

Division of Public Health Administrative Manual

Chapter:	Travel
Title:	Travel Procedures
Current Effective Date:	8/12/14
Revision History:	11
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PURPOSE

1. To provide guidelines for travel authorization for all Division of Public Health (DPH) employees and for non-state employees based on established state and department policies.
2. To ensure a clear interpretation for travel, payment or reimbursements allowable for state travel expenses pertaining to official travel and subsistence.
3. To ensure all appropriate forms are completed accordingly.
4. To establish the responsibilities of the traveler.

POLICY

DPH travel procedures are based on policies established by the Office of State Budget and Management and relevant state departments. Policies cited in this document include:

State Budget Manual, Travel Policies & Regulations Http://www.osbm.state.nc.us/files/pdf_files/BudgetManual.pdf
Department of Health and Human (DHHS) Services: Travel & Conferences /Retreats/ Workshops/Training Policy Http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dhs/pol-20/man/Travel_Conferences_Retreats_Workshops_Training1.htm
Department of Administration: Motor Fleet Management (MFM) Regulations Http://www.ncmotorfleet.com/documents/mfmregs.pdf

This document does not address all travel activities. For example, guidance on travel by members of commissions, councils, etc. is described in the state budget manual fully, and that should be the source for information used by staff involved. In addition, these procedures do not address decisions about number of staff attending conferences. The DPH must exercise prudence in determining the appropriate number of staff traveling to conferences without providing discrete limitations.

Throughout these procedures staff who request travel are referred to as “requesters” and those who have final approval authority, “approvers”.

DPH employees traveling on official state business are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary, unjustified, or for the convenience or personal preference of the employee in the performance of official state business are not acceptable under this standard.

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Employees will be responsible for unauthorized costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience. However, it is necessary to include all necessary costs expected when requesting approval for travel to avoid problems with reimbursement after the travel is concluded.

PROCEDURES

Travel Requests

In State - The unit/branch/section may require staff to submit documentation describing the dates, purpose and destination of travel for internal tracking purposes. Delegation for approval of this type of travel is determined by the sections/branches/offices. Requesters are advised to understand reimbursement for personal vehicle mileage when planning travel. Rates and notes for travel reimbursement may be viewed on pages 4 and 5.

Requesters are to fill out the [Travel Authorization](#) form, and include all anticipated travel costs. Multiple travelers may be included on the same form. If excess lodging is requested that should be so noted and justified clearly. Travelers should utilize a state vehicle, unless circumstances make this impractical.

For approval, submit the Travel Authorization form through the unit/branch/section and Budget Office as necessary within 15 working days of travel.

Employees who travel frequently in the course of their duties are allowed blanket approvals at unit/branch/section discretion.

In/Out of State (Excess Lodging) - Excess lodging is allowed when the employee is in a high cost area and unable to secure lodging within the current allowance, or when the employee submits in writing an opinion that his/her personal safety or security is unattainable within the current allowance. Excess lodging authorization is not allowed for reason of convenience or personal preference of the employee

Out of Country Travel - Requesters are to fill out the Travel Authorization form, and include all anticipated travel costs. Certain costs are associated with out- of-country travel and are reimbursable; consult the State Budget Manual for a full description. Strong justification is required for out of country travel.

Within 30 days of travel out of the country, submit the Travel Authorization form to the unit/branch/section and Budget Office to the Secretary, DHHS.

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Travel Advance

Occasional Travel - All employees traveling on state business may be issued advances when authorized by the department head or his or her designee in order that personal funds will not be required. The minimum advance is \$50. The travel advance may not be issued more than 5 working days prior to the date of departure. Advances must be deducted from the reimbursement request on the travel expense report, which shall be submitted within 30 days after the travel period ends. All advances must be reconciled prior to the end of the state fiscal year. This date is communicated to DPH staff as a part of closeout instructions.

Regularly Scheduled Travel – For an employee traveling each month, an annual advance of funds equal to the average monthly expense may be made. All reimbursement requests shall be filed and reconciled monthly for incurred expenses. The advance must be repaid annually or earlier if required by the agency. When it is determined that the monthly reimbursement has averaged less than the annual advancement, the advance must be reduced to the newly established amount.

Reimbursement

Direct Deposit - First-time employees are to fill out a [Payment Verification Form](#) with an attached voided check. This allows the DHHS Controllers Office to provide a direct deposit of approved reimbursement into the specified account.

Each employee is responsible for his or her own request for reimbursement. A standard form [Reimbursement of Travel and Other Expenses Incurred in the Discharge of Official Duty](#) must be completed and filed within 30 days of travel.

Accuracy of this form will speed the reimbursement process. Attention to the following items is important:

Lodging - Receipts are required with specific dates of lodging along with a \$0 balance. “Express” checkout receipts are not acceptable. Reimbursement for lodging in an establishment treated as an apartment building by state or local law or regulation is not allowed unless approved by the Office of State Budget and Management in advance.

Meals - Tips for meals are included in the meal allowance. Each meal reimbursement rate must be listed on the reimbursement request. Times of departure and arrival must also be listed on the reimbursement request to justify certain meal allowances. The costs of meals included in other related activities (registration fees, conference costs, hotel registration, etc) may not be duplicated in reimbursement requests. If requested, each employee may be reimbursed for breakfast even if the lodging establishment offers a free continental breakfast.

