

	Montana Operations Manual Policy	Category	Travel
		Effective Date	10/1/2015
		Last Revised	10/09/2015
Issuing Authority	Department of Administration State Financial Services Division		
Employee Travel			

I. Purpose

This policy provides the guidelines for how agencies should conduct travel and the ensuing expenses.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all state agencies and institutions, excluding community colleges.

III. Policy - Employee Travel

Traveling is a necessary operation of state government. However, employees and their agency should always remember that travel expense can be a major budget consideration. Employees must always be aware of the need for efficiency and economy in travel. Although the legislature establishes laws governing travel and the Department of Administration prescribes the policies, the responsibility for adhering to the laws and providing effective managerial control rests with the employee and their agency. Any collective bargaining agreement providing a greater meal or travel reimbursement supersedes this policy.

A. Applicable State Statutes

Unless covered by a separate section of statute, all elected officials, appointed members of boards, commissions, or councils, department directors and all other state employees are subject to the regulations contained in [Title 2, Chapter 18, Part 5](#) - Travel, Meals and Lodging of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA). Legislators are subject to certain limitations while the legislature is in session, as noted in [Section 5-2-301](#), MCA.

B. Travel Guidelines

When considering state travel, an employee and their agency must follow these guidelines:

1. The department head or designated approving authority must approve all out-of-state and foreign travel. A "[Request and Justification for Travel Form](#)" is

available on the department's travel website for use in the review and approval process relating to this travel.

2. Each agency shall hold to the absolute minimum the number of personnel attending a function requiring travel.
3. Lodging expenses should be kept as low as possible. The agency/employee must try to receive either the state rate or a government rate and be prepared to show pictured identification proving they are a state employee. Lower rates can only be requested, not demanded.
4. Transportation costs should be kept as low as possible and time away from the office minimized. The least expensive class service available must be used for all commercial air travel trips and should be scheduled to avoid unnecessary back-tracking and overlapping.
5. When traveling by car, employees should adhere to speed limits.
6. No state agency shall pay an employee's travel cost to attend a function that does not benefit the state. However, to promote employee initiative and efforts at self-improvement, the agency head has discretionary authority to give time off with pay to participate in the desired function.
7. Although each state agency should assist and support other states and organizations, Montana cannot do so at its own expense. However, if another state or organization is willing to pay travel costs to have an employee lecture or provide other assistance; the agency head has discretionary authority to contribute the employee's personal service to the project.

C. Departure and Return Time

Departure time and return time normally mean the times when the employee leaves from and return to headquarters, respectively. However, if they depart from their home and return to their home without stopping at headquarters, the times leaving from and returning to home become the times they use in computing the allowance. If they leave from their home and return to headquarters after the trip, the starting time would be when leaving home and the ending time would be when arriving at headquarters.

D. Reimbursable Travel Expenses

Reimbursable travel expenses are the business-related expenses incurred when traveling on official state business. Non-business-related expenses, incurred when taking vacation or compensatory time off while in a travel status, are not reimbursable expenses.

Miscellaneous business expenses associated with official state travel are reimbursable. Each expense of \$25 or more must be supported by a receipt. Report all miscellaneous expenses in the "Other Expense" column of the agency's Travel Claim Form, and explain each one in the space provided at the bottom of the form. Some examples of allowable miscellaneous expenses are: needed working supplies purchased on an emergency basis; taxi fares; and

business telephone calls. Meal tips and meal taxes are not considered miscellaneous expenses.

All non-university employee travel reimbursements are to be issued through the State payroll system. In order to avoid financial hardship for employees, agencies are encouraged to have their employees use a state issued purchasing card.

1. [Travel Expense Voucher, Form DA-101](#)

Employees must use a travel expense voucher or similar travel claim form authorized by their agency to itemize their allowable expenses. The travel expense voucher is available electronically at the department's travel website.

2. Travel Expense Voucher – Frequency of Filing

An employee should file travel expense vouchers no more than twice monthly. Unusual circumstances may justify an exception to this rule. Travel expense vouchers should be filed within thirty days of completion of the related travel. Employees who do not file for reimbursement of travel costs within three months after incurring the expense waive their right to reimbursement unless approved by appropriate agency staff.

