRS regulations.

Overtime meals are not considered Business Meals. See the “**Overtime Meal Allowance**” section for further information.

Law Enforcement Personnel and Sponsored Programs

IRS income reporting requirements for meals reimbursed under the law enforcement personnel meal reimbursement policy or the sponsored program exception must be determined by the disbursing agency based on the specific circumstances of each case.

Overtime Meal Allowance

Agency conditions that necessitate overtime vary greatly. An agency with special or unique conditions may submit, in writing, an agency-specific overtime meal policy to the Department of Accounts (ComplianceAssurance@doa.virginia.gov). When developing an overtime meal policy, prudent judgment is expected to recognize only reasonable and necessary costs. An overtime meal allowance is a fixed dollar amount allowed while working or traveling in an overtime status. Overtime status is when work or travel time occurs beyond an employee’s normal, scheduled work hours, but not overnight. Therefore, overtime meal allowance does not apply during overnight travel. In the case of overnight travel, per diem rates apply.

An overtime meal allowance is allowed when overtime worked is:

- Essential to the agency’s mission
- Permitted by agency policy
- Approved by appropriate agency personnel, and
- In excess of the employee’s normal, scheduled work hours.

Note: Scheduled work hours and overtime hours worked for overtime meals must be included on the Expense Report.

Agencies are required to comply with IRS regulations regarding reportable meals. An overtime meal allowance based on the number of hours worked is considered taxable wages.

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Non-Travel Related Meals, Continued

Overtime Meal Rates The Overtime Meal Allowance policy described in the following table must be followed unless an agency-specific overtime meal policy is approved by DOA.

IF...	Are worked or traveled AND the overtime occurs...	THEN an overtime meal allowance is...	Documentation Required
2 or more overtime hours	during a normal workday	\$7.50 (\$11.25 if outside the official station)	Workday and Overtime Start/End Times
5 or more overtime hours	on a Saturday, Sunday, holiday or an alternate work schedule day off *	\$7.50 (\$11.25 if outside the official station)	Overtime Start/End Times
10 or more overtime hours	on a Saturday, Sunday, holiday or an alternate work schedule day off *	\$20.00 (\$30.00 if outside the official station)	Overtime Start/End Times

* **Note** Or if comparable overtime is necessitated by shift schedule or beyond a routine scheduled 40-hour work period.

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Non-Travel Related Meals, Continued

Law Enforcement Personnel Meals

Under certain circumstances, meals may be reimbursed when an overnight stay is not involved for law enforcement personnel. Reimbursement for actual meal expenses or fixed meal allowances may be paid by agencies which have a policy providing for such payments. Additionally, the employees must meet each of the following criteria.

The officer:

- has arrest powers
- is sworn to uphold the law
- is permitted to carry a firearm, according to the *Code of Virginia*, and
- is required, according to agency policy, to be in an “on Duty” or “Ready” status during the meal period.

Minimum requirements for the *On Duty* or *Ready* status are as follows:

- The duties require the employee to be available during the meal period to perform public service such as reporting of accidents or dissemination of information concerning traffic, motor vehicle, or other laws (examples: marine, game, forestry laws).
- The employee *is required* to stay in close communication during the meal period for possible immediate response to emergency situations. Such response may interrupt or cancel the employee’s meal period.
- The employee *is required* to have his/her meal in an area accessible to the public so that public services can be readily provided.

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Transportation

State-Owned Automobile

Rules and policies for use of a state vehicle are defined in the Office of Fleet Management Policies & Procedures issued by the Department of General Services. Agency Heads shall limit authorization for commuting in State-owned vehicles to those employees whose job travel requirements make commuting the only cost-effective or practical alternative. No appointee, serving at the pleasure of the Governor, shall use a State-owned vehicle for the purpose of commuting, except:

- where the commute is connected to a departure for or return from a trip on official State business, or
- where authorized by the Secretary of Public Safety for job-related emergencies.

