

# STATE TRAVEL POLICY

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# STATE TRAVEL POLICY

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## SECTION 1. General

- 1.1 Scope:** This policy governs in-state, out-of-state and international travel, hereinafter referred to as "travel," for state officials, employees and non-employees, except those in the legislative and judicial branches of state government and except the Attorney General, Auditor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Board of Investments and Commissioner of Agriculture and their employees traveling on behalf of the state of West Virginia. .

## SECTION 2. Delegation of Authority and Responsibilities

- 2.1** Authority to manage, approve, or disapprove travel and travel-related expense is delegated exclusively to the spending officer of a state agency. Authority may be revoked by the Travel Management Office.
- 2.2** The spending officer may delegate authority to others within the respective state agency to act as designee(s) for authorizing and approving travel and travel-related expenses as may be required. All such authorizations and approvals shall be made in accordance with the provisions of these regulations.
- 2.3** Travel may be authorized only for official business and only if the state agency has the financial resources to reimburse the traveler for travel expenses.
- 2.4** The spending officer may develop administrative policies and procedures for the state agency, consistent with this policy, to provide additional guidance to employees and others traveling on behalf of the state agency.
- 2.5** The responsibility to audit a traveler's expense account settlement lies with the state agency. Approval of a traveler's expense account settlement by the state agency means that the expense account settlement meets all criteria established by this policy for reimbursement. The state agency shall audit and submit an accurate expense account settlement for reimbursement to the Auditor's Office within fifteen (15) days after completion of travel.

## SECTION 3. Travel Regulations Applicable to All employees, Board and Commission Members, and Non-employees

### 3.1 Employees

- 3.1.1** Approval to travel shall be secured in advance by the employee in accordance with these regulations, and if applicable, the administrative

policies and procedures of the state agency. Under no circumstances should an employee travel without proper approval of the spending officer.

- 3.1.2 Employees are responsible for submitting a travel expense account settlement form with all required attachments to the traveler's spending unit. The form should be submitted within the time prescribed by the Travel Management Office or spending unit after the last day of the approved travel to qualify for reimbursement of expenses.
- 3.1.3 Consultants, contractors, and non-employees are not required to use these policies and regulations, at the spending unit's option. All consultant and contractor travel should be included as part of the consulting/contractor fee agreement (WV-48).
- 3.1.4 Reimbursement of travel expenses paid from federal, state, and private grants shall be governed by the terms and conditions of the grant if they differ from those contained in this policy; otherwise, this policy shall govern such reimbursement.

**3.2 Purchasing Card Receipt Requirements:** Employees are responsible for submitting all original, required receipts for travel to the appropriate Departmental Card Coordinator for expenses paid using the Purchasing Card in accordance with Purchasing Card Program policy.

### **3.3 Board and Commission Members**

- 3.3.1 This policy shall govern reimbursement of travel expenses to board and commission members when legislation requires such members to follow this policy.

## **SECTION 4. Transportation**

### **4.1 Air Transportation**

#### **4.1.1 Commercial Airlines**

**4.1.1.2** Tickets must be purchased using the Purchasing Card.

**4.1.1.3** Allowable reimbursement for commercial airline travel shall include the actual expense or cost for the least expensive logical fare via the most direct route, or a reasonable alternative route if it results in lower fare.

**4.1.1.4** Travelers must make advance bookings through the state's E-Travel Management System to secure the least expensive airfare

possible. Reimbursement for tickets where reservations were not made through the state's E-Travel Management System requires authorization from the Travel Management Office. Reimbursement may be made to the traveler in advance for airfare purchased 45 to 180 days prior to the trip.

**4.1.1.5** In order to receive reimbursement, the traveler must submit the original invoice from the travel service vendor. If airfare is reimbursed prior to the trip, it must be referenced on the traveler's final expense account. Refundable or unused airline tickets shall be returned immediately to the ticket issuer for a proper credit or refund.

**4.1.1.6** If an increase in the cost of airfare is incurred, the charge is reimbursable if the traveler is directed by the appropriate spending officer to change his or her travel plans, or if other extenuating circumstances arise. Increased or extra charges incurred due to the traveler's negligence will be considered a personal expense of the traveler and shall not be reimbursed.

