

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS Standard Operating Procedures		
Policy Name: Travel Regulations		
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I. Introduction and Summary: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for payment of travel expenses in an efficient, cost effective manner and to enable travelers to successfully execute their travel requirements at the lowest reasonable costs. This includes reimbursement of reasonable and necessary expenses incurred for the completion of the employee’s duties and responsibilities.

II. Authority:

- A. O.C.G.A. § 50-5B-5;
- B. Office of Planning and Budget Policy #1 (Revision 6): Rules, Regulations and Procedures Governing the Payment and Accounting for Travel Advances;
- C. State Accounting Office - Statewide Travel Policy; and
- D. ACA Standards: 1-CTA-1C-10, 4-4066, and 4-ACRS-7D-17.

III. Definitions:

- A. **Accountability** - Employees are responsible for accounting for their travel expenses accurately. All staff will ensure travel is conducted in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.
- B. **Agency** - Any department, board, commission, or other organizational unit of government that is subject to these statewide travel policies.
- C. **Public Transportation** - Any entity that offers transportation of people or goods to the public for pay.
- D. **Commuting Miles** - The miles traveled on a regular (usually daily) basis from an employee’s residence to the location most frequently associated with work performed outside of that residence (Primary Work Station). This should be a standard distance that does not change from one reimbursement request to the next.
- E. **Continuous Travel** - A traveler is required to be away from his/her Residence and Primary Work Station for any four or more days per week.

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- F. **Cost Comparison Calculator** - The Rental Car Cost Comparison tool made available by DOAS on their website for assisting employees in determining the cost effectiveness of using a Rental Car versus a Personal Vehicle in the transaction of the business of the state of Georgia.
- G. **County or Municipal Excise Tax** - The local taxes charged by hotel/motels for lodging, also referred to as “hotel/motel” or “occupancy” tax. This tax is separate from the state sales tax.
- H. **Employee Travel Expense Statement** - The accounting document used as the basis to reimburse a State employee for travel expenses incurred while on official business.
- I. **Government Owned Vehicles** - A state agency owned vehicle or the interagency motor pool that is operated on behalf of the Department of Administrative Services’ Fleet Support Services through Enterprise Rent-a-Car.
- J. **High Cost Area** - Any area within Georgia within which meal expenses may be reimbursed at a higher amount than the limits that otherwise apply to travel within Georgia. High cost areas are those counties which are assigned higher than the standard “CONUS” rates for meals by the U. S. General Services Administration, and are identified in a separate Meal Allowance Schedule document issued by SAO and OPB.
- K. **Lodging** - A hotel, motel, inn, apartment, or similar entity that furnishes lodging to the public for pay.
- L. **Miscellaneous Travel Expense** - A necessary and reasonable expense incurred by a State employee while traveling on official business. This term does not apply to meals, lodging, mileage, or transportation costs.
- M. **Out of State Travel** - When an employee travels from a point of origin within Georgia to a point of destination within another state and then returns. Out-of-state travel rates are used for all travel with a destination outside the state of Georgia.

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- N. **Personal Motor Vehicle** - A motor vehicle that is owned or leased for personal use by an employee. Personal motor vehicles include automobiles, aircraft, and motorcycles.
- O. **Per Diem Allowance** - The maximum food allowance for which employees can be reimbursed per day. The amount is not a reimbursement of actual expenses incurred. Receipts are not required for meal per diem amounts.
- P. **Point of Departure** - The beginning location used to calculate state-use miles traveled in a motor vehicle.
- Q. **Primary Work Station** - The location a State employee regularly reports to for work. An employee's manager must use good judgment and declare one of the following as an employee's primary work station (PWS). It shall be used for all required travel calculations.
1. **Headquarters or Satellite Office** - When an employee works the majority of his/her business days at a regular office site, such site is his/her PWS.
 2. **Home Office** - When an employee works from his/her primary residence (tax home base) for the majority of his/her business days and is not required to travel to an office to carry out job duties, such residence is considered the PWS.
- R. **State Fund Sources** - All revenue types for a State agency.
- S. **TeamWorks Travel and Expense (TTE) System** - The on-line travel and expense reporting system administered through the State Accounting Office (aka Concur).
- T. **Transportation Funding Act of 2015** - The state of Georgia will charge a \$5.00 per room per night hotel tax to travelers.
- U. **Travel Advance** - Any payment to an employee for travel expenses made prior to the time that expenses will be incurred for a scheduled, future trip.

