Administrative Policy No. 19.10.11

Subject:	Lodging
Contact:	Office of Accounting Services Chief, (360) 664-5716
Authorizing Source:	State Administrative & Accounting Manual (SAAM) Chapter 10
Effective Date:	August 29, 2011
Revised:	March 30, 2023 [i] Housekeeping 4/5/2024 [ii] Housekeeping 03/24/2025 [ii] Housekeeping 4/21/2026
Approved By:	**Original signed by Richard Pannkuck** Chief Financial Officer / Assistant Secretary Finance, Technology, and Analytics Administration

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Purpose

This policy establishes requirements for lodging eligibility, the process for making lodging arrangements, and the payment of those expenses.

Scope

This policy applies to all Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) employees, board members, community compensation participants, and commission members (unless otherwise stated in statute), and volunteers.

This policy does not apply to contractors reimbursed by specific contractual arrangements.

Additional guidance

DSHS administrative policies
- Subchapter 19.10, travel policies
- 05.04, Records retention
- 18.26, Disability reasonable accommodation

State administrative & accounting manual (SAAM)
- Lodging, 10.30
- Allowable moving costs, 60.20.10

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Ensure the health and safety of travelers, 10.10.35
Travel rates, 10.90

DSHS forms picker

02-752, in-state travel arrangements
03-337, out-of-state travel arrangements

DES Contracts
OFM WA Per Diem Rates

Definitions

Advantageous means direct non-financial, work-related benefits accruing to the state.

Amenity fee or resort fee means an additional fee that a traveler is charged by an accommodation provider, usually calculated on a per day basis, in addition to a base room rate.

Approving manager means the approving authority responsible for the traveler's travel status and reimbursement.

Commercial lodging facility means a business, non-profit, or governmental entity that provides lodging accommodations for a fee. A commercial lodging facility other than a hotel must be supported by a tax ID number and must be available to the general public to qualify as commercial lodging. Reimbursement for lodging at a private residence not meeting the criteria above is not allowed.

Community compensation participant is an agency partner who is a part of historically excluded communities who have been disproportionately impacted by government decisions. The community compensation participant provides their lived experience perspective—their personal, direct experience related to the subject matter—to agency events and workgroups where activities, policies, processes and systems are being addressed. A community compensation participant is not a volunteer. They may be compensated for their work with a stipend and reimbursed for expenses, where applicable, in accordance with 2SSB 5793 and the office of equity and DSHS community compensation guidelines.

Department travel card means a purchase card issued to pay for authorized, business related travel expenses on behalf of DSHS.

Economical means direct financial, work-related costs that occur at the least cost to the state for which the state is responsible to pay.

Most direct route means the "shortest distance" as shown by a standard highway mileage guide or electronic mapping system

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Normal return night means that night of travel on which it was anticipated prior to the trip, which the traveler would return either to the official duty station or official residence after the completion of official state business.

Official residence means the city, town, or other location where the traveler maintains their primary residence. For employees, this information is obtained from their personnel records. For non-employees, this information is obtained from form 09-415 (authorization for expenditures).

Official state business means activities performed by an official or state employee, authorized volunteer, or contractor, work experience program participant, student or employee of another governmental jurisdiction as directed by their supervisor in order to accomplish state programs or as required by the duties of their position or office.

Official station means the city, town, or other location where the state official or employee's office is located, or the city, town, or location where the state official or employee's work is performed on a permanent basis. For the purposes of these travel regulations, Olympia, Tumwater and Lacey are considered to be the same official station. A state official or employee's official station is to be designated by their appointing authority and is to be determined by the by the agency. It is not assigned because it is the home or preferred living area of a state official or employee.

Overnight travel means a traveler was in travel status substantially longer than an ordinary day's work AND stopped for substantial sleep or rest.

Peer to peer property rental is the process whereby a homeowner makes their home or a room within their home available for others to rent for short periods of time as an alternative form of accommodation.

