Washington State Department of Social & Health Services

Transforming lives

Administrative Policy No. 19.10.12

Subject:	General Travel Provisions
Information Contact:	Office of Accounting Services Chief, (360) 664-5716
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Effective Date:	February 29, 2012
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Approved By:	**Original signed by Richard Pannkuk** Assistant Secretary / Chief Financial Officer Finance, Technology, and Analytics Administration

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Purpose

This policy describes the general travel provisions that are applicable to all Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) travel policies.

Scope

This policy applies to all DSHS employees, board and commission members (unless stated otherwise in statute), as well as volunteers.

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

Additional guidance

DSHS administrative policies
- 18.26, disability reasonable accommodation
- Subchapter 19.10, travel policies
- 14.10, accessible meetings
- 18.64, standards of ethical conduct for employees
- 13.19, credit cards – purchases, payments, and disputes

IRS Publication 463

Definitions

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Business stop means a physical location, outside of the traveler's commute, that they travel to for official state business. These could be locations to meet with clients, nearby offices, or any other locations traveled to for official DSHS business.

Commute route refers to travel between the official residence (OR) and their official station (OS) or first business stop. When the traveler's official residence and official station is the same, then their first and last trip within their OR/OS would be considered their normal commute.

Common carrier is a person or company that transports passengers or goods for a fee.

Department (DSHS) 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 and which the state is responsible to pay.

Official residence is 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 the activities performed by a state employee, volunteer, board or commission member 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 traveler's office is located, or the city, town, or location where their 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 agency. It is not assigned because it is the home or preferred living area of a state official or employee.

Out-of-state means travel anywhere outside the boundaries of the State of Washington; however, with respect to the requirement for prior authorization of out-of-state travel, travel to counties and cities in the states of Idaho and Oregon that are contiguous to the border between Washington-Idaho or Washington-Oregon are not considered out-of-state.

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

Per diem means daily travel costs covering both lodging expenses and subsistence expenses (meals, taxes & tips on meals, and incidental expenses) while in travel status.

Non-employee means anyone who is not employed by DSHS.

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Qualified prospective employee means an applicant for the position of director, deputy director, assistant director, state supervisor or other personnel having both executive and professional status.

Regular workplace means the location where the traveler normally performs their work (excludes meeting and conference rooms). This is normally the traveler's office, but if the traveler is not assigned to an office, it is the location where the majority of their work is performed.

Reimbursement request means the request for travel reimbursement that is submitted using the travel and expense management system (TEMS).

Temporary duty station means a fixed location where a traveler has been temporarily reassigned to work for a specific period of time which is less than one year. The temporary duty station becomes the traveler's official station after one year.

TEMS is the software program used to process travel reimbursement requests and travel advances.

Travel status refers to the official status of a traveler when the traveler is away from both their official residence and their official station on official state business, exclusive of commuting between the traveler's official station and official residence.

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

Policy

A. Out-of-state travel approvals

Out-of-state travel must be pre-approved and requires additional approval as shown on the out-of-state travel document posted on the DSHS travel website.

B. Temporary duty station assignments

1. When a traveler has been reassigned to a temporary duty station, travel expenses incurred in traveling to the temporary duty station are paid and reimbursed in the same manner as travel to a business stop.

2. A review of the reassignment must be completed every 90 days by the division director or designee, to determine whether the traveler's temporary assignment should be extended or whether their permanent official station should be changed.

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The division director or designee must ensure:

a. The traveler has been notified of the possible federal tax implications per the IRS Publication 463 for extending the temporary assignment for an indefinite period of time or for longer than one year; and

b. A cost analysis has been performed to identify the most economical means of lodging (i.e., costs of lodging in apartment with kitchen facilities versus hotel and meal costs) .

3. Copies of temporary duty station assignment letters must be sent to the DSHS travel desk (MS45842). The DSHS travel desk will track and verify the time a traveler is assigned to a temporary duty station and provide the DSHS payroll office with the information necessary to report any travel allowances or living expenses incurred for tax reporting purposes.

4. The DSHS payroll office will notify the employee and supervisor of any travel allowances received that will be reported on the W2 form at the end of the calendar year.

C. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

1. All employees are to be afforded an equal opportunity to perform travel for official state business, even when the travel costs for the traveler with a disability will exceed what would normally be most economical to the state. For example:

a. When a traveler uses a wheelchair and it is necessary to pay more for an airline ticket, so the traveler can fly on a larger airplane that can accommodate the wheelchair.

b. When a traveler flies out of Sea-Tac airport because the traveler's disabilities cannot be accommodated at the local airport.

c. When a traveler has hearing or vision impairments and there is a cost of providing auxiliary aids and services to enable the traveler to successfully accomplish the purpose of the travel.

2. Compliance with the ADA is not required for non-employee travel but is available to programs on a case-by-case basis as approved by the assistant secretary or designee.

3. 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. When extra costs are incurred, a notation must be added to the payment documentation stating that the extra costs were required to comply with the ADA. The ADA supporting documentation must remain confidential and the file location referenced on the travel reimbursement request.

