



# State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 50 Travel

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Section 05 General Travel Principles and Policies

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## INTRODUCTION

The sections in this topic of SAAM are frequently collectively referred to as the “State Travel Policy” and they serve as the directives for both employees and non-employees when traveling on State business.

State Travel Policy exists not merely to provide guidance, but to ensure, to the extent possible:

- Compliance with Arizona Revised Statutes, the Arizona Administrative Code and the U.S. Internal Revenue Code is maintained.
- Travel expenses incurred while conducting business for the State of Arizona are authorized, necessary, reasonable, and appropriate.
- Appropriate, safe and reasonable accommodations are provided for those traveling on State business.

Non-compliance with State Travel Policy or the improper claim for travel expenses may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

## POLICIES

1. Agency management and all those traveling on State business should be familiar with and have an understanding of State Travel Policy; all travel arrangements and practices should reflect that familiarity and understanding.
2. Travel arrangements should be fair and equitable, but planned for the convenience of the State using the most reasonable and economic means. In general, the practical travel alternative most beneficial and cost effective for the State should be chosen, with a focus on the total cost of the trip rather than any specific component of that cost.
3. Travelers and agencies are required to do travel planning for individuals and group travel and for meetings and conferences that involve travel by participants. In general, the best travel alternative is that which results in the most favorable cost-benefit result for the State and involves a traveler spending the least, as may be reasonable under the circumstances, time away from his duty post. Travel planning should begin far enough in advance to limit:
  - 3.1. The number of overnight stays.
  - 3.2. Meal, lodging and transportation expenses.

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- 3.3. Time in travel status (cost vs. benefit).
- 3.4. The number of travelers necessary to meet the needs of the State.
- 3.5. Use of private versus public facilities.
4. Unless a specific exception exists, for an employee to qualify for reimbursement, receipts for travel-related expenditures are to be collected by either the traveler or the agency arranging the travel; if collected by the traveler, the receipts are to be submitted to the agency responsible for reimbursing such expenditures.
  - 4.1. Among those expenditures that do not require a receipt for reimbursement are:
    - 4.1.1. Meals, unless required by the agency.
    - 4.1.2. Incidentals with a cost of less than five dollars (\$5). Incidentals include, but are not limited to such things as tips or other charges for baggage handling and tips for chamber maids. It is to be noted that expenditures for incidentals reduce the amount of reimbursement available for meals (this is not prorated by meal, i.e., if a traveler is entitled to only one (1) meal for the day, the amount of the incidental expense reimbursed will reduce the amount available reimbursement for that meal).
    - 4.1.3. Certain expenses incurred and no receipt is available, such as parking meter charges.
  - 4.2. For those who are not employees of the State, all reimbursements require receipts.
5. Unless specifically elsewhere prohibited, an agency head may delegate his authority related to travel to others in his agency.
  - 5.1. This is a delegation of authority, but not of responsibility for the actions taken by the delegate.
  - 5.2. All such delegations must be writing and retained by the agency in according with the directives issued by LAPR.
6. Agency travel-related policies and procedures.
  - 6.1. Agency management may draft travel-related policies and procedures, if necessary, to cover circumstances specific to their agencies such as:
    - 6.1.1. Restrictions or limitations on travel.
    - 6.1.2. Non-standard work shifts.

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- 6.1.3. Use of State equipment, such as fleet vehicles.
- 6.1.4. Unique approval requirements.
- 6.1.5. Charging travel expenses to various funding sources.
- 6.1.6. Travel request and travel claim approval and validation processes.
- 6.2. Agency management must draft travel-related policies and procedures that address:
  - 6.2.1. Definitions with respect to in-state and out-of-state destinations. At the discretion of agency management, out-of-state travel to U.S. states within one hundred (100) miles of their border with Arizona may be deemed to be in-state travel when determining reimbursement limits for lodging, meals and incidentals.
    - 6.2.1.1. Travel on official out-of-state business that is within one hundred (100) miles of the Arizona border will be considered in-state, unless designated as out-of-state travel by agency management.
    - 6.2.1.2. Agency management, in drafting agency travel-related policies, makes this determination based upon the reimbursement rates for lodging and meals in the area of travel as well as other considerations, such as the mission of the agency, the frequency of employee travel beyond the Arizona border, but within the hundred-mile (100-mile) zone discussed herein, the overall cost to the agency of anticipated meal and lodging reimbursements, etc.
    - 6.2.1.3. When out-of-state travel within one hundred (100) miles of the Arizona border is to be considered out-of-state travel, all provisions of State Travel Policy relating to out-of-state travel—such as those that might relate to prior authorization, use of State equipment, use of personally owned vehicles for out-of-state business, etc.—apply.
  - 6.2.2. The circumstances under which a traveler may be reimbursed for charges or fees relating to cancellations, re-bookings, early or late arrival or departure charges, or charges related to changes involving reservations or travel arrangements. Agencies, however, should not reimburse a traveler for such charges when incurred for personal reasons or are considered avoidable.
- 6.3. Agency travel-related policies:
  - 6.3.1. Must be consistent with and complement State Travel Policy.
  - 6.3.2. May be more restrictive, but not more generous or liberal, than State Travel Policy.
  - 6.3.3. Must be applied equitably to all agency personnel.

