

TRAVEL REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

A. REGULATIONS

1. General

ASU employees required to travel in the performance of official duties and entitled to reimbursement for expenses must have prior travel authorization from the department head or other designated official. Travel is considered to be authorized when the Business Office receives a completed, signed and approved Travel Request Form.

Reimbursement to an individual may cover only those expenses pertaining to that individual. Reimbursement may not include expenses pertaining to another person.

Travel Exceptions for Emergency Personnel

On occasion, agency personnel who are responsible for responding to emergency situations regarding public health and safety are called out after normal working hours and on weekends, or are required to work hours which far exceed the number of hours in a normal work day.

Examples of such emergency situations may include: bioterrorism threats, arson investigations, gas leaks, or prisoner escapes. Given the nature of these jobs and the requirements placed upon such personnel during emergency situations, it may be appropriate for agencies to reimburse emergency personnel for certain meals and mileage incurred by personnel when they are responding to emergency situations.

Employees may also be reimbursed for meals when they are required to be on-site beyond their normal work hours.

ASU's travel policies are governed by the laws of the State of Georgia and the policies of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

2. Subsistence

2.1 Per Diem Allowance for Meals Associated with Overnight Travel within Georgia (General Rules)

Employees traveling overnight may be paid a per diem amount designed to cover the cost of meals (including taxes and tips), based on the number of meals per day for which the employee is eligible.

The daily meal limits shown below may be considered as a single daily total:

Number of Meals Reimbursed	Meals Reimbursed	Maximum Allowable Expense (1)
3 meals per day	breakfast/lunch/dinner	\$28.00
2 meals per day	breakfast/lunch	\$13.00
	breakfast/dinner	\$21.00
	lunch/dinner	\$22.00
1 meal per day	breakfast	\$ 6.00
	lunch	\$ 7.00
	dinner	\$15.00

Note 1: (1) Taxes and tips are allowable expenses. However, they should be included in the total expense for the meal.

Note 2: Meal limits applicable to employees traveling to high cost areas within Georgia.

Employees may only receive per diem for meals occurring while officially on travel status.

Employees traveling overnight are generally eligible for per diem amounts designed to cover the cost of three (3) meals per day for all days on travel status *other than* day of departure and the day of return. There are specific instances, however, in which an employee *may be* eligible for the three (3) meal per diem rate on departure/return days, as noted below:

Day of Departure			Time of Departure/Return	Day of Return		
B	L	D	12:00 a.m. – 6:30 a.m.	—	—	—
—	L	D	6:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.	B	—	—
—	—	D	11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.	B	—	—
—	—	D	1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	B	L	—
—	—	—	5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.	B	L	—
—	—	—	7:30 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.	B	L	D

Day of Departure

1. If an employee departs on an overnight trip prior to 6:30 am, the employee is eligible for per diem for breakfast on the day of departure, along with being eligible for lunch and dinner per diem on that day.
2. If an employee departs on an overnight trip prior to 11:00 am, the employee is eligible for per diem for lunch on the day of departure, along with being eligible for per diem for dinner on that day.
3. If an employee departs on an overnight trip prior to 5:30 pm, the employee is eligible for per diem for dinner on the day of departure.

Day of Return

1. If an employee returns from an overnight trip after 6:30 am, the employee is eligible for per diem for breakfast on the day of return.
2. If an employee returns from an overnight trip after 1:30 pm, the employee is eligible for per diem for lunch on the day of return.
3. If an employee returns from an overnight trip after 7:30 pm, the employee is eligible for per diem for dinner on the day of return.

2.2 Meals included in Conference Registrations, etc.

If any meal is included as a part of the cost of a conference registration, etc., such meal(s) should not be considered eligible in the calculation of per diem and an employee may not receive per diem for the normally eligible number of meals. For example, if conference registration includes breakfast and lunch, the employee will only receive per diem for the dinner meal (\$15, or \$20 for high cost areas). Because most conferences, etc., accommodate a variety of dietary needs/restrictions, employees are expected to participate in such meals.

In rare circumstances, an employee may be unable to participate in a conference meal. In such a case, the employee may request the per diem amount associated with the meal purchased in lieu of that provided. If requesting such reimbursement, a receipt documenting the meal purchase must be attached to the travel expense statement, and a justification for the meal purchase must be indicated on the statement.

