

# Did You Know?

## A Guide for State of Arizona Travelers



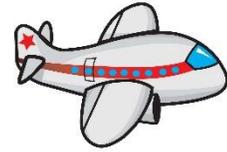
## PRIOR to Traveling:

### General Trip Information

- **Where** and **when** are you going?
  - *Know your destination and the start and ending dates and times for your trip.*
- **Why** are you traveling? What is the business purpose?
  - *Your out-of-state travel authorization, Form GAO-509, and travel claim, Form GAO-503EZ, will both require that you document the business purpose for your travel. This purpose should help any reader, reviewer, or auditor understand why you are traveling and why it is beneficial for the State.*
- Are you going to be in **travel status**?
  - *Except for mileage or unless otherwise specifically provided in SAAM, a traveler must be more than fifty (50) miles from both the traveler's residence and his regular duty post. If you are not in travel status, you are not eligible for meals or lodging or other travel expenses.*
- Are you going **Out-of-State** or Out-of-Country?
  - *If yes, complete Form GAO-509 Out-of-State Travel Approval Request. Obtain approval prior to travel and incurring non-refundable costs.*
- Does your **agency** have travel policies and procedures you should be aware of and follow?
  - *If yes, review and follow.*
- What is the **funding source** of your travel?
  - *Know what accounting codes are required on your Form GAO-509 (and Form GAO-503EZ after travel) if your agency requires you to complete.*

## Transportation – How are you getting there?

### Are you flying? (See SAAM 5010)



- Is your agency making your **flight arrangements** or are you?
  - Usually agencies book flights with their CTA cards; however, if you are responsible for making your own flight arrangements, make sure you obtain and keep comparative flight information.
- Have you provided your **personal information** for your agency to arrange your flight?
  - They will need information that matches the identification you will be presenting at the airport to arrange your flight.
- Have you received the **confirmed flight information** prior to your trip? Does it match the expected dates and times you are traveling?
  - If you do not have this information, follow up with those who made your flight information.
- Do you know what you are allowed for **baggage** (number of bags and size/weight)?
  - Know what the airline allows (airline website), and what you will be reimbursed (See SAAM 5010).
- Do you know what you are allowed for **transportation traveling to and from** the airport? Have you made any necessary arrangements for transportation, parking, etc.?
  - See SAAM 5010 for details.



### Are you driving? (See SAAM 5015)

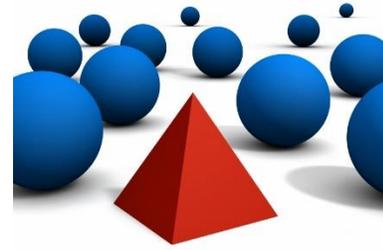
Will you be **driving to** your destination? Are you **renting a vehicle** to drive to your destination or to use when you arrive?

- If you are using a State Owned Vehicle (SOV), your Personally Owned Vehicle (POV), or a commercially rented vehicle (CRV), read SAAM 5015.
- If you are renting a vehicle, obtain your agency's pre-approval (in writing or on a Form GAO-509 and review SAAM 5015 for further information).
- For mileage reimbursement, commute mileage might need to be deducted. See SAAM 5015.



## Lodging (See SAAM 5030, 5040, & 5095)

- Are you attending a **conference** or an event with published lodging rates?
  - Attach the conference brochure.
  - The conference lodging rate
    - ✓ Must be a published rate, not a list of nearby hotels. Note, not all meetings/conferences/etc. have conference lodging rates.
    - ✓ Only the lowest published rate is the approved conference rate (availability does not matter).
- Do you know what the allowable State of Arizona **reimbursement rate** is for your destination and time of year?
  - Find the rate in SAAM 5095. Rates for lodging and meals and incidentals are provided by location and season. For out-of-country, see the GAO website (<https://gao.az.gov/travel/welcome-gao-travel>) for more information.
- Do all nights of your lodging meet the **rate requirements**?
  - Each night, considered independently, must be within the allowable rate.
  - An approved Form GAO-509 is not an approval to exceed the lodging rate; only a fully approved Form GAO-515 for a lodging rate exception is authorized approval.
  - You should obtain and keep a written lodging confirmation from the lodging establishment confirming the dates and lodging rates for all nights of your stay.
- Is **your lodging rate** within the allowable amount?
  - Some hotel fees/charges must be included in the rack rate to determine if they are within the State rate. See SAAM 5030 for more information.
- How conference registrations should be paid for?
  - Conference registrations should be paid for by P-Card or purchase order.