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- V. **Travel Advance Authorization Form** - The form used to document approval of cash advances by an agency head or his designee and to document receipt of the cash advance, via direct deposit, by the employee (Attachment 2).
- W. **Travel Exception** - Written authorization for travel reimbursement of expenses generally not allowable under the Statewide Travel Regulations.
- X. **Travel Expenses** - Reimbursable meal, lodging, mileage, transportation, parking, and miscellaneous expenses related to official State business travel.
- Y. **Travel Management Company (TMC)** - The State's contracted travel agent.
- Z. **Travel Status** - An individual is working away from his/her Primary Work Station on official State business. Start time is defined as the point of direct departure (from Residence or Primary Work Station) to the alternate work site, and ending time is the point of direct return to his/her Residence or Primary Work Station.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

- A. **Ground Transportation:** The most cost-effective method of transportation that will accomplish the purpose of the travel should be selected. Among the factors to be considered should be length of travel time, employee's salary, cost of operation of a vehicle, cost and availability of common carrier services, etc. Common carrier shall be used for out-of-state travel unless it is documented that utilization of another method of travel is more cost-efficient or practical and approved in accordance with these regulations.

Travelers are responsible for knowing which type of ground transportation is the least expensive in the area. In some areas, public transportation (e.g., taxis, shuttles, or mass transit) may be the more economical alternative. In other areas, it may be more cost effective to rent a car. When renting a car, the traveler should also consider the costs of parking fees and fuel.

When traveling by air or train, travelers should use shuttle services or public transportation when such options are available and less expensive than other means of ground transportation.

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B. Car Rental: Employees traveling on State business must use a temporary fleet vehicle, if available, unless the employee’s supervisor determines and provides in writing, in advance of travel, that use of a temporary fleet vehicle is clearly not the most efficient method of travel.

If a temporary fleet vehicle is not available, state employees must choose the least expensive option between a rental vehicle or mileage reimbursement for use of their personal vehicle. Rental cars should be used when it is determined that it is the most economical form of transportation. To determine the most cost effective means of ground transportation, refer to the Car Rental Cost Comparison calculator located on the DOAS website.

The State has mandatory statewide contracts with specified car rental vendors.

These vendors and contract car rental rates are automatically provided in the TTE booking system, and can also be located on the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) website. Travelers are responsible for securing the lowest cost contract rental available at time of booking, considering all reasonable associated factors (rates, delivery time, distance and mileage, etc.)

When a rental car is necessary for TTE system travelers, reservations must be made through a TMC agent (Hertz or Enterprise) assisted call to ensure contracted State rates are obtained and billed under the mandatory statewide vendor contracts, and to ensure other Policy requirements are met. Refer to the SAO Travel website for relevant TMC contact numbers.

Renting outside the statewide vendor contracts is not allowed. However, if extenuating circumstances require a rental outside of the statewide vendor contract, an approved waiver form SPD-NI005, from the State Purchasing Division in the Department of Administrative Services (DOAS) must be obtained. Approved waivers should be attached as a “receipt” in the TTE system.

Approved car rental sizes are Economy, Compact or Intermediate. Other vehicle sizes require a business-related justification. Vans may be rented when there are more than 4 travelers. Reimbursement will be made for reasonable fuel charges. (This excludes renters who are furnished with a fuel card and are billed based on

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a specific calculation.) Travelers must decline optional fuel offerings offered by the car rental vendor. Maintenance and oil changes are the responsibility of the rental company and will not be reimbursed by the State.

Employees traveling on State business inside the Continental U.S. in a rented motor vehicle are covered by the State’s liability policy; therefore, liability coverage should be declined when renting a motor vehicle. Loss Damage and Collision Damage are also covered under the mandatory statewide car rental vendor contracts. When traveling to destinations outside the Continental U.S. (OCONUS), with the exception of Canada, the State Risk Management Department recommends that travelers accept collision insurance. **Contact the DOAS Risk Management Services Department regarding any other questions related to rental car insurance coverage.**

NOTE: The State liability policy is only in effect while the employee is using the rented vehicle for official State business. For this reason, personal use of the vehicle, including allowing friends or family members to ride in a State rented vehicle, is prohibited.