3. Travel Expense Voucher – Supervisor's Approval Required

The immediate supervisor or the supervisor having the most direct knowledge of the travel-related activities must approve the employee's travel expense voucher. Exceptions to this rule are listed below.

E. Travel Time Allowed

It is usually necessary to begin traveling prior to the time established for the meeting, appointment, or conference that necessitated the travel. Also, business activities may end late in the day, and because of inclement weather, fatigue, or the unavailability of transportation, it may not be feasible for the employee to return promptly to headquarters. In such cases, they may claim travel expenses for a reasonable time before and after the actual business activities that necessitated the travel. Because circumstances vary, managers have to decide what is reasonable on a case-by-case basis. To the extent possible, however, an employee should travel within a normal travel shift, as defined in Section V.A of this policy. For example, the employee may want to start a meeting in Great Falls at 9:00 a.m. rather than 8:00 a.m. or conclude business at 3:00 p.m. to allow adequate time to return home. The aim is to reduce state travel expense whenever possible.

F. Travel Status When Going to Job Site/Work Assignment (revised April 8, 2009)

If the employee travels each day from headquarters or home to a specific work site or work sites within the same general vicinity, they are not in a travel status and should not claim a meal allowance unless they have to stay overnight. The employee should consider the work sites to be their "headquarters" for that day. Examples include MDT employees who travel each day from their headquarters

or home to a construction site or FWP employees who travel each day from their headquarters or home to patrol or maintain a specific state park or fishing access site. This does not apply to specific labor contract allowances. The employee may claim mileage expense, however, at the appropriate rate, if they are using their personal vehicle.

G. Change in Travel Status

When traveling from in-state to out-of-state, and vice versa, an employee must observe these rules regarding reimbursement for lodging and meals:

1. The geographical location of the lodging facilities determines the applicable reimbursement; that is, if the employee stays in-state, in-state rates apply, and if they stay out-of-state, out-of-state rates apply.
2. When an employee boards a flight originating in Montana with an out-of-state destination, they receive out-of-state rates from the time they depart until they return to Montana. However, if a layover for business or personal reasons occurs in-state, then the out-of-state rates do not apply until they leave Montana from the layover point. If employees are traveling by other means of transportation, the geographical location in which they first become eligible for a meal allowance determines the reimbursement.

H. Frequent Traveler Promotion Usage

Employees are free to join frequent flyer programs and any other frequent traveler programs offered by airlines, hotels, car rental agencies, or other travel vendors. Most airlines will require traveler program enrollment for online ticket purchases. If frequent flyer mileage earned from state travel can be accounted for separately from mileage earned from personal travel, the employee must apply the mileage earned from state travel toward free airline tickets for future state travel.

Agencies are encouraged to use programs such as Horizon/Alaska Airlines' Easy Biz that accrue miles on a two-for-one basis that may be allocated directly to the agency, in addition to the accumulation of personal miles. Commercial Airline "Bumping"

Voluntary Bumping - Many times commercial airlines overbook flights and request that passengers volunteer to take a later flight in exchange for a free or discounted airline ticket. Employees may take advantage of being "voluntarily bumped" from a flight and keep the free or discounted airline ticket for their personal use as long as the extra time it takes to reach the destination does not cause a disruption in state business and the employee uses leave or off-duty time for the extra time. The employee should receive approval in advance from their supervisor to take leave time, if appropriate, and if the opportunity could arise for them to volunteer to be "bumped". They are not entitled to receive meal allowance or lodging reimbursement for this extra time. The extra time is the time between when they would have left and the time that same day or the next when they actually do leave. Since the employee is on a business trip, they should be compensated for the actual flying time. In addition, they should be compensated

for any time spent on work-related activities during this time. For example, if they are scheduled to fly out of Helena at 7:00 a.m. on Monday morning to go to Boston and are bumped to the 2:00 p.m. flight that same day, they may return to the office and work or they can take leave time until they have to return to the airport. If an employee is scheduled to leave Boston at 10:00 a.m. Thursday to return to Helena and are voluntarily bumped but unable to get another flight until Friday at 7:00 a.m. and their normal work schedule is Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., they cannot be reimbursed for lodging Thursday night or meal allowance for Thursday and they will be considered off duty on Thursday.

