

There are **two types** of per diem, short-term (up to 30 days) and long-term. In addition, there are provisions to cover business travel related expenses for circumstances where commercial facilities are not available. See AAM 60.190 for details.

MEALS AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSE (AAM 60.220)

Meal and incidental expense (M&IE) allowances and prorated M&IE allowances are used when the traveler is in travel status and the travel is of a nature which requires overnight lodging. The M&IE is to cover the cost of meals and necessary incidental expenses including tips, laundry expenses, etc. The appropriate M&IE for a day is the rate prescribed for the community in which the traveler is required to obtain overnight lodging. On the day of return a traveler is entitled to the M&IE applicable for the preceding day. On the day of departure and return, the traveler receives a prorated M&IE based upon scheduled flight (or other common carrier) departure and actual return times as follows:

If your departure time is before 9:00 am the M&IE would be for a full day. If your departure time is before 2:00 pm your M&IE will be for lunch and dinner. If your departure time is before 11:00 pm the M&IE will be for dinner.

If your return time is before noon the M&IE will be for breakfast. If your return time is before 5:00 pm the M&IE will be for breakfast and lunch. If your return time is after 5:00 PM the M&IE will be for a full day.

Occasionally a traveler is provided with a meal while at a conference or meeting, or as part of a lodging package such as at bed and breakfast inns (and the state is reimbursing for actual lodging costs). When a traveler is provided with a meal in these or similar circumstances, the traveler is not eligible for the related M&IE allowance. Airline meals and continental breakfasts are not considered provided meals so the traveler is eligible for M&IE in these situations.

The short-term M&IE allowance for Alaska is \$42.00 for a full day, (\$9.00 for breakfast, \$11.00 for lunch, and \$22.00 for dinner). For rates in the contiguous United States (CONUS) see the federal per diem rates at the link provided on the Division of Finance web page. Long-term M&IE for Alaska is \$25.00 per full day, (\$5.00 for breakfast, \$7.00 for lunch, \$13.00 for dinner).

AIRLINE DELAYS, RESCHEDULING, AND OVERHEADING (AAM 60.250)

When an airline assumes the cost of a traveler's lodging and/or meals due to airline delays or overheading, the traveler shall be paid up to the originally scheduled arrival time. When the airline does not assume the cost of a

traveler's lodging and/or meals the traveler shall be paid in the same manner as the rest of the trip.

TRAVEL ADVANCES (AAM 60.260)

Per your department policy a travel advance may be provided to cover expenses incurred by the traveler. The amount of advance is limited to the M&IE allowance for the authorized days of travel.

COMPLETION OF THE TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION (TA) (AAM 60.270)

The TA must be filled out and submitted within five working days from the completion of travel. The TA is completed with actual costs and any advances or other amounts paid directly to vendors. The traveler signs as the claimant, obtains the divisional approval signature for reimbursement and submits the TA with the appropriate back up documents for review and payment. The TA form can be found on the Division of Finance web site. The procedure for filling out the TA is found in the Accounting Procedures Manual also located on the web site.

TRAVEL EXPENSES AND REQUIRED RECEIPTS/DOCUMENTATION (AAM 60.280)

The following shall be attached to the TA when submitted for final payment:

- a copy of the airline or other tickets;
- original itemized commercial lodging facility receipts (short-term per diem);
- receipts for expenses (though receipts for expenses of \$15.00 or less are not required, they are strongly encouraged - total reimbursement of expenses without receipt is limited to \$30.00 per trip)
- ATM receipt for any cash advances;
- a copy of the rental car agreement;
- leave slips, if the trip is interrupted for leave.

Reimbursement of unsupported expenses may be disallowed. Fraudulent claims may be subject to disciplinary and/or other action.

THIRD PARTY REIMBURSEMENT (AAM 60.290)

Occasionally an outside entity may pay travel expenses. In such cases, state travel policies still apply. A TA must be completed which clearly indicates the sponsoring entity's involvement and reimburses the traveler in accordance with state travel policies. The entity should reimburse the state directly, or when this is not possible, the traveler must turn the reimbursement over the state agency for deposit in the treasury. A traveler may not accept honorariums when traveling for and representing the state.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q - Section 27.2 C. of the SU contract, which provides a noncommercial lodging allowance, states a bargaining unit member ". . . shall be provided a lodging allowance of thirty dollars (\$30) for periods of thirty (30) days or less." Does this mean that an employee is to receive this allowance whether they ask for it or not, and even if they specifically state they do not want it?

A - Yes. The same would apply to GGU bargaining unit members under their contract section 30.02 C.

Q - If the car keys are accidentally locked inside the rental car, is an employee entitled to reimbursement for locksmith charges?