In the event of an accident while driving a rental vehicle, contact the Risk Management Office at **1-877-656-7475**, as well as the appropriate car rental vendor, for claims handling.

- C. Personal Vehicle:** A State employee is only authorized to use his or her personally-owned vehicle, when: 1) no temporary fleet vehicle is available and the personally-owned vehicle is the least expensive option (See Section IV B, above.); OR, 2) the supervisor determines **in writing** that use of the least expensive option is clearly not efficient. Travelers should secure supervisory authorization for use of a personally-owned vehicle **in advance** of such use.

Reimbursement for business use of a personally-owned vehicle is calculated per mile, from point of departure after deduction for normal commuting mileage, based on the current reimbursement rate, which can be found on the SAO Travel website, by viewing the Mileage Reimbursement Rates Policy. The employee and supervisor must determine if mileage reimbursement should be made using Tier 1 or Tier 2 rates, as described below. **Any reimbursement of mileage claims paid to an employee in excess of rates stipulated in this Policy (e.g.,**

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Tier 2 versus Tier 1 rates) must be refunded to the State or characterized as taxable compensation to the employee.

By law, the State mileage reimbursement rates follow the published General Services Administration (GSA) rates and are as follows:

- Tier 1 Rate: When it is determined that a personal motor vehicle is the most advantageous AND least expensive form of travel, the employee will be reimbursed for business miles traveled based on the applicable GSA Tier 1 rates.
- Tier 2 Rate: If a government-owned (agency-owned) vehicle is available, and its use is determined to be the most advantageous form of travel to the State, OR a rental vehicle (under the statewide vendor contracts) is the recommended and least expensive method of travel, BUT a personal motor vehicle is used, the employee will be reimbursed for business miles based on the applicable GSA Tier 2 Rate.

The standard per-mile reimbursement rate includes gas, oil, repairs and maintenance, tires, insurance, registration fees, licenses, and depreciation attributable to the business miles driven. If you request reimbursement for mileage, you will not be reimbursed separately for those costs.

In addition, **normal commuting miles must be deducted when calculating total mileage reimbursement.** Mileage traveled by State travelers between their Residence and Primary Work Station (See Section III for definitions) is considered “commuting miles”. Commuting costs are not reimbursable.

Exceptions:

- If travel occurs on a weekend or holiday outside of the normal work schedule, mileage is calculated from the point of departure with no reduction for normal commuting miles.
- If an employee utilizes state-sponsored transportation alternatives (ex. MARTA), the “normal commuting miles” should still be calculated as the direct mileage from the employee’s Residence to his Primary Work Station.

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- If an employee's Primary Work Station is his/her Residence, the requirement to deduct normal commuting miles does not apply since, by definition, there are none.

Tolls and reasonable parking charges incurred while on official State business will be reimbursed, in addition to the mileage allowance. While there are no maximum limits for parking, employees are encouraged to utilize low-cost, long-term parking to minimize the cost.

While driving your personal vehicle on State business, the State provides full liability coverage and personal immunity for the employee for damages and injuries the employee may cause to others. The State does not provide coverage for damages to your personal vehicle. Cost of repairs to a personal vehicle, whether or not they result from the traveler's acts, are not reimbursable.

Under no circumstances will the State reimburse parking fines or moving violations.

D. Other Transportation: The most reasonable and customary means of transportation should be used when traveling to and from airports or other transportation terminals. The State will reimburse for shuttle or taxi fares to and from airports and railroad stations when such service is not included in air and rail fares, and where public transportation is not practical. Taxi fares between business meetings while on travel status are reimbursable.

E. Lodging Expense: The traveler should select the least expensive option available taking into consideration proximity to the business destination and personal safety. The traveler or the travel arranger must inquire about the government rate availability, or the conference lodging rate, and select the lowest available rate. When the hotel or motel is the conference or convention site, reimbursement will be limited to the conference rate, if available.