Involuntary Bumping - Commercial airlines also overbook flights and require passengers to take a later flight. If an employee is involuntarily bumped they may be entitled to lodging and meal reimbursement. They are entitled to receive meal allowance or lodging reimbursement for this extra time if the airline does not provide the lodging and meals at no cost to them. If vouchers are provided, but are not adequate, they are eligible for reimbursement at the difference between the actual cost of lodging and the state per diem rate and the value of the vouchers received. When involuntarily bumped, an employee is considered on duty during the regular work shift. For example, if an employee is scheduled to fly out of Helena at 7:00 a.m. on Monday morning to go to Boston and is bumped to the 2:00 p.m. flight that same day, they may return to the office and work or they can take leave time until they have to return to the airport. If an employee is scheduled to leave Boston at 10:00 a.m. Thursday to return to Helena and are involuntarily bumped and unable to get another flight until Friday at 7:00 a.m. and their normal work schedule is Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., they may be reimbursed for lodging Thursday night and the meal allowance for Thursday and they will be considered on-duty on Thursday during their normal working hours. If this were to occur on Saturday with the return flight instead on Sunday, they may be eligible for the lodging and meal reimbursement but would be considered off duty during this period except for actual flying time because the additional time falls outside the normal work shift.

Involuntary Bumping with a Free Ticket or Cash – The employee may choose to either:

1. Treat this event as if they were voluntarily bumped and keep the cash or airline ticket (they are not eligible for meal or lodging reimbursements and considered off duty);
2. Remit the cash to the State or use the ticket for State purposes (they are eligible for meal and lodging reimbursements and may be considered on duty dependent on their normal work shift).

I. Special In-Lieu Allowances

An employee may wish to use other than the most economical and efficient mode of transportation to complete a travel-oriented work assignment. For example, they might be going to a conference in Seattle and be allowed to use their personal vehicle rather than fly. In this example, their agency can allow transportation reimbursement up to the air travel equivalent; that is, the cost of

the plane fare, if it is less than reimbursement at the equivalent mileage rate. In addition, they should be able to claim compensation for the travel time it would take to fly. The remaining travel time required to drive would be their personal time. They would have to travel during off-duty hours or take leave time. Applicable claims must be marked **In-Lieu Allowance** and the underlying details fully explained.

J. Transportation Purchase Order

The transportation purchase order form and process have been eliminated. The Department of Administration requires agencies to use the State's purchasing card to purchase all airline tickets for individual employee travel.

K. Airline Ticket Purchase

Agencies are required to use the State's purchasing card to purchase all airline tickets for **employee** travel unless it can be documented that another payment method is in the state's best interest. This applies to ticket purchases made through a travel agent, purchased directly from an airline, or purchased from an online travel source.

IV. Use of, and Reimbursement for, State and Personal Vehicles and Airplanes

There are a number of options available to an employee when required to travel by car. The state motor pool, operated by the Department of Transportation, has a variety of vehicles available in Helena. The employee should use motor pool vehicles for business travel whenever possible. Questions regarding procedures should be directed to the motor pool office at 444-2705.

The motor pool rules are in the [State Vehicle Use Rule](#), and govern the use of state-owned or leased vehicles in the motor pool. The motor pool bills the agencies periodically for the vehicles used. Agencies having their own state vehicles should establish rules regarding the use of their vehicles.

If motor pool vehicles are not available, the employee has the option to use their personal vehicle or vehicles from the private rental agency contract, (See Section IV.F), whichever is most cost effective.

A. Use of Personal Vehicles-Reimbursement Rates and General Requirements

[Section 2-18-503](#), MCA, establishes three rates for personal vehicle use. These are referred to as the standard, high and low rates in this policy.

The standard reimbursement rate for personal vehicle use is 48.15 percent of the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service for the current year rounded to the nearest ½ cent. For example, if the current Internal Revenue Service rate is 40.5 cents, the standard reimbursement rate will be 19.5 cents.

If an employee meets certain conditions, as discussed in Section IV.C, they may receive reimbursement at a rate equal to that established by the Internal Revenue Service for the current year (high rate) for the first 1,000 miles traveled within a given calendar month. After the 1,000 mile threshold is reached the

employee meeting these conditions will be reimbursed at the high rate less 3 cents (the low rate).

