



**Minnesota State Colleges and Universities**  
**System Procedures**  
**Chapter 5 – Administration**  
**Procedures associated with Board Policy 5.19**

### **5.19.3 Travel Management**

**Part 1. Authority.** Board Policy, 7.1, Authority, delegates to the chancellor authority to develop a system procedure on travel management.

**Part 2. Scope and Responsibility.** This procedure applies to all employees of the colleges, universities, the Office of the Chancellor; the Board of Trustees; and any other individuals, including students, authorized to travel and be reimbursed for allowable expenses in conducting authorized Minnesota State Colleges and Universities business. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities employees, Board of Trustees members, or other individuals authorized to travel, including students, are responsible for complying with this procedure and for the accurate completion of all required forms, including the Employee Expense Report. Students shall be compensated in accordance with local student travel rates or, in the absence of local student travel rates, with the Commissioner's Plan.

For purposes of this procedure, unless otherwise specified, the term “traveler” shall refer to all employees of the colleges, universities, and Office of the Chancellor; Board of Trustees; and any other individuals, including students, authorized to travel.

**Part 3. Prior Approval.** All in-state travel requires verbal prior approval, and all out-of-state travel requires written prior approval by an employee who has delegated authority to approve out-of-state travel prior to any travel and the actual incurrence of expenses. Written authorizations are retained locally for audit purposes.

Authorized travel is when it can be reasonably determined that:

- the travel is primarily for the benefit of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and is related to the effective conduct of business, including the promotion of interstate cooperation;
- the cost of the travel and absence from work will be offset by benefits accruing to Minnesota State Colleges and Universities including the professional advancement of an employee; and
- the travel relates to activities which do not have as their purpose the advancement of a political party, a political candidate, or a religious denomination.

**Part 4. Exceptions to Pre-Travel Authorization Requirements.** Travel without prior authorization is allowed only in emergency situations.

**Part 5. Spouse/Companion Travel.** Travel expenses will not be reimbursed if incurred by a spouse or other individual accompanying traveler on business unless:

- the spouse/companion is a state employee and there is a bona fide business purpose requiring their attendance
- such expenses are provided for in collective bargaining agreements or compensation plans

A spouse or other individual may accompany a traveler on a business trip at the traveler's expense.

**Part 6. Maximum Use of Financial Resources.** Travel costs should take into consideration any financial decisions made such as:

- Traveler leaving a day early to take advantage of a lower airfare.
- Traveler staying over a weekend at his/her own expense to obtain lower airfare. Additional expenses may be paid related to the reduced airfare providing they do not exceed the amount saved on the lower airfare.
- Other unusual situations which increase or decrease the trip costs.
- Travel is being paid for by an outside organization and is in compliance with ethics requirements in accordance with Minn. Stat. Section 43A.38, Code of Ethics for Employees in the Executive Branch, and Minn. Stat. Section 10A.071, Certain Gifts by Lobbyists and Principals Prohibited. If a traveler is reimbursed by a Minnesota State Colleges and Universities institution for this travel and is also reimbursed for the same travel expense by an outside organization, the traveler must endorse the reimbursement check over to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities institution. A traveler may be reimbursed by an outside organization for travel or meals expenses, not to exceed actual expenses incurred, which are not reimbursed by the state and which have been approved in advance by the appointing authority as part of the work assignment.
- Traveler elects to drive a personal vehicle rather than fly. Reimbursement for personal vehicle use in lieu of airfare is at the lower reimbursement rate and shall not exceed the lowest round trip coach airfare.
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**Part 7. Travel Arrangements.** Travel arrangements may be made through any travel agency. Use of the state's preferred vendors or targeted group and economically disadvantaged vendors is encouraged.

#### **Subpart A. Fares.**

##### Lowest Fare

Inquiries on fares and reservations should be made early enough to take advantage of advance purchase discounts.

##### Travel Insurance

Travel insurance coverage purchased by employees is not a reimbursable expense.

##### Upgrades

Upgrades at the expense of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities are not permitted. Upgrades are allowed at the traveler's personal expense.

Free service upgrades for all domestic air travel are permissible with the lowest available rates. Travelers shall not use their positions to seek or accept an unwarranted privilege of substantial value which is not regularly available to similarly situated individuals.

##### Use of Personal Aircraft

Travel in personal aircraft may be authorized by the board chair for the Board of Trustees, by the chancellor for Office of the Chancellor staff, and by the president at the colleges and universities when it is deemed in the best interest of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Mileage reimbursement in such cases shall be at the rate identified in the applicable collective bargaining agreement or compensation plan. Proof of adequate liability insurance is required and

the pilot and aircraft must be in compliance with all Federal Aviation Administration requirements.

#### Lost Baggage

Personal items lost while traveling on authorized business are not a reimbursable expense.

