



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 system office; the Board of Trustees; and any other individuals, including students, authorized to travel or be reimbursed for allowable expenses in conducting authorized Minnesota State Colleges and Universities business. System employees, trustees, 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 eligible for reimbursement 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 system office; Board of Trustees; and any other individuals, including students, authorized to travel.

Part 3. Prior Approval.

1. All in-state travel and the incurrence of related expenses must receive oral 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. Written authorizations are retained locally for audit purposes.
2. Travel may be authorized travel when it can be reasonably determined that:
 - a. 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;
 - b. 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
 - c. 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.
3. Exception. Travel that has not received prior authorization is allowed only in emergency situations.

Part 4. 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 his or her attendance; and
- such expenses are provided for in collective bargaining agreements or compensation plans.

A spouse or other individual may accompany a traveler, including students, on a business trip at the traveler's expense. However, personal guests, including spouses, are not allowed to travel in a state-owned, rented, or leased vehicle.

Part 5. Maximum Use of Financial Resources. Travel costs should take into consideration any financial decisions made such as:

- Traveler leaving a day early if a lower airfare is available and the airfare offsets costs of additional hotel or food.
- Traveler staying over a weekend at the traveler's own expense to obtain lower airfare. Additional expenses may be paid related to the reduced airfare providing the expenses 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 Minnesota Statutes section 43A.38, Code of Ethics for Employees in the Executive Branch, and Minnesota Statutes section 10A.071, Certain Gifts by Lobbyists and Principals Prohibited. If a traveler is reimbursed by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities for this travel and is also reimbursed for the same travel expense by an outside organization, the traveler must endorse the outside reimbursement check over to the college, university, or system office. 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 travel by commercial airliner. 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.

Part 6. Travel Arrangements. Whenever feasible, travel arrangements must be made through the travel agency designated by the college, university, or system office. Use of the state's preferred vendors or targeted group and economically disadvantaged vendors is encouraged.

Subpart A. Fares.

1. **Lowest Fare.** Inquiries on fares and reservations should be made early enough to take advantage of advance purchase discounts.
2. **Travel Insurance.** Travel insurance coverage purchased by employees is not a reimbursable expense.
3. **Upgrades.** Upgrades at the expense of the system 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.
4. **Use of Personal Aircraft.** Travel in personal aircraft may be authorized by the board chair for the Board Trustees; by the chancellor for system office staff; and by the college or university president for the respective college or university staff, when it is deemed in the best interest of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. In such cases, mileage reimbursement 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.
 5. **Baggage.**
 - a. **Checked Baggage Fee.** A traveler will be reimbursed for reasonable checked baggage fees to and from the traveler's flight destination.
 - b. **Excess Baggage Fee.** An excess baggage fee is a fee for baggage deemed by the airline to be overweight or oversized. A traveler will be reimbursed for excess baggage charges only to the extent the traveler is required to have on hand equipment, books, reports, etc., which exceed the normal weight limitations.
 - c. **Lost Baggage.** Personal items lost while traveling on authorized business are not a reimbursable expense.

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 system office. 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, rented or leased vehicles are to be used for official state business only. A driver shall have a valid state 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, System Guideline 5.19.3.1 Driver's License Record Check, and Consent Form - Vehicle Use Agreement and Consent to Obtain Driving Record(s).

Authorized drivers are:

- state employees;
- contractor's employees or independent contractors, if authorization to drive a state vehicle is specifically mentioned in the applicable contract;
- students who have been given permission by college or university administration;
- an individual assisting an employee with a disability, if approved by the employee's supervisor; and
- an individual assisting a student with a disability, if approved by the college or university administration.

Only authorized persons are permitted to ride in state vehicles. Personal guests not on state business are not allowed in state vehicles. Authorized persons include:

- state employees;
- other persons participating in related state programs;
- volunteers as provided in System Procedure 4.0.1;
- an individual assisting an employee with a disability, if approved by the employee's supervisor; and
- an individual assisting a student with a disability, if approved by the college or university administration.

Subpart D. Personal Vehicle Usage. A traveler may use the traveler's 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 Business/Travel Expenses.

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, Employee Business/Travel Expenses.

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 (taxi, 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:

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

When rental vehicles are used for travel within the United States, the traveler is expected to decline rental vehicle insurance because the State of Minnesota 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 7. Airline Frequent Flyer Program. Minnesota Statutes §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. When using state funds, travelers who frequently fly and have airline frequent flyer programs for their personal travel shall obtain separate airline frequent flyer program numbers to record and report receipt of credits or other

benefits. 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 8. Travel Advances. The use of state purchasing cards for authorized business expenses is strongly encouraged. An authorized card may be used for all travel-related expenses of the cardholder except food, beverages and as otherwise provided in System Procedure 7.3.3, Purchasing Cards, Part 6. A traveler may be issued a travel advance subject to minimum amounts determined by the applicable bargaining agreement or compensation plan. The amount of the advance should not include any expense that will be directly billed. Advances should be requested a minimum of 14 days before departure using the Employee Expense Report. A traveler may not have more than one outstanding travel advance. 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 from the employee's paycheck in their entirety in accordance with appropriate payroll deduction procedures.

Part 9. Reimbursement of Travel Expenses. Review of expenses by the traveler's supervisor or manager is the primary control in preventing duplicate expense payments.

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. Itemized receipts are required for all expenses except meals, baggage handling, and parking meters or as required in collective bargaining agreements or compensation plans. Examples of acceptable forms of receipts include, but are not limited to: receipts delivered to the employee electronically, copies, scans, faxes, or original paper receipts. Canceled checks and copies of credit card bills do not substitute for receipts. A traveler may be allowed to file an affidavit in lieu of a receipt if a receipt is not obtained.

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

1. **Alcoholic beverages.** Under no circumstances will travelers be reimbursed for alcoholic beverages.

2. **Parking.** If a traveler who normally does not drive to work drives a personal vehicle to work because the traveler will use the vehicle for official business during the day, the traveler is NOT entitled to parking reimbursement at the work location.
3. **Examples** of miscellaneous expenses for which travelers will NOT normally be reimbursed:
 - Annual fees or interest for personal credit cards;
 - Late payment fees or interest on state-issued purchasing 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 recreation costs, including movies;
 - "No-show" charges;
 - Optional travel or baggage insurance;
 - Traffic or parking tickets; and
 - Incorrect or incomplete expense reports.

Part 10. International Travel.

Subpart A. Definitions.

1. International