The Department of Administration periodically issues memos to alert agencies of changes in the mileage reimbursement rates. If an employee drives a personal vehicle on state business and are reimbursed mileage, they must comply with the Motor Vehicle Safety - Responsibility Act, [Section 61-6-1](#), MCA, and the mandatory liability protection provisions of [Section 61-6-3](#), MCA, and must be aware of personal vehicle usage liability as provided by the Department of Administration - Risk Management and Tort Defense Division.

Reimbursement for miles traveled in a personal car must be actual map miles from point A to point B and back. The agency has the discretion to allow an appropriate amount for in-town mileage. This would be in lieu of the employee needing to keep a log book showing detailed odometer readings each time they use their personal vehicle while on state time.

B. Use of Personal Vehicles-Reimbursement at Standard Rate

If the department director or designated approving authority authorizes the use of a personal vehicle on state business, the employee must be reimbursed for mileage at the standard rate unless they meet the conditions in Section IV.C.

C. Use of Personal Vehicles-Reimbursement at High Rate

An employee must receive reimbursement at the high rate for the first 1,000 miles traveled during a calendar month under the following circumstances:

1. A motor pool vehicle or other state-owned or leased vehicle is not available.

If a request for a vehicle cannot be met, the motor pool will promptly prepare a memo and submit it to the employee or agency, stating a vehicle was not available on the date requested. At the agency's discretion, personal vehicle use may be authorized and the employee must be reimbursed at the high rate. The agency shall indicate approval to use a personal vehicle on the motor pool memo and provide two copies to the employee. The memo from the motor pool must be attached to the travel reimbursement form.

2. The use of a personal vehicle is considered to be in the best interest of the state.

The department director or designated approving authority may approve personal vehicle usage for staff when they believe there is sufficient justification that it is in the best interest of the State for a personal vehicle to be used on state business. The agency shall prepare a personal vehicle use authorization form and provide two copies to the employee.

3. Legislators and members of the general public on official state business.

Members of the legislature, while traveling between their residence and Helena, and all other members of the general public except state employees, directors and elected officers are entitled to mileage when using their own motor vehicles for official state business.

After the first 1,000 miles traveled during a calendar month, an employee can receive reimbursement only at 3 cents less than the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service for the current year. In addition, consideration should be given to using the private rental agency contract vehicles if that is a more cost effective means of transportation.

D. Use of Personal Vehicles-Exemptions

The following persons are exempt from meeting the requirements of Section IV.C and are authorized reimbursement at the high rate:

1. Members of boards, commissions, committees, or advisory councils unless related to state employment
2. Employees driving 25 miles or less in any calendar day

These exemptions do not preclude an agency from prescribing internal administrative procedures that require people to use agency-owned vehicles or to receive the standard rate.

E. Personal Vehicle Use Authorization Form (Revised 12/11/09)

In order to claim reimbursement, an employee must use the personal vehicle use authorization form or similar form authorized by their agency prior to using their personal vehicle. The [Personal Vehicle Use Authorization](#) form is available electronically on the State's travel policy website.

F. Private Rental Agency Vehicles Contract – In State (revised 3/11/10)

The State Motor Pool, in conjunction with the Department of Administration, has entered into a contract to supply the “overflow” vehicle needs of state employees through two private rental agencies. The services are available on a statewide basis in the following locations: Helena, Butte, Missoula, Bozeman, Great Falls, Billings and Kalispell. The contract provides for the same type vehicles that are available through the motor pool.

Although the cost of obtaining a vehicle through a private vendor exceeds the motor pool cost, this cost must be weighed against the cost of using a private vehicle, especially at the “high” rate, or scheduling the trip at a later date when a vehicle is available at the motor pool. An added benefit of this private contract is the statewide coverage. Using this contract, vehicles can be obtained at a reasonable cost to complete all job functions throughout the State

Direct any questions concerning this contract to the motor pool at 444-2705 or by contacting the MDT Equipment Bureau Chief at 444-6151.

G. Private Rental Agency Vehicles – Out of State

When renting a vehicle from a car rental company, employees should not purchase the additional insurance offered by the company. Insurance is provided for the employee either through DOA Risk Management and Tort Defense or by the state credit card vendor when this is used.