#### Excess Baggage

Travelers will be reimbursed for excess baggage charges only when the traveler is required to have on hand equipment, books, reports, etc. which cause him/her to exceed the normal weight limitations.

**Subpart B. Lodging.** The lowest government rate available should be secured at a reasonably priced licensed lodging facility. Staying at the private residence of a relative or friend is not a reimbursable expense.

Room charge and tax may be directly billed to the college, university, or the Office of the Chancellor. Other miscellaneous charges such as meals, dry cleaning, telephone calls, etc. must be paid by the traveler to the lodging facility at the time of check-out. Business related expenses will be reimbursed through the Employee Expense Report process.

**Subpart C. State-owned Vehicles.** State owned vehicles are to be used for official state business only.

Authorized drivers are state employees, contract employees if authorization to drive a state vehicle is specifically mentioned in their contract, students who have been given permission by college or university administration, and an individual assisting an employee or student with a disability, if approved by the employee's supervisor, or for students the college or university administration.

Drivers shall have a valid U.S. driver's license, complete a Vehicle Use Agreement Consent to Obtain Driving Record form and observe all ordinances and laws pertaining to the operation of motor vehicles.

Only authorized persons are permitted to ride in state-owned vehicles. Authorized persons include state employees, other persons participating in related state programs, or an individual assisting an employee or student with a disability, if approved by the employee's supervisor, or for students the college or university administration.

**Subpart D. Personal Vehicle Usage.** Travelers may use their personal vehicle for business purposes when in compliance with state policy outlined in Minnesota Management and Budget's SEMA4 Operating Policy and Procedure Manual, Employee Travel Expenses Chapter.

Mileage reimbursements for the use of personal vehicles will be at the allowable levels and in conformance with expense reimbursement requirements defined in the respective bargaining agreement or compensation plan of the traveler, and state policy as outlined in Minnesota Management and Budget's SEMA4 Operating Policy and Procedure Manual.

**Subpart E. Rental Vehicle.** Rental of a vehicle by traveler is authorized only when the type of trip or location of meetings is such that use of local transportation (taxis, airport limousines and airport shuttles, buses) is not practical or is expected to be more expensive.

Rental vehicles shall be reserved and rented at the lowest applicable discounted rate possible or available.

The use of compact or mid-size/intermediate rental vehicle categories is recommended except in cases where:

- the number of passengers is three or more
- excess baggage for official business requires a large vehicle, e.g., booth displays, slide presentations, sales items
- a larger size vehicle is provided at no extra charge above compact or midsize rate

When rental vehicles are used for travel within the United States, traveler is expected to decline rental vehicle insurance because the state has provisions for insuring rental vehicles against damage through the Risk Management Division. Traveler will not be reimbursed for the cost of rental vehicle insurance for domestic travel. For international travel, traveler should accept all insurance coverage when renting vehicles in a foreign country. Insurance coverage purchased in foreign countries is reimbursable.

**Part 8. Airline Frequent Flyer Program.** Minnesota Statute 15.435, Airline Travel Credit, requires any credits or other benefits issued by an airline to a public employee or any other individuals authorized to travel, including students, who uses public funds to pay for airline travel to accrue to the benefit of the public body providing the funding. Travelers who frequently fly and have airline frequent flyer programs for their personal travel shall obtain a separate airline frequent flyer program number to record and report receipt of credits or other benefits when using state funds. All travelers shall report such credits or other benefits within 90 days of the receipt of such benefits to the college or university business office or other administrative office as designated by each college and university; credits and other benefits can only be used to offset future business related expenses.

**Part 9. Travel Advances.** The use of state credit cards for authorized business expenses is strongly encouraged. A traveler may be issued a travel advance subject to minimum amounts determined by his/her bargaining agreement or compensation plan. The amount of the advance should not include any expense that will be directly billed. Advances should be requested using the Employee Expense Report a minimum of 14 days before departure. A traveler may not have more than one outstanding travel advance due to failure to settle the advance for a trip that has been completed. The advance must be submitted with an Employee Expense Report with appropriate receipts and documentation within five (5) days of returning from the trip. Advances not settled within 28 days of return date will be deducted in their entirety from the employee's pay check.

## **Part 10. Reimbursement of Travel Expenses.**

**Subpart A. Reimbursement Form.** Travelers, within applicable policies and collective bargaining agreements or compensation plans, will be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses while traveling on authorized business. Request for reimbursement of travel expenses shall be submitted on an Employee Expense Report form.

**Subpart B. Receipts.** Original itemized receipts are required for all expenses except meals, baggage handling, and parking meters or as required in collective bargaining agreements or compensation plans. Canceled checks and copies of credit card bills do not substitute for original receipts. A traveler may be allowed to file an affidavit in lieu of a receipt if the original receipt is lost or a receipt is not obtained.