Permanent use of State-owned vehicles by persons performing official State business is permitted as determined by the Agency Head. A written request must be made by the Agency Head explaining in detail the purpose or reason for such an assignment on forms prescribed by the Office of Fleet Management Services.

State-Owned Automobile Permanent Basis

Agencies that have employees who travel frequently on official state business should request a State-owned vehicle on a permanent basis, if it is cost beneficial to the state. Such agencies should conduct a cost/benefit analysis on an annual basis to evaluate whether the use of permanently assigned, agency vehicles would be cost beneficial to the state. The cost benefit analysis should consider the actual costs associated with providing state-owned vehicles including Office of Fleet Management charges, incremental administrative costs of establishing an agency fleet or adding vehicles to an existing agency fleet, vehicle parking costs, and any vehicle maintenance and operating costs not paid by the Office of Fleet Management Services. For further information and guidance concerning the use and availability of permanently assigned vehicles, refer to the Office of Fleet Management Policies & Procedures issued by the Department of General Services.

State-Owned Aircraft

State-owned aircraft are available on a priority basis and can be scheduled through the Department of Aviation (*DOAV*). Refer to the aircraft use guidelines that can be found on the [Virginia Department of Aviation's Website](#). Costs should be compared with commercial rates to determine the best air carrier travel for State travel.

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Transportation, Continued

Personally Owned Automobile

Employees are permitted to use their personally owned automobile when a State-owned vehicle or Office of Fleet Management Services (OFMS) rental vehicle is not available, or when the use of a personally owned automobile is cost-beneficial to the agency. Employees electing to use their personal vehicle as a matter of convenience will be reimbursed for mileage at the GSA Private Owned Vehicle rate stated below. The applicable Personal Mileage Expense Type option (Convenience, Cost Justified, Over 15K Miles) should be selected in the Expense Report.

When processing mileage reimbursement in Cardinal for a personally owned automobile, the mileage traveled should be rounded to the nearest whole mile. Cardinal does not allow for entry of a fraction of a mile.

Current Mileage Rates

Reimbursement rates are set in the current Appropriation Act (Section 4 - 5.04e.2):

- **Current IRS rate** - when a personally owned automobile is cost justified or a State- owned vehicle/OFMS rental is not available, for the first 15,000 miles of use each fiscal year.
- Reimbursement rates are reduced to **\$0.13/mile** for travel in excess of 15,000 miles in one fiscal year, unless a State-owned vehicle is not available; then, the rate shall be **the current IRS rate**.

Current GSA Private Owned Vehicle rate will be reimbursed when use of a personally owned automobile is elected for the convenience of the employee. This is the current GSA privately owned vehicle (convenience) mileage rate published at:

[GSA Private Owned Vehicle Rate.](#)

The current IRS rates can be found at [IRS Standard Mileage Rates.](#)

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Transportation, Continued

**Short Term
Trip
Vehicle—
Enterprise
Rental Car**

The Department of General Services, Office of Fleet Management Services (OFMS), maintains a contract with Enterprise Leasing to provide vehicles for short term travel by state employees.

When preparing for a trip, the traveler should visit the OFMS website (at least 24 hours in advance) and use the trip calculator to determine the vehicle cost for the proposed trip: [Department of General Services Travel Planning](#)

This cost should be used in the agency’s cost benefit analysis as required in the following section. **All vehicle reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance of the anticipated pickup of the vehicle.** Otherwise, the traveler may be restricted to reimbursement at the Personal Convenience Rate.

Rental of vehicles which last longer than 30 days must have the **prior approval** of the Office of Fleet Management Services.

Operators of Short-Term Trip Vehicles are subject to the OFMS Policies and Procedures that apply to state- or agency- owned vehicle, including use for official business only. See OFMS Policies and Procedures Manual (II. Travel Planning).

