

## Travel Policy

### Description:

It may be necessary for Department of Human Service's (DHS) staff to travel to conduct state business for a variety of reasons. This includes in-state, border community or out-of-state travel. Staff must follow state policies and procedures, labor agreements and compensation plans to travel on state business. For each type of travel, employees must follow different requirements for transportation, lodging and other expenses specific to their trip.

### Reason for Policy:

The purpose of this policy is to define the funding of authorized employee travel expenses for state business and how to promptly reimburse employees for incurred travel expenses.

### Applicability:

This policy and its procedures apply to all DHS employees.

### Failure to Comply:

Failure to comply with this policy and its procedures may result in disciplinary actions or termination. Employees who do not comply with this policy may also be subject to delay or withholding of reimbursement. DHS will not reimburse employees for non compliant or unauthorized expenses.

## Policy

### I. Approved Travel

Employees may travel to conduct state business if:

- It is primarily for the benefit of the state and is related to the effective conduct of state business, including the promotion of interstate cooperation;
- The costs to the state and absence from work will be offset by benefits accruing to the state, including the professional advancement of employees; and

- The purpose of the activity is not to advance a political party, a political candidate, or a religious denomination.

## II. Travel types

- **In-state:** Employees must obtain verbal approval from their supervisor before traveling in-state for state business.
- **Border communities:** Travel to border communities is treated as in-state travel and either a state owned vehicle or personal car may be used for this type of travel. An example of a border community is Fargo-Moorhead.
- **Out-of-state:** Employees must complete the [Authorization for Out-of-State Travel Form \(DHS-2818-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#) for out of state travel. All required signatures must be obtained before incurring any expenses.
- **International:** International travel is authorized through the special expense reimbursement process. Employees should refer to the [Special Expense Reimbursement Policy](#) for additional information.

## III. Combined business and personal travel

- **In-state and border communities:** Employees must use vacation leave for personal travel during their normal work hours. The state will only pay or reimburse employees for incurred expenses directly to the business portion of the trip.
- **Out-of-state travel:** Approval for combined business and personal travel should be discussed at the beginning of the travel authorization process and must be obtained on the [Authorization for Out-of-State Travel from \(DHS-2818\) \(PDF\)](#). Employees must use vacation leave for personal travel during workdays outside the normal travel time for out-of-state travel. Normal travel time for out-of-state travel is to arrive one day before the event's start date and to depart one day after the event's end date. The airfare (or other form of transportation) cost cannot exceed the amount that would be incurred if employee was not combining business and personal travel. The state will only pay or reimburse employees for incurred expenses directly related to the business portion of the trip.

## IV. Travel expense reimbursement

- **Employee business expense report:** To receive reimbursement for travel expenses, employees must complete the employee Business Expense Report located on the [self-service portal](#). Employees cannot incur or claim travel expenses for other employees or individuals. Specific instructions are provided below under Procedure III - Processing Travel Expense Reimbursement.
- **Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations and tax reporting information:** The IRS requires employee business expenses to be submitted for reimbursement within 60 days after the expense is incurred or the trip ends. If not submitted within 60 days, the reimbursement becomes taxable.
- **Fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) considerations:** Final expense reports for the fiscal year must be submitted by deadlines established by MMB (generally mid- July). Employees will be notified of actual deadline through DHS Today announcements. Under the [Policy on Procurement Violations](#), if an Employee Expense Report is submitted after year-end fiscal deadline a M.S. [Minnesota Statutes 16A.15/16C](#)

[Violation Form \(DHS-3748-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#) must be completed. If approved, reimbursement of prior year travel expenses will be paid from current year's funds.

## V. Non reimbursable expenses

Alcoholic beverages, annual fees and interest for personal credit cards, expenses of travel companions or family members, loss or theft of personal cash or property and entertainment or amusement costs are not reimbursable.

## VI. Prohibited travel benefits

Minnesota State law prohibits DHS employees from collecting any travel benefit received and from claiming as their own while traveling on state funded business. Some examples of these benefits are free lodging, cash payments, discount coupons, free tickets and frequent flyer mileage. Employees certify when completing and submitting the employee Business Expense Report they have not claimed frequent flyer miles for personal use.

## VII. Office supplies and equipment

Employees cannot purchase office supplies or equipment and be reimbursed through the employee Business Expense Report. Employees must follow the [EIOR](#) process to complete these purchases. Under the Policy on Procurement Violations, if these types of purchases occur, a [Minnesota Statutes 16A.15/16C Violation Form \(DHS-3748-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#) must be completed.

Employees should bring appropriate office supplies when traveling for state business. Rarely, it may be necessary for an employee to purchase office supplies while traveling on state business. To claim reimbursement, employees need to provide their supervisor with a written explanation and attach the explanation along with the receipt to the employee Business Expense Report.