Travelers on State business are allowed lodging expenses when their destination is located more than 50 miles from both their Primary Work Station and Residence. Written pre-approval must be obtained from the agency head, or their designee, when lodging is required *within* this 50-mile radius. The approval must be submitted with the traveler's receipts when requesting reimbursement.

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Reasonable lodging expenses are reimbursed at actual cost. All lodging claims must be documented with receipts and must be at a business that offers lodging to the general public, such as a hotel or motel, and not a private residence.

Upgraded room accommodations that incur an additional charge are not allowed. A complimentary upgrade should be noted on the expense report. Mandatory resort fees are reimbursable as lodging expenses.

Due to tax and cost issues, do not utilize third party online travel booking sites (Ex.: Expedia, Travelocity, etc.)

F. Tax Exemptions: State and local government officials and employees traveling within the state on official business are *exempt* from paying the *county or municipal excise tax* on lodging (“hotel/motel” or “occupancy” tax) [O.C.G.A. § 48-13-51 (H) (3)], regardless of the payment method being used. (*This exemption does not apply to travelers staying at an out-of-state hotel/motel.*) Travelers must be able to provide proper identification to document their employment as a state or local government employee.

Additionally, as an employee traveling on official State business, the lodging is eligible for **exemption** from **State of Georgia Sales Tax** when the payment method being used is either direct bill to the agency or out of pocket expense by the employee. Travelers should make every effort to avoid payment of sales tax when payment method is other than a personal payment method.

Travelers are required to submit a copy of the Hotel Exemption Occupancy Form (Attachment 1), which is located on the SAO travel website upon registration at the hotel/motel. If the hotel refuses to accept the form at check-in, the traveler should attempt to resolve the issue with hotel management before checking out at the end of their stay. If the matter is not resolved by check-out time, the traveler should pay the tax.

Per the Transportation Funding Act of 2015, effective July 1, 2015 hotels in the state of Georgia will charge a \$5.00 per room per night hotel tax to travelers. This tax is not exempted for State Employees.

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G. Lodging Cancellation: Travelers should not book nonrefundable rates or rates that require a deposit unless required by conference lodging. It is the traveler's or arranger's responsibility to understand the cancellation rules of the room confirmed. No-show charges and penalties will not be reimbursed when the traveler does not cancel reservations within the allotted time. Nonrefundable rates cannot be changed or cancelled; therefore, the traveler is accepting the risk of a non-reimbursable cancellation fee.

In a case where all efforts have been taken, and a fee is still charged, an explanation must be provided when submitting the traveler's expense report in order for the fee to be reimbursed.

H. Conference Lodging: Employees who stay at a hotel/motel that is holding a scheduled meeting or seminar may incur lodging expenses that exceed the rates generally considered reasonable. The higher cost may be justified to avoid excessive transportation costs between a lower cost hotel/motel and the location of the meeting.

When the conference does not have an official hotel, the traveler is required to obtain a property within reasonable proximity to the conference.

I. Meals (General): Meals are reimbursable on a per diem basis (not actual expenses) for overnight official business travel outside the traveler's Primary Work Station. Per Diem expenses do not require receipts to be provided.

Employees traveling within the state of Georgia will be paid a per diem amount designed to cover the cost of meals (including taxes and tips), based on the number of meals per day for which the traveler is eligible. The current standard in-state per diem rates are located on the Meal Allowance Schedule on the SAO Travel website.

Employees who are provided meals during the course of travel as part of a conference fee, or when hosting or are hosted by another party while on travel status, must deduct the corresponding, applicable meal rate from their per diem reimbursement claim for each meal provided.

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Meal adjustments include those provided by hotels, meetings, conferences, or any other source. If a continental breakfast, lunch, dinner, or reception is offered as part of the travel event and the food/timing is sufficient to serve as a meal, the traveler must reduce the per diem by the appropriate allowance amount. If a meal is offered as part of a conference and the traveler has medical restrictions, the traveler should make every effort to have the conference facilitate his/her needs by the deadline specified by the conference. If the conference does not honor the request, the traveler is not required to deduct the applicable meal allowance from the per diem. However, the traveler must include a note or other documentation with the TTE report documenting this information.

