



## ACCOUNTING SERVICES

# EMPLOYEE TRAVEL GUIDELINES

**Purpose** The intent of the travel guidelines is to ensure an employee is properly reimbursed for reasonable travel costs related to business travel, and that payment is fair, equitable, and efficient for both the employee and the district. These guidelines apply to all travel expenses regardless of the source of funds.

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**Travel Approval**

- All district travel must have prior written approval from the supervisor and Superintendent or designee.
- Approval must be obtained by completing the Travel Request Form (ACC-F014).
- A copy of the approved Travel Request Form is required with travel reimbursements.
- Any extraordinary circumstance or variation from travel policies and procedures must have written approval from the manager of the budget under which they are traveling.
- General Services Administration (GSA) establishes the per diem rate for destinations within the Continental United States (CONUS). Per diem rates for destinations are listed on the GSA website at <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>.
- It is the responsibility of the department or school site to ensure that adequate funds are budgeted and available for their travel request(s).

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**Advance Payment for Out-of-District Travel**

- Advance payment is available for authorized out-of-district travel.
- Employees must submit their request using the Travel Advance Payment Request Form (ACC-F021).
- Employees may request an advance of no less than \$100.00 at least 30 days prior to the event to cover anticipated travel and or/subsistence expenses.
- A copy of the approved Travel Request Form must be attached with the Travel Advance Payment Request Form.
- Payments for lodging, meals and incidental expenses are based on per diem rates provided by the GSA.
- Within five (5) days after the conclusion of travel, the employee must reconcile actual expenses by submitting the Travel Reimbursement Form (ACC-F013) to the Accounting Department.
- **Please note: Should you fail to reconcile your travel expenses within five (5) days of your return and you have taken advance per diem payment, the district may deduct the amount from your next scheduled payroll distribution.**

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**Travel Reservations**

- Employees who have travel approval may contact the Purchasing Department at 277-6663 to request reservations for airfare, hotel, and car rental or employees may make their own travel reservations and claim reimbursement.
- **Original itemized receipts must substantiate all business expenses reimbursable to the employee.**

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**Travel Reservations**  
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- Employees who make their own reservations should consider the following:

- **AIRLINE TICKETS**

Purchase early— Airlines tend to offer the lowest prices on 21-day advance tickets. However, advance purchase fares can often be secured in as little as 14 or 7 days ahead of your departure date. If you wait until fewer than 7 days, you're unlikely to find a good deal.

Compare fares— Search multiple travel websites for deals. You can expedite this process with a comparison-shopping search engine, which allows you to review several airline and agency websites simultaneously.

- **PERSONAL VEHICLE**

Employees are allowed to claim mileage for any district-related trips made in a personal vehicle while traveling.

- **RENTAL CARS**

Employees may rent a car when traveling on district business when it is necessary to travel between the activity/conference and hotel. The district will pay for the rental of a mid-sized car. You may rent a full-sized car or van if there are four or more people traveling in your party and only if such rental is pre-approved on your initial Travel Request Form.

The district will not pay for rental of a *specialty vehicle*, such as an SUV, a luxury car, etc. If you wish to rent a specialty vehicle, you may do so, but you must pay the difference in the rental cost between a mid-sized car and the specialty vehicle.

When signing a vehicle rental agreement, accept the rental car company's personal liability insurance and decline the company's collision damage waiver. If you have an accident with a rental vehicle, notify your insurance and contact the SCUSD Risk Management Department at 643-9299 within 48 hours of the accident.

- **LODGING**

Employees are authorized to stay at the hotel where the business-related activity is taking place. If the activity is not assigned to a specific hotel, employees may be authorized to claim reimbursement for a standard single room in a similar deluxe hotel. Government rates should be requested whenever available.

An additional night's stay, at either the beginning or the end of a trip, may be requested at the district's expense if it will result in a lower airfare and a lower overall cost to the district. Otherwise, any additional night's stay will be the employee's expense and not reimbursed.

All lodging reimbursements will be based on the cost of a single occupancy rate if only one employee is staying in the room. If an employee wishes to stay in another type of hotel room (such as a double room or a suite), they may do so, but the employee must pay the difference in the cost between a standard single-occupancy room and the type of room in which they wish to stay. **The district will reimburse employees only for the cost of a standard single-occupancy room.**

Employees may charge business use of the internet and/or business calls made from the hotel room to their hotel bill. Employees must pay for all personal expenses such as room service, movies, etc.

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**Per Diem - Meals and Incidental Expenses**

Per diem is an allowance for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) that does not have to be substantiated by receipts. GSA establishes per diem rates for destinations within the CONUS.

