

	Montana Operations Manual Policy	Category	Travel
		Effective Date	10/1/2015
		Last Revised	Not Approved Yet
Issuing Authority	Department of Administration State Financial Services Division		
Employee Travel			

I. Purpose

This policy provides the guidelines for how agencies should conduct travel and the ensuing expenses.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all state agencies and component units, excluding community colleges.

III. Policy Overview

Traveling is a necessary operation of state government. Employees and their agency should keep in mind that travel expense can be a major budget consideration. Employees must be aware of the need for efficiency and economy in travel. Although the legislature establishes laws governing travel and the Department of Administration (DOA) prescribes the policies, the responsibility for adhering to the laws and providing effective managerial control rests with the employee and their agency. Any collective bargaining agreement providing a greater meal or travel reimbursement supersedes this policy.

A. Applicable State Statutes

Unless covered by a separate section of statute, all elected officials, appointed members of boards, commissions, or councils, department directors and all other state employees are subject to the regulations contained in [Section 2-18-501-512](#), Montana Code Annotated (MCA). Legislators are subject to certain limitations while the legislature is in session, as noted in [Section 5-2-301](#), MCA. Agencies should refer to the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#) for additional MOM travel policies and information.

B. Travel Guidelines

When considering state travel, an employee and their agency must follow these guidelines:

1. The department head or designated approving authority must pre-approve all out-of-state and foreign travel. A “Request and Justification for Out-of-

State Travel Form” is available on the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#) for use in the review and approval process relating to this travel.

2. Each agency should keep the number of personnel attending a function requiring travel to an absolute minimum.
3. Lodging expenses should be kept as low as possible. The agency/employee must try to receive either the state rate or a government rate and be prepared to show picture identification identifying them as a state employee at check-in. Lower rates can only be requested, not demanded.
4. Transportation costs and time away from the office should be kept to a minimum. The least expensive class service available must be used for all commercial air travel trips and should be scheduled to avoid unnecessary back-tracking and overlapping.
5. When traveling by car, employees should adhere to speed limits.
6. No state agency shall pay an employee's travel cost to attend a function that does not benefit the state. However, to promote employee initiative and efforts at self-improvement, the agency head has discretionary authority to give time off with pay to participate in the desired function.
7. Although each state agency should assist and support other states and organizations, Montana cannot do so at its own expense. However, if another state or organization is willing to pay travel costs to have an employee lecture or provide other assistance, the agency head has discretionary authority to contribute the employee's personal service to the project.

IV. Travel Expenses

Reimbursable travel expenses are the business-related expenses incurred when traveling on official state business. Non-business-related expenses, incurred when taking vacation or compensatory time off while in a travel status, are not reimbursable expenses.

Miscellaneous business expenses associated with official state travel are reimbursable. Each expense of \$25 or more must be supported by a receipt. Report all miscellaneous expenses in the “Other Expense” column of the agency’s travel claim form, and explain each one in the space provided at the bottom of the form. Some examples of allowable miscellaneous expenses are: working supplies purchased on an emergency basis, baggage fees, taxi fares, and business telephone calls. Meal tips and meal taxes are not considered miscellaneous expenses.

All State agency and component unit, excluding Montana University System (MUS) employee travel reimbursements are to be issued through the State payroll system. In order to avoid financial hardship for employees, agencies are encouraged to have their employees use a state issued purchasing card.

A. Procurement Card Program

Agencies that issue procurement cards to employees should require its use for air travel, lodging and out-of-state vehicle rental unless it can be documented that another payment method is in the state’s best interest. Agencies must follow the

guidelines established for general procurement card use. For additional procurement card information, see the State Procurement Card Program [webpage](#) and MOM Policy.

B. Travel Advances

Travel advances should be short-term (no more than 30 days), and processed through the payroll system. Travel advances should not exceed \$200.00 or be used for lodging or car rentals. Agencies may use discretion to avoid financial hardships for employees.

C. Travel Expense Voucher

Employees must use a travel expense voucher or similar travel claim form authorized by their agency to itemize their allowable expenses. The travel expense voucher is available electronically at the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#).

1. Frequency of Filing

An employee should file travel expense vouchers no more than twice monthly. Unusual circumstances may justify an exception to this rule. Travel expense vouchers should be filed within thirty days of completion of the related travel. Employees who do not file for reimbursement of travel costs within three months after incurring the expense waive their right to reimbursement unless approved by appropriate agency staff.