2.3 Per Diem Allowance for Meals Associated with Overnight Travel within High Cost Areas in Georgia

In some areas of Georgia, employees may experience high costs that cause the employee to exceed the general meal limits. In recognition of this fact, certain areas, as defined in Section 4.1.7 on page 4-3, have been designated "high cost areas." As is true with the general meal limits, the daily meal limits for high cost areas may be considered as a single daily total.

When working and spending the night in lodging in the designated high cost areas, the following meal limits apply:

Number of Meals Reimbursed	Meals Reimbursed	Maximum Allowable Expense (1)
3 meals per day	breakfast/lunch/dinner	\$36.00
2 meals per day	breakfast/lunch	\$16.00
	breakfast/dinner	\$27.00
	lunch/dinner	\$29.00
1 meal per day	breakfast	\$ 7.00
	lunch	\$ 9.00
	dinner	\$20.00

Note: Taxes and tips are allowable expenses. However, they should be included in the total expense for the meal.

Employees are considered traveling in high cost areas of Georgia when their official responsibilities must be performed at a location in the high cost area. Employees who are not both working and spending the night in lodging in a designated high cost area are subject to the general meal limits.

2.4 Per Diem Allowance for Meals Associated with Overnight Travel outside Georgia

Employees are considered traveling outside Georgia when their official responsibilities must be performed at an out-of-state location.

Note: Employees who are working in Georgia but spending the night in lodging in another state are not traveling outside Georgia. Travel to points just beyond the state border necessary for the accomplishment of in-state business shall not be construed as out-of-state travel for the purpose of these regulations.

Employees traveling outside Georgia should make every effort to remain within the meal limits prescribed in these travel regulations. However, employees may experience some high cost areas that cause the employee to exceed the authorized meal expenses.

Employees traveling outside of Georgia may receive meal per diem amounts up to the federal per diem rates, at the discretion of the approving agency head or designee.

Note: These meal per diem amounts will **not** include the \$3 federal “incidentals” allowance.

The federal per diem rates and meal amounts are located at the following Internet addresses:

- Federal per diem rates for locations within the continental United States: <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>
- Breakdown by meal for federal per diem amounts: <http://www.gsa.gov/mie>
- Federal per diem rates for foreign travel: <http://www.state.gov/m/a/als/prdm>

Per diem rates associated with travel to high cost out-of-state areas should be approved by the agency head or his/her designee prior to the trip, in order that the employee might plan meals accordingly.

2.5 Per Diem Allowance for Meals Not Associated with Overnight Travel

Employees who are required to travel for their job and do not stay overnight may be reimbursed for certain meal expenses under the following situations.

1. Employees acting as an official representative for their department may receive per diem for meals that are an integral part of a scheduled, official meeting. Per diem is only authorized, however, if the meeting is with persons outside the employee's department and if the meeting continues during the meal. Employees are not authorized to receive this per diem if they leave the premises of the meeting site.
2. Employees may be reimbursed for noon meals that are part of a required registration fee that is paid by the employee.
Note: In this instance, a per diem is not authorized, since the registration fee is the basis for reimbursement.
3. Employees on State business who travel more than thirty (30) miles from home or headquarters on a work assignment, and are away for more than thirteen (13) hours, may receive per diem for the noon meal, even when there is no overnight lodging. In addition to the noon meal, employees who depart prior to 6:30 a.m. are entitled to per diem for breakfast, and employees who return later than 7:30 p.m. are entitled to per diem for dinner. Employees must meet the eligibility requirements outlined above for per diem related to the noon meal before per diem for breakfast and/or dinner will be considered.

Employees who are reimbursed for any of these circumstances are still expected to remain within the authorized meal limits.

Note: Statewide travel regulations *do not* authorize employees to be reimbursed for meals purchased during a "lunch meeting" in which the meal and the meeting are one and the same.

2.6 Required Documentation of Meal Expenses

Receipts for meals are not required, except as discussed in Section 4.3.1, starting on page 4-7. Times of departure (for the day of departure) and return (for the day of return) should be noted on the employee travel expense statement to substantiate meals eligible for payment of per diem. All meals included as a part of conference registration fees, etc., should be noted on travel form. Meal expenses incurred that exceed the authorized per diem amounts due to travel in high cost areas or out-of-state should be itemized separately and explained on the travel expense statement, and are eligible for reimbursement as determined by the approving official.