- The per diem M&IE rate includes snacks, associated taxes and tips in the rate, so employees will not be reimbursed separately for those items.
- Incidental expenses are defined as fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff on ships, under Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 300, Part 300-3, under Per diem allowance.
- On the first and last days of travel, employees are only eligible for 75 percent of the total M&IE rate.
- No per diem payments are made for a segment of travel where a meal has already been paid through the registration fee or is otherwise provided (e.g., meals at seminars, breakfast as part of the hotel room cost, etc.). Continental breakfasts will not preclude per diem for that meal if the provided breakfast does not meet the employee's dietary needs.
- No per diem payments are made if travel is for a duration of 12 hours or less.
- For travel of 12 hours or less and outside of a fifty (50) mile radius of the employee's work location, receipts are required for reimbursement of actual expenses.
- In the event that travel is to a high cost location and per diem rates are insufficient to cover normal expenses, with prior approval, an employee may receive reimbursement for reasonable actual expenses if they submit detailed receipts.
- For reimbursement of actual expenses, receipts must include the amount, date, location, and the name(s) of the individuals associated with the receipt.
- You may never receive both per diem and receipt reimbursement for the same expense.
- **Alcoholic beverages are never reimbursed as part of a per diem or actual receipt reimbursement.**
- Per SEIU Contract, Article 9 - Section 9.9.1 and 9.9.1.1, the reimbursement rate for bus drivers shall follow the contract or GSA rate, whichever amount is greater.
- For more information on general rules for allowances and rates for your destination, visit the GSA website at <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>.

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**Travel and Subsistence Paid by Outside Sources**

- No employee under any circumstances shall receive payments both from the district and from an outside source.
- No employee shall receive travel or per diem payment from any individual, company, or organization who has done, or is attempting to do, business with the district unless the sole purpose of the trip involves out-of-district training related to the service or operation of the district equipment or software which, for the convenience of the supplier and the district, is conducted at an educational center maintained by the supplier at a location other than a district facility.
- If such travel is in the district's interest but is not for training in the use of goods or services already procured, the expense, upon proper authorization, shall be paid by the district.

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**Group meals including non-district business participants**

- If a district employee takes a group of individuals for a business meal(s) during a conference or seminar and the group includes non-district business participants, the meal can be reimbursed from an actual itemized receipt.
- The receipt must include the amount, date, location, and the name(s) of the individuals associated with the receipt, including non-district participants.

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**Group meals including only district employees**

- If a district employee takes a group of individuals for a business meal(s) during a conference or seminar and the group consists entirely of district employees, each employee is limited to reimbursement in accordance with the per diem policies and/or actual meal receipts.
- Obtaining separate receipts for each employee or having each employee pay for his or her own meal will simplify the reimbursement process.

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**Itemized Receipts**

- To be considered “itemized” for audit purposes, a receipt must list all items purchased *and* the cost of each item.
- Receipts, or appropriate approval form, must contain the specific purpose of the business meeting, conference, or event (including an agenda or similar documentation), the date, and a list or description of who was in attendance.
- Charge slips – unless itemized – and/or credit card statements are **not** acceptable receipts.

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**Mileage Reimbursement**

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides the reimbursement rate for mileage and usually updates it annually. For the current rate, view the Accounting Services website, under Accounting Bulletins, or contact Accounting Services at 643-7894.

- Mileage reimbursements associated with travel should be requested on a Travel Reimbursement Form (ACC-F013).
- Employees may submit Mileage Reimbursement Form (ACC-F004) for the following:
  - ✓ Total mileage from an employee’s assigned work location to various business destinations and return to the assigned work location.
  - ✓ Actual miles or mileage from work location to destination, whichever is less.
  - ✓ Total mileage for assignment outside regular hours of employment. Only employees assigned to business activities by their supervisor will be eligible for mileage reimbursement.
  - ✓ Under IRS regulations, no reimbursement will be made for mileage to and from your primary assigned work location from home (daily commute).

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**Travel Reimbursement**

- Within twenty (20) business days after the conclusion of travel, complete and submit Travel Reimbursement Form (ACC-F013) detailing actual business expenses paid by the employee.
- Each attendee must complete a separate Travel Reimbursement Form (ACC-F013) and include copies of receipts and the approved Travel Request Form (ACC-F014).
- **Travel reimbursements must be submitted within 20 business days of travel, during or just following the same fiscal year of travel, or you are at risk of not being reimbursed.**

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**References**

- Board Policy, BP 3350 Travel Expenses
- U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

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**Form Reference – Accounting**

- [Travel Request Form \(ACC-F014\)](#)
  - [Travel Advance Payment Request Form \(ACC-F021\)](#)
  - [Mileage Reimbursement Form \(ACC-F004\)](#)
  - [Travel Reimbursement Form \(ACC-F013\)](#)
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