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Cost Benefit Analysis

Unless otherwise noted, agencies must conduct a cost benefit analysis to determine whether a state-owned vehicle, OFMS rental, or a personally owned automobile should be used in official state travel. It is expected that a good faith effort will be made to use the Enterprise Rental contract when a state-owned vehicle is not available. (See “Short Term Trip Vehicle— Enterprise Rental Car” section.)

A cost benefit analysis is not required for occasional same-day or overnight travel planned for distances up to 200 miles. For a travel event greater than 200 miles, a cost benefit analysis MUST be completed prior to the travel event and included with the travel reimbursement package.*

The OFMS TRIP CALCULATOR (See “Short Term Trip Vehicle— Enterprise Rental Car” section) should be used to obtain the Enterprise vehicle cost for the cost benefit analysis.

Examples of other factors that can be considered in the cost benefit analysis are:

- Distance to the nearest Enterprise location and the hours of operation
- Availability of an Enterprise rental vehicle
- Administrative time required to obtain the Enterprise rental car
- The type of vehicle required and the number of travelers

In emergency or rare cases, the IRS mileage rate may be reimbursed when use of a personal vehicle is not considered cost beneficial to the state. The Agency Head or designee must approve of the reimbursement in advance of the travel event, when practical, and this approval must be documented within the travel reimbursement package.

**Non-state employees are not required to complete a cost benefit analysis for mileage reimbursement for official state business trips. The IRS mileage rate will be reimbursed to these individuals.*

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Transportation, Continued

Mileage Versus Air Costs Planned personal vehicle or rental car costs cannot exceed the total cost of the trip using the most economical public air transportation available. All travel costs (including meals, lodging, parking, ground transportation, etc.) should be considered for each option. Reimbursement shall be limited to the least expensive option (flying vs. driving). Comparative statements should be attached to the Expense Report for reimbursement.

Travel Routing Travel routing, whether by public transportation, privately-owned vehicle, State-owned vehicle or for-hire conveyance, shall be the most direct practicable route.

Weekend and Holiday Mileage Mileage incurred when the individual is required to work on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday that is **not a scheduled workday** may be reimbursed.

Out of Country Mileage Reimbursement for out-of-country travel will be at the rate established in the current Appropriations Act. However, if a higher personal mileage rate is justifiable, a request must be sent to the Deputy State Comptroller at ComplianceAssurance@doa.virginia.gov for approval. This request must have appropriate documentation to support the proposed reimbursement.

Parking & Toll Expenses Parking and Toll expenses are reimbursable. A receipt is required for reimbursement claims where each individual claim is greater than \$75 per instance. Reimbursement must be claimed as an “other expense” on the Expense Report.

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Transportation, Continued

Public Transportation

Public transportation travel includes:

- Rental Car
- Plane
- Train
- Bus
- Taxi, Shuttle, Uber (or similar ride sharing service), or other “for hire transportation”

Public transportation rates must not exceed those for tourist or coach class accommodations. Receipts for such expenses (e.g., rental car, plane, train, bus) must be retained for submission with the Expense Report. Because of the liquidity of air and rail tickets, any unused portions must be returned to the agency for credit. Each agency *must* have a written policy and assigned responsibility for obtaining and controlling airline and rail tickets, particularly any unused portions.

Charges for changes to tickets/reservations to accommodate personal comfort, convenience, and/or taste are not reimbursable. Change fees must be explained on the Expense Report.

For taxis, shuttle vans, Uber (or similar ride sharing service) and other forms of on demand or reserved “for hire transportation,” receipts are required **only** if the reimbursement claim exceeds \$75 per instance. The least costly “for hire transportation” must be used in all cases. A reason must be identified on the voucher of the necessity for **reserved** “for hire” transportation. Reimbursement for limousine or other forms of luxury transportation services are not allowed. A maximum tip of 20% of the fare is reimbursable as a transportation cost separate from Meals and Incidental Expenses. For reimbursement, the Expense Report must separate the amount for the tip from the amount of the fare.

