

**Administrative Policy No.: 19.70.10**

**Subject:** Coffee and Light Refreshments

**Information Contact:** Office of Accounting Services  
Chief, (360) 664-5716

**Authorizing Source:** RCW [43.03.050 \(4\)](#)  
State Administrative & Accounting Manual (SAAM)  
[70.10](#), Coffee and Light Refreshments

**Effective Date:** August 1, 2006

**Revised:** October 16, 2015 <sup>i</sup> [Housekeeping 10/27/17](#)

**Approved By:** original signed by Kathy Marshall  
Chief Financial Officer/Assistant Secretary

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**Purpose**

This establishes DSHS policy and procedures for light refreshments when conducting official state business.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all:

1. DSHS employees, officers, and volunteers, including board and commission members.
2. Contractors that do not have specific contractual arrangements and are reimbursed under [Chapter 10](#) and [Chapter 70](#) of the *State Administrative and Accounting Manual* or [DSHS Travel Rules and Policies](#).

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

**Additional Resources**

Department of Health - [Recommended Food and Beverages](#)  
DSHS Administrative Policy  
18.86, Healthy Eating and Nutrition  
[DSHS Forms Picker](#)  
Form 17-186, Meeting Expense Pre-Authorization  
[Executive Order 13-06](#)

## Definitions

**Coffee** includes any non-alcoholic beverage, such as tea, soft drinks, juice, water, milk, or coffee.

**Healthful Options** means meeting the standard of the Washington State Healthy Nutrition Guidelines and any federal health and sustainability guidelines.

**Light refreshments** are edible items that may be served between meals.

**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.

**Regular workplace** means the location where the traveler normally performs his/her work (excludes meeting and conference rooms).

## Policy

### A. DSHS may serve light refreshments in certain circumstances.

1. All authorized boards and commissions may provide coffee and/or light refreshments at their official public meetings, including executive sessions.
2. DSHS may provide coffee/light refreshments for certain occasions if ALL the following conditions are met:
  - a. Coffee/light refreshments are approved by the Division Director, or authorized designee, in writing, using form 17-186 or memorandum with equivalent information in advance of the meeting or event.
    - The request must identify the purpose of the meeting and the names of the state program (e.g., commission, boards, etc.) or people attending the meeting.
    - Coffee and light refreshments at reoccurring events may be approved annually by including the dates of all scheduled meetings on the request. Recurring approvals should be resubmitted every July and must be approved by the Division Director or authorized designee.
  - b. The coffee and light refreshments are an integral part of the meeting or training.
  - c. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct state business, recognize agency or employee accomplishments, or to provide formal training that benefits the state.
  - d. The meeting or training session takes place away from the employee's, official's or volunteer's regular workplace.
  - e. The cost of the coffee and light refreshments per person does not exceed ten percent of the authorized daily meal per diem amount for the location in which the event takes place.

3. When determining what food and beverages to offer as coffee and light refreshments, the organizer of the meeting will, whenever possible, provide healthful options and consider the [Recommended Food and Beverages](#) provided by the Department of Health.

**B. DSHS must not incur expenditures for coffee and light refreshments in the following situations:**

1. Employee or agency anniversaries.
2. Receptions for new, existing, or retiring employees or state officials.
3. Election celebrations.
4. Any “hosting” activities intended to lobby a legislator or a government official.
5. Social events.

**C. Documentation of approval and purchase**

1. Required documentation includes:
  - a. A copy of the approval memorandum or approved form 17-186.
  - b. All original receipts.
  - c. A supporting document showing the date, event purpose and list of participants.
2. Use account code **Sub Sub Object EA-A130** to process payment.

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<sup>i</sup> Housekeeping update October 27, 2017 updates the sub-sub-object code in C.2.