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D. Health & safety of travelers

1. The health and safety of travelers is a top priority and consideration must be given to establishing and altering travel plans when hazardous inclement weather and other situations could threaten the health and safety of travelers. When this occurs, travelers should:
   a. Promptly notify their supervisor about the change in travel plans; and
   b. Note the reason for any additional expense on the supporting payment documentation.

2. When a traveler takes a leave of absence because they become incapacitated due to illness, or injury, that is **not due** to their own misconduct, the authorized reimbursement for meals and lodging may be continued during the leave period with discretion by the appointing authority:
   a. Providing the traveler is able to travel, reimbursement is not to exceed in total, the cost authorized for motor vehicle car mileage or common carrier in returning the traveler to the official station or official residence, whichever is closer, and then back to the assignment.

3. When a traveler takes a leave of absence as a result of illness that **is due** to their own misconduct, the authorized reimbursement for meals, lodging, transportation, and all other travel expenditures may not be continued during the leave period.

E. Personal preference or convenience of the traveler

1. If a traveler chooses to return to their official station or official residence when overnight travel would normally be required; they are eligible for the lesser amount of either:
   a. The travel expense incurred in returning to the official station or residence (whichever is closer); or
   b. The amount which would have been allowable (lodging, meals, etc.) had they stayed overnight.

2. No additional travel expenses will be paid for extra field time incurred when the traveler, for their own convenience, chooses to:
   a. Travel to the destination in advance of the necessary time for arrival; or
   b. Remain at the destination longer than is required.

3. A traveler may couple a vacation of other personal travel with a business trip when all the following conditions exist:
   a. The primary purpose of the trip is official state business;

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b. The traveler uses, where necessary, approved leave for the vacation or personal portion of the trip;
c. A cost comparison must be completed and retained with supporting documentation. Any additional expenses, over what would normally have been incurred had the trip occurred without any personal travel, are paid by the traveler;
d. The approver must ensure that the total expenses incurred by DSHS for the trip, either as reimbursement through TEMS to the traveler, or charged to the DSHS travel card, does not exceed the total costs that would have been incurred without the personal travel;
e. The traveler must contact the travel desk prior to any submission of expenses through TEMS for trips that combine both personal and business travel; and
f. Any portion of the airfare or common carrier fee that is to be covered by the traveler must be paid at the time of ticket purchase to DSHS.

4. Per-diem for extended travel time at the destination may be authorized and paid by the agency when there is a direct savings to the state. For example, if the traveler needs to work in Spokane two weeks in a row, it is more cost effective to pay per-diem over the weekend rather than multiple flights.
   a. The calculation of the direct savings is to include a comparison of the commercial transportation costs; the per-diem costs; and, when applicable, the salary and fringe benefit costs of the traveler.
   b. The cost comparisons are to be retained with the supporting payment documentation.

F. Job interviews, state exams

1. Travel expenses incurred by a qualified prospective employee in traveling to and from an interview may be paid upon prior approval by the appointing authority or designee of the interviewing position. Travel expenses may include:
   a. Transportation expenses;
   b. Per-diem expenses; and
   c. Other miscellaneous travel costs.

2. Payment or reimbursement of travel expenses must be:
   a. In compliance with DSHS travel policies;
   b. Reimbursed at the same rate as state employees; and
   c. Documented to the same level of detail as required for state employees.
   d. If registered in TEMS, may pay through TEMS. If not, pay by P-Card or A-19.
3. If the prospective employee is applying for a classified position, authorization must be received by the secretary or designee of the interviewing position, prior to offering to pay the prospective interviewee for their travel expenses.

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G. Payment of travel expenses

1. TEMS is used to reimburse travelers for eligible travel expenses that are:
   a. Paid for by the traveler

   Instructions for requesting reimbursement of travel expenses through TEMS are located on the travel website.

2. Personal financial resources can be used to pay for:
   a. Meals
   b. Lodging
   c. Miscellaneous travel expenses (when policy does not require another method of payment)
   d. Common carriers
   e. Airfare & rental cars (in emergencies when the DSHS travel card is unavailable)

3. The DSHS travel card must be used to pay for airfare.

   The DSHS travel card may be used to pay for:
   a. Lodging (to include taxes and parking)
   b. Rental cars (off contract rentals)
   c. Miscellaneous travel expenses (See DSHS administrative policy 19.10.13 - miscellaneous travel expenses for definition)
   d. Common carriers

   The policies and procedures outlined in DSHS administrative policy 13.19 – credit cards – purchases, payments, and disputes must be followed when using the DSHS travel card.

4. Direct payment may be made to a vendor for a traveler's meal and lodging expenses when prior written approval authorizing the direct billing has been received from the division director or designee. The following supporting documentation is required:
   a. A copy of the agreement (e.g., a field order, etc.) between the vendor and DSHS that states the services to be provided by the vendor and the amount to be paid;
   b. A list of individuals for whom the travel expenses were provided and the dates they were provided; and
   c. A vendor billing in sufficient detail to ensure payment is made in conformance with the written agreement.

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5. When a traveler's expenses are to be paid by another state agency or a non-state entity, DSHS must pay or reimburse the traveler for their expenses in accordance with DSHS travel policies, and then receive reimbursement from the other entity.

[i] Updated AP links to new SharePoint.
[ii] Removed or updated broken links.

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