**4.1.1.7** Deliberately causing increased costs or delays to obtain personal gratuities, such as denied boarding compensation, frequent flier points or mileage, or similar benefits is prohibited. In addition, conversion of airline tickets for personal benefit, such as downgrading tickets, returning unused tickets for cash, credit, or personal airline tickets, or any other similar action is prohibited. Any credits, rebates, or refunds resulting from these actions must be returned to the state of West Virginia

**4.1.1.8** All major airlines charge a fee to issue paper flight coupons in situations where an e-ticket is available. E-tickets are the industry standard, are issued automatically, and are sufficient for traveling and reimbursement unless the traveler specifically requests a paper ticket. If a paper ticket is requested, the service charge will not be reimbursed. If travelers experience problems with e-tickets when exchanging due to flight cancellations or delays, particularly when changing airlines, the travel service vendor is required to assist and provide proper documentation.

#### **4.1.2 Non-Commercial Aircraft Service**

**4.1.2.1** For any state-owned or private aircraft service, please contact the Aviation Division for policies, procedures, and instructions.

## **4.2 Ground Transportation**

**4.2.1** The traveler may use a state-owned vehicle, privately-owned vehicle, or a commercial rental vehicle for ground transportation. The availability and use of a state-owned vehicle will be determined by the Fleet Management Office and/or the spending units' administrative policies and procedures.

**4.2.2** The traveler must possess a valid operator's license if operating a vehicle. The traveler is personally responsible for any fines or penalties resulting from citations, charges, or warrants attributable to operator negligence. Such fines or penalties shall not be reimbursed.

**4.2.3** In cases where a traveler chooses to drive rather than fly while on business, reimbursement will be based on actual in-transit expenses (mileage, hotels, parking, meals, etc.), not to exceed the lowest available commercial airfare plus local transportation, and parking (where required) to and from the airport.

#### **4.2.4 Privately-Owned Vehicles**

**4.2.4.1** Privately-owned vehicles may be used for state travel with agency approval when agency owned or leased vehicles are unavailable. A privately-owned vehicle should not be used when reimbursement costs are expected to exceed \$50.00 per day or mileage reimbursement is expected to cost more than the cost of commercial travel (air, rental car, etc.).

Reimbursement will be made at the prevailing rate per mile established by the Travel Management Office, excluding normal daily commuting mileage, for actual miles traveled using the shortest practicable route to the point of arrival at the traveler's destination. This rate is intended to cover all operating costs of the vehicle (including fuel, maintenance, depreciation, insurance, etc.) and no additional reimbursement will be made.

**4.2.4.2** Receipts are not required for mileage reimbursement when using privately-owned vehicles.

#### **4.2.5 Commercial Rental Vehicles**

**4.2.5.1** A commercial rental vehicle should only be used when a temporary need arises, a state vehicle is unavailable, and the cost will be less than the reimbursement associated with a privately-owned vehicle. Only the state employee renting the vehicle is permitted to operate the vehicle.

The Purchasing Card is the only acceptable method of payment when renting a vehicle. Reimbursement for rentals made outside of the statewide car rental contract requires authorization from the Travel Management Office. Reimbursement will be made at actual cost for the daily rental fee for a mid-size,

standard, or smaller vehicle, plus mileage fees and fuel costs. For travel of more than a few days in duration, weekly rental rates may be reimbursed if they will result in a lower total cost than the daily rate. Reimbursement may be made for full-size vehicles if more than three (3) people are traveling together on business and for larger vehicles if a group of five (5) or more is traveling together.

#### **4.2.6 Collision Damage Insurance (CDW)**

**4.2.6.1** The Purchasing Card provides CDW at no cost for rentals up to 31 days.

**4.2.6.2** The Purchasing Card Program does not cover the rental of trucks, campers, off-road vehicles, trailers, motorized bikes, motorcycles and motorized scooters, antique cars, high value, special interest and exotic cars, or vans that seat more than eight (8) occupants.

**4.2.6.3** The statewide car rental contract may provide CDW for some vehicles excluded by the Purchasing Card Program. Please refer to the current contact.

No other insurance or insurance-like product is reimbursable for rentals used in the United States, unless required by law. Full coverage insurance is a reimbursable expense for any approved rental vehicle used outside the United States.

**4.2.6.4** If a third party booking incurs a service fee, that fee will not be reimbursed (i.e. some internet sites charge a service fee for booking cars). Travelers may use car rental services from another company in the following situations:

- a) Rental car vendor does not have a location in the specific area.
- b) Rental car vendor does not have the appropriate vehicle at the time needed.
- c) Rental car vendor does not have the appropriate vehicle for the duration needed.

Travelers must note these exceptions on the travel expense settlement form.

**4.2.6.5** Receipts or documentation is required for reimbursement of car rental and mileage charges or fees. Reimbursement may be made for actual fuel costs. Receipts must be attached. Travelers must return rental cars with a full tank of fuel. Refueling costs charged by rental car vendors are not reimbursable.

