

TRAVEL POLICY

- Policy Number:** BP # 105
- Effective Date:** Approved by the **Eastern Washington State Historical Society (EWSHS)** Board of Trustees on November 4, 2015.
- Application:** Applies to all employees, volunteers, and contractors of the EWSHS who need to use a state purchase card for official state business.
- History:** This is a new policy which replaces Policy HR # 214.
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Article I PURPOSE

The policies and procedures in Chapter 10 of the State Administrative & Accounting Manual (SAAM) are the minimum travel requirements that state agencies must follow. This Travel Policy Manual supplements information in the SAAM and provides clarification regarding travel policies, rules and regulations that EWSHS travelers must meet when traveling on state business. It is the responsibility of each traveler to ensure he/she is familiar with these travel policies and follows them.

Article II TRAVELERS

Employees who are travelling on state business are said to be "in travel status" and are referred to as "travelers".

- A. Before You Travel:** Business travel plans should always be made with two criteria in mind: (1) What is most economical?; and/or (2) What is most advantageous to the State of Washington?
1. Consider alternatives to travel: Before deciding to travel, travelers need to consider other travel alternatives. These may include but are not limited to:
 - a. Teleconferencing and video conferencing;
 - b. Video recordings and published reports;
 - c. Car-pooling and greater use of public transportation;
 - d. Reduced frequency of regularly scheduled out-of-town meetings;
 - e. Restrictions on the number of staff traveling to the same destination; and
 - f. Coordinating between agencies for joint travel arrangements when more than one agency is involved.
 2. Get approval from manager/supervisor: You must obtain management approval before making travel arrangements. Approval may be obtained by submitting a letter of request to your manager/supervisor. (The Executive Director shall obtain prior approval from the EWSHS Board President or his/her designee before making travel arrangements.) That letter should include the following:
 - a. The purpose of the trip,
 - b. How it relates to your work assignment,
 - c. A description of expected benefits,
 - d. The anticipated costs associated with the travel, and
 - e. A statement of whether or not state business could be accomplished by an alternative approach to achieve the same or similar result.
 3. Apart from my manager/supervisor's approval, are there other approvals I need to have before I travel?

- a. The Executive Director's approval is needed in advance for traveling out-of-state (The Board President or his/her designee's approval is needed by the Executive Director in advance for traveling out-of-state);
 - b. Lodging that exceeds the normal reimbursement rate;
 - c. The Director's (If the Director is planning to travel outside the continental United States, Alaska or British Columbia, the EWSHS Board President or his/her designee's approval is needed in advance of travel) and the Office of the Governor's approval is needed for travel outside the continental United States, Alaska and British Columbia.
4. As a EWSHS traveler, what are my responsibilities? You need to comply with travel policies and procedures outlined by the Office of Financial Management and the Finance Department. As an EWSHS traveler you must:
- a. Get authorization to travel prior to departure;
 - b. Know, or seek clarification from your approving manager and/or the Finance Department on relevant travel policies and procedures before embarking on travel;
 - c. Exercise a level of thrift and be a good steward of state resources by ensuring you:
 1. Do not incur any excessive costs by travelling circuitous or indirect routes, incurring needless delays, or choosing luxury accommodations;
 2. Do not incur any additional expenses for personal preference or convenience;
 3. Return as soon as reasonably possible to either your official work station or official residence when state business is completed.
 4. Use the Travel Expense Management System (TEMS) to submit all travel reimbursement requests.
 5. Ensure you save your original receipts and any other relevant documentation required by agency policy and the SAAM and give them to your supervisor who must forward them to the Finance Department on a timely basis so that payment can be processed and you can be reimbursed promptly.
5. Are there travel expenses that I will not be reimbursed for? Yes. You will not be reimbursed for the following:
- a. Alcoholic beverages;
 - b. Any expenses considered personal and not required for the conduct of state business such as valet services unless one is disabled;
 - c. Entertainment expenses including but not limited to movie and/or video game rentals;
 - d. Taxi fares and/or motor vehicle rental costs for transportation to and from entertainment places or events and other non-state business locations
 - e. Costs for personal trip insurance and medical and hospital expenses;
 - f. Personal telephone calls (Note: Reasonable calls to the traveler's home or family to communicate safe arrival or changes in itinerary are allowed);
 - g. Any tips or gratuities associated with personal expenses; and
 - h. Costs of commute between traveler's official work station and official residence.
- You also will not be reimbursed for:
- a. Additional meals or lodging costs for extra field time incurred if you travel in advance of the necessary arrival time for your personal convenience; and/or,
 - b. Additional meals or lodging costs for remaining at the work site late for your own convenience;
 - c. Tolls for using high-occupancy lanes.

