

State Travel Management Unit

Board of Public Works

Subtitle 02 Business Administration

23.02.01 Standard Travel Regulations

Authority: State Finance and Procurement, § 10-203, Annotated Code of Maryland

.01 Scope.

- A. Unless otherwise provided by law, these regulations apply to all travel for official business undertaken by officials and employees of units of the Executive Branch of the State government, except elected officials and officials and employees of the University of Maryland System, Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of Maryland.
- B. If a contract specifically provides for their application, these regulations may apply to official business travel of persons performing a State contract.
- C. These regulations do not apply:
 - (1) When a line item in the annual State budget specifically identifies an item and amount for exemption.
 - (2) To State-owned, State-leased, or privately owned motor vehicles. Reimbursement to employees or officials who use State-owned, State-leased, or privately owned motor vehicles to conduct official business for the State is within the jurisdiction of the State Fleet Administrator, Department of Budget and Management, and subject to policies issued by the Secretary of Budget and Management.

.02 Definitions.

- A. In this chapter, the following terms have the meanings indicated.
- B. Terms Defined.
 - (1) "Board" means the Board of Public Works.
 - (2) "Conferences, conventions, and seminars" means non-routine official business meetings for the purpose of discussing or deciding matters related to the accomplishment of position responsibilities.
 - (3) "Credit services contractor" means a private entity under contract with the State to extend the State credit for purposes of charging business travel expenses.

- (4) "Department" means the Department of Budget and Management.
- (5) Employee.
 - a) "Employee" means an employee or official of a unit of the Executive Branch of State government.
 - b) "Employee" does not mean elected officials and officials and employees of the University of Maryland System, Morgan State University, and St. Mary's College of Maryland.
- (6) "In-State travel" means travel to destinations inside the boundaries of Maryland, and includes Washington, D.C.
- (7) "Official business" means the authorized duties performed by an employee or official of the State in the employee's or officer's defined capacity under the duties and responsibilities prescribed by the employment or office.
- (8) "Out-of-country travel" means travel to destinations outside the United States and its territories.
- (9) "Out-of-State travel" means travel to destinations outside Maryland and Washington, D.C.
- (10) "Routine business travel" means authorized travel on a daily basis or periodic basis to a jobsite other than the employee's assigned office for official business.
- (11) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Budget and Management.
- (12) "Training" means the same as provided under COMAR 17.04.10.01.
- (13) "Travel services contractor" means a private business entity under contract with the State to serve as a travel agency for purposes of State employee business travel.
- (14) "Travel status" means the condition of a State employee while traveling on State business. An employee is not in travel status while commuting from home to the employee's assigned office, regardless of the length of time of that commute.
- (15) "Unit" means any department or independent agency within the Executive Branch of State government.

.03 Policy

- A. These regulations establish a State Travel Management Program, under the jurisdiction of the Secretary, Budget and Management, to help ensure fairness in the application and administration of travel expense reimbursement and to reduce and control the State's costs related to travel.

- B. An employee traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care incurring expenses as would a prudent person traveling for personal reasons. Travel for business should be conducted at a minimum cost for achieving the success of the mission. Travelers shall request reservations as far in advance as possible and shall utilize the lowest logical air/rail fares available. Subject to approval by the unit head, use of business class is allowable when traveling to destinations outside North America, the Caribbean Islands, and the Hawaiian Islands. Travel in first class is not allowable unless documented evidence clearly indicates the travel is in the best interest of the State. An employee may accept promotional awards if they are obtained under the same conditions as those offered to the general public, provided that participation in such programs results in no additional cost to the State. An employee who receives compensation for being bumped from a flight while on travel status shall remit that compensation to the State. Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport, as the State's preferred airport, should be used whenever convenient and cost effective.
- C. State facilities shall be used for in-State meetings whenever available, unless the use of outside facilities is more cost effective, or the agency head certifies that the outside facility is more appropriate to completing the business mission.
- D. The Secretary shall establish reimbursement rates, subject to the approval of the Board of Public Works. Expenditures for official travel may be considered as reimbursable only if incurred in accordance with these regulations. The Department shall make reimbursement rates available online wherever practicable.

.04 Travel Management Office.

- A. The State Travel Management Office is established in the Department of Budget and Management to administer the State Travel Management Program.
- B. The State travel manager shall:
 - (1) Oversee the operations of the Travel Management Office;
 - (2) Monitor contractor performance and unit compliance; and
 - (3) Work with State units to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the Travel Management Program.

.05 Unit Heads.

- A. Unit heads shall:
 - (1) Be responsible for ensuring compliance with this chapter by providing adequate internal control over employee travel;

(2) Designate an existing employee or employees to serve in a subsidiary capacity as an agency travel coordinator or coordinators within their organization for the purpose of monitoring employee compliance with these regulations and performing other duties listed in Regulation .06.