## VIII. Meals

Employees may be reimbursed for the actual cost of a meal up to the maximum amount listed on the [Mileage and Meal Allowances Chart](#). The cost of a meal includes tax and a reasonable gratuity. Under IRS regulations, reimbursement of meal expenses on trips not including an overnight stay are considered taxable income. The reimbursement will be included in wages on the employees W-2 form. To receive reimbursement for:

- **Breakfast:** Employees must leave home before 6:00 a.m. or be away from home overnight.
- **Lunch:** Employees must be in travel status and performing required work more than thirty-five (35) miles from their temporary or permanent work station during the normal noon meal period.
- **Dinner:** Employees must return home because of state business after 7:00 p.m. or be away from home overnight.
- **Consecutive meals:** For two or more consecutive meals, employees will be reimbursed the actual meal costs up to the combined maximum meal reimbursement amount.

- **Inclusive meal costs:** If the cost of airfare, conference registration fees, or hotel lodging includes meals, the employee cannot claim reimbursement of the same meals. If a lodging facility provides a “continental breakfast,” an employee may purchase a different breakfast and claim reimbursement.

## IX. Lodging

- **Government discounts:** Employees should stay at a facility that is reasonably priced and should request a government discount when making a reservation.
- **Licensed lodging:** Employees must stay at a licensed lodging facility and cannot be reimbursed for staying at an unlicensed lodging facility such as a home of a relative or friend. Rental agreements can be used to save costs on long-term lodging. This requirement applies to hotels, Airbnbs, bed and breakfasts and any other type of lodging facility.
- **Purchasing cards:** Lodging costs may be paid by State purchasing card. Central Office division should contact [Mike LaValle](#) or [Joe Jarosz](#) and DCT should contact [Corlyn Maxwell](#) for additional information on the process for obtaining a purchasing card for this type of payment.
- **Miscellaneous charges:** Miscellaneous lodging expenses cannot be charged on an agency purchasing card. These expenses must be paid for by the employee at the lodging facility and later claimed for reimbursement on the Employee Expense Report.

## X. Mileage reimbursement

Clarifying details for employees (Teleworkers, Non-Teleworkers, and Remote Workers) to claim reimbursement for mileage incurred for business travel is provided in this policy’s procedural document, [Mileage Reimbursement for Use of Privately Owned Vehicles](#).

**Mileage instead of airfare:** Reimbursement of mileage for out-of-state travel instead of airfare may be authorized for an employee requesting to use their personal car. The total reimbursement is limited to the cost of round-trip airfare that would have been paid.

## XI. Miscellaneous travel expenses

Employees may qualify to receive reimbursement for applicable miscellaneous expenses such as laundry and dry cleaning expenses. More detailed information about miscellaneous expenses are provided in applicable labor agreements and compensation plans.

## XII. Travel Advances

Travel advances are used to provide employees with funds before traveling for state business. More specific information is provided in the [Guide for Requesting Travel Advances and Completion of Settlements \(DOC\)](#) located on the [Finance, Contracts and Procurement SharePoint site](#).

## Procedures:

### I. Out-of-state travel approval

The [Authorization for Out-of-State Travel Form \(DHS-2818-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#) must be completed with all required approvals, before any expense may be incurred. Employees are required to submit for approval a new [Authorization for Out-of-State Travel Form \(DHS-2818-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#) if the total actual cost is more than the “approved for an amount not to exceed” section located on the [Authorization for Out-of-State Travel Form \(DHS-2818-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#). When determining the appropriate amount to enter for this section of the form, supervisors should take into consideration the timing of the travel approval process and how travel expense pricing may fluctuate.

### II. Travel Expense Receipts

Original receipts must be scanned and attached to the employee Business Expense Report for all expenses except meals, taxi services, baggage handling and parking meters. Division directors have the option of requiring receipts for meals. Cancelled checks, credit card bills and photocopies cannot be substituted for original receipts. Acceptable receipts contain the date of the transaction, the name and location of the merchant, and an itemization of all costs. Employees can complete and submit a [Lost Receipt Affidavit Form \(PDF\)](#) in place of the lost receipt for some expenses. For large expenses, for example lodging, employees must request a duplicate receipt from the facility to receive reimbursement.

### III. Processing travel expense reimbursement

- **Employees:** Must enter travel expenses on the Business Expense Report located on the employee [self-service portal](#). A copy of original receipts, and applicable prior approvals and supporting documents must be attached. When finished the employee needs to mark “complete” and notify their supervisor.
- **Supervisors:** Will review and approve the Business Expense Report through the [self-service portal](#) and mark “approve” to approve the employee travel expenses.
- **Central Office FOD or DCT designated staff:** Will complete the final review of Employee Business Expense Report and approve allowable compliant expenses.