Note 1: Bridge tolls are allowed.

Note 2: Non-overnight meal reimbursements may be taxable per IRS rules.

B. Transportation

1. Is there any guidance that helps me decide whether to use my private vehicle vs a rental vehicle? The decision to choose either a rental vehicle or POV (privately owned vehicle) for state travel should be made based on what is most cost effective for the state. An exception may be granted for the use of a POV when it is not more economical for any of the following circumstances:
 - a. A rental vehicle is not available,
 - b. The exception is most advantageous to the state.
 - c. POV use must be approved in advance by your supervisor or manager who has authority to do so. In addition, exceptions to use a POV may not be granted solely for the convenience of the traveler.
2. How am I reimbursed for the use of my POV? The agency mileage reimbursement policy requires that mileage reimbursement will be made only for travel beyond the distance between an employee's official residence and their official station. Example: When you are assigned to work at more than one location (building) within the same agency, you may be reimbursed only for the miles driven between the work locations. The mileage from home to the additional work/training location is not reimbursable if it is in the same city as the official station.
3. Under what conditions may I use a rental car? Use of a rental car will be approved by the employee's supervisor/manager in advance under the following conditions:
 - a. If the state travel is both critical and necessary; and
 - b. If the use of the rental car is advantageous to the state, or more economical than other means of transportation.
4. How will I obtain a rental car, if I have been approved to use one? EWSHS has agreements with approved rental firms through Department of Enterprise Services from whom you are expected to rent a vehicle. A vehicle is secured using the EWSHS account. The state contract for rental of motor vehicles does not authorize the vehicle to be used for other than official state business. For that reason, when you couple a personal vacation with official state business, you must complete a personal contract/agreement with the rental agency to rent a car for the vacation portion of the trip.
5. If I pay for a rental car using my personal credit card in an emergency, how will I be reimbursed? Generally you should use the EWSHS account, however, if you encounter an emergency that requires you to pay for a rental car using your personal credit card you need to do the same as above:
 - a. Submit your travel claim using the TEMS as soon as possible after travel; and
 - b. Submit your original receipts to your manager/supervisor. This will allow you to be reimbursed in a timely manner.
6. What happens if I am fined or get a ticket while travelling on state business? You are responsible for payment of any fines, or tickets you receive while travelling on state business and/or operating state vehicles. This is not a reimbursable expense. You are required to pay your fines as soon as possible.
7. Are there limitations on baggage costs? You are allowed one checked bag and one carryon both of which must be at or under the limit stipulated by the air carrier. Should your business needs require additional baggage this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

C. Lodging

1. May I combine vacation with state authorized business travel? You are allowed where all of the following conditions exist:
 - a. The primary purpose of the trip is official state business;
 - b. You use your approved leave for the vacation or personal part of the trip; and
 - c. EWSHS does not incur any extra expenses beyond what it would normally incur had the trip occurred without any personal use coupled to the trip.
2. What do I need to know about booking lodging? You will be reimbursed for lodging when required to stay overnight and travel more than 50 miles (most direct road miles) from the closer of either your official residence or official work station. Lodging is reimbursed at actual cost, with an upper limit as published in SAAM. Original receipts are required.
3. What if the hotel or accommodations cost more than the amount listed in the reimbursement rates? The traveler is required to get approval for rates that exceed the normal reimbursement rate in advance of travel.
4. Is there anything else I need to know about being reimbursed for higher lodging rates? The Executive Director or designee may approve lodging costs greater than the lodging amount but not in excess of 150% of the maximum per diem rate if at least one of the following conditions is satisfied:
 - a. You are required to attend a meeting, conference, convention, or training session where you are expected to have business interaction with other participants in addition to scheduled events; and
 - b. It is anticipated that maximum benefit will be achieved by authorizing a stay at the lodging facilities where the meeting, conference, convention, or training session is held; and the lowest available advertised lodging rate at the lodging facility exceeds 150% of the applicable maximum per diem amount for the location.
 - c. When costs in the area have escalated for a brief period of time either during special events or disasters.
 - d. You are assigned to accompany an elected official, a foreign dignitary, or others as authorized by law, and are required to stay in the same lodging facility.
 - e. To comply with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act or when you have tangible reasons to believe your health and/or safety is at risk.
5. EWSHS requires employees in travel status to select the most economical options for lodging even when exceptions to the normal rates apply. The Executive Director must get approval from the Board President or his/her designee for lodging rates that exceed the normal reimbursement rate in advance of travel. The President or his/her designee may approve lodging costs greater than the lodging amount but not in excess of 150% of the maximum per diem rate if at least one of the following conditions listed above is satisfied.
6. What if I spend more time than anticipated at the travel site? If it can be demonstrated that the state will receive direct savings because of your prolonged visit, travel costs covering both lodging expenses and subsistence may be allowed.
7. How do I support a claim that direct savings will accrue because of prolonged stay? To support your claim, document and submit to your manager/supervisor:
 - a. A comparison of the transportation costs including:
 - b. Costs to be incurred if you had to do a return visit;
 - c. The per diem costs; and when applicable,
 - d. The salary and fringe benefit costs.
8. What happens if I become ill or I am injured while in travel status? Provided the illness or injury is not due to your own misconduct, you may be eligible for the following:
 - a. Continued reimbursement for meals and lodging during the leave period that you are ill or injured;