3. Lodging

Employees who travel more than 50 miles from their home office, residence, or headquarters may be reimbursed for lodging expenses associated with approved overnight travel.

Reimbursement may be made for actual lodging expenses, including state sales taxes, based on reasonable rates as determined by the circumstances of the trip. All lodging claims must be documented by itemized receipts. It is expected that employees will secure reasonable rates by making reservations in advance whenever practical, utilizing minimum rate accommodations, avoiding "deluxe" hotels and motels, and obtaining corporate/government rates whenever possible. Expenses exceeding reasonable rates should be explained on the employee's travel expense statement.

Employees staying at a hotel inside Georgia are required to submit a copy of the tax-exempt form to the hotel at registration. This form exempts state employees from local excise taxes associated with lodging. If the hotel refuses to accept the tax-exempt form at check-in, the employee should attempt to resolve the issue with hotel management before checking out at the end of his or her stay. If the matter is not resolved by the time the employee checks out, the employee should pay the tax and explain the payment as a miscellaneous expense on the travel expense statement. The University will reimburse the employee for the tax if the documentation supporting the travel expense statement includes the dates of lodging and the name, address and telephone number of the hotel. The University will then forward this information to the Travel Regulations Section of the State Accounting Office.

4. Transportation

4.1 General Provisions

The Legislature in its 2005 special session passed Senate Bill 1 EX, amending OCGA 50-19-7 and tying the mileage reimbursement rate for use of a personal motor vehicle to the rate established by the United States General Services Administration (GSA) pursuant to the Federal Travel Regulations Amendment 2005-01 as of July 1, 2005, or subsequently amended. These GSA rates are based on a determination of the most advantageous form of travel. Advantageous use may be determined based on energy conservation, total cost to the State (including costs of overtime, lost work time, and actual transportation costs), total distance traveled, number of points visited, and number of travelers. Documentation of the determination of “advantageous use” should be retained for audit purposes.

Note: For more information, refer to the following Internet addresses:

- General Services Administration: <http://www.gsa.gov/pov>
- DOAS Vehicle Cost Comparison Tool: <http://ssl.doas.state.ga.us/vehcostcomp/>

Employees are encouraged to utilize agency-owned vehicles, if available, for travel within the state of Georgia, and when appropriate for travel outside the state. However, if agency owned vehicles are not available, employees may choose between using DOAS or personal vehicles. Institutions may reimburse employees for the mileage incurred during the employee’s use of a personal vehicle.

The mileage reimbursement encompasses all expenses associated with the operation of a personal motor vehicle, with the exception of tolls and parking expenses, which are reimbursed separately.

4.2 Use of Agency-Owned or DOAS Vehicles

Institutions that maintain a fleet of vehicles should establish the necessary policies and procedures consistent with state fleet management policy for employees to request, utilize, and maintain the vehicles. Employees traveling in state-owned vehicles should purchase fuel using the state contracted fuel program credit card at fuel program network fuel stations. If the vehicle should break down while traveling, the institution responsible for maintaining the vehicle will provide for repairs and roadside assistance to the driver.

4.3 Mileage Reimbursement Rates for Use of Personal Vehicles

The following rates should be used for mileage reimbursement for personal vehicles.

Note: Mileage rates are changed only upon notification from the State Accounting Office and the Office of Planning and Budget via the State Accounting Office web site. New rates should not be utilized based solely on GSA updates.

1. **Tier 1 Rate.** When it is determined that a personal motor vehicle is the most advantageous form of travel, the employee will be reimbursed for business miles traveled as follows:

- Automobile: \$0.505 per mile
- Motorcycle: \$0.305 per mile
- Aircraft: \$1.070 per mile

2. **Tier 2 Rate.** If a government-owned (institution-owned or DOAS motor pool, for employees in the vicinity of Capitol Hill) vehicle is available, and its use is determined to be most advantageous to the state, **OR** if it is determined (through institution policy or otherwise) that a rental vehicle is the recommended method of travel, but a personal motor vehicle is used, the employee will be reimbursed for business miles traveled at the rate of \$0.285 per mile.