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7. Reimbursements are to be made only for qualified travel expenditures necessary to conduct the business of the State.
8. Consideration should be given to alternatives to travel to accomplish State business more efficiently and economically. Such alternatives include, but are not limited to, conference calls and web conferencing. Travel should be authorized only when there is a need for personal contact, intervention or observation.
9. Except as provided immediately below, reimbursement of travel expenses are limited to those actually incurred while traveling on State business.
  - 9.1. The State motor vehicle mileage rate may be used instead of actual expenses when operating a privately owned vehicle on State business. The amount claimed, however, is to be based upon the lesser of actual miles driven or miles that would have been driven had the most economical route been chosen.
  - 9.2. The State personal aircraft rate may be used instead of actual expenses when operating a privately owned aircraft on State business. The amount claimed, however, is to be based upon the lesser of actual miles flown or miles that would have been flown had the most economical route been chosen.
10. In the following cases, reimbursement is subject to the limits published in SAAM 5095:
  - 10.1. Mileage.
  - 10.2. Lodging.
  - 10.3. Meals and incidentals.
11. All documentation related to travel for the State must be maintained in accordance with the Records Retention Schedules published by LAPR. Such documentation includes, but is not limited to, travel requests, travel claims, receipts and conference brochures.
12. Employee travel is conducted and reimbursed in accordance with State Travel Policy, regardless of the funding source that pays for the travel.
  - 12.1. Even when the travel is financed using monies that were provided by the Federal Government or some other organization, individual, program, or funding source, employee reimbursements for meals and lodging are limited to State rates.
  - 12.2. With respect to cost recovery from a Federal program or grant, travel costs are considered reasonable when they do not exceed State Travel Policy.
  - 12.3. Travel reimbursements to employees for costs in excess of those set forth in State Travel Policy may, when applicable, jeopardize an agency's or the State's ability to recover such costs from the Federal Government.

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13. Agencies may, but are not required to, use and pay for the services of a commercial travel agency. Agency management, however, must consider the cost associated with the use of a travel agency vs. the benefits, other than mere convenience, of such arrangements.
  - 13.1. The costs associated with the use of a travel agency include, but may not be limited to:
    - 13.1.1. The fee paid to the travel agency for making travel arrangements.
    - 13.1.2. The opportunity cost incurred when the travel agency does not book the most economical travel alternative available.
    - 13.1.3. The cost of additional time spent when a travel agency makes travel arrangements that do not comply with State Travel Policy. Such time might include that required to request a policy exception.
  - 13.2. The benefits that might be associated with the use of a travel agency include:
    - 13.2.1. Potentially lower fares or lodging rates.
    - 13.2.2. Possibly better travel reporting.
    - 13.2.3. Feasibly a reduction of staff time required to research and book travel.
14. When operating a motor vehicle on State business within the U.S., whether that vehicle is a State vehicle, rented or privately owned, the driver must possess:
  - 14.1. A valid driver's license; a driver's manager or supervisor is responsible for verifying this before authorizing travel and, if applicable, before approving a travel reimbursement related to the operation of a motor vehicle.
  - 14.2. Mandatory insurance coverage as required by applicable State laws and regulations, primarily issued by ADOT.
    - 14.2.1. Risk Management should be consulted with respect to the operation of a vehicle on State business outside of the U.S.
15. When operating an aircraft on State business, whether that aircraft is a State aircraft, rented or privately owned, the pilot must possess:
  - 15.1. A valid pilot's license; a pilot's manager or supervisor is responsible for verifying this before authorizing travel and, if applicable, before approving a travel reimbursement related to the operation of an aircraft.
  - 15.2. Insurance coverage as required by the Federal Aviation Administration or other authority with jurisdiction.

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16. The most reasonable and customary mode of transportation and the most commonly traveled route should generally be selected.
17. Attendance at out-of-state conventions or meetings should only be approved when such occurrences are directly related to the job. Travel should be limited to personnel whose attendance, as determined by agency management, is essential to State business.
18. Reimbursements are limited to the expenses incurred or that would have been incurred by using the most efficient route. The most efficient route is that which is the most direct, most traveled or most economical, taking all circumstances into consideration. (It may, for example, be less direct to take an expressway than surface streets. However, travel by expressway would be generally the most traveled route and, given the additional cost of employee time to travel by surface streets, the most economical.)
19. Avoidable travel time in excess of that which is necessary to conduct State business, such as that used to conduct personal affairs, incurred during normally scheduled work hours is to be charged to annual leave. Non-avoidable travel time, such as delays imposed by weather, mechanical failures, etc., experienced during normally scheduled work hours is to be charged to regular pay.
20. Additional travel expenses incurred by taking an uneconomical route, are not in the best interest of the State or are for personal business will not be reimbursed.
21. Travel expenses paid directly by the State to a travel agency, hotel, restaurant, rental car company, etc., on an employee's behalf are subject to applicable State Travel Policy reimbursement limitations. Claims for this manner of payment must reference the traveler(s) to whom they apply. When they would be otherwise required, as for lodging, car rentals, etc., itemized receipts are required for direct payment of these expenses.
22. The agency head or his delegate must approve all out-of-state travel in advance. The request for out-of-state travel should be submitted to allow ample time to take advantage of the availability of discounted airfares, conference lodging, a traveler's special needs, etc. A copy of the approved out-of-state travel request must accompany the out-of-state travel claim.
23. Agency managers and supervisors may, as directed by their respective agency heads:
  - 23.1. Authorize in-state and out-of-state travel that conforms (i.e., the travel arrangements have no exceptions) to State Travel Policy.
  - 23.2. Determine that out-of-state travel to U.S. states within one hundred (100) miles of the Arizona border to be in-state travel.