H. Use of Personal Airplanes – Mileage Reimbursement Rate

[Section 2-18-503](#)(4), MCA, establishes the mileage rate to be used when reimbursing members of the legislature, state officers, employees, jurors, witnesses, county agents and all other persons out of public funds for the use of their own airplanes in the performance of official duties. They are entitled to collect mileage for the actual nautical air miles traveled at a rate equal to twice the “high” rate allowed for personal vehicle use. The Department of Administration periodically issues memos to alert agencies of changes in the mileage reimbursement rates.

V. Meal Allowances Generally

To be eligible for a meal allowance while traveling on state business, an employee must be in a travel status for more than three continuous hours and be at least 15 miles from headquarters or home, whichever is closer. Appointed members of a state board, commission or council, or a member of a legislative subcommittee, select or interim committee are exempt from this requirement and are entitled to a midday meal on the day of a meeting, regardless of proximity of the meeting to headquarters or their home. This exemption does not apply to a member of a legislative committee that is meeting during a legislative session.

Because the meal allowance is a fixed amount per meal, inclusive of taxes and tips, not reimbursement for actual costs incurred, an employee is generally entitled to receive a meal allowance if they are in a travel status and meet the above criteria. However, they may not request reimbursement for meals included in the cost of a conference registration that is paid by their agency or for meals provided by the State or another governmental entity.

To determine eligibility for a meal allowance, keep two items in mind:

1. The employee’s relationship with their travel shift (Section V.A); and
2. The time ranges in which travel status has to occur for each meal (See Section V.B).

A. Meal Allowance – Definition of “Travel Shift”

[Section 2-18-502](#)(3), MCA, defines “travel shift” as beginning one hour before and ending one hour after an employee’s regular scheduled work shift. The employee may claim only one meal per day when all travel takes place within their assigned travel shift. They are entitled to two meal allowances during a 24-hour calendar day under the following circumstances: departing within their travel shift but returning outside the shift or departing before their assigned travel shift and returning during the travel shift.

When travel is totally outside the confines of the employee’s travel shift, eligibility for a meal allowance is governed strictly by the time ranges for each meal, as specified in Section V.B. For example, if they traveled to Billings from Helena and left at 5:00 a.m. to attend a 9:00 a.m. meeting that lasted until 5:00 p.m. and then had to return to Helena that evening and their normal working hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., they would be entitled to all three meals since they would be in

a travel status for three continuous hours in each segment of the time ranges specified in Section V.B.

An employee cannot claim a meal allowance, however, if they stop to eat and extend the normal travel shift by the amount of time it takes to eat. For example, if an employee traveled to Butte from Helena and left at 8:00 a.m. to attend a 9:00 a.m. meeting and the meeting ended at 4:30 p.m., they could not claim dinner because they would not be in travel status for more than three continuous hours in the 3:01 p.m. to midnight time range prior to eating dinner.

B. Meal Allowances – Time Ranges

The time ranges determining eligibility for meal allowances are established in [Section 2-18-502\(1\)](#), MCA. In order to claim an allowance for a meal, an employee must be in a travel status for more than three continuous hours within one of the following time ranges:

<u>Time Range</u>	<u>Meal Allowed</u>
12:01 a.m. to 10 a.m.	Morning Meal
10:01 a.m. to 3 p.m.	Midday Meal
3:01 p.m. to midnight	Evening Meal

Each time range must be considered separately when applying the more-than-three-hour rule. For example, if an employee travels from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., they receive the allowance only for the midday meal.

VI. Reimbursement for Lodging

A. Reimbursement for Receiptable Lodging

The employee receives reimbursement for their actual out-of-pocket lodging expenses, including room tax, up to the maximum amounts set by [Section 2-18-501](#), MCA, for in-state and out-of-state travel. [Section 2-18-501\(3\)](#), MCA, authorizes the Department of Administration to designate the locations and circumstances under which the actual cost of lodging may be claimed when the actual cost exceeds the maximum lodging reimbursement rates established in [Section 2-18-501\(1\)](#), MCA, (In-State) and [Section 2-18-501\(2\)](#), MCA, (Out-of-State). Sections VII.B and C describe the procedures to follow for reimbursement at actual cost. In order to claim lodging reimbursement, the original receipt from a licensed lodging facility must be attached to the agency's travel claim form or the travel expense voucher, Form DA-101. Other receipts, such as credit card receipts, are not acceptable.