## Exceptions (SAAM 0015)

- Do you need a **travel exception**? If you cannot find lodging within the allowable rate, contact those who handle travel in your agency to help you find lodging within the allowable rate or to obtain an exception.
  - *Travel exceptions must be requested on a Form GAO-515 submitted from your agency to the GAO.*
  - *Do you have print screens of the hotel research conducted and its results? (Note: only three options are not acceptable research. The expectation is an exhaustive search for all lodging options to find an option within the State rate, including lodging which may require transportation.)*
  - *Lodging rate exceptions can only be approved by the State Comptroller with a request (Form GAO-515) signed by your agency head/deputy agency head and chief financial officer. This request should be made as soon as possible and at least ten business days prior to travel to allow time for processing.*
  - *Other travel exceptions requiring the State Comptroller's approval must also be on a Form GAO-515 with required signatures and within the same timeframes.*

## Meals and Incidentals? (See SAAM 5030, 5040, & 5095)



- Do you know the **maximum amount** you will be reimbursed for each day of your trip?
  - **If you do not have an overnight stay**, you must be in travel status (i.e., be 50 or more miles away from your home and duty post) for **six (6) hours or more** to receive a meal reimbursement and your reimbursement is **taxable**.
  - **If you have an overnight stay**, the first and last day are **limited to 75%** of the daily rate for your destination.
  - The full amount for **provided meals** (provided by anyone other than traveler, regardless whether accepted or not) must be **deducted** for each day, including the first and last day.
  - Transportation costs to get meals, the cost of the meals, and incidentals such as tips for hotel services and other discretionary expenses are **subject to the meals and incidentals rate limits**.
  - Donations, tips for meal service above twenty percent (20%), and tips for carryout, fast food, buffet, or provided meals are **not reimbursable**.

## Other Travel Information

### Employee Travel Card (ETC)

Q: Would you find that a credit card for you to use for State travel to be convenient?

A: You may be able to obtain an Employee Travel Card (ETC). See SAAM 5051 and your agency for more information.

### Incidentals

Q: Are your incidentals included in your meal maximum allowable State meal and incidental reimbursement rate or is it in addition?

A: This can vary depending on the incidental; see SAAM 5026 for more information.

### Conference Registration

Q: If you are attending a conference, was your registration paid?

A: Verify that your registration was paid and that you are registered.

### Designated Conference Lodging & Provided Meals

Q: Do you have a copy of your conference brochure with the agenda and published room rates?

A: (Room rates and meals provided will be required when you submit your GAO-503 Travel Reimbursement Claim). This information can change on websites as time progresses and room blocks fill or are no longer available. It is a good idea to keep a screen print or physical copy until after your travel claim has been processed. Information about provided meals, such as conference provided meals or hotel provided meals should also be attached to your travel claim, Form GAO-503EZ and not claimed for reimbursement, regardless whether or not consumed.

### Travel Receipts

Q: Do you have a plan on how to keep your receipts when you travel for all travel expenses?

A: Receipts are usually required for reimbursement, so it best to obtain and retain receipts for all travel expenses. Although meal receipts may or may not be required by your agency, you can only claim reimbursement for amounts actually spent. You must sign a certification for your travel reimbursement stating the amounts claimed are actual and in compliance with State travel policy in order to receive reimbursement. See the Form GAO-503EZ.

### Multiple Travelers

Q: Are others from your agency going to the same destination?

A: Any out-of-state travel involving three (3) or more individuals from the same agency or if travel can reasonably be expected to equal five thousand dollars (\$5,000) or more must be agency approved on a Form GAO-509S.

### Non-reimbursable Expenses

Q: What type of expenses are not reimbursable?

A: Alcohol, entertainment, and personal expenses are not reimbursable.



## AFTER Traveling:

### Form GAO-503EZ Travel Reimbursement Claim

- Gather your receipts and complete your Form GAO-503EZ Travel Reimbursement Claim.

### Timely Submission Is your travel claim timely?

- *If not in long-term travel or subsistence, you should, if practicable, file your travel claim within five (5) business days after the return from travel and no less than once per pay period. To be timely, travel claims must be filed within two calendar months after the completion of the trip. (SAAM 5055)*
- Did you know, in all cases, if practicable, travel claims should be filed not later than ten (10) calendar days after the end of the fiscal year in which travel is completed? (SAAM 5055)

### Delinquent Filing Is your travel claim delinquent?

- *Travel Claims filed after two (2) months are delinquent and need a Form GAO-513 attached to be processed. Different levels of approval are required depending on the number of months delinquent. See SAAM 5056 for more information for most travelers and SAAM 5565 for board members.*

## Prior to submitting your travel claim, have you reviewed it for the following:

- ✓ Are receipts attached for every item claimed as required by policy?
- ✓ Are all expenses claimed allowable under State travel policy?
- ✓ Is your lodging within the approved rate for each night?
- ✓ Are your meal and incidental requests within the approved rate?
- ✓ If you had an overnight stay, did you adjust the day of departure and return to 75% of the maximum full-day meal rate?
- ✓ Have you deducted all provided meals, including free meals provided by the lodging establishment or conference, regardless of whether you ate them?
- ✓ Are any expenses on your travel claim duplicated or already paid by the State?
- ✓ Did you personally pay for the expenses you are requesting? You cannot be reimbursed for expenses paid by the State or others.
- ✓ Are your receipts itemized? Credit card slips with totals only are not itemized receipts. Reviewers will be verifying that your travel expenses comply with policy (i.e., room charges are appropriate and do not contain entertainment or alcohol, meal receipts do not include alcohol or excessive tips, etc.).
- ✓ Did you verify whether commute mileage must be deducted if claiming mileage for your POV?
- ✓ Does your travel claim have any whiteout or correction tape? If something is incorrect, correct it prior to submitting or cross it out and initial the change.
- ✓ Make sure you read and agree to the certification and sign your travel claim.