2. Approval Required Process

The immediate supervisor or the supervisor having the most direct knowledge of the travel-related activities must approve the employee's travel expense voucher.

D. Third Party Reimbursement and/or Payment

State agencies are encouraged to assist and support other states and organizations and to promote employee initiative and efforts at self-improvement. These functions must directly benefit the state in order for an agency to pay the travel costs associated with efforts in these areas. Although the agency may not be able to pay for the travel costs associated with a function, the agency head or other approving authority has the discretionary authority to contribute an employee's personal time and/or to give time off with pay to participate in a function.

In these situations, an outside party may reimburse an employee or their agency for travel incurred on behalf of the third party. Examples of these types of situations include the following:

- 1. An employee is invited to make a presentation at a training conference or national meeting of an organization and the organization pays all travel costs associated with the conference; or*
- 2. An officer or board member of a national organization related to the job they perform and must attend several meetings each year for which the organization reimburses the travel costs incurred; or*
- 3. An employee manages one or several federal programs in an agency and the federal government sponsors a conference for which they would like*

representation from each of the states and are willing to arrange for and provide an airline ticket, lodging and all other costs for the employee to attend this conference.

In each of these situations, the outside third party may reimburse the agency or the employee as an individual for the travel costs incurred or it may actually make all of the arrangements and provide for all lodging and meals so that neither the employee nor the agency incurs any costs directly.

Since the employee is participating in this activity primarily for the purpose of the third party and only secondarily because they are a state employee, they are allowed to follow the travel policies of that third party and/or to be reimbursed for all costs incurred and do not have to follow state policies as long as the agency is not required to incur any expenditures associated with this travel. In other words, either (1) the employee as an individual incurs the expenditures and is reimbursed directly or (2) the third party makes all arrangements and provides for all travel or (3) expenditures incurred by the agency are properly abatable as discussed in MOM Policy 318 – Miscellaneous Expenditure Topics.

If the agency is only partially reimbursed for the travel costs by the third party, state statutes and policies with regard to employee travel applicable to the specific costs not reimbursed or for all costs incurred if only a certain percentage is reimbursed must be adhered to. For example, if the outside party pays for the airline ticket and all the lodging costs, their policy with regard to these costs may be followed but state policy must be followed with regard to meal reimbursement. However, if the outside party agrees to pay 50% of all travel costs associated with this trip, state statutes and policies with regard to reimbursement must be adhered to for all costs associated with this trip.

V. Travel Time and Status

A. Travel Time Allowed

It is usually necessary to begin traveling prior to the time established for the meeting, appointment, or conference that necessitated the travel. Also, business activities may end late in the day, and because of inclement weather, fatigue, or the unavailability of transportation, it may not be feasible for the employee to return promptly to headquarters. In such cases, they may claim travel expenses for a reasonable time before and after the actual business activities that necessitated the travel. As circumstances vary, managers have to decide what is reasonable on a case-by-case basis. To the extent possible, however, an employee should travel within a normal travel shift.

For example, the employee may want to start a meeting in Great Falls at 9:00 a.m. rather than 8:00 a.m. or conclude business at 3:00 p.m. to allow adequate time to return home. The aim is to reduce state travel expense whenever possible.

B. Departure and Return Time

Departure time and return time normally mean the time when an employee leaves from and returns to headquarters, respectively. However, if they depart from their home and return to their home without stopping at headquarters, the departure

time starts when the employee leaves from their home and stops when the employee returns to their home. If the employee leaves from their home and returns to headquarters after the trip, the starting time would be when the employee leaves their home and the ending time would be when they arrive at headquarters.