Public transportation from place of lodging to restaurants is allowed only for official business needs.

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Transportation, Continued

Air & Rail Tickets

Generally, airline and rail travel cannot exceed the rates charged for tourist or coach class accommodations. Recently, airlines have created a higher level of coach class (business, premium, coach plus, etc.) service that charges a premium for certain desired seats. Such upgrades in the coach seating area are enhancements to the coach fare and are not reimbursable.

With careful consideration of the reasonableness limitations specified in the “**Expenses Must be Reasonable and Necessary**” section of these regulations, the approving authority may grant permission for **business class** air or rail travel under the following circumstances:

Air

- When it does not cost more than the lowest available tourist/coach fare (comparison must be attached to Expense Report), or
- For travel to western Europe if the business meeting is conducted within three hours of landing, or
- For transoceanic, intercontinental trips involving flight-time of more than eight consecutive hours, or
- If the traveler pays the difference.

Rail

- When it does not cost more than the lowest available tourist/coach fare (comparison must be attached to Expense Report), or
- When reserved coach seats are not offered on the route, or
- If the traveler pays the difference.

Reimbursement for first class air or rail travel is prohibited.

Note: Documents that validate the mode and class of travel are required for all air and rail reimbursements made directly to the employee.

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Transportation, Continued

Canceled Air & Rail Tickets If a flight or trip is cancelled, the ticket documentation must be given to the Agency Fiscal Officer for safekeeping. Cancelled tickets (full fare and non-refundable) may hold some residual value depending upon specific airline policies and restrictions. The agency should develop a policy to adequately control unused tickets. The Agency Fiscal Officer is responsible for ensuring that any residual value is used for official agency business.

Additional Airline Fees Certain airlines now charge additional fees for baggage and other services formerly included in the airfare cost. When procuring airfare for business travel, travelers should consider total costs in selecting the most appropriate carrier. Airlines publish limits for baggage and the fees associated with those limits. Travelers are expected to be aware of these limits. In the event these limits must be exceeded for legitimate business purposes, the cost is reimbursable. A receipt and appropriate explanation must be included with the Expense Report.

Chartered Aircraft Travel Chartered aircraft will only be used when State-owned aircraft are not available or will not meet customer needs. The Department of Aviation (DOAV) shall contract for all chartered aircraft on behalf of state agencies. Reference the aircraft use guidelines on the [Virginia Department of Aviation's Website](#).

Chartering an aircraft is permitted when authorized in advance by the requesting agency's Cabinet Secretary or designee and justified by a written cost benefit analysis. The cost benefit analysis must include a comparison of the total costs of the trip by alternative means of travel. This includes consideration of such benefits as reduced overnight travel costs and employee time out of the office, security, etc. A copy of this analysis and the written approval from the Cabinet Secretary or designee must be attached to the traveling agency's Expense Report.

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Personal Use Aircraft Travel

The use of personal aircraft is permitted for official state travel with the prior approval of the appropriate Agency Head. Personal aircraft usage by an Agency Head requires the prior approval of the appropriate cabinet secretary.

Documentation of comparable costs for other travel means must be included in the Expense Report package. The reimbursement shall be limited to the most economical means of travel available at that time. For example, if it were less costly to travel by commercial carrier, the reimbursement shall be limited to the lowest cost commercial carrier ticket available. The traveler must include a signed statement with the Expense Report certifying that the amount requested represents the most economical use of public funds. As with all travel, it is the responsibility of the traveler and the agency fiscal office to ensure the most efficient use of taxpayer funds.

The reimbursement rate per mile shall be the amount listed by the federal government at the GSA website at the time of the travel:

[GSA Personal Use Airfare Rates](#)

A dated printout or screenshot of this site indicating the appropriate mileage rate for the travel time period must be included with the Expense Report package.

Bus Travel

Permitted in lieu of automobile, airline, or train travel when cost beneficial.

