

Chapter 10 - Travel

10.10 Travel Management Requirements and Restrictions

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10.10 Travel Management Requirements

10.10.00 Assignment of Official headquarters

Each State official will be assigned an official headquarters by the department head. Every expense account will show an official headquarters which will be established as follows:

1. For officials whose duties require their presence in an established State office location at least two days each week, that office location shall be designated as their official headquarters.
2. For officials whose duties are at other than an established State office more than three days per week, the designated official headquarters may be the official's residence, if such designation is advantageous to the State and without prejudice to the official.

10.10.05 Who must comply with these policies?

The following persons must comply with the policies in this chapter:

1. All state officers, employees, and volunteers that agencies have legal authority to utilize, unless otherwise provided by law.
2. Persons other than state officers and employees, where travel expenses are authorized by statute but the statute is silent as to amount.
3. Contractors.

10.10.10 Agency responsibilities

10.10.10.a Agency heads, and their designees for directing travel and approving reimbursement, are to:

1. Ensure that any travel costs incurred are:
 - Directly work related,
 - Obtained at the most economical price, and
 - Both critical and necessary for state business.
2. Exercise prudent judgment in approving travel-related costs.

3. Establish an effective system for management and control over travel-related costs. This system should include:
 - Written internal policies and procedures which cover the items required in this chapter.
 - Authorization or approval of travel costs by the agency head or authorized designees.
 - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities to include the level(s) to which agency head responsibility has been delegated.
4. Ensure travelers are treated in accordance with the applicable bargaining unit agreements.
5. Ensure the agency uses the procurement methods required in this chapter, and maintains an accountability record for all state travel cards it or its travelers are issued.

10.10.10.b Agencies may not adopt internal travel policies and reimbursement allowances that deviate from those contained in this chapter.

10.10.10.c **Travel Limitations.** It is the intent of the Legislature that out-of-state travel by state employees be limited. Any state employee who travels out of state on state business, such as law enforcement, collecting, bidding, industrial development or loans, may continue to do so. The Legislature directs that department heads limit travel, allowing it only when it is absolutely needed. A state employee may not be reimbursed for noon meals, unless the expense is incurred while the employee is traveling on state business and lodging is required. Any state employee who attends a seminar or other program that includes the cost of a noon meal as part of the tuition or registration fee is not required to reimburse the state for the meal. (Effective July 1, 2005)

10.10.15 Responsibilities of travelers

A traveler on official state business is responsible for:

1. Being familiar with state and agency travel and transportation regulations before embarking on travel.
2. Exercising the same care in incurring expenses and accomplishing the purposes of the travel that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official state business travel are not acceptable.
3. Paying any excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.

4. Returning as promptly as possible to either the official headquarters or official residence when the state business is completed.
5. Securing prior authorization for travel when required. (Subsection 10.10.50) The employee is at risk of not receiving proper reimbursement for any expenses incurred if they do not follow proper procedure and secure proper authorization for travel.
6. Preparing the Travel Expense Voucher and providing appropriate receipts and documentation as required in Section 10.80 and other sections of this chapter.

10.10.20 These criteria must be used for selecting and approving travel

An agency head or authorized designee must use the following criteria to determine whether to authorize a person to travel on official state business, and to determine what travel alternatives to authorize. Agency heads must be cognizant of the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act when determining travel alternatives.

1. Select the travel alternative that is most economical to the state.

Agencies **must use this criteria** except in the situations noted below. All costs should be considered, travel, labor, etc.,-in making the determination.

2. Select the travel alternative that is most advantageous to the state.

An agency may use this advantageous criterion only in the following situations:

- To ensure the health and safety of agency travelers (Subsection 10.10.35);
- To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (Subsection 10.10.40);
- Process and travel situations for meals with meetings (Subsection 10.40.70);
- Use of privately owned motor vehicles

The personal travel plans of the traveler shall not influence this criterion.

10.10.25 Implement alternatives to travel

Agencies are to develop and implement alternatives to travel, as well as less expensive means of travel. These methods should include, but are not limited to:

- Teleconferencing and video conferencing;
- Video recordings and published reports;

- Making transportation arrangements through state-qualified travel agents and using centrally contracted air carriers (Subsection 10.50.45);
- Car-pooling and greater use of public transportation;
- Reducing the frequency of regularly scheduled out-of-town meetings;
- Restricting the number of staff traveling to the same destination; and
- Coordinating between agencies for joint travel arrangements when more than one agency is involved.