C. Travel Status

If the employee travels each day from headquarters or home to a specific work site(s) within the same general vicinity, they are not in a travel status and should not claim a meal allowance unless they have to stay overnight. The employee should consider the work sites to be their “headquarters” for that day. *Examples include MDT employees who travel each day from their headquarters or home to a construction site or FWP employees who travel each day from their headquarters or home to patrol or maintain a specific state park or fishing access site. This does not apply to specific labor contract allowances. The employee may claim mileage expense, however, at the appropriate rate, if they are using their personal vehicle.*

D. Change in Travel Status

When traveling from in-state to out-of-state, and vice versa, an employee must observe these rules regarding reimbursement for lodging and meals:

1. The geographical location of the lodging facilities determines the applicable reimbursement; that is, if the employee stays in-state, in-state rates apply, and if they stay out-of-state, out-of-state rates apply.
2. When an employee boards a flight originating in Montana with an out-of-state destination, they receive out-of-state rates from the time they depart until they return to Montana. However, if a layover for business or personal reasons occurs in-state, then the out-of-state rates do not apply until they leave Montana from the layover point. If employees are traveling by other means of transportation, the geographical location in which they first become eligible for a meal allowance determines the reimbursement.

VI. Meal Allowances

To be eligible for a meal allowance while traveling on state business, an employee must be in a travel status for more than three continuous hours and be at least 15 miles from headquarters or home, whichever is closer. Appointed members of a state board, commission or council, or a member of a legislative subcommittee, select or interim committee are exempt from this requirement and are entitled to a midday meal on the day of a meeting, regardless of proximity of the meeting to headquarters or their home. This exemption does not apply to a member of a legislative committee that is meeting during a legislative session.

As the meal allowance is a fixed amount per meal, inclusive of taxes and tips, not reimbursement for actual costs incurred, an employee is generally entitled to receive a meal allowance if they are in a travel status and meet the above criteria. However, they may not request reimbursement for meals included in the cost of a conference

registration that is paid by their agency or for meals provided by the state or another governmental entity.

To determine eligibility for a meal allowance, keep two items in mind:

1. *The employee's relationship with their travel shift; **and***
2. *The time ranges in which travel status has to occur for each meal*

A. Travel Shift

[Section 2-18-502\(3\)](#), MCA, defines "travel shift" as beginning one hour before and ending one hour after an employee's regular scheduled work shift. An employee is allowed to claim **only** one meal (midday) if the travel takes place within their assigned travel shift. They are entitled to two meal allowances during a 24-hour calendar day under the following circumstances: departing within their travel shift but returning outside the shift or departing before their assigned travel shift and returning during the travel shift.

When travel is totally outside the confines of the employee's travel shift, eligibility for a meal allowance is governed strictly by the time ranges for each meal.

For example, if they traveled to Billings from Helena and left at 5:00 a.m. to attend a 9:00 a.m. meeting that lasted until 5:00 p.m. and then had to return to Helena that evening and their normal working hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., they would be entitled to all three meals since they would be in a travel status for three continuous hours in one or all of the time ranges referenced below in Section B. Meal Allowances – Time Ranges.

An employee cannot claim a meal allowance if they stop to eat and extend the normal travel shift by the amount of time it takes to eat.

For example, if an employee traveled to Butte from Helena and left at 8:00 a.m. to attend a 9:00 a.m. meeting and the meeting ended at 4:30 p.m., they could not claim dinner because they would not be in travel status for more than three continuous hours in the 3:01 p.m. to midnight time range prior to eating dinner.

B. Time Ranges

The time ranges determining eligibility for meal allowances are established in [Section 2-18-502\(1\)](#), MCA. In order to claim an allowance for a meal, an employee must be in a travel status for more than three continuous hours within one of the following time ranges:

<u>Time Range</u>	<u>Meal Allowed</u>
12:01 a.m. to 10 a.m.	Morning Meal
10:01 a.m. to 3 p.m.	Midday Meal
3:01 p.m. to midnight	Evening Meal

Each time range must be considered separately when applying the more-than-three-hour rule.

For example, if an employee travels from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., they receive the allowance only for the midday meal.

C. In-State Meal Rates

[Section 2-18-501\(1\), MCA](#), establishes the following in-state meal allowances:

Morning meal	\$5
Midday meal	\$6
Evening meal	<u>\$12</u>
Total per day	<u>\$23</u>

D. Out-Of-State Meal Rates

Meal allowance for out-of-state travel follows federal guidelines, as established in [Section 2-18-501\(2\)](#), MCA. The federal schedules are available on the [GSA website](#). Meal allowances for out-of-state travel are equal to the maximum standard federal rate (or CONUS per diem rate) per meal. Although the federal schedules provide for higher meal allowances in specific locations, [Section 2-18-501\(2\)\(b\)](#), MCA, does not allow an employee to use anything other than the standard or CONUS per diem rate. Unlike the out-of-state lodging reimbursement rates, it was not the intent of the legislature to allow out-of-state meal allowances to vary by location. Rates are established for morning, midday, and evening meals. The current standard federal per diem rate per meal is as follows:

Morning meal	\$11
Midday meal	\$12
Evening meal	<u>\$23</u>
Total per day	<u>\$46</u>

VII. Lodging Reimbursement

The reimbursement for lodging for Montana are available on the [GSA website](#) or MOM policy – Lodging Rates located on the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#). The employee receives reimbursement for their actual out-of-pocket lodging expenses, including room tax, up to the maximum amounts set by [Section 2-18-501](#), MCA, for in-state and out-of-state travel. [Section 2-18-501\(3\)](#), MCA, authorizes the DOA to designate the locations and circumstances under which the actual cost of lodging may be claimed when the actual cost exceeds the maximum lodging reimbursement rates established in [Section 2-18-501\(1\)](#), MCA, (In-State) and [Section 2-18-501\(2\)](#), MCA, (Out-of-State). In order to claim lodging reimbursement, the original receipt from a licensed lodging facility must be attached to the agency's travel claim form or the travel expense voucher. Other receipts, such as credit card receipts, are not acceptable.

If the employee is traveling with their non-state-employee spouse, the lodging rate claimed must reflect only the rate for one person. The single-occupant rate should be noted and marked as such on the receipt.

Whenever practical, more than one hotel or motel should be contacted to ensure the best possible room rate is received in a location. Although an establishment may not

have rooms available at or below the standard state rate, it may be willing to offer a government rate or other discounted rate that is less than its normal business rate. To save on travel costs, the employee should always ask for the lowest rate for which they qualify. An updated list of lodging facilities that accept the state per diem rates can be found on the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#). Be aware that most hotels require an employee to show a valid state identification card before they will honor the state rate.

NOTE: A lodging facility may waive taxes upon request and proof of government identification. In an effort to reduce travel costs, employees should inquire as to the taxability of your lodging rate.

A. Non-Receiptable Lodging

If an employee stays in a non-receiptable facility (*e.g. with friends or relatives or in a camper or trailer*) or you fail to obtain a receipt, [Section 2-18-501\(5\)](#), MCA, authorizes the employee to claim \$12 per night for lodging expenses.

B. Provided Lodging

In some instances, lodging is provided at no charge. In these instances, lodging expense cannot be claimed.

Examples include:

1. *Lodging is provided on campus for industry or government seminars;*
2. *Lodging is included in the registration fee;*
3. *A cabin is provided for remote work.*

C. In-State Lodging Rates

[Section 2-18-501\(1\)](#), MCA, establishes the lodging reimbursements for in-state travel. The maximum lodging reimbursement rate for in-state travel is the actual cost of lodging, not to exceed the federal per diem rate plus the applicable taxes on the allowable rate.

The federal per diem room rates for Montana are available on the GSA [website](#) or by visiting the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#).

Reimbursement at Actual Cost

The agency director, or designated approving authority, may provide prior approval of lodging reimbursement at actual cost, without applying the cap under the following circumstances:

1. Lodging below the cap is temporarily unavailable due to special functions such as fairs, sporting events, conventions or seasonal demand;
2. Emergency travel arrangements prevent finding accommodations below the cap;
3. Remote locations with limited accommodations within a 15-mile radius prevent finding accommodations below the cap;
4. A shortage of available lodging below the cap;
5. An employee in a regulatory or undercover function has reasonable cause to believe there is risk to his/her personal safety if identified as a state employee.

The employee must provide adequate justification, along with the original lodging receipt, to the director or designated approving authority. The justification should also indicate that reimbursement at actual cost is within the agency's appropriation level. The Request for [Reimbursement of Lodging at Actual Cost](#) form can be found on the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#) under Forms.

D. Out-Of-State Lodging Rates

Lodging reimbursement for out-of-state travel follows federal guidelines, as established in [Section 2-18-501\(2\)](#), MCA. The federal schedules are available on the GSA [website](#).

The GSA website also provides links to other travel information including the Federal Discount Lodging Directory and other listings of hotels and motels that accept the federal per diem rates in all the states as well as many foreign countries. The listings provide other information about the lodging facilities including addresses and telephone numbers.

The federal rates change periodically, and DOA will notify agencies when these changes occur.