B. Exceptions to using the travel and credit service contractor or contractors shall be approved by the unit head or designee in accordance with Regulation .08B, documented by the unit, and forwarded to the Department's Travel Management Office by January 15th and July 15th of each year. Reporting is to cover the periods of July 1 through December 31, and January 1 through June 30, respectively. This section shall be effective upon written notification of the Secretary to the unit head.

.06 State Agency Travel Coordinators.

The agency travel coordinators shall be responsible for:

- A. Monitoring employee compliance in accordance with this chapter;
- B. Providing assistance to employees concerning questions and problems with travel;
- C. Serving as liaison with the Department's Travel Management Office and the travel and credit service contractors.

.07 Secretary.

The Secretary shall be responsible for the:

- A. Development and promulgation of the regulations in this chapter, including travel reimbursement rates, with the approval of the Board;
- B. Procurement of travel and credit service contracts and rate agreements;
- C. Development and administration of travel and credit service contracts and rate agreements;
- D. Program monitoring, evaluation, and guidance;
- E. Liaison with State units to ensure the effective and efficient operation of the travel management program and compliance with this chapter. This shall include resolving problems and complaints of the units and travel and credit service contractors and providing educational material to agency travel coordinators and employees.

.08 Travel Services Contractor.

- A. The Secretary may contract with travel service providers, or with a single provider, to acquire travel services for State employees traveling on official business.
- B. Upon written notification of the Secretary to the unit head, employees shall book all airline, railway, and ship travel, all car rentals, and all lodging reservations through the State travel service contractor, except under the following circumstances:
 - (1) An unusual situation makes it impractical or impossible to use the services of the State travel services contractor;
 - (2) The State travel services contractor does not serve the area where the employee is located;
 - (3) Travel arrangements are to be made for the employee by the organizer of a planned conference, convention, or seminar in order to obtain special discounts not available through the travel services contractor.
- C. When changes in travel planning require cancellation or revision of common carrier tickets, or car rental or lodging arrangements, the employee shall notify the travel services contractor as soon as possible so that the necessary changes can be made.

.09 Air Travel Accident Insurance.

Air travel insurance is provided through the State Treasurer's Office. Beneficiaries are those designated with the Maryland State Retirement and Pension System. Questions concerning policy coverage or the designation of beneficiaries shall be directed to the State Treasurer's Office.

.10 Travel Authorization.

- A. In-State Business Travel. Subject to appropriated funds, routine business travel may be authorized in accordance with appropriate internal approval procedures of the unit responsible for the official State business.
- B. Out-of-State or Out-of-Country Business Travel. Subject to appropriated funds, a unit head or designee may authorize out-of-State and out-of-country travel for official business. Requests for authorization shall be submitted on the Comptroller of the Treasury's GAD Form X-3A, "Individual Request for Out-of-State Travel."
- C. Conventions, Conferences, Seminars, or Training Travel.

- (1) Subject to appropriated funds, a unit head or designee may authorize in-State travel to conventions, conferences, seminars, or training in accordance with appropriate internal approval procedures. A unit head or designee may authorize out-of-State travel for these purposes using the Comptroller of the Treasury's GAD Form X-3A, "Individual Request for Out-of-State Travel."
- (2) Requests for authorization to travel out-of-country to conventions, conferences, seminars or training shall be submitted to the Secretary for approval.

.11 Travel Payment and Reimbursement.

A. Each employee's reimbursement request shall include:

- (1) The Comptroller of the Treasury's GAD Form X-3A, "Individual Request for Out-of-State Travel," in accordance with Regulation .10 of this chapter;
- (2) The Comptroller of the Treasury's GAD Form X-5, "State of Maryland Expense Account";
- (3) Itemized receipted bills and such other supporting documentation of expenses as may be required by the Comptroller.

B. Payment for Airline and Rail Tickets (Common Carrier). The following conditions shall be effective upon written notification of the Secretary to the unit head:

- (1) Units shall pay for employee common carrier tickets issued by the contractor travel service using the credit account number provided by the contractor selected for that purpose. Each unit or appropriate unit division shall be issued one account number and shall be centrally billed by the contractor for all charges. The identity of and access to all unit account numbers shall be restricted by the unit to the essential personnel.
- (2) Each unit shall have a written policy and assigned responsibility for obtaining and controlling common carrier tickets.
- (3) Wholly unused, fully refundable tickets shall be returned by the employee to the designated unit official to obtain credit. The unit official immediately shall return any unused portions of tickets to the contractual travel agency for credit to be applied.

.12 Reimbursable Expenses.

A. General. The State shall reimburse employees for authorized necessary travel and related expenses incurred by the employee. The State may not reimburse an employee for transportation, lodging, meal expense, or any other costs incurred by a spouse, child, or other person not essential to the business mission, who accompanies the employee on an official business trip. For reimbursement of travel expenses, including meals and expenses other than authorized tips, employees must provide receipts.