J. In-State High Cost Area: Increased per diem allowances are available in certain locations designated as “high-cost areas”. The high cost areas in Georgia and the current rates for these areas are located on the Meal Allowance Schedule of the SAO Travel website.

K. Meal Per Diem During Overnight Travel: Employees traveling overnight are generally eligible for per diem amounts designed to cover the cost of three (3) meals per day for all days on travel status *other than* the day of departure and the day of return.

Travelers are eligible for 75 percent (75%) of the total per diem rate on the first and last day of travel. For example, if the per diem rate allows a \$28 total reimbursement, \$21.00 would be allowable on a travel departure or return day ($\$28 \times .75 = \$21.$)

For trips involving multiple travel destinations, base the reduction on the per diem rate in effect where the night was spent, as follows:

- **Departure Day:** Where you spend the night.
- **Return Day:** Where you spent the night before returning to your Residence or Primary Work Station.

When meals are provided to an employee in conjunction with travel events on a travel departure or return day, the full meals per diem reimbursement rate is reduced by the amount of the provided meal(s) after the 75% proration. For

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example, if the per diem allows a \$28 total reimbursement, and lunch was provided at no cost on a travel departure or return day, the total allowable reimbursement for that day would be \$14 [$\$28 \times .75 = \21 less \$7 lunch = \$14.00].

L. Meal Per Diem During Non-Overnight Travel: Employees on State business who travel more than 50 miles from their Residence and Primary Work Station on a work assignment, AND are away for more than twelve (12) hours, may receive the total day's per diem rate, even when there is no overnight lodging. The per diem allowance must, however, be adjusted for any meals provided to the traveler, as stated in Sec. K, above.

Clarification: Certain employees are viewed as having a mobile work station and are therefore, ineligible for reimbursement of meals not associated with overnight travel (Ex.: Construction supervisors and transfer officers).

The traveler's supervisor is to determine the reasonableness of when an overnight stay is justified.

M. Meetings: Luncheon or dinner meetings sponsored by the State will be paid under contract; therefore, no claims for such expenses may be presented on the travel expense report.

Employees on official business attending luncheon or dinner meetings not sponsored by the State are entitled to receive reimbursement for actual costs incurred, provided that:

- The purpose of the meeting is to discuss business and the nature of the business is stated on the travel expense report.
- The luncheon or dinner meeting is planned in advance and includes persons not employed by the State.
- The meal is an integral part of the meeting.
- The meal is served at the same establishment that hosts the meeting.

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N. Employee Group Meals: Under certain infrequent circumstances, employees may be required to remain at the work site during mealtime. Such circumstances include emergency situations, but may also include intra-departmental meetings or training sessions where the meeting or training session extends beyond the meal times and the employees are not permitted to leave the premises of the meeting site.

Under these and similar circumstances, organizations may purchase meals for the affected employees. Purchase of such meals should be approved by a higher level approving authority prior to the date of the event (for non-emergency situations). Such expenditures are limited to the purchase of meals and necessary beverages only (this does not include snacks). Meal limits outlined in the *Statewide Travel Policy* must be adhered to. Meal expenses associated with meetings/training sessions must be documented with retained receipts and a copy of the formal written agenda. In all instances, the employee for whom meals were purchased must include a list of attendees.

O. Special Meals: Reimbursement designed for those occasions when, as a matter of extraordinary courtesy or necessity, it is appropriate and in the best interest of the State to use public funds for provision of a meal to a person who is not otherwise eligible for such reimbursement and where reimbursement is not available from another source. Requests should be within reason and may include tax and tips. Itemized receipts are required. Examples include:

- Visiting dignitaries or executive-level persons from other governmental units, and persons providing identified gratuity services to the State. This explicitly does not include normal visits, meetings, reviews, etc., by federal or local representatives.
- Extraordinary situations are when State employees are required by their supervisor to work more than a twelve-hour workday or six-hours on a non-scheduled weekend (when such are not normal working hours to meet crucial deadlines or to handle emergencies).

All special meals must have prior approval from the Agency Head/Commissioner unless specific authority for approval has been delegated to a department head for a period not to exceed one fiscal year.