A - No. This type of expense is under the control of the employee and is similar to fines for traffic or parking violations that are also not reimbursed (AAM 60.020).

Q - An employee, for personal reasons, departed on a scheduled state business trip two days before they would have had they only been traveling for state business. May they be reimbursed for the additional two days parking fees?

A - No. The cost of the additional two days parking is not a business-related expense. AAM 60.010 states "The purpose of the travel policies is to provide reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred by employees while traveling on state business." Also, section AAM 60.050 specifies that any additional expense resulting from a deviation of travel for employee convenience shall be borne solely by the employee.

Q - Occasionally airlines may have bargain fares, such as two-for-one fares (purchase one full fare and receive a second ticket free). If both tickets are not being used for state employee travel, but rather the employee's spouse is accompanying them on the trip, how is the fare to be prorated?

A - The policy on two-for-one airfares is the state will pay for its share of the cost of the ticket used for state business. In the example above, since two tickets were acquired with a state expenditure and only one is being used for state business, the state would pay one-half and the employee would pay one-half. For companion fares, where an employee's personal coupon is used to purchase a second ticket for personal use, the state pays one-half and the employee pays one-half of the total purchase price of the tickets.

For full list of FAQs see Division of Finance web site.



The travel policies of the State of Alaska are contained in section 60 of the Alaska Administrative Manual (AAM). Travelers are referred to that document on the Division of Finance web site for further information.

<http://fin.admin.state.ak.us/dof/main/index.jsp>

The travel policies are established to provide approval for travel on state business, and to provide reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred by travelers while traveling on state business.

The policies apply uniformly to all travelers unless otherwise provided for by a collective bargaining agreement. Whenever there is a conflict between the Alaska Administrative Manual policies and a collective bargaining agreement, the relevant provisions of the collective bargaining agreement supersede.

TRAVEL DEFINITIONS

CTA - Central Travel Account is a MasterCard account used for the purchase of transportation such as rental cars, ferry or airline tickets. For air transportation, use is limited to purchases through a travel agent or over the Internet.

DAY TRIP - Local travel or travel that is part of normal duties that does not include overnight lodging. For example, an inspector driving to various sites outside the normal duty station is on a day trip and not in travel status.

DUTY STATION - The city, town, or village, or vicinity within a 50-mile radius where the traveler spends the major portion of working time or the place to which the traveler returns on completion of special assignments.

LODGING ALLOWANCE - Portion of per diem that covers lodging. Generally the actual cost of the traveler's hotel room unless otherwise stated in individual bargaining unit agreements.

M&IE - Meals and incidental expense allowance covers the cost of meals and incidentals such as tips and laundry expenses.

OTHER AUTHORIZED EXPENSES - Other expenses include costs for business telephone calls, parking fees, purchases of supplies, and other charges necessary to conduct the official business function.

PER DIEM ALLOWANCE - Reimbursement for travel costs that consists of two parts, meals and incidental expense allowance, and lodging.

RESIDENCE - Location of primary dwelling. If the traveler has multiple residences, it is the residence that bears the most logical relationship to the duty station.

TA - Travel Authorization form is used to evidence approvals for travel and request reimbursement for authorized travel expenses for state business.

TRAVEL STATUS - Travel status means traveling outside the boundaries of the duty station and is subject to reimbursement under these policies.

TRAVELER - Anyone traveling on state business. Includes state officials and employees, as well as board or commission members, volunteers, or non-employees. Note that non-employee travel should be paid in accordance with these policies under a professional service contract when appropriate.

UNAUTHORIZED EXPENSES - Costs not necessary to conduct official state business are not authorized. For example, fines for traffic or parking violations, lost keys, lost airline tickets, or similar expenses are not authorized and will not be reimbursed.

THE FIRST STEPS TO STATE TRAVEL

Your supervisor has asked you to make a trip for state business. Now what do you do? The first is get the appropriate approvals for your travel. It can be a signed document or an email, but it must be written and must include essentials of travel as outlined in AAM 60.030.

The level of approval depends on the destination. For travel within Alaska prior approval is required from the traveler's immediate supervisor or designee. Travel to other states, British Columbia, and Yukon Territory requires an additional approval by the department's commissioner or designee. Travel outside the United States requires that in addition to the approvals required for travel within Alaska, prior approval is required by the department's commissioner and the Governor's Office. A memorandum explaining the need for the travel must be included with the request sent to the Governor's Office.

TRANSPORTATION

Now that you have your approvals for the trip you will need to book your transportation. There are several ways to do this. You can book directly through the transportation provider or you can book through a travel agent. In Juneau and some other areas of Alaska, we have mandatory contracts with certain travel agencies if a travel agent is used. See the Division of Finance web page for an up to date list. If there isn't a contracted travel agency in your area then you may use any travel agent that charges no more than the fee cap of \$33.00 per transaction set by the state. You may book directly with the provider regardless of area.