Reimbursement at Actual Cost

The agency director, or designated approving authority, may approve reimbursement of out-of-state lodging at actual cost if the request meets the following criteria:

1. Government rates are requested and they are not available at the hotel where the conference or meeting the employee is attending is being held; and
2. Government rates or rates significantly lower than the conference hotel rates are not available at another hotel within a reasonable distance from the conference hotel (consider the cost of a taxi and employee safety or convenience walking to other nearby lodging); or
3. It is necessary for purposes of accessibility and/or security for the employee to stay at the hotel in which the conference is being held; or
4. Emergency or last minute travel arrangements preclude finding accommodations within the federal guidelines; and
5. Reimbursement at actual cost is within the agency's appropriation level.

It is required that approval for reimbursement of lodging at actual cost is obtained before out-of-state travel. Adequate justification should be provided, along with the original lodging receipt, to the designated approving authority.

VIII. Mode of Transportation

A. Commercial Airline Travel

Ticket Purchase

Agencies are required to use the State's purchasing card to purchase all airline tickets for **employee** travel unless it can be documented that another payment method is in the state's best interest. This applies to ticket purchases made

through a travel agent, purchased directly from an airline, or purchased from an online travel source.

Frequent Traveler Promotion Usage

Employees may join frequent flyer programs and any other frequent traveler programs offered by airlines, hotels, car rental agencies, or other travel vendors. Most airlines will require traveler program enrollment for online ticket purchases. If frequent flyer mileage earned from state travel can be accounted for separately from mileage earned from personal travel, the employee must apply the mileage earned from state travel toward free airline tickets for future state travel.

Agencies are encouraged to use programs such as Horizon/Alaska Airlines' Easy Biz that accrue miles on a two-for-one basis that may be allocated directly to the agency, in addition to the accumulation of personal miles.

Airline "Bumping"

Voluntary Bumping - Many times commercial airlines overbook flights and request that passengers volunteer to take a later flight in exchange for a free or discounted airline ticket. Employees may take advantage of being "voluntarily bumped" from a flight and keep the free or discounted airline ticket for their personal use as long as the extra time it takes to reach the destination does not cause a disruption in state business and the employee uses leave or off-duty time for the extra time. The employee should receive approval in advance from their supervisor to take leave time, if appropriate, and if the opportunity could arise for them to volunteer to be "bumped". They are not entitled to receive meal allowance or lodging reimbursement for this extra time. The extra time is the time between when they would have left and the time when they actually do leave. Since the employee is on a business trip, they should be compensated for the actual flying time. In addition, they should be compensated for any time spent on work-related activities during this time.

For example, if an employee is scheduled to leave Boston at 10:00 a.m. Thursday to return to Helena and are voluntarily bumped but unable to get another flight until Friday at 7:00 a.m. and their normal work schedule is Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., they cannot be reimbursed for lodging Thursday night or meal allowance for Thursday and they will be considered off duty on Thursday.

Involuntary Bumping - Commercial airlines also overbook flights and require passengers to take a later flight. If an employee is involuntarily bumped they may be entitled to lodging and meal reimbursement. They are entitled to receive meal allowance or lodging reimbursement for this extra time if the airline does not provide the lodging and meals at no cost to them. If vouchers are provided, but are not adequate, they are eligible for reimbursement at the difference between the actual cost of lodging and the state per diem rate and the value of the vouchers received. When involuntarily bumped, an employee is considered on duty during the regular work shift.

For example, if an employee is scheduled to fly out of Helena at 7:00 a.m. on Monday morning to go to Boston and is bumped to the 2:00 p.m. flight that same day, they may return to the office and work or they can take leave time until they have to return to the airport. If an employee is scheduled to leave Boston at 10:00

a.m. Thursday to return to Helena and are involuntarily bumped and unable to get another flight until Friday at 7:00 a.m. and their normal work schedule is Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., they may be reimbursed for lodging Thursday night and the meal allowance for Thursday and they will be considered on-duty on Thursday during their normal working hours. If this were to occur on Saturday with the return flight instead on Sunday, they may be eligible for the lodging and meal reimbursement but would be considered off duty during this period except for actual flying time because the additional time falls outside the normal work shift.