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P. Miscellaneous Travel Expenses: Reimbursable expenses while on official travel status include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Business office expenses (copy services, postage, and supplies);
- Business related phone calls, faxes, and internet usage charges and fees;
- Transportation costs from lodging or businesses to restaurants (**domestic travel only**; see SAO Policy, Appendix B for international travel guidance.)
- Conference/Registration fees;
- Costs related to passports and travel visas when necessary to accomplish the official business purpose of the trip;
- Costs related to vaccinations required and/or recommended for international business travel;
- Currency conversion fees;
- Baggage handling services, other than regular portage/tips; and
- Laundry or cleaning expenses on trips lasting seven (7) calendar days or more.

Q. Miscellaneous Travel Expenses: Non-reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Airline, car, and card membership dues and club fees;
- Travel upgrade fees (air, rail, car);
- Alcoholic beverages;

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- Bank charges for ATM withdrawals, except on international travel;
- Childcare costs;
- Clothing or toiletry items;
- Commuting between Residence and Primary Work Station;
- Country Club dues;
- Expenses related to vacation or personal days taken before, during or after a business trip;
- Haircuts and personal grooming;
- Laundry, cleaning, pressing costs for trips of less than seven days;
- Loss Damage Insurance when State agency contract rate vehicle is available and another rental car agency is utilized;
- Loss or theft of cash advance money or airline tickets;
- Loss or theft of personal funds or property;
- Lost baggage;
- Luggage or briefcases;
- Medical expenses while traveling (*Exceptions may be made to accommodate ADA compliance*);
- Mini-bar charges;

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- Movies;
- No-show/Cancellation fees or fees related to hotel late check-out (unless business or weather related) *See section G*;
- Personal reading materials (magazines, newspapers, etc.);
- Personal vehicle maintenance;
- Personal entertainment;
- Personal pet care;
- Recreational expenses;
- Saunas or massages;
- Shoe shines;
- Souvenirs or personal gifts;
- Traffic citations (moving violations), parking tickets, court fees and other fines;
- Travel accident insurance premiums; and
- Valet services for parking, when self-parking options are available, unless there are valid security reasons.

R. Receipts: Travelers must always obtain receipts, except when per diem travel allowances are claimed. Not all receipts must be submitted with a travel expense report, but may be requested for verification or audit. Itemized receipts should include:

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- Name and address of the vendor;
- Date of service;
- Description of goods/service; and
- Amount paid for each individual item.

Credit card slips and statements are not acceptable in lieu of receipts.

Travel expense reports may be selected for audit at any time and all required receipts must be retained by the traveler for three years after the travel date, if not attached to the expense report.

Receipts are required with the travel expense report for the following expenses, regardless of dollar amount:

- Airline fares;
- Hotel expenses;
- Rental car expenses;
- Breakfast, luncheon, or dinner meetings unless claiming a per diem;
- Registration Fees; and
- Visa/Passport fees.

No expense should be approved if a required receipt is missing.

Receipts are not required for the following expenses if individual amounts are less than \$25:

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- Gasoline purchased for rental vehicles;
- Parking;
- Highway tolls;
- Mass transit tickets;
- Taxi fares; and
- Airport vans.

S. Combining Personal Travel with State Business Travel: For in-state and out-of-state trips that combine personal travel with State business travel, reimbursement will not exceed the amount of what it would have cost the State if the traveler did not combine personal travel with business travel. Combining State travel with personal travel does not, in and of itself, provide justification for using a private vehicle rather than a state-owned vehicle.

For out-of-state trips between points where scheduled airline service is available and where travelers are combining official State travel with a holiday, weekend trip, vacation or other personal travel, reimbursement will be based on the cost of round-trip coach airfare, lodging, and the meal per diems to which the traveler would have been entitled while traveling by air, or by the least expensive reasonable means of travel.

When combining personal travel and State business travel, baggage and luggage fees should be allocated, accordingly, and be reasonable under the circumstances.

Note: The employee is responsible for any additional costs incurred in booking personal travel combined with business travel.