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Transportation, Continued

Car Rental

Reimbursement of car rental expenses is limited to official business use only. Car rentals may be made through commercial rental agencies. The traveler must select the most economical contractor and type of vehicle available and acquire any commercial rate or government discount available when the vehicle is rented. When possible, rentals should be arranged through a company that has contracted with the Commonwealth to perform such services.

In most cases, rental vehicles would only be necessary after reaching the destination of travel. However, for travel initiated from the traveler’s base point, the traveler may conduct a cost benefit analysis to determine if it is beneficial for the State to use a rental car in lieu of a personal vehicle for the planned trip. The cost benefit analysis should consider the cost of the rental car, any surcharges, and the cost of fuel for operating the rental vehicle. If this analysis demonstrates that it is cost effective to obtain the rental car and agency policy permits, a rental car may be used, and the cost/benefit analysis must be attached to the Expense Report.

Car Rental Insurance

There are several types of car rental insurance that is offered by rental car contractors, included in the categories of comprehensive and collision (liability).

When renting a car for official state business travel, the option to purchase insurance offered by rental car contractors depends upon the following circumstances:

If the traveler is a . . .	then . . .	Notes
State Employee inside the continental U.S.	Decline	Rental insurance will not be reimbursed. The Department of Treasury, Division of Risk Management, provides a Statewide Self-Insured Automobile plan for State employees.
State Employee outside of the continental U.S., but inside the territorial United States	Accept	Individuals traveling outside of the continental U.S., but inside of the territorial United States are required to purchase and will be reimbursed for comprehensive and collision coverage. Other types of insurance offered such as trip cancellation, personal, health or life insurance are not reimbursable.
State Employee outside the territorial United States	Accept	Individuals traveling outside of the territorial United States are required to purchase and will be reimbursed for comprehensive and collision insurance. Other types of insurance offered such as trip cancellation, personal, health or life insurance are not reimbursable.

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Transportation, Continued

Traveler’s Tip The Department of Treasury, Division of Risk Management, provides liability coverage for State Employees in the course and scope of employment for third party damages when the State employee is negligent or "at-fault". Liability coverage does not include damages to the rented vehicle, whether the State driver is at-fault or not. This is why the employee may decline additional liability coverage by the rental car company.

Damages to the rental car, regardless of fault, will be the responsibility of the agency to repair. The Division of Risk Management offers “Lease Care” insurance to agencies to cover damages for rental vehicles, excluding heavy duty trucks, off-road vehicles and motorcycles, up to \$35,000. Coverage under "Lease Care" is provided regardless of fault, subject to deductible and subrogation requirements. This coverage is optional, and each agency should decide on obtaining “Lease Care” coverage based on their particular risk situation. If the agency does not have "Lease Care" they should obtain collision coverage from the rental car company.

Additionally, a traveler may encounter a situation when renting a car outside of Virginia and the car rental company requires the traveler to obtain coverage from the car rental company or show some evidence of insurance. The traveler should determine if this requirement is in effect for their travel destination and if so, obtain a “Proof of Insurance” certificate from the Division of Risk Management. This can be obtained on-line from the Department of Treasury Web Site at:

<https://trs.virginia.gov/Risk-Management/Plans-Programs/State-Government>

Car Rental Refueling

Travelers must ensure that the rental vehicle is refueled before returning the vehicle to the rental contractor unless an exception is noted. Reimbursement will be based on the fuel used and receipts provided. Reimbursement must be claimed as an “other expense” on the Expense Report.

In no instance should the traveler enter into a “Fuel Agreement” or pay for fuel at the time of rental or before vehicle is used to avoid paying for fuel not used.

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International Travel

Approval Authority

In addition to all other policies set forth in this travel policy, the following policies must be adhered to when traveling internationally. The following approvals must be obtained in advance, dated and submitted with the Expense Report.