If the employee is traveling with their non-state-employee spouse, the lodging rate claimed must reflect only the rate for one person. The single-occupant rate should be noted and marked as such on the receipt.

Whenever practical, more than one hotel or motel should be contacted to ensure the best possible room rate is received in a location. Although an establishment may not have rooms available at or below the standard state rate, it may be willing to offer a government rate or other discounted rate that is less than its normal business rate. To save on travel costs, the employee should always ask for the lowest rate for which they qualify.

Be aware that most hotels require an employee to show a valid state identification card before they will honor the state rate.

B. Reimbursement for Non-Receiptable Lodging

If an employee stays in a non-receiptable facility (e.g. with friends or relatives or in a camper or trailer) or you fail to obtain a receipt, [Section 2-18-501\(5\)](#), MCA, authorizes the employee to claim \$12 per night for lodging expenses.

C. No Reimbursement for Provided Lodging

In some instances, lodging is provided at no charge. In these instances, lodging expense cannot be claimed. Examples include:

1. Lodging is provided on campus for industry or government seminars;
2. Lodging is included in the registration fee;
3. A cabin is provided for backwoods work.

VII. In-State Travel Guidelines

[Section 2-18-501\(1\)](#), MCA, establishes the meal allowances and lodging reimbursements for in-state travel.

A. In-State Travel – Meal Allowance Rates

In-state allowances for the morning, midday, and evening meals that correspond to the time frames discussed in Section V.B are as follows:

Morning meal	\$5
Midday meal	\$6
Evening meal	<u>\$12</u>
Total per day	<u>\$23</u>

B. In-State Travel – Lodging Reimbursement Rates in General

Except as provided in Section VII.C, the maximum lodging reimbursement rate for in-state travel is the actual cost of lodging, not to exceed the federal per diem rate plus the applicable taxes on the allowable rate.

The federal per diem room rates for Montana are available through the Internet at the following location:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120>

C. In-State Travel – Lodging Reimbursement at Actual Cost (No Cap)(Revised July 17, 2012)

The agency director or designated approving authority may approve lodging reimbursement at actual cost, without applying the cap provided for in Section VII.B under the following circumstances:

1. Lodging below the cap is temporarily unavailable due to special functions such as fairs, sporting events, conventions or seasonal demand;
2. Emergency travel arrangements prevent finding accommodations below the cap;
3. Remote locations with limited accommodations within a 15-mile radius prevent finding accommodations below the cap;
4. A shortage of available lodging below the cap;
5. An employee in a regulatory or undercover function has reasonable cause to believe there is risk to his/her personal safety if identified as a State employee.

The employee must provide adequate justification, along with the original lodging receipt, to the director or designated approving authority. The justification should also indicate that reimbursement at actual cost is within the agency's appropriation level. An example of the documentation is included in Attachment A of these policies.

VIII. Out-Of-State Travel Guideline

Meal allowance and lodging reimbursement for out-of-state travel follows federal guidelines, as established in [Section 2-18-501\(2\)](#), MCA. The federal schedules are available in the Department of Administration or through the Internet as follows:

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120>

This Internet site also provides links to other travel information including the Federal Discount Lodging Directory and other listings of hotels and motels that accept the federal per diem rates in all the states as well as many foreign countries. The listings provide other information about the lodging facilities including addresses and telephone numbers. The links are shown on the bottom half of the web page, a copy of which is included in Attachment B to these policies.

The federal rates change periodically, and the Department of Administration will notify agencies when these changes occur.