Staff should refer to [Summary Instructions for Self Service \(PDF\)](#) and [Detailed Instructions for Self Service \(DOC\)](#) located on the [Finance, Contracts and Procurement SharePoint site](#) specific guidance on entering and approving employee business expenses.

### IV. Booking airfare

Staff should refer to the [Guidance for Booking Airfare for Out-of-State Travel](#) located on the [Finance, Contracts and Procurement SharePoint site](#) for specific information and instructions.

### XIII. Vehicles

- **Department of Admin - State Fleet Service Rental Vehicles:** For program areas with staff who travel in-state on an on-going basis, vehicles can be obtained for long term usage by contacting the [Department of Administration, Fleet Services Division](#). The [DHS Policy on Use of State Vehicles, Fuel Cards and Maintenance](#) also provides more detailed information.
- **DHS Vehicle Share:** DHS has a vehicle share program for shared DHS vehicles parked and ready for pick up at the Andersen and Lafayette campus. Additional information on this program can be found at the [DHS Parking and Transportation Services SharePoint site](#).
- **In-state rental vehicles (Enterprise):** The state has a contract for vehicle rentals through Enterprise Rent-A-Car. Employees should contact an Enterprise Rent-A-Car Rental Branch by accessing their [website](#).
- **Central Office employees:** Must complete and forward the [DHS Car Rental Form \(DHS-4044-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#) to [FOD Accounts Payable](#) or submit by interoffice mail to Accounts Payable 0940. The customer number on the form should be 19A2652 and the PI is MND. Enterprise submits invoices directly to FOD Accounts Payable.
- **DCT employees:** Are reimbursed for this expense through the employee Business Expense Report.
- **Out-of-state rental vehicles (Enterprise/National):** When public transportation is not adequate, employees in need of an out of state rental vehicle should contact Enterprise Rent-A-Car by phone at 1-800-736-8222 or at their [website](#). Minnesota's account number is XZ19113 should be referenced when making the reservation, the PIN is STA. If a car is not available through Enterprise, employees must contact National Car Rental at 1-800-227-7368 or their [website](#), a pin is not required. Payment for out of state rentals must be made by credit card only.
- **Personal vehicles:** Employees may use their personal vehicles for state business. However, this activity should be limited whenever possible because a state or an Enterprise vehicle are usually more economical. Employees using a personal vehicle for state business are responsible for insurance costs, including any deductible or subsequent loss of use of the vehicle because of damage.
- **In-state and out-of state-rental insurance:** Employees should not purchase and will not be reimbursed for a loss damage waiver because the state's automobile self-insurance program will reimburse these losses. Employees will not be reimbursed for any vehicle or personal insurance protection plans. Employees must immediately notify their supervisor or agency contact if they are in an accident involving a collision or comprehensive damage with a rental vehicle. The agency contact must notify the Department of Administration, Risk Management Division. This notification is required regardless of fault.

### Forms that Apply:

- [Request for Approval to Incur Special Expenses Form \(DHS-3274-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [Authorization for Out-of-State Travel Form \(DHS-2818-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [DHS Car Rental Form \(DHS-4044-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#)
- [Lost Receipt Affidavit Form \(PDF\)](#)
- [Vendor Invoice Form \(DHS-1728F-ENG\) \(PDF\)](#)

## Related Policies and References:

- [Detailed Instructions for Self Service \(PDF\)](#)
- [Finance, Contracts and Procurement SharePoint site](#)
- [Use of State Vehicles, Fuel Cards and Maintenance Policy](#)
- [Guide for Requesting Travel Advances and Completion of Settlements \(DOC\)](#)
- [Mileage and Meal Allowances Chart](#)
- [Payment of Travel Time for Non-Exempt Employees General Provisions](#)
- [Procurement Violation Policy](#)
- [Special Expense Reimbursement Policy](#)
- [Summary Instructions for Self Service \(PDF\)](#)
- [Travel for Work Safety and Security \(PDF\)](#)

## Legal Authority:

- [Minnesota Statutes, section 15.435](#)
- [Minnesota Statutes, section 16A, subdivision 3](#)
- [Minnesota Statutes, section 16B.55](#)
- [Minnesota Statutes, section 43A.38](#)

## Definitions:

**Trip miles:** Are miles traveled from city to city.

**Local miles:** Are miles traveled in the vicinity of the home station and miles traveled to accomplish the purpose of the trip after reaching the destination. All stops must be listed including the building, address or other location.

**Commuting:** Travel between home and your permanent work site.

**Normal travel time:** For out of state-of-state travel, is to arrive the day before the required state business begins and to depart the day after the last day of the required state business.

## Policy Contacts:

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## **Policy History:**

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This policy and its procedures remain in effect until rescinded or updated.