- b. Providing you are able to travel, reimbursement is not to exceed in total the cost authorized for motor vehicle car mileage or common carrier in returning to your official duty station or official residence, whichever is closer, and then back to the assignment provided it does not exceed the total cost authorized.

D. Travel Advance

1. What if I am not able to bear travel costs, may I ask for a travel advance? You are encouraged to use a EWSHS Travel Charge card. This minimizes the need for travel advances. An advance may be considered only if use of the EWSHS central travel card is not feasible. Should an advance be issued, it will be based on:
 - a. The per diem rate of the final destination location(s),
 - b. The number of days in travel status; and
 - c. Estimates of small expenses not payable by credit card.Travel advances **are not** allowed:
 - d. For mileage when using a privately owned vehicles; or
 - e. For the purchase of commercial air fares.
2. How do I apply for a travel advance if I need one? The Travel Authorization Form includes a section to be completed and approved if a travel advance is required. In order to process in a timely manner, your request for an advance must be received by the EWSHS Accounts Payable department at least one week prior to travel.
3. Is there anything else I need to know about travel advances? A travel advance is limited to 90% of the estimated out-of-pocket expenses. You may receive the advance no more than 30 days before the start of travel. The advance is to cover a period not to exceed 90 days. A travel advance is not a loan to you. It must be used only to cover necessary reimbursable costs while performing official duties.
4. How do I repay or account for the advanced payments? It is your responsibility to submit a fully itemized Travel Expense Voucher and is to indicate the net amount, if any, due to you on or before the tenth day following the month in which you received the travel advance. If the travel advance was not fully used, you need to repay the unspent portion of the advance by check payable to the EWSHS. This payment is to be made by the close of the tenth day following the month in which the travel advance was furnished.
5. What happens if I do not account for or repay an advance? If you fail to account for or repay an advance, the full unpaid amount will become immediately due and payable with interest of 10% per annum from date of default until paid. In addition, the agency may deduct the full amount, including the 10% interest, from any monies due to you. Please note that EWSHS is required to report as income any unsupported or unreturned portion of a travel advance to the IRS.

Article III.

FOR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS AUTHORIZING TRAVEL

A. Responsibilities

1. As an approving manager/supervisor, what are my responsibilities? EWSHS approving managers/supervisors must:
 - a. Know or seek clarification from the Accounting Department on relevant travel policies and procedures before approving traveler travel or requests for payment of travel related expenses;
 - b. Review all staff travel to help ensure all travel costs incurred are directly work related, obtained at the most economical price, and both critical and necessary for state business;
 - c. Select the travel alternative that is most economical to the state.

- d. Ensure that original receipts and other documentation (e.g., out-of-state travel authorization, lodging receipts, etc.) required by state and agency policy are forwarded to the Finance Department on a timely basis to ensure payment can be processed promptly;
 - e. Use TEMS to approve all travel related reimbursements paid directly to the traveler, within required time frames. EWSHS fiscal personnel shall provide the Board Chair or his/her designee, who serves as the supervisor/manager of the Executive Director, with an electronic copy of the Executive Director's expense voucher and receipts for approval prior to submission into TEMS for processing.
2. Before you Approve Employee Travel. Business travel plans should always be made with two criteria in mind:
- a. What is most economical? and/or
 - b. What is most advantageous to the State of Washington?
- Note:** Employees who are travelling on state business are said to be 'in travel status' and are referred to as 'travelers'.
- Note:** Daily travel costs covering both lodging expenses and subsistence (meal) expenses while in travel status is referred to as 'per diem'.
3. What are the criteria for selecting and approving travel? The following criteria must be used when determining whether to authorize a person to travel on official state business and to determine what travel alternatives to authorize: All costs should be considered (car, air, parking etc.) before selecting the alternative travel that is most economical to the state.
- Note:** Your determination must not be influenced by the personal travel plans or convenience of the traveler. Select the travel option that is most advantageous to the state keeping the following in mind:
- a. The health and safety of the traveler;
 - b. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
 - c. Process and travel situations for meals with meetings; and
 - d. Use of privately owned motor vehicle;