A. Out-Of-State Travel – Meal Allowance Rates (Revised October 1, 2015)

Meal allowances for out-of-state travel are equal to the maximum standard federal rate (or CONUS per diem rate) per meal. Although the federal schedules provide for higher meal allowances in specific locations, [Section 2-18-501\(2\)\(b\)](#), MCA, does not allow an employee to use anything other than the standard or CONUS per diem rate. Unlike the out-of-state lodging reimbursement rates, it was not the intent of the legislature to allow out-of-state meal allowances to vary

by location. Rates are established for morning, midday, and evening meals, corresponding to the time frames discussed in Section V.B. Because the individual meal rates are not included in the Internet site information, the Department of Administration will provide updates to those rates as they occur. The current standard federal per diem rate per meal is as follows:

Morning meal	\$11
Midday meal	\$12
Evening meal	<u>\$23</u>
Total per day	<u>\$46</u>

B. Out-Of-State Travel – Lodging Reimbursement Rates

The maximum lodging reimbursement for out-of-state travel is the maximum federal rate per day for the location involved, plus the taxes on the allowable cost. Reimbursement is at the standard federal rate unless the area or location is listed in the federal schedules with a specific maximum lodging rate that is higher than the standard.

Out-of-state lodging reimbursement includes the taxes on the allowable cost. If your actual out-of-state lodging rate is equal to or less than the maximum federal per diem rate for that area, you receive reimbursement for all taxes. However, if your actual lodging rate is higher than the maximum federal per diem rate for that area and reimbursement at actual cost is not approved, you may receive reimbursement only for the taxes on the maximum allowable federal rate. **NOTE:** Many times, a lodging facility will waive taxes if it is established that the individual staying at the lodging facility is a government employee. In order to reduce travel costs, you should inquire as to the taxability of your lodging rate.

C. Out-Of-State Travel – Lodging Reimbursement at Actual Cost

The agency director or designated approving authority may approve reimbursement of out-of-state lodging at actual cost if the request meets the following criteria:

1. Government rates are requested and they are not available at the hotel where the conference or meeting the employee is attending is being held; **and**
2. (a.) Government rates or rates significantly lower than the conference hotel rates are not available at another hotel within a reasonable distance from the conference hotel (consider the cost of a taxi and employee safety or convenience walking to other nearby lodging); **or**
(b.) It is necessary for purposes of accessibility and/or security for the employee to stay at the hotel in which the conference is being held; **or**
(c.) Emergency or last minute travel arrangements preclude finding accommodations within the federal guidelines; **and**
(d.) Reimbursement at actual cost is within the agency's appropriation level.

It is preferable to obtain approval for reimbursement of lodging at actual cost before out-of-state travel. Adequate justification should be provided, along with the original lodging receipt, to the designated approving authority. An example of the type of documentation needed is included in Attachment A of these policies.

IX. Out-Of-Country Travel (revised April 8, 2009)

For travel to a location outside of the United States , except as provided in Sections IX.A and IX.B, the meals and lodging rates provided in [Section 2-18-501\(4\)](#), MCA, follow:

Meals:	Morning meal	\$7
	Midday meal	\$11
	Evening meal	<u>\$18</u>
	Total per day	<u>\$36</u>
Lodging	Per night	\$155

Note: Employees must submit receipts for both foreign meals and lodging to receive reimbursement.

A. Out-Of-Country State Travel Reimbursement at Actual Cost – Up to Federal Rate (New Section April 8, 2009)

If the meal or lodging costs exceed the rates established in law, the employee will be reimbursed for actual meal and lodging expenses up to the daily maximum established by United States Department of State for the related foreign area. The federal schedules for foreign travel rates are available at:

http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78

The first column of the federal foreign travel schedules specifies the maximum lodging reimbursement. The second column specifies the maximum per diem for meals and “incidental expenses”. The federal meal “per diem” is allocated at the rate of 15% for breakfast, 25% for lunch, and 40% for dinner, or 80% of the total for a full day, rounded to the nearest dollar. If an employee is in foreign travel status for less than a full day, the federal meal total should be allocated using the individual meal percentages provided above. When an employee is in foreign travel status for an entire day, the receipts will be compared to the total allowed per day to arrive at the reimbursement due.

As calculated above, the 20% foreign “incidental allowance” included in the federal “per diem” rate, not allowable under state law, is excluded from the daily federal total to arrive at the meals allowed a State employee.

B. Out-Of-Country State Lodging – Reimbursement at Actual Cost – Above Federal Rate (New Section April 8, 2009)

The agency director, or designated approving authority, may approve lodging reimbursement at actual cost. Employees must provide adequate justification, along with the original lodging receipt, to the director or designated approving

authority. The justification should also indicate that reimbursement at actual cost is within the agency's appropriation level.

