

JUDICIAL SYSTEM MEAL AND LODGING GUIDELINES

(Revised July 1, 2021)

The following lodging and meal guidelines have been adopted for individuals traveling on behalf of the Judicial System. All requests for reimbursement of travel expense must be submitted by completing a Travel Expense Reimbursement Voucher, Form DA-02-041. These guidelines must be followed by all Judicial personnel except where otherwise addressed by the Code of Virginia.

LODGING

All lodging rates are governed by the U. S. General Services Administration (GSA) rates effective October 1, 2015. The traveler must search for the travel destination using the search criteria on the website listed below. The travel destination or the lodging destination is the city or county in which the hotel is physically located.

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>

Supporting receipts and original hotel bills for lodging accommodations must be submitted with the travel voucher and any unusual charges fully explained.

MEALS

Travel meal expenses are reimbursable only for **overnight** official business travel outside the traveler's official station. In extreme cases, an exception to this policy may be made after application in writing to and approved by the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court. To be reimbursed for breakfast expenses, the traveler must, out of business necessity, leave home before 6:30 a.m. To be reimbursed for lunch expenses, the traveler must, out of business necessity, leave their official station before 11:00 a.m. or return to their official station after 2:00 p.m. To be reimbursed for dinner expenses, the traveler must, out of business necessity, be unable to return home before 7:30 p.m. **In order to claim any meals (breakfast, lunch or dinner), the departure and arrival (return) times must be entered on the travel voucher.**

The maximum amount reimbursable for meals taken within the State is \$55.00 per day. The meal guidelines are up to \$10.00 for breakfast, up to \$15.00 for lunch and up to \$30.00 for dinner, including applicable tax and gratuity. The maximum amount reimbursable for meals taken outside the State is \$65.00 per day. Out of State meals guidelines are up to \$12.00 for breakfast, up to \$18.00 for lunch and up to \$35.00 for dinner. Actual costs of meals should be claimed, but not to exceed the maximum daily allowance. To permit travelers additional flexibility in managing travel meal budgets, for days in which the traveler is eligible to be reimbursed for 2 or 3 meals, a meal rollover policy is permitted. Under this policy, each traveler may save all or a portion of the individual meal expense guideline amount allowed but not incurred during any one meal, and spend that portion saved on meal expenses incurred within another meal taken **on the same day of travel**. This meal rollover policy provides reimbursement only for actual costs incurred by a single traveler up to the maximum amount allowed for the meals included in the rollover during a single day of travel. (Alcoholic beverages are not an allowable expense.)

The IRS requires a receipt for each meal expenditure of \$75.00 or more, including meal tips. This includes such meals reimbursed under the rollover policy and situations where one traveler purchases and claims reimbursement for the meals of any other official business traveler. The absence of such documentary evidence requires the meal reimbursement amount to be reported as gross income to the employee.

MEALS – OTHER

Meals and meal tip expenses not involving an overnight stay are not reimbursable unless documentation supporting the reimbursement clearly establishes that the meal is taken during overtime work periods or for official business reasons. To be eligible for reimbursement, non-travel official business meals must be essential to the agency's mission, a business necessity, involve substantive and bona fide business discussions, and approved by the Agency Head or designee. Reimbursements for meals provided at regularly scheduled or routine meetings are not permitted. These expenditures are also subject to the meal guidelines set forth above.

TRANSPORTATION

Personal Automobiles may be used when traveling on official State business when a State-owned vehicle or Office of Fleet Management Service (OFMS) rental vehicle is not available, or when the use of a personally owned vehicle is cost-beneficial to the Commonwealth. Such use will be reimbursed at the rate and under the conditions established in the current Appropriations Act and shall be calculated in the most direct route reasonably available. The current mileage reimbursement rate is **56 cents per mile**.

Commuting Mileage – The cost for round trip mileage traveled by an employee between his/her residence and the office/building/court(s) where the traveler performs his/her duties on a routine basis is considered a personal expense and is not reimbursable.

Permanent Use of State-Owned Vehicles must be requested through the Assistant Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court. Such use is strictly limited to those employees whose job travel requirements make commuting the only cost-effective or practical alternative.

Vehicle Rentals – The Department of General Services, Office of Fleet Management Services (OFMS) maintains a contract with Enterprise Leasing to provide vehicles for short-term travel by state employees. Use of luxury vehicle is strongly discouraged (justification required). When rental vehicles are used, travelers will be reimbursed for actual expenses rather than mileage rates; therefore, receipts for the car rental and an accurate accounting of gas purchases must be submitted with the travel voucher in lieu of mileage. The total amount of gas purchases should be entered on the travel voucher under the “Other Expenses” column. Travelers must ensure that the rental vehicle is refueled before returning the vehicle to the rental contractor unless an exception is noted. The option to purchase insurance offered by rental car contractors should be declined and will not be reimbursed. Employees are responsible for operating the rental cars in a safe and responsible manner. If a traveler on official business is involved in a vehicle accident while operation a rental car, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Contact the local police or state police of the jurisdiction where the accident occurred.
2. Notify the contractor by calling the telephone number identified in the rental car agreement and complete a contractor-provided Vehicle Accident Report.
3. Contact the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court and notify them of the accident. They will contract the Department of General Services, Division of Risk Management.

Parking and Toll expenses are reimbursable. If the reimbursement claim exceeds \$20.00 a receipt is required. In all cases, the name of the facility (bridge, tunnel or turnpike) as well as the names and reasons for inclusion of a charge for passengers, where applicable, must be included in an attachment to the travel voucher and the amount(s) itemized under “Other Expenses”.

Approvals / Authorization – Travel vouchers are to be approved by the supervisor of the employee. Supervisors must sign and date the travel voucher form designating their approval of the submitted form. Due to the nature of their position, Judges and Circuit Court Clerks are not required to have a supervisor approval on their travel vouchers.