Involuntary Bumping with a Free Ticket or Cash – The employee may choose to either:

1. Treat this event as if they were voluntarily bumped and keep the cash or airline ticket (they are not eligible for meal or lodging reimbursements and considered off duty);
2. Remit the cash to the State or use the ticket for State purposes (they are eligible for meal and lodging reimbursements and may be considered on duty dependent on their normal work shift).

Special In-Lieu Allowances

An employee may wish to use other transportation than the most economical and efficient mode of transportation to complete a travel-oriented work assignment. However, the excess time would be considered personal time and the employee wouldn't be reimbursed.

*For example, they might be going to a conference in Seattle and be allowed to use their personal vehicle rather than fly. In this example, their agency can allow transportation reimbursement up to the air travel equivalent; that is, the cost of the plane fare, if it is less than reimbursement at the equivalent mileage rate. In addition, they should be able to claim compensation for the travel time it would take to fly. The remaining travel time required to drive would be their personal time. They would have to travel during off-duty hours or take leave time. Applicable claims must be marked **In-Lieu Allowance** and the underlying details fully explained.*

B. Personal Airplanes

[Section 2-18-503\(4\)](#), MCA, establishes the mileage rate to be used when reimbursing members of the legislature, state officers, employees, jurors, witnesses, county agents and all other persons out of public funds for the use of their own airplanes in the performance of official duties. They are entitled to collect mileage for the actual nautical air miles traveled at a rate equal to twice the "high" rate allowed for personal vehicle use. DOA periodically issues memos to alert agencies of changes in the mileage reimbursement rates.

C. State and Personal Vehicles

State Vehicles

There are a number of options available to an employee when required to travel by car. The state motor pool, operated by the Montana Department of

Transportation (MDT), has a variety of vehicles available in Helena. The employee should use motor pool vehicles for business travel whenever possible. Questions regarding procedures should be directed to the motor pool office at 444-2705.

The motor pool rules are in the [State Vehicle Use Rule](#), and govern the use of state-owned or leased vehicles in the motor pool. The motor pool bills the agencies periodically for the vehicles used. Agencies having their own state vehicles should establish rules regarding the use of their vehicles.

If motor pool vehicles are not available, the employee has the option to use their personal vehicle or vehicles from the private rental agency contract.

Personal Vehicles

[Section 2-18-503](#), MCA, establishes three (standard, low, and high) rates for personal vehicle use.

	Rate per Mile	Additional Information
Standard Rate	0.26	No maximum mileage per month
High Rate	0.54	0<= 1,000 miles per month
Low Rate	0.51	> 1,000 miles per month

Must meet certain requirements to qualify for high/low rates

The standard reimbursement rate for personal vehicle use is 48.15 % of the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for the current year rounded to the nearest ½ cent.

For example, if the current IRS rate is 40.5 cents, the standard reimbursement rate will be 19.5 cents.

If an employee meets certain conditions, they may receive reimbursement at a rate equal to that established by the IRS for the current year (high rate) for the first 1,000 miles traveled within a given calendar month. After the 1,000 mile threshold is reached the employee meeting these conditions will be reimbursed at the high rate less 3 cents (low rate).

DOA periodically issues updates to alert agencies of changes to the MOM policy - Mileage Reimbursement Rates, located on the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#). If an employee drives a personal vehicle on state business and are reimbursed mileage, they must comply with the Motor Vehicle Safety - Responsibility Act, [Section 61-6-1](#), MCA, and the mandatory liability protection provisions of [Section 61-6-3](#), MCA, and must be aware of personal vehicle usage liability as provided by the DOA - Risk Management and Tort Defense Division.

Reimbursement for miles traveled in a personal car must be actual map miles from point A to point B and back. Employee should use the Montana Distance Calculator located on the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#). The agency has the discretion to allow an appropriate amount for in-town mileage. This would be in lieu of the employee needing to keep a log book showing detailed odometer readings each time they use their personal vehicle while on state time.

1. Authorization Form

In order to claim reimbursement, an employee must use the personal vehicle use authorization form or similar form authorized by their agency **prior to** using their personal vehicle. The Personal Vehicle Use Authorization form is available electronically on the DOA State Employee Travel [webpage](#).

2. Standard Rate

If the department director or designated approving authority authorizes the use of a personal vehicle on state business, the employee must be reimbursed for mileage at the standard rate unless they meet the following high rate conditions.