AAM 60.150 Transportation should be paid for with your agency CTA account or your individual One Card Alaska MasterCard. These are directly paid by the state and exempt from local taxes.

AAM 60.040 Reimbursable travel must be by the most direct route and efficient means. When traveling on state business, travelers must obtain the lowest tourist class fare ([AS 39.20.140](#)) unless:

- tourist class is not available;
- waiting for tourist class would cause a greater cost to the state;
- tourist class is not in the best interest of the state.

Use of first class accommodations at state expense must be approved, in advance, by the Department of Administration and a written justification must be attached to the TA.

INTERRUPTION OR DEVIATION OF TRAVEL FOR TRAVELER CONVENIENCE (AAM 60.050)

Any interruption or deviation from the most direct and efficient means of travel for traveler convenience requires, at a minimum, prior approval at the agency level by the appropriate supervisor or designee. Any additional time or expense resulting from an interruption or deviation for traveler convenience shall be borne solely by the traveler. This includes delays outside the traveler's control once travel has been interrupted for traveler convenience.

RENTAL VEHICLES (AAM 60.100)

When necessary, the rental of an automobile may be authorized for travelers in travel status. When renting a vehicle, every attempt shall be made to use the contract award vendor for the location. Contact the Division of General Services for information on contract award vendors. When making reservations, it is necessary to receive a confirmation number. If no vehicles are available at the contract award rate, travelers may then rent a vehicle from another car rental agency. This situation should be documented on the TA.

State insurance coverage applies to travelers and additional vendor offered insurance coverage should be declined. Rental vehicles may be driven on state business only, and state insurance coverage applies only where the vehicle is used on state business. State business includes the entire trip excluding any interruptions or deviations for traveler convenience. In case of an accident, contact the Division of Risk Management as soon as possible.

SHUTTLE, COURTESY VAN, AND TAXI SERVICE (AAM 60.110)

When a traveler requires transportation either to or from an airport or ferry terminal, airport shuttle or courtesy van service shall be used whenever possible. Taxi fare is allowed only when a shuttle or courtesy van is not available or when it is in the best interest of the state.

PRIVATELY OWNED CONVEYANCES (AAM 60.120)

A traveler may use a privately owned vehicle or boat when it is in the best interest of the state. The approving official shall be responsible for substantiating that use of a privately owned vehicle or boat is in the state's best interest. The traveler shall receive a mileage reimbursement for the use of a personal automobile, boat, snowmobile, motorcycle, etc. while engaged in official state business. The state's mileage reimbursement rate mirrors the federal rate and is identified in AAM 60.120.

When a traveler uses a privately owned vehicle or boat for personal convenience, the amount of reimbursement shall be limited to what the lowest available taxi, airport shuttle, courtesy van, airfare, boat charter, or any other common carrier or charter would have cost. Per diem, actual hotel expenses and meal allowances, or other travel reimbursements shall not exceed that which would have been incurred had the traveler used common carrier transportation. Only mileage incurred while engaged in official state business is reimbursable. Any additional time away from the duty station required as a result of using a privately owned conveyance for personal convenience will be charged to annual leave, personal leave, or leave without pay.

EXCESS BAGGAGE (AAM 60.170)

Excess baggage to be paid for by the state will be limited to personal and state baggage necessary to carry out official state business. Such baggage shall be transported by the most economical method (checked as excess baggage, shipped via airfreight, etc.).

UNUSED TRANSPORTATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS (AAM 60.180)

When a traveler finds they will not be using accommodations that have been reserved, the traveler shall release them within the time limits specified by the carriers and hotels. The state will not normally reimburse travelers for charges incurred as a result of failure to release accommodations.

When a traveler's journey is terminated short of the destination specified on the ticket, the traveler shall submit the unused portion of the ticket with the TA.

PER DIEM TYPES AND RATES (AAM 60.190)

Except as otherwise provided by collective bargaining agreements, a traveler shall be allowed actual cost for lodging when traveling on official state business and overnight lodging is obtained. In addition, the traveler shall be reimbursed for meal and incidental expenses (M&IE) in accordance with section AAM 60.220. Together, the cost for lodging and the M&IE allowance are considered the per diem allowance. A traveler is not entitled to any per diem or M&IE allowance if provided meals or lodging by the state or a third party with whom the state is conducting business. A traveler is also not entitled to a lodging allowance if staying in their own dwelling (i.e., second residence), but may be entitled to M&IE on normal workdays.