X. Travel Advances and the Procurement Card

All outstanding travel advances must be repaid to the State by June 30, 2008. Starting July 1, 2008, travel advances should be short-term (no more than 30 days), and processed through the payroll system. Travel advances should not exceed \$200.00 or be used for lodging or car rentals. Agencies may use discretion to avoid financial hardships for employees.

A. Procurement Card Program

Agencies that issue the State's procurement card to employees should require its use for air travel, lodging and out-of-state vehicle rental unless it can be documented that another payment method is in the state's best interest. Agencies must follow the guidelines established for general procurement card use. For additional procurement card information, see the State Procurement Card Program policies at <https://gsd.mt.gov/procurement/agency/creditcardprograms>

XI. Third Party Reimbursement and/or Payment

As discussed in Section III.B, state agencies are encouraged to assist and support other states and organizations and to promote employee initiative and efforts at self-improvement. These functions must directly benefit the State in order for a state agency to pay the travel costs associated with efforts in these areas. Although the agency may not be able to pay for the travel costs associated with a function, the agency head or other approving authority has the discretionary authority to contribute an employee's personal time and/or to give time off with pay to participate in a function.

In these situations, an outside party may reimburse an employee or their agency for travel incurred on behalf of the third party. Examples of these types of situations include the following:

1. An employee is invited to make a presentation at a training conference or national meeting of an organization and the organization pays all travel costs associated with the conference; or
2. An officer or board member of a national organization related to the job they perform and must attend several meetings each year for which the organization reimburses the travel costs incurred; or
3. An employee manages one or several federal programs in an agency and the federal government sponsors a conference for which they would like representation from each of the states and are willing to arrange for and provide an airline ticket, lodging and all other costs for the employee to attend this conference.

In each of these situations, the outside third party may reimburse the agency or the employee as an individual for the travel costs incurred or it may actually

make all of the arrangements and provide for all lodging and meals so that neither the employee nor the agency incurs any costs directly.

Because the employee is participating in this activity primarily for the purpose of the third party and only secondarily because they are a state employee, they are allowed to follow the travel policies of that third party and/or to be reimbursed for all costs incurred and do not have to follow state policies as long as the agency is not required to incur any expenditures associated with this travel. In other words, either (1) the employee as an individual incurs the expenditures and is reimbursed directly or (2) the third party makes all arrangements and provides for all travel or (3) expenditures incurred by the agency are properly abatable as discussed in Policy 318, Section VI, Expenditures.

If the agency is only partially reimbursed for the travel costs by the third party, state statutes and policies with regard to employee travel applicable to the specific costs not reimbursed or for all costs incurred if only a certain percentage is reimbursed must be adhered to. For example, if the outside party pays for the airline ticket and all the lodging costs, their policy with regard to these costs may be followed but state policy must be followed with regard to meal reimbursement. However, if the outside party agrees to pay 50 percent of all travel costs associated with this trip, state statutes and policies with regard to reimbursement must be adhered to for all costs associated with this trip.

**ATTACHMENT A
REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF LODGING AT ACTUAL COST
IN-STATE/OUT OF STATE**

Name of Employee Date

Destination/Hotel

Travel Dates Rates to Be Approved

Mark the type of travel and the appropriate justification below

Note – The reimbursement must be within the agency’s authorized appropriation level.

In-State

- Lodging costs below the caps provided for in Policy 1910, Section VII.B or VII.C are temporarily unavailable due to seasonal demand or to special functions such as fairs, sporting events or conventions;
- Emergency travel arrangements preclude being able to find accommodations at costs below the caps provided for in Policy 1910, Section VII.B or VII.C;
- Remote locations with limited accommodations within a 15-mile radius preclude obtaining accommodations at costs below the caps provided for in Policy 1910, Section VII.B or VII.C;
- There is reasonable cause to believe person safety is at risk due to employment position;

Explanation:

Out of State

- Government rates are not available at the hotel; **and**
 - Government or significantly lower rates are not available at another hotel within a reasonable distance;
 - It is necessary for purposes of accessibility and/or security to stay at the hotel in which the conference is being held;
 - Emergency or last minute travel arrangements preclude finding accommodations within the federal guidelines;

Explanation:

APPROVED BY DATE
Director or Designated Approving A