3. High Rate

An employee must receive reimbursement at the high rate for the first 1,000 miles traveled during a calendar month under the following circumstances:

- A motor pool vehicle or other state-owned or leased vehicle is not available.

If a request for a vehicle cannot be met, the motor pool will promptly prepare a memo and submit it to the employee or agency, stating a vehicle was not available on the date requested. At the agency's discretion, personal vehicle use may be authorized and the employee must be reimbursed at the high rate. The agency shall indicate approval to use a personal vehicle on the motor pool memo and provide two copies to the employee. The memo from the motor pool must be attached to the travel reimbursement form.

- The use of a personal vehicle is considered to be in the best interest of the state.

The department director or designated approving authority may approve personal vehicle usage for staff when they believe there is sufficient justification that it is in the best interest of the state for a personal vehicle to be used on state business. The agency shall prepare a personal vehicle use authorization form and provide a copy to the employee.

- Legislators and members of the general public on official state business.

Members of the legislature, while traveling between their residence and Helena, and all other members of the general public except state employees, directors and elected officers are entitled to mileage when using their own motor vehicles for official state business.

Exemptions

The following persons are exempt from meeting the high rate requirements and are authorized reimbursement at the high rate:

- Members of boards, commissions, committees, or advisory councils unless related to state employment
- Employees driving 25 miles or less in any calendar day

These exemptions do not preclude an agency from prescribing internal administrative procedures that require people to use agency-owned vehicles or to receive the standard rate.

4. Low Rate

After the first 1,000 miles traveled during a calendar month, an employee can receive reimbursement only at 3 cents less than the rate established by the IRS for the current year. In addition, consideration should be given to using the private rental agency contract vehicles if that is a more cost effective means of transportation.

Private Rental Agency Vehicles Contract

The MDT Motor Pool, in conjunction with the DOA, has entered into a contract to supply the “overflow” vehicle needs of state employees through two private rental agencies. The services are available on a statewide basis in the following locations: Helena, Butte, Missoula, Bozeman, Great Falls, Billings and Kalispell. The contract provides for the same type vehicles that are available through the motor pool.

Although the cost of obtaining a vehicle through a private vendor exceeds the motor pool cost, this cost must be weighed against the cost of using a private vehicle, especially at the “high” rate, or scheduling the trip at a later date when a vehicle is available at the motor pool. An added benefit of this private contract is the statewide coverage. Using this contract, vehicles can be obtained at a reasonable cost to complete all job functions throughout the state.

Direct any questions concerning this contract to the motor pool at 444-2705.

1. Insurance Waiver

When renting a vehicle from a car rental company, employees should not purchase the additional insurance offered by the company. Insurance is provided for the employee either through DOA - Risk Management and Tort Defense or by the state procurement card (when card is used).

IX. Out- Of-Country Travel

For travel to a location outside of the United States , except as provided in the following Reimbursement at Actual Cost sections, the meals and lodging rates provided in [Section 2-18-501\(4\)](#), MCA, follow:

Meals:	Morning meal	\$7
	Midday meal	\$11
	Evening meal	<u>\$18</u>
	Total per day	<u>\$36</u>
Lodging:	Per night	\$155

NOTE: Employees must submit receipts for both foreign meals and lodging to receive reimbursement.

Up to Federal Rate

If the meal or lodging costs exceed the rates established in law, the employee will be reimbursed for actual meal and lodging expenses up to the daily maximum

established by United States Department of State for the related foreign area. The federal schedules for foreign travel rates are available on the GSA [website](#).

The federal meal “per diem” is allocated at the rate of 15% for breakfast, 25% for lunch, and 40% for dinner, or 80% of the total for a full day, rounded to the nearest dollar. If an employee is in foreign travel status for less than a full day, the federal meal total should be allocated using the individual meal percentages provided above. When an employee is in foreign travel status for an entire day, the receipts will be compared to the total allowed per day to arrive at the reimbursement due.

As calculated above, the 20% foreign “incidental allowance” included in the federal “per diem” rate, not allowable under state law, is excluded from the daily federal total to arrive at the meals allowed a State employee.

Above Federal Rate

The agency director, or designated approving authority, may approve lodging reimbursement at actual cost. Employees must provide adequate justification, along with the original lodging receipt, to the director or designated approving authority. The justification should also indicate that reimbursement at actual cost is within the agency’s appropriation level.