T. Travelers with Physical and/or Medical Conditions: The impact of travelers with physical and/or medical conditions, while on State travel, should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Compliance with the Americans with

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Disabilities Act (ADA) is mandatory. Each department has the authority to provide reasonable accommodations during State travel for travelers with disabilities.

All State employees are to be afforded equal opportunity to perform travel for official State business even if the travel costs for disabled travelers will exceed what would normally be most economical to the State. For example:

- When a traveler uses a wheelchair, it may be necessary to pay more for an airline ticket so the traveler can fly on a larger airplane that accommodates the wheelchair.
- When a traveler has hearing or vision impairments, there may be a cost of providing auxiliary aids and services to enable the traveler to successfully accomplish the purpose of the travel.

The extra travel costs required to comply with ADA shall be documented and kept on file by the authorizing approver.

U. Policy Exceptions: Requests for exceptions to the *Statewide Travel Policy* should be infrequent and requested in advance. The **State Accounting Office (SAO) and Office of Planning and Budget (OPB)** will generally not grant exceptions to travel Policy when it appears that, with proper planning and reasonable effort, the additional costs could have been avoided. Repetitive requests for similar exceptions, particularly after-the-fact requests, will be carefully reviewed and, when circumstances warrant, denied.

Agencies should not consider approved exceptions to be a blanket waiver of the travel regulations. Exceptions are only granted for an individual or individuals participating in a scheduled event, and are only allowable for the specified dates of the event. Agencies are encouraged to request exceptions for unusual travel circumstances, as needed. Agencies that deviate from the travel regulations, without receiving written authorization, could be cited in the Single Audit Report issued by the Department of Audits and Accounts.

Agencies requesting travel exceptions should submit their request in writing to the SAO's Travel office with as much advance notice as possible. All written

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requests must come from the agency head or other designated official and must be submitted prior to the expected travel date. All written requests should include the following:

- The name(s) of the person(s) for which the exception is requested;
- An explanation of the purpose of the trip;
- An explanation of the types of expenses to be incurred; and
- The anticipated travel dates.

Note: Exceptions granted under these provisions apply only in circumstances in which an employee will incur expenses.

SAO and OPB are responsible for approving or denying all requests for travel exceptions. Written documentation will be returned to the requesting agency indicating whether the request was approved or denied.

V. Submitting Reimbursement Requests:

- **Employees:** When submitting travel reimbursement requests, the TeamWorks Travel and Expense (TTE) System (currently Concur) should be utilized. The address for logging into Concur is www.concursolutions.com. Once the travel is submitted, the employee's supervisor will review and approve the request and forward it to Accounting for processing.
- **Direct Bills:** For hotels that direct bill and car rentals, the responsible business office will enter vouchers into the accounting system (currently TeamWorks/PeopleSoft) making sure to allocate the expense among the employees involved via the "Open Item" process.

W. Air Travel: Any traveler incurring out of state expenses must submit a completed and approved Request for Out of State Travel Form (Attachment 3) at least two weeks prior to the travel date. The form must include the approval of

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the traveler's immediate supervisor, Regional or Division Director AND the Commissioner or Chief of Staff. Out of state travel per diem rates, include the cost of meals, taxes and tips on meals and follows the appropriate GSA per diem rates for a given geographical area. These rates, as well as a breakdown by meal, can be found on the GSA website <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>, (Incidentals are not included). For additional information related to air travel SAO Policy Section 1.1 to 1.12 <http://sao.georgia.gov/state-travel-policy>.

X. Advances: Advances should be requested two weeks prior to the travel date and are only available for employees whose salary is \$50,000 or less. If an advance is required, contact the Travel Administrator or the Accounts Payable Manager for more information. The Travel Advance Authorization Form (Attachment 2) must be completed.

V. Attachments:

Attachment 1: Exemption From Local Hotel/Motel Excise Tax Form

Attachment 2: Travel Advance Authorization Form

Attachment 3: Request for Out of State Travel Form

VI. Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:

Attachment 1 shall be maintained by the hotel/motel operator with the tax record. Attachments 2 and 3 shall be maintained for the current year, plus five prior years at the Facility level, and for five years following the end of the fiscal year at Central Office. (The State Accounting Office is responsible for the proper retention of the electronic records.)