#### **4.2.7 Rail Service**

**4.2.7.1** Travelers are expected to make advanced bookings through the contracted travel services vendor and use the least expensive logical fare via the most direct route or other reasonable route that results in a lower fare.

**4.2.7.2** Receipts or documentation is required for reimbursement of rail service expenses.

#### **4.2.8 Miscellaneous Ground Transportation**

**4.2.8.1** When courtesy transportation is provided by a hotel, motel, or other service facility, the traveler is encouraged to use such service.

**4.2.8.2** Travelers may be reimbursed for taxi, bus, and other forms of public transportation. Receipts are not required if under the limit authorized by the Travel Management Office. If the Purchasing Card is used to make these payments, a receipt is required.

### **SECTION 5. Lodging**

#### **5.1 Reimbursement**

**5.1.1** Allowable reimbursement for lodging shall include the actual expense for overnight accommodations and all applicable taxes and surcharges. Employees are reimbursed for lodging up to the maximum per diem established by the federal government. Travelers may request reimbursement above the per diem, not to exceed 300 percent (300%) of the maximum per diem allowance. Request for reimbursement above the per diem allowance should be made in advance of travel. Reimbursement above per diem following travel may be granted subject to agency approval.

**5.1.2** Travelers shall secure the lowest rate available at a reasonably priced facility. Certain hotels and motels offer special reduced rates to state employees. Sales tax is to be paid by traveler unless the lodging facility is located in the state of West Virginia and billed to the Purchasing Card.

**5.1.3** Reimbursement for a single occupancy shall be at the least expensive single room rate available.

**5.1.4** The location of the lodging facility should be as convenient as possible to the place where business is being transacted. The meal per diem is based on the temporary duty location. If lodging is not available at the temporary duty location, the agency may authorize or approve the maximum per diem rate for the location where lodging is obtained.

**5.1.5** For multiple occupancy, reimbursement may be claimed fully by one

traveler with no claim filed by the other traveler, or each traveler may be reimbursed at equal percentages of the total actual cost for accommodations.

**5.1.6** If an increase in the lodging charge is incurred, the change is reimbursable if the traveler is directed by the appropriate spending officer to change his or her travel plans, or if other extenuating circumstances arise. Charges incurred due to the traveler's failure to notify the facility will be considered the personal expense of the traveler.

**5.1.7** Under no circumstances should a hotel be booked through a third party vendor (i.e. Hotels.com, Travelocity, Expedia, etc). Third party vendors are unable to provide an invoice or folio for reimbursement and charge service fees that are not reimbursable

## **5.2 Receipts**

**5.2.1** Receipts are required for lodging reimbursement. An invoice or folio shall be the official document utilized for reimbursement to the traveler.

## **SECTION 6. Meals**

**6.1** Meal expense reimbursement is based on the temporary duty location and is not to exceed the maximum per diem established by the federal government. Alcohol and entertainment expenses are specifically excluded. If a percentage of the maximum daily rate is used, the traveler may round the calculated amount up to the next whole dollar. Meal reimbursement is allowed when lodging is listed as "gratis" or "no charge."

**6.2** State employees will be reimbursed the cost of meals when there is an overnight stay.

**6.2.1** Exceptions may be granted to the established rates when authorized by the spending officer. If reimbursement is made in excess of federal government rates, receipts are required and the spending officer must approve the expense voucher.

**6.3** Travelers may request meal allowances in advance of travel when using the state's E-Travel Management System provided that the traveler has a direct deposit account with the Auditor's Office.

**6.4** When meals are provided for a traveler, the traveler's maximum daily rate shall be reduced by the appropriate amount.

Current rates and an example of the per diem meal breakdown may be found at the Travel Management Office's website at [www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/travel](http://www.state.wv.us/admin/purchase/travel).

**6.5** Meal and incidental rates differ by travel location. Examples of incidental

expenses are fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, stewards or stewardesses and others on ships, and hotel servants; transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, if suitable meals cannot be obtained at the temporary duty site; and mailing cost associated with filing travel vouchers and payment of government charge card billings.

**6.6** On the first and last days of travel of an overnight trip when no meals are provided, the allowable reimbursement is based on 75% of the federal government's per diem rate for the specific city. Departure or arrival times are not considered. If a meal(s) is provided gratis or included within a registration fee of the business travel, the per diem rate must be reduced by the appropriate amount.

**6.7** Meal expenses for single day travel are not reimbursable. Single day travel is travel without an overnight stay and will not qualify a traveler as being away from home for purposes of receiving non-taxable meal reimbursement. This does not apply to Guardian Travel.