3. **Tier 3 Rate.** When a government- or institution-owned vehicle is assigned directly to an employee, but that employee utilizes a personal motor vehicle, the employee will be reimbursed for business miles traveled at the rate of \$0.125 per mile.

Employees may be reimbursed for the mileage incurred from the point of departure to the travel destination. If an employee departs from headquarters, mileage is calculated from headquarters to the destination point. If an employee departs from his/her residence, mileage is calculated from the residence to the destination point, **with a reduction** for normal one-way commuting miles. For the return trip, if an employee returns to headquarters, mileage is calculated based on the distance to such headquarters. If an employee returns to his/her residence, mileage is calculated based on the distance to the residence, **with a reduction** for normal one-way commuting miles.

Exceptions include:

1. If travel occurs on a weekend or holiday, mileage is calculated from the point of departure with **no** reduction for normal commuting miles.
2. If an employee does not regularly travel to an office (headquarters) outside of his/her residence (i.e., residence is “headquarters”), the requirement to deduct normal commuting miles does not apply.

Employees may also be reimbursed for business miles traveled as follows:

- Miles traveled to pick up additional passengers
- Miles traveled to obtain meals for which employee is eligible for reimbursement
- Miles traveled to multiple work sites

Employees are **not** entitled to mileage reimbursement for:

- Travel between their place of residence and their official headquarters, or
- Personal mileage incurred while on travel status.

4.4 Air Transportation

Airline transportation expenses will be reimbursed only at the coach rate. Costs must be documented by ticket stub or original itinerary from a travel agent. Limousine or taxi service will be reimbursed between the individual's departure point and the common carrier's departure point, between the common carrier's arrival point and the individual's lodging or meeting place, and between the lodging and meeting places if at different locations. A point-to-point explanation should be included on the back of the expense statement when claiming expense.

Employees who require air travel should obtain the lowest available airfare to a specified destination, which may include the use of the Internet, a travel agency, or the State airfare contract. The State Purchasing Office of the Department of Administrative Services has contracted with airlines for various travel destinations. Employees should refer to the statewide contract when making travel arrangements. Airfares included in this contract may be accessed on the Internet. You may access this information through the Statewide Travel Regulations.

Many travel agencies now charge small fees for issuing tickets. These fees, if reasonable, are part of the cost of travel. Employees may, therefore, be reimbursed for such costs. However, employees are strongly encouraged to use the Internet in order to avoid travel agency fees.

4.5 Miscellaneous Expense

Registration fees required for participation in workshops, seminars or conferences which an employee is directed and/or authorized to attend will be allowed when supported by a paid receipt or copy of canceled check showing payment. Any part of a registration fee applicable to meal expense should be reported as meal expense and not as a registration fee if the costs can be separately identified.

Expenses for official telephone and telegraph messages should be explained and claimed in the Miscellaneous section of the Travel Expense Statement.

B. PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING TRAVEL FORMS

1. Travel Request Form ("Short Form")

Submit original copy. For insurance purposes, an approved travel request must be on file 3 days prior to the trip. Please fill out the travel request form completely. Remember to print or type the name and Vendor ID number of the person submitting the request beside the signature and to include the account number which is to be charged.

2. Prepayments

The Board of Regents has designed its travel policies and accounting systems to facilitate *reimbursements* of travel expenses paid by employees. The State of Georgia requires that all travel expenses be tracked by individual traveler. That is normally accomplished by making reimbursement checks payable to the traveler. However, it may be desirable in some instances for the University to pay an expense directly to the vendor. The process of attributing such expenses to the individual traveler is complicated and time-consuming; therefore, requests for this type of prepayment should be reserved for those instances where the expense is too great for the traveler to bear or when it is otherwise in the best interest of the university to prepay. Prepayment requests for expenses of less than \$50 per check will not be processed.

Employees who travel on a regular basis are encouraged to apply for and use an Augusta State University Corporate American Express card to pay for travel expenses.

- a. Registration fees — send registration form or documentation that includes the name and federal identification number of the organization.
- b. Hotel — send a memo with the hotel name, address, single room rate and federal identification number. Please remember that we do not pay county or municipal excise taxes to Georgia hotels and motels. Exemption forms are available below after item #4.
- c. Airline tickets – air fare may be prepaid upon receipt of an invoice from a travel agency or online receipt.