B. Transportation

1. How does EWSHS pay for air travel? Only the EWSHS travel card should be used for booking airfare.
2. What if I discover the same flight can be made for a lower cost? When you determine that savings can be gained by taking advantage of discounts offered by a commercial airline for advance bookings and payments, you are authorized to pay for airline or other common carrier tickets prior to a scheduled trip.
3. What if an employee wishes to combine state and personal travel - is that allowed? You may approve vacation or extended time at a travel location in conjunction with a legitimate business trip. The traveler will not be reimbursed for any expenses during this additional time. You must ensure that the employee identifies all travel system entries so that it is clear when the business portion of the trip begins and ends, and when the vacation begins and ends. All leave time must be supported by an official approved leave request.
4. Does ESWHS reimburse for baggage costs when traveling on state business? You may approve costs for one checked bag and one carryon, both of which must be at or under the limit stipulated by the air carrier. If the traveler is able to demonstrate that his/her business needs require additional baggage, you may consider this on a case by case basis.
5. Are there restrictions I need to be aware of regarding rental car usage by travelers? Yes.

- a. EWSHS has agreements with approved rental firms and the employee is expected to rent a vehicle from an approved vendor. The state contract usually includes insurance coverage so there is no need for the employee to purchase this separately. A vehicle is secured using the EWSHS Corporate account.
- b. If business travel is combined with personal travel, and a rental car is used, then a separate contract must be issued for the vacation portion of the trip.
- c. If the traveler is billed individually and seeks reimbursement for rental car services, he/she needs to submit the original receipt for the costs to you for forwarding to the Finance Department.
- d. Payment of fines or citations is solely the obligation and responsibility of the driver. It is not a qualified reimbursable expense.
- e. Travelers are prohibited from transporting unauthorized passengers in the rental car. Unauthorized passengers are those passengers not engaged in performing official state business and/or not specifically authorized by the Executive Director or authorized designee. Unauthorized passengers include, but are not limited to; family members, relatives, friends, and pets. Authorized passengers may include students, contractors, clients, and private citizens who are authorized by the Executive Director or authorized designee to be driven by a EWSHS employee conducting official state business. The Executive Director shall seek authorization for passengers from the EWSHS President or his/her designee prior to travel.

C. Meals and Lodging

1. What do I need to know before approving expense payments and reimbursements?
Employees in travel status will be reimbursed for authorized travel expenses (e.g., mileage and/or per diem).
2. Travelers should use the Travel Charge card for most of their travel-related expenses.
Travel expenses may be reimbursed to the traveler after they are incurred.
3. What do meal allowances include? Reimbursement for meals is based not on actual costs, but on set rates based on location. Rates for breakfast, lunch and dinner can be found using the SAAM manual Per Diem map. Meal allowances are intended to include:
 - a. The basic cost of a meal;
 - b. Any incidental expenses;
 - c. Any applicable sales taxes; and
 - d. Any customary tip or gratuity.
4. Under what conditions may I reimburse a traveler for meals?
 - a. For overnight travel assignments, the agency-determined meal periods are used to determine when a traveler is entitled to a meal.
 - b. For non-overnight travel assignments, the following two criteria must be met to receive a meal allowance:
 - i. Three Hour Rule: A traveler may be reimbursed for meal expenses only after the traveler is in travel status for three hours beyond the traveler's regularly scheduled working hours for any one day. The three hours may consist of hours occurring before, after, or a combination of both before and after the traveler's regularly scheduled working hours for the day.
 - ii. In travel status during the entire meal period. Travelers must be in travel status during the entire agency-determined meal period(s) in order to qualify to collect payments for meals. The traveler may not stop for a meal just to meet the three hour rule.

Note: *Employees need to be aware that non-overnight meal reimbursements may be taxable per IRS rules.*

Note: Reimbursement for meals and lodging shall not exceed the maximum allowable per diem rate. See the [SAAM Per Diem Map](#).

Note: Meal receipts are not required except for overseas travel.