If the traveler is...	Then, approval must be made in advance by...
A State employee	The respective Agency Head or designee.
An Agency Head	The respective cabinet secretary.
A cabinet secretary	The Governor’s Chief of Staff.

To ensure all travel meets the test of necessity, travel involving more than three employees from a single agency to a single international travel destination must be approved in advance by the Cabinet Secretary.

Air Travel Emphasized

The guidelines stated previously for air travel also apply to international travel. Specifically, airline travel cannot exceed the rates charged for tourist/coach fare except as follows:

With careful consideration of the reasonableness limitations specified in the “Expenses Must be Reasonable and Necessary” section of these regulations, the approving authority may provide written authorization for **business class** travel, or premium coach seating, under the following circumstances:

- When it does not cost more than the lowest available tourist/coach fare (comparison must be attached to Expense Report), or
- For travel to western Europe if the business meeting is conducted within three hours of landing, or
- For transoceanic, intercontinental trips involving flight-time of more than eight consecutive hours, or
- If the traveler pays the difference.

Reimbursement for first class travel is prohibited.

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International Travel, Continued

Per Diem Rates The Commonwealth of Virginia uses the lodging and M&IE per diem rates for foreign travel as defined by the Federal Government, General Services Administration (GSA). The Department of Defense (DOD) sets the rates for Hawaii, Alaska, and all United States Territories (Puerto Rico, Guam, The U.S. Virgin Islands, etc.) The Secretary of State establishes these maximum rates of per diem allowances for travel in foreign areas.

The [GSA Travel Webpage](#) has links to the DOD and State Department web sites. If a specific city is not listed, use the “Other” rate shown for that country. The M&IE portion of the maximum per diem rate covers the cost of meals as well as incidental expenses.

Printouts or screenshots of appropriate rates for the time of travel must be attached to the Expense Report for reimbursement.

DOA Contacts

Contacts

General Travel Information and Limitations

Compliance Oversight and Federal Reporting Unit

☎ (804) 225-4103

✉ complianceassurance@doa.virginia.gov

EDI Employee Enrollment Information

Assistant Director, EDI Unit, General Accounting

☎ (804) 692-0473

✉ edi@doa.virginia.gov

<https://www.doa.virginia.gov/reference.shtml#edi>

Travel Charge Card, Agency Travel Card, and Purchasing Card

Assistant Director, Charge Card Administration, Finance and Administration

☎ (804) 786-9259

✉ cca@doa.virginia.gov

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Subject Cross References

References

CAPP – Cardinal Topic No. 20310, *Expenditures*
CAPP – Cardinal Topic No. 20336, *Agency Travel Processing*
CAPP – Cardinal Topic No. 20355, *Purchasing Charge Card*
CAPP – Cardinal Topic No. 20360, *Travel Charge Card*

Refer to suggested job aids and training information for data entry and processing on the [Cardinal Project Website](#).

Suggested Job Aids and Forms The following forms can be found on the [Cardinal Project Forms Website](#):

Cash Advance Request
Employee Travel Authorization and Expense Report

The following can be found on the [Cardinal Project Simulations Website](#):

Processing Employee Expenses (Simulation)

The following can be found on the [Cardinal Project Course Materials Website](#):

AP315A Online Expense Processing
AP315B Interface Expense Processing
AP317 Approving Employee Expenses
AP316 Employee Expenses Administration

The following can be found on the [Cardinal Project Job Aids Website](#):

Applying and Reconciling a Cash Advance
Authorizing a Proxy for an Employee
Cash Advance Interface Processing
Creating an Expense Template
Entering Non-Reimbursable Expenses
Expense Type Coding – Online Agency
Tips for Entering Employee Expenses – Online Agencies
Updating and Deleting Expense Transactions
Expense Report Interface Processing
Updating an Employee Expense Profile
Reassigning Employee Expense Approvals

Additional job aids and training materials may be available on the Cardinal website.