**6.8** The following qualifications for extraordinary meal expense reimbursement require the exercise of good judgment in determining what is considered a "reasonable" expense to incur for the situation.

**6.8.1** Travelers transporting or accompanying clients, patients, students or others entrusted to a spending unit for their care, education or placement, referred to as Guardian Travel, may be reimbursed the cost of meals, not to exceed the maximum per diem. Receipts (or the student signature form) per the state's current guidelines are required.

**6.8.2** Employees in undercover operations, law enforcement personnel and others in certain occasional overtime situations, at the direction of the spending officer, may be reimbursed for their expenses. These cases must have the approval of the spending officer. Agencies should keep appropriate documentation on file.

## **SECTION 7. Registration Fees**

**7.1** Fees or charges for attendance at conferences, meetings, seminars, or workshops, as well as event-related materials, are reimbursable. Reimbursement for registration fees at meetings or conferences is allowable and must be supported by a receipt. Employees should verify acceptable payment methods with the conference prior to attending. Registration fees should be charged to the employee's Purchasing Card.

**7.2** Receipts are required for reimbursement. The receipt or documentation provided by the event sponsor shall be sufficient for reimbursement. Travelers are to adjust meal reimbursement requests for meals included with the registration fee.

**7.3** The traveler will not receive an allowance or reimbursement for lodging or food included in registration fees.

**7.4** If a cancellation charge is incurred, the charge is reimbursable if the traveler is directed by the appropriate spending officer to change his or her travel plans, or if other extenuating circumstances arise. Charges incurred due to the failure of the traveler to notify the event sponsor will be considered a personal expense.

## **SECTION 8. Other Expenses**

**8.1** Travelers may incur miscellaneous business-related expenses for which reimbursement may be made, if appropriate. Receipts are required for any individual expenditure in excess of \$75.00. The spending officer may require any or all receipts at their option as a means of cost control.

An agency may allow an employee to file a copied or faxed invoice if the original receipt is lost; however, the Auditor's Office requires two original signatures, in addition to the traveler's. One signature must be the spending officer and the other must be a delegated agency staff person, who has a signature card on file with the Auditor's Office.

Such expenses and reimbursement may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Baggage storage between appointments and between hotels and meeting places;
- b. Tolls, garage, and parking fees - excluding valet parking for personal convenience;
- c. Communication expenses, such as (1) local calls which may include a surcharge; (2) long distance calls which may include toll charges and surcharges and must be made on the current corporate communications travel card; (3) surcharges for long distance calls when the toll charges are direct billed; (4) facsimiles, cablegrams, or telegrams which may include toll charges, surcharges, or delivery charges; and (5) charges related to internet connections.
- d. Currency conversion;
- e. Guides, interpreters, and visa fees; and
- f. Laundry and dry cleaning when an employee is in travel status in excess of seven days without returning home.

**8.2** Non-reimbursable travel-related expenses include the cost of passports (not as a travel expense, but may be considered as a direct charge to the spending unit)-and personal flight or baggage insurance. Exceptions must be approved by the spending

officer.

**8.3** Employees traveling in foreign countries should report their expenditures in United States dollars. The total expenditure in foreign currency must be converted into United States dollars at the rate or rates at which the foreign money was obtained. The rates of conversion and the commissions charged must be shown.

## **SECTION 9. Form of Payment for Business Travel**

### **9.1 Purchasing Card**

**9.1.1** Travelers must use the Purchasing Card issued by the state of West Virginia for approved business related travel expenses. No personal purchases are permitted.

**9.2** Travel expenses shall not include food expenses or any personal expenses on hotel folios such as room service or movie expenses. Proper documentation must be provided for any billing (i.e. hotel folios) relating to multiple travelers.

**9.3** Except where otherwise exempted by statute, policy, or waiver from the State Auditor's Office Purchasing Card Division, the Purchasing Card may not be used to obtain cash, cash credits, or cash advances.

**9.4** Travelers may request cash advances when using the state's E-Travel Management System for meals and mileage allowances that can't be charge to the Purchasing Card, providing they have set up direct deposit account with the Auditor's Office.

## **SECTION 10. Reimbursement Forms**

**10.1** Travelers must use the state's E-Travel Expense Management System to reconcile all travel related expenses.

## **SECTION 11. Other Provisions**

**11.1** In accordance with *West Virginia Code* § 6B-2-5(2), employees may use bonus points acquired through frequent traveler programs while traveling on official government business, as long as the employee's participation in the program does not result in an additional cost to the state.

## **SECTION 12. Exceptions**

**12.1** Any exceptions to this policy must be documented in writing and approved by the Travel Management Office.