10.10.30 Considerations when placing an employee in travel status

- 10.10.30.a Plan the itinerary of the traveler to eliminate unnecessary travel in the performance of work assignments. Whenever it is feasible for two or more persons to travel on official state business in one vehicle, they are to do so.
- 10.10.30.b Before placing a traveler in travel status, the agency is to determine for each occurrence whether it is more economical or advantageous (Subsection 10.10.20) to reimburse the traveler for meals and/or lodging, or to require the traveler to return to the official headquarters or official residence daily or on weekends.
- 10.10.30.c After 90 days, agencies should review assignments placing travelers in travel status at a temporary duty station to determine if the traveler’s permanent official duty station should be changed to meet the State’s operational needs. The employee will be reimbursed for actual and reasonable moving expenses by common carrier. The agency should inform the traveler of the possible federal tax implications of official headquarters assignments for an indefinite period of time or for longer than one year. See Internal Revenue Service regulations contained in Publication 463 for further information.

10.10.35 Ensure the health and safety of travelers

The health and safety of travelers is a top priority in the conduct of travel related activities. It is advantageous to the state for agencies to establish and alter travel plans and itineraries with consideration of hazardous inclement weather and other situations that could threaten the health and safety of state personnel. When this occurs, travelers should:

- Promptly notify the traveler's supervisor of the change in travel plans.
- Note the reason for any additional expense on the traveler's travel expense voucher.

10.10.40 Comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act

- 10.10.40.a Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is required by law and thus considered to be advantageous. All state personnel are to be afforded equal opportunity to perform travel for official state business even if the travel costs for travelers with a disability will exceed what would normally be most economical to the state. For example:
- When a traveler uses a wheelchair and it is necessary to pay more for an airline ticket so the traveler can fly on a larger airplane that can accommodate the wheelchair.
 - When a traveler has hearing or vision impairments and there is a cost of providing auxiliary aids and services to enable the traveler to successfully accomplish the purpose of the travel.
- 10.10.40.b Travel authorizations and travel claims should be annotated that the extra costs were required to comply with the ADA. ADA supporting documentation should remain confidential and a statement added to the travel voucher indicating the agency file location.

10.10.45 Use of the State Travel Card Program, when required, to purchase travel

- 10.10.45.a The term “State Travel Card Program” comprises the authorized state travel charge card program. This system has the following components that can be used for travel purchases:
- **Individual Travel Account.** Each agency head or authorized designee (aka Travel Coordinator) is to authorize the use of or approve the issuance of the State of Maine Travel Card to those travelers whose work requires them to travel on official state business. The individual travel charge card can only be used for authorized state travel purchases. When a state employee uses the individual travel charge card, they are responsible for all charges and must apply for travel reimbursement through their agency.
- 10.10.45.b In cases where a state travel card receipt is issued, the traveler is to attach the original receipt to the Travel Expense Voucher.

10.10.50 Prior authorization for travel may be required

10.10.50.a Travelers must receive prior authorization for travel from the agency head or authorized designee (aka travel coordinator):

- Whenever a travel advance is required by a traveler.
- For all out-of-state travel, travelers must have prior written approval of the Office of the Governor, or the Office of the Governor's designee.

Use the Out-of-State Travel Request as the written means for requesting and documenting prior authorization for travel.

10.10.50.b Travel outside the Continental USA, except for neighboring cities of the Canadian Provinces within a radius of 700 miles of Augusta, requires additional approval as follows:

- **Agencies reporting to the Governor** must have prior written approval of the Office of the Governor.
- **Agencies not reporting to the Governor** must have prior written approval of the agency's governing body or its managerial designees.

10.10.55 Scheduling meetings, conferences, conventions, and training sessions

10.10.55.a When meetings or conferences are necessary, agencies must give first preference to locations at state or other public (e.g., local government) facilities. Cost effectiveness must be a prime consideration when planning these events.

10.10.55.b Limit the number of persons from an agency attending a particular conference, convention, meeting, or training session to the minimum necessary to benefit from the event.

The location and facilities for **all** conferences, conventions, training sessions, or meetings held or sponsored by the state are to be barrier-free. Agencies should consider cost to the state, the suitability of barrier-free facilities, accessibility to attendees, and other relevant factors in their selection. First priority is to be given to using state-owned or other public owned barrier-free facilities in lieu of renting or leasing other facilities.

Where a convention, conference, training session, or meeting held or sponsored by the state is conducted at a rented/leased barrier-free non-state facility, the person responsible for the choice of location and facilities is to submit justification in advance in writing to the agency head or authorized designee for approval. The justification is to include:

- The purpose and objective of the meeting;
- The name of the organizations or persons expected to attend and an estimate of the attendance;
- An estimate of the anticipated cost to the state to include travel costs of travelers; and
- An explanation why state-owned or other public owned barrier-free facilities cannot be used.