NOTE: All requests for prepayments should include a copy of an approved travel request. All prepayment checks must be picked up and mailed by the individual or department requesting payment. Please allow five working days for checks to be prepared.

3. Travel Expense Statement

- a. Fill out name, vendor ID number, title, date departed and date returned on the top of the expense statement.
- b. The time of departure and return are used to determine which meals are allowable. See "Subsistence" above.
- c. Fill in the actual amount you spent for each meal, each day.
- d. List the amount of each night's lodging. The original, itemized receipt must be included; we are required to verify the single room rate. Please remember: we cannot reimburse for county and municipal excise taxes in Georgia.
- e. Mileage — list actual odometer readings on the back of the form to calculate state, commuting, and personal mileage. Please remember to provide your vehicle's license plate number.
- f. Common Carrier, Taxi/Limousine — list costs for airfare, taxi, shuttle service, etc., on the back of the form and bring the total amount to the front.
- g. Miscellaneous Expenses — list business phone calls and parking fees on the back of the form and bring the total to the front.
- h. Sign and date in the indicated space on the front of the form; also obtain the appropriate approval signature.
- i. Describe the purpose of the trip on the back of the form. Check the box if you are traveling on a standing authorization.
- j. Please write "prepaid" by any prepaid expense, and do not include such expenses in the total.

(1) Submit the approved travel expense statement to the Business Office. (2) If received by Friday, 12 noon, payment will be processed the following week in the EFT cycle. (3)

Incomplete forms and forms not accompanied by required documentation will be returned.

4. State Auditor's Comment

The State Auditor has issued the following statement with respect to the reimbursement of travel expenses:

"Obtaining funds by padding of expense accounts is a misappropriation of public funds. A diligent effort should be made by department heads and persons responsible for certifying claims for reimbursements to see that expense accounts submitted are reasonable and accurate, both as to transportation and subsistence, and to cover only expenses actually incurred in traveling in the interest of the State by State employees on travel status. Each and every State employee on travel status should consider seriously the wording of the statement which he or she signs in submitting claim for reimbursement, which reads as follows:

"I do solemnly swear, under criminal penalty of a felony for false statements subject to punishment by not less than one year nor more than twenty years of penal servitude, that the above statements are true and I have incurred the described expenses and State mileage in the discharge of my official duties for the State and have not been reimbursed and have not filed nor will I file reimbursement from any other source for said expenses."

GEORGIA HOTEL AND MOTEL OPERATORS:

On April 2, 1987, Act No. 621, amending section 48-13-51 of the Georgia Code became effective. This act provides that Georgia state or local government officials or employees traveling on official business should not be charged county or municipal excise tax on lodging.

Sales tax is not exempted under the current sales tax law, since the payment of hotel/motel bills by an employee is not considered to be payment made directly by a state agency from appropriated funds. Upon verification of the identity of the state official or employee identified below, Georgia hotel and motel operators are authorized to exempt the individual from any applicable county or municipal lodging excise tax. Sales tax, however, should continue to be charged.

A copy of this notification should be maintained with your tax records to document the individual's status as a state official or employee traveling on official business. If you have any questions, please contact the Travel Office of the department or agency employing the individual identified below.

STATE OF GEORGIA

EXEMPTION OF THE LOCAL HOTEL-MOTEL EXCISE TAX

CERTIFICATION

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE LODGING OBTAINED ON THE DATE(S) IDENTIFIED BELOW WAS REQUIRED IN THE DISCHARGE OF MY OFFICIAL DUTIES FOR THE STATE AND QUALIFIED FOR EXEMPTION OF THE LOCAL HOTEL/MOTEL EXCISE TAX UNDER OCGA CHAPTER 48-13 (AMENDED BY ACT 621).

Signature of Official or Employee: _____

Date: _____

Print or Type Name of Office or Employee: _____
(Name) (Title)

Agency Representing: Augusta State University, 2500 Walton Way, Augusta, GA 30904-2200

Travel Office Contact: ASU Travel Office Phone No: (706) 737-1767

Date(s) of Lodging: _____