Per diem expenses means daily travel costs covering both lodging expenses and subsistence expenses while in travel status.

Travel and expense management system (TEMS) is the software program used to process travel reimbursement requests and travel advances.

Traveler means any DSHS employee, officer, volunteer, board member, community compensation participant or commission member traveling on official state business.

Policy

A. Lodging expenses at a commercial lodging facility may be paid at actual costs up to the specific daily maximum allowable lodging rate, as shown in SAAM 10.90.20. The traveler must turn in a receipt for lodging costs to receive payment.

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1. The maximum reimbursable lodging rate includes, but is not limited to, the basic commercial lodging cost, amenity fee, resort fees, cleaning fees, and service fees.
2. The only additional lodging expenses that are reimbursable beyond the maximum lodging rate are any applicable sales taxes and/or hotel/motel taxes on those amounts.
3. A traveler will not be reimbursed if no lodging expenses are incurred. (E.g., traveler stays with family or friends).

B. Lodging expenses will not be paid if the business location is located less than fifty (50) miles (most direct route) from either the traveler's official residence or official station.

Exceptions to the 50-mile rule may be granted by the approving manager if one of the following applies:

1. The traveler stays overnight in a commercial lodging facility to avoid driving back and forth for back-to-back late night/early morning official state business;
2. The health and safety of the traveler is of concern per SAAM Subsection 10.10.35;
3. The agency can demonstrate that staying overnight is more economical to the state.

Written supervisory approval for the first and third conditions and cost analysis documentation for the third condition is to be kept in accordance with the record retention schedule. Approval for the exception(s) is to be noted on the payment documentation.

C. Payment of lodging expenses up to 150% of the applicable maximum per diem rates must be pre-approved in writing by the division director or designee in the following situations:

1. When a traveler is assigned to accompany an elected official, a foreign dignitary, or others, as authorized by law, and is required to stay in the same lodging facility;
2. When costs in the area have escalated for a brief period of time either during special events or disasters;
3. When lodging accommodations in the area of the business location are not available at or below the maximum lodging amount, and there are no savings from occupying less expensive lodging at a more distant site because of an increase in transportation and other costs;
4. When the traveler attends a meeting, conference, convention, or training session where the traveler is expected to have business interaction with other participants in addition to scheduled events and it is anticipated that maximum benefit will be achieved by allowing the traveler to stay at the lodging facility

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where the meeting, conference, convention, or training session is held; (If the DSHS is sponsoring a meeting, conference, convention, or training session, see section I below.)

5. To comply with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or when the health and safety of the traveler is at risk;
6. When meeting room facilities are necessary and it is more economical for the traveler to get special lodging accommodations such as a suite rather than a meeting room and a lodging room separately.

The written pre-approval for the exception, including the explanation of necessity, must be included as part of the payment documents or its file location referenced.

150% of maximum per diem is calculated as follows:		
Maximum lodging rate*	=	$248.00
Maximum meal rate*	=	$ 92.00
Total per diem	=	$ 340.00 X 150% = $510**

*Based on King County rates from Seasonal Rates for 06/01 to 08/31, 2025.
**Taxes are not included and may be paid in addition to this amount.

D. Payment of lodging expenses <u>in excess</u> of 150% of the applicable maximum per diem rates must be pre-approved in writing by the division director when <u>all</u> of the following apply:

1. The traveler is required to attend a meeting, conference, convention, or training session where the traveler is expected to have business interaction with other participants in addition to scheduled events;
2. It is anticipated that maximum benefit will be achieved by authorizing the traveler to stay at the lodging facilities where the meeting, conference, convention, or training session is held (if DSHS is sponsoring a meeting, conference, convention, or training session, see section J below);
3. The lowest available advertised lodging rate at the lodging facility exceeds 150% of the applicable maximum lodging rate for the location.

The written pre-approval for the exception, including the explanation of necessity, must be included as part of the supporting documents or its file location referenced.

