



# State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 50 Travel

Issued 06/19/15

Section 56 Delinquently Filed Employee Travel Claims

Page 1 of 3

## INTRODUCTION

The timely filing of travel claims is in the best interest of the State since it supports, promotes, enables, enhances or results in:

- Reasonable internal control over travel and the authorization and verification thereof.
- Timely and accurate accounting for the State's expenditures and obligations.
- Better budgeting and planning, since the payment of costs is closer to the time when such costs were incurred.
- Decreased costs related to the processing of such claims by, among other things, reducing the need for preparing, reviewing and responding to requests for exceptions to policy.
- Faster reimbursement of employees.
- Less risk of loss of documentation and a reduction of the costs associated with finding, recovering or replacing lost documentation.
- Rapid receipt of grant proceeds.
- Properly timed reporting of grant expenditures.
- Reducing an agency's travel related costs by allowing it to more frequently evaluate employees' travel habits and how their needs and the needs of the State may be better served (for example, to make an early determination that it would be more economical to provide a State vehicle to an employee than it is to provide mileage reimbursements).

Those portions establishing the criteria to determine the timeliness of the filing of a travel claim duplicate other Sections of SAAM.

Because the timely filing of travel claims is important, special policies and procedures apply to travel claims that are not timely filed. It is recognized that the processing of delinquently filed employee travel claims, as outlined below, imposes an administrative burden on all involved.

# State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 50 Travel

Issued 06/19/15

Section 56 Delinquently Filed Employee Travel Claims

Page 2 of 3

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## POLICIES

1. All travel claims, including those for long-term travel and long-term subsistence, are to be filed by the traveler in accordance with the requirements outlined in SAAM 5055.
2. Agencies are to establish policies, procedures and processes that reduce or eliminate the frequency of delinquently filed travel claims. The reduction of delinquently filed travel claims may involve:
  - 2.1. Making the timely filing of travel claims an element of employees' periodic evaluations and reviews.
  - 2.2. Streamlining travel claim approval paths to achieve greater efficiency while retaining reasonable controls over expenditures. This may be accomplished by removing from an approval path those through whom travel claims are routed for information purposes only. Someone who cannot reject a travel claim needs not be on the approval path and can be notified about the claim by other means.
    - 2.2.1. In general, those who can reject a travel claim are those with knowledge about why the travel was approved and was necessary and can attest to one or more of the following:
      - 2.2.1.1. That the travel was for a valid public purpose, and
      - 2.2.1.2. That sufficient spending authority exists and existed to pay for the travel, and
      - 2.2.1.3. That adequate cash is available to pay the claim, and
      - 2.2.1.4. That appropriate documentation exists to support the claim.
    - 2.3. Emphasizing to supervisors and managers the importance of the timeliness in filing travel claims and making the compliance of the staff they supervise or manage a matter for discussion during periodic reviews and evaluations.
3. A Form GAO-513 must be completed for any delinquent travel claim. Completing the Form GAO-513 requires:
  - 3.1. An explanation of why the travel claim could not have been filed on a timely basis.
    - 3.1.1. It is important to candidly identify the cause of the delinquency of the filing as this will help in counseling employees and improving processes.
    - 3.1.2. Claimants' patterns of non-compliance with expectations of the timely filing of travel claims should be investigated and steps taken to encourage and support changes in behavior.

# State of Arizona Accounting Manual

Topic 50 Travel

Issued 06/19/15

Section 56 Delinquently Filed Employee Travel Claims

Page 3 of 3

- 3.1.3. If securing the approval of supervisors or managers is the cause of the delinquency, the importance of timeliness in dealing with travel claims should be discussed, including the additional costs of dealing with delinquent travel claims and the discontent delays in paying travel claims may cause employees.
- 3.1.4. If it is an agency's processes that prevent the timely filing of travel claims, new and different ways of handling travel claims should be explored and new, more efficient processes be implemented. Such processes should, however, not sacrifice appropriate review and internal control to timeliness.
- 3.2. A description of the corrective action that will be taken by, as appropriate, the employee, his supervisor or manager, or the agency to prevent future delinquent filings.
4. The completed Form GAO-513 must—before the claim is processed and/or paid—be signed by those persons designated in the table found at the end of this section. It is to be noted that, as the claim becomes more delinquent, additional signatures will be required to effect processing.
  - 4.1. If approved by the State Comptroller, the Form GAO-513 will be returned to the agency for processing and payment by the agency.
  - 4.2. If not approved, the State Comptroller will communicate with the claimant's agency head to determine the appropriate course of action.
5. An agency head and the agency CFO may not delegate authority to sign a Form GAO-513 without the express, written permission of the State Comptroller.
6. Completed Forms GAO-513 must be retained by the agency for a period consistent with those prescribed by LAPR for such records.

Delinquent Travel Claim Filed Number of Months After Travel	GAO-513 Must Be Signed by
More than two (2), but less than three (3)	The Traveler <u>and</u> The Traveler's Supervisor <u>or</u> Manager
Three (3) or more, but less than five (5)	The Traveler <u>and</u> The Traveler's Supervisor <u>or</u> Manager <u>and</u> The Traveler's Agency Head <u>or</u> CFO
Five (5) or more	The Traveler <u>and</u> The Traveler's Supervisor <u>or</u> Manager <u>and</u> The Traveler's Agency Head <u>or</u> CFO <u>and</u> The State Comptroller