B. Taxi, Bus, and Airport Limousine. Taxi, bus, shuttle and airport limousine fares incurred while on travel status are reimbursable when traveling to and from the airport, train station, or bus station, or when otherwise incurred while conducting official business. Employees may be reimbursed for tips for taxi, bus, shuttle and airport limousine at rates and limits established by the Secretary. Employees shall use the mode of public transportation that results in the lowest logical cost to the State.

C. Rental Cars.

(1) Subject to approval by the unit head or designee, employees may rent cars while on travel status when other means of transportation are unavailable, more costly, or impractical. The lowest cost vehicle necessary to achieve the traveler's mission shall be reserved. Upon written notification to the unit head, all car rental reservations shall be made through the State travel services contractor, except as provided in Regulation .08B, of this chapter.

(2) In addition to the cost of the rental, the employee shall be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable expenses incurred for the following items:

a) Gasoline, oil, and emergency repairs;

b) Parking;

c) Toll charges.

D. Lodging.

(1) This section shall be effective upon written notification by the Secretary to the unit head. Employees shall make all lodging reservations through the State travel services contractor, except as provided in Regulation .08B, of this chapter, when official business requires the employee to remain away from home overnight. Field staff employees shall make in-State lodging reservations through the State travel services contractor whenever practical.

- (2) Reimbursement shall be in an amount equal to the actual cost of the least expensive available rate for reasonable accommodations based on single occupancy.
- (3) In cases of double occupancy by two State employees, each employee shall be reimbursed 50 percent of the total room charge.
- (4) In cases of double occupancy when one of the occupants is not on State business, lodging reimbursement shall be on the basis of the least expensive available rate for reasonable accommodations based on single occupancy.

E. Meals.

- (1) Meal allowances for employees while in travel status are reimbursable at the rates established by the Secretary. All meal rates are inclusive of taxes and tips.
- (2) When an employee is in travel status involving absence from home overnight, all meals are reimbursable.
- (3) Reimbursement may not be made for the cost of alcoholic beverages.
- (4) The cost of breakfast is reimbursable when an employee in travel status has to leave home on official business 2 hours or more before the beginning time of the employee's place of business. The cost of dinner is reimbursable when an employee in travel status cannot get home within 2 hours after the employee's normal quitting time. In both cases, the 2 hours are in addition to the normal commuting time.
- (5) In cases when an employee meets both of the conditions of §E(4), of this regulation, and is in travel status for the entire day, but not overnight, the employee's lunch also is reimbursable.
- (6) Reimbursement for either breakfast or dinner may not be made because of the hour at which an employee is required to leave home, or at which the employee returns home, because of commuting to and from the employee's normal place or places of employment.
- (7) When a State institution, as a matter of practice, charges an employee for meals regardless of whether the employee eats a particular meal, and the employee is required to be absent from the institution on official business at mealtime, the employee shall be reimbursed to the extent of the cost of the meal charged to the employee by the institution.
- (8) Except as provided in §E(2), (4), (5), and (7), of this regulation, an employee may not be reimbursed for the cost of lunch.

- (9) If the registration fee for a conference, convention, seminar, or training meeting includes the cost of meals, the State shall reimburse the employee for the full registration fee. For this meeting, the employee may not request reimbursement for the included meals.
- (10) Members of boards and commissions established by statute who do not receive compensation from the State may be reimbursed for actual and necessary meal expenses incurred while on official State business. Reimbursable meal expenses including tips may not exceed amounts established by the Secretary.
- (11) Meal reimbursement above the standard limits is allowable for employees conducting business in high cost areas designated by the Secretary.
- (12) Meal reimbursement above the standard limits is allowable for employees on travel status outside the United States and its territories upon submission of itemized receipts approved by the unit head or the unit head's designee.

F. Conference Registration Fees. When a registration fee is charged, participating State officials or employees shall be reimbursed upon submission of a receipt.

G. Porter Fees and Hotel Tips.

- (1) Porter fees and hotel tips per each bag carried at common carrier depots and hotels respectively are reimbursable at the rates and limits established by the Secretary.
- (2) The same per bag tip is reimbursable when checking into and checking out of a hotel.
- (3) The State will not reimburse for tips for hotel housekeeping services.

H. Telephone and Postage Expenses. Telephone and postage expenses incurred in the performance of official duties are allowable.

I. Cleaning Expenses. When an official or employee is required to be on travel status for a period exceeding 5 working days, the cost of necessary laundry, cleaning, and pressing is reimbursable.

J. Expenses for Passports, Visas, and Traveler's Checks. If incurred as a result of the performance of official duties, fees for passports, visas, and traveler's checks are reimbursable upon submission of a receipt.