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Meals and Day-to Day Activities – State employees may not be reimbursed for meals in conjunction with a congress, conference, assembly, convocation or meeting, or by whatever name called, of employees within a single state department, institution or agency, or between the employees of two or more state departments, institutions or agencies to discuss issues relating to the employee’s normal day-to-day business activities. Boards, commissions or councils have to be established by the government’s general statutes or legislative action.

Miscellaneous - Telephone access fees for business calls are considered a miscellaneous expense. Individual calls over \$5 must identify point of origin and destination. Telephone access fees for personal calls are not reimbursable unless an employee is in travel status for 2 or more consecutive nights in a week. In that case, the employee is allowed one personal long distance telephone call for each consecutive 2 nights, not to exceed \$3 for each in-state call or \$5 for each out-of-state call.

Baggage handling tips are considered miscellaneous. Excessive tips must be documented with a receipt.

Registration -These fees are charged to “Registration Fees.” A signed receipt is required if the employee paid the fee. An employee can not be reimbursed for meals included in a registration fee.

Taxi or Airport Shuttle - Actual receipts are required.

Public Transportation - In lieu of using a taxi or airport shuttle, employees can be reimbursed up to \$5 without a receipt for each one-way trip either from the airport to hotel meeting, or hotel meeting to the airport.

Parking – Parking is reimbursed for amount spent and receipts are required.

Rental vehicle – A rental vehicle may be used, with the prior approval, and receipts are required.

Travel Reimbursement Rates - FY 14 - 15

Meal Allowances			
	In State	Out of State	
Breakfast	\$ 8.20	\$ 8.20	Must leave prior to 6:00 am
Lunch	\$ 10.70	\$ 10.70	Must leave prior to 12:00 noon on departure day, or return after 2:00pm (return day) overnight status
Dinner	\$ 18.40	\$ 20.90	Must leave prior to 5:00 pm (departure day) and return after 8:00 pm (return day)
Total	\$ 37.30	\$ 39.80	

Allowances cannot be paid to employees for lunches if travel does not involve an overnight stay

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Lodging

<u>In-State</u>	<u>Out-of-State</u>	
\$ 65.90	\$ 77.90	Maximum (excluding taxes/fees)

*Lodging is allowed only for destinations at least 35 miles from the employee's duty station.
 All lodging-related taxes and service fees are reimbursable in addition to the actual room rate.*

Total Meals and Lodging*

<u>In-State</u>	<u>Out-of-State</u>
\$ 103.20	\$ 117.70

**maximum allowable for total meal and lodging expenses; each component can exceed rates above if total is within the allowable limit*

Receipts are required for: (1) lodging, (2) parking (3) conference registration, (4) air fare and (5) ground transportation (taxi, shuttle, etc)

Personal Vehicle Mileage

- .30/mile when employee elects to drive personal vehicle
 - .56/mile when employee must use personal vehicle because state car is unavailable
- Mileage is measured from the closer of duty station or point of departure to destination (and return).*

Approval Requirements

Travel Item	Approver	Approval Documentation Required	Reimbursement Documentation Required
In-State travel, within state rates, including "blanket" approvals	Branch or Unit, as determined by Branch Head	Determined by Branch as needed	Travel Reimbursement Form, and appropriate receipts
In-State travel, excess rates	Deputy Director or Designee	Travel Authorization Form (BDA)	Travel Reimbursement Form, with approved Travel Authorization Form (BDA), and appropriate receipts
Out of state travel (within state rates or excess)	Deputy Director or Designee	Travel Authorization Form (BDA)	Travel Reimbursement Form, with approved Travel Authorization Form (BDA), and appropriate receipts
Out of country travel	Department Secretary	Travel Authorization Form (BDA)	Travel Reimbursement Form, with approved Travel Authorization Form (BDA), and appropriate receipts
Registration fees, pre-paid by state	Deputy Director or Designee	Travel Authorization Form (BDA)	No reimbursement; fee paid with approved Travel Authorization Form (BDA) and conference or training registration form

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Travel Item	Approver	Approval Documentation Required	Reimbursement Documentation Required
Registration fee, in-state paid by employee	Branch or Unit, as determined by Branch Head	Determined by Branch as needed	Travel Reimbursement Form and valid registration receipt
Registration fee, out of state paid by employee	Deputy Director or Designee	Travel Authorization Form (BDA)	Travel Reimbursement Form, with approved Travel Authorization Form (BDA) and valid registration receipt

Note: Travel by non-state employees must always be pre-approved by the Deputy Director or the designee for a Travel Authorization Form (BDA), regardless of type or cost. All state rates for reimbursed travel apply to non-state employees, with some exceptions as outlined in the State Budget Manual, Travel Policy Section. All Travel Authorizations shall be submitted to the Chief Budget Officer for processing.

Document History

- 8/01/06: Initial approval of procedure
- 2/05/07: Revision 1
- 5/04/07: Revision 2
- 7/01/07: Revision 3
- 1/01/08: Revision 4
- 7/01/09: Revision 5
- 1/01/10: Revision 6
- 5/01/10: Revision 7
- 4/12/11: Revision 8
- 7/01/11: Revision 9
- 1/04/13: Revision 10
- 8/12/14: Revision 11