**Subpart C. Direct Billing/Credit Cards.** Air travel costs may be paid using a direct or central billing account, state charge/corporate credit card, or personal charge/credit card.

**Subpart D. Miscellaneous Expenses.** The following miscellaneous expenses may be reimbursed:

- Personal telephone calls - if allowed by collective bargaining agreements or compensation plans, documented personal telephone calls are reimbursable.
- Laundry and dry cleaning - travelers in travel status in excess of one week without returning home shall be allowed actual cost not to exceed applicable collective bargaining agreements or compensation plans for laundry and dry cleaning for each week after first week.

**Subpart E. Non-Reimbursable Expenses.** Following are examples of miscellaneous expenses that travelers will NOT normally be reimbursed for:

- Under no circumstances will travelers be reimbursed for alcoholic beverages
- Annual fees or interest for personal credit cards
- Late payment fees or interest on state-issued corporate credit card
- Expenses of traveling companions or family members
- Expenses related to vacation or personal days while on a trip
- Loss or theft of personal cash or property
- Entertainment or amusement costs, movies, "no-show" charges, optional travel or baggage insurance, and parking or traffic tickets
- Incorrect or incomplete expense reports
- Parking if a traveler who normally does not drive to work drives a personal vehicle because he/she will use the vehicle for official business during the day, the traveler is NOT entitled to parking reimbursement at the work station.

## Part 11. International Travel.

**Subpart A. Definition.** International travel covers all destinations outside the Continental U.S.

**Subpart B. Authorization/Approval.** The chancellor or designee shall approve/disapprove, in writing, international travel for the presidents and office of chancellor employees.

The president or designee at each of the state colleges and universities shall approve/disapprove, in writing, international travel for college or university employees.

**Subpart C. Expense Reimbursement.** Because the cost-of-living varies from country to country and the rate of money exchange fluctuates, the following expenses will be reimbursed at the actual cost unless provisions for reimbursement of international travel are referenced in collective bargaining agreements or compensation plans:

1. Commercial transportation.
2. Hotel/motel accommodations.

3. Meals.
4. Work-related long distance calls.
5. Dry cleaning and laundry services after one week in continued travel status.
6. Miscellaneous expenses incurred with travel such as baggage handling and parking fees.

Receipts for expenses should be attached to the Employees Expense Report. If a traveler does not have a receipt or an affidavit of expenditures, the out-of-state reimbursement limits in collective bargaining agreements or compensation plans shall be used.

**Subpart D. Travel Warnings/Alerts.** Travelers must NOT travel to countries for which a travel advisory has been issued by the State Department of the United States of America. Contact the State Department to obtain a list of current advisories at <http://travel.state.gov/>.

**Subpart E. Travel Vaccine Requirements.**

- The Center for Disease Control has travel vaccine requirements, food and water precautions and other pertinent information at the following Internet address: [www.fss.state.mn.us/index.html](http://www.fss.state.mn.us/index.html) , Department of Administration, Fleet & Surplus Services

**Subpart F. Emergency Travel Assistance.** In case of an emergency, contact the travel agency issuing the travel documents and itinerary.

**Subpart G. Foreign Currency Services and Reimbursement Conversion.** Foreign currency can be obtained from any of the following locations:

- banks
- airport foreign exchange counter
- major hotels in foreign countries
- currency exchange outlets

Expenses incurred and paid directly by the traveler are converted into U.S. dollars at the actual exchange rate, supported by receipts such as a foreign currency exchange receipt or a charge/credit card billing statement. When more than one exchange of the same type of foreign currency is made during the reporting period, a weighted average exchange rate (total U.S. dollars divided by total amount of foreign currency) must be used. All expenses must be recorded in U.S. dollars, with the currency conversion rate clearly noted on the expense report and on all support receipts. If the amount claimed on the expense report is more or less than the amount of the attached receipts, a written statement explaining the differences must accompany the expense.

**Part 12. Responsibility and Accountability.** The traveler is responsible for complying with state statutes, laws, regulations, policies, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities travel policy and procedures, the traveler's respective bargaining agreement or compensation plan, state laws, federal laws, and IRS guidelines and for accurately completing all required forms for reimbursement of authorized official business travel expenses. The traveler's supervisor is responsible for reviewing and approving all travel requests and expenses. Audits of travel reimbursements shall be conducted according to the audit plan approved by the Board of Trustees.

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11/17/09 – Part 11, Subpart D – Title changed from *Travel Advisories* to *Travel Warnings/ Alerts*.

07/20/09 – Clarification of requirement to report frequent flier benefits for business travel; technical changes including capitalization; and state agency name changes.

1/18/02 - Amendments to be more comprehensive and to include students and to move Part 11 to its own procedure 5.20.1

06/21/00 - Contains language formerly in system procedure 5.7.1