E. When any exception to the maximum allowable lodging amount is used, the traveler is to select the <u>most</u> economical room available under the circumstances.

F. There will be no payment of lodging expenses at a commercial lodging facility at either the traveler's official station or official residence except:

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1. As an allowable moving cost per SAAM, subsection 60.20.10;
2. In emergency situations when the appointing authority determines that employees performing critical agency functions must remain at their official station;
3. When an employee, acting in a custodial or leadership role must, as a part of their duties, lodge with clients of the agency.

The specific reason allowing the traveler to lodge at the official station or residence must be noted on the supporting payment documentation.

G. Travelers are not required to share lodging accommodations. If the travelers voluntarily agree to share a room, that agreement must be made in writing prior to the travel.

1. Only one room rate per night, will be paid.
2. When a traveler pays for both their own share of the room expense and a co-workers, only that traveler will be paid.

H. Lodging expenses at peer-to-peer property rentals will not be paid by DSHS. If the traveler, due to personal preference, chooses to lodge in a peer-to-peer property rental, the traveler must pay the entire lodging expense using their own funds.

I. If an individual, who is <u>not</u> on official business, accompanies a traveler, any additional occupancy charges will not be paid by DSHS.

J. When DSHS is hosting a meeting, conference, convention, or training session for employees and the maximum allowable lodging amounts (shown in SAAM 10.90.20) are not sufficient, the assistant secretary must give written pre-approval for payment of lodging expenses up to 125% of the maximum per diem rates.

K. If the use of a travel trailer or camper is for the <u>traveler's convenience,</u> payment is limited to actual space rental costs (as evidenced by a receipt) and cannot exceed the daily non-high cost location lodging rate in SAAM 10.90.20.

L. Division directors or designees, with the traveler's concurrence, may authorize the use of a privately-owned travel trailer or camper when:

1. Suitable commercial lodging is not available;
2. State lodging is not provided;
3. There is a benefit to the state for the traveler to remain at the business location.

Payment is at the hourly, non-high cost per diem rate per SAAM 10.90.20.

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M. Lodging expenses may be paid for the normal return night if the division director or designee determines one of the following three conditions apply:

1. When the overnight stay is more economical to the state;
2. For the health and safety of travelers (e.g., hazardous weather, late night travel, etc.);
3. To comply with the ADA.

The specific reason for the traveler lodging on the normal return night must be noted on the payment documentation.

N. If a traveler chooses to return to their official station or official residence when overnight travel would normally be required, they will be paid the lesser amount of either:

1. The travel expense incurred in returning to the official station or official residence (whichever is closer); or
2. The amount which would have been allowable (lodging, meals, etc.) had they stayed overnight.

O. For non-mandatory attendance at seminars or professional meetings, lodging may be paid at less than the standard rate as found in SAAM 10.90. Supervisors will ensure that the lower rate is agreed to in writing by the traveler in advance of the travel.

P. DSHS travel card is the preferred method of payment for lodging expenses. A purchase order or the traveler's own personal resources may also be used to make payment. If the traveler chooses to use their own funds instead of the DSHS travel card any cancellation fees will not be paid.

Q. If the traveler, due to personal preference, chooses to lodge in a commercial lodging facility where costs exceed the maximum rate, the traveler must pay the entire amount to the lodging facility using their own funds. The traveler will then submit for payment through TEMS for costs (allowance and prorated taxes) up to the maximum allowed rate.

R. If the traveler requires a reasonable accommodation due to a disability for (work related) travel that would require an exception to travel policies, they will need to work with their supervisor or manager and human resources prior to travel expenses being incurred.

S. Travelers are encouraged to use the state lodging directory when making lodging arrangements.

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T. If making reservations on-line, or through a travel agency, a contracted travel provider must be used.

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[i] Updated AP links to new SharePoint.
[ii] Updated AP links and added community compensation participant.
[ii] Removed or fixed broken links due to FTAA SharePoint update and updated travel rates.

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