4. Under what conditions is reimbursement for meals not permitted? Reimbursement for meal expenses is not authorized when a traveler does not incur expenses for meals because they are furnished. When identifiable costs of meals are included in the lodging rate or registration for a meeting, conference, convention or formal training, the meal costs, not to exceed the state per diem rate, are to be deducted from the traveler's allowable travel reimbursement amount. Where the meals costs are not specifically identified, EWSHS will not pay the traveler the meal allowances. EWSHS also cannot reimburse travelers for expenditures for meals related to "hosting" activities which includes, but is not limited to those activities that are intended either to lobby a legislator or a governmental official, or are to be a social rather than governmental business event.
5. What are the rules regarding lodging? Travelers will be reimbursed for lodging when they are required to stay overnight and travel more than 50 miles (most direct road miles) from the closer of either their official residence or official work station.
 - a. Lodging is reimbursed at actual cost, with an upper limit as published in SAAM. Follow this link to access current per diem rates for Lodging - [SAAM Per Diem Map](#).
 - b. Original receipts are required.
 - c. Division heads may approve lodging costs greater than the lodging amount but not in excess of 150% of the maximum per diem rate if at least one of the following conditions is satisfied:
 - d. Lodging accommodations in the area of the temporary duty station are not available at or below the maximum lodging amount, and the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging at a more distant site are consumed by an increase in transportation and other costs.
 - e. The traveler is required to attend a meeting, conference, convention, or training session where he/she is expected to have business interaction with other participants in addition to scheduled events; and
 - i. It is anticipated that maximum benefit will be achieved by authorizing a stay at the lodging facilities where the meeting, conference, convention, or training session is held; and
 - ii. The lowest available advertised lodging rate at the lodging facility exceeds 150% of the applicable maximum per diem amount for the location.
 - f. When costs in the area have escalated for a brief period of time either during special events or disasters.
 - g. The traveler is assigned to accompany an elected official, a foreign dignitary, or others as authorized by law, and are required to stay in the same lodging facility.
 - h. To comply with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act or when the traveler has tangible reasons to believe his/her health and/or safety is at risk.

EWSHS requires employees in travel status to select the most economical options for lodging within allowable exceptions to the normal rates.
6. Are there any rules regarding telephone calls? Personal telephone calls are not reimbursable. **Exception:** Reasonable calls to the traveler's home or family to communicate safe arrival or changes in itinerary are allowed.
7. Travel reimbursement by a non-state entity. All travel reimbursement by non-state entities will be paid directly to the agency. Travel reimbursements will be provided consistent with the Washington State Ethics in Public Service Law, chapter 42.52. The

reimbursement cannot be more than the actual expenses of travel, except for meals which can be reimbursed based on the state per diem rates.

8. What are my options for addressing my employees' health and safety while travelling?
The health and safety of employees is a top priority to agency management at all times, but more so in the conduct of travel related activities. When there is bad weather or other conditions that will impact a traveler's health or safety, the employee needs to:
 - a. Promptly notify you of any change in travel plans; and
 - b. Note the reason for any additional expense on his/her travel document submissions.

D. Travel Advances

1. Under what conditions may I approve travel advances?
The preferred method for payment of most travel expenses is the DES Travel Charge card. This minimizes the need for travel advances. SAAM 10.80.60 states that "the purpose of the advance is to defray the traveler's anticipated reimbursable expenses other than private motor vehicle expenses while traveling on state business away from official station or residence. The DES Policy on Travel Advances states:
 - a. An advance may be considered if use of the State Travel Charge card is not feasible;
 - b. Travel advances are generally appropriate for expenses such as cab fare, parking fees, and fast food which might not be payable with credit cards.
 - c. Travel expense advances will be issued based on:
 - i. The per diem rate of the final destination location(s),
 - ii. The number of days in travel status, and
 - d. Estimates of small expenses not payable by credit card.
 - e. The request for an advance must be received by the Accounts Payable section of the Finance Division at least one week prior to travel;
 - f. A travel advance is limited to 90% of the estimated out of pocket expenses.
 - g. The employee may receive the advance no more than 30 days before the start of travel;
 - h. Travel advances are prohibited for use of privately owned vehicles and for the purchase of commercial air fares.
 - i. The employee must use the travel advance only to cover necessary reimbursable costs while performing official duties;
2. Travel advances are not, under any circumstances, loans to any officer or employee.
Any unauthorized disbursement of a travel advance is considered a misappropriation of state monies by the officer or employee.

References that apply to this policy

Chapter 10 of the State Administrative & Accounting Manual (SAAM)	Travel Expense Management System (TEMS)
SAAM Per Diem Map.	Chapter 42.52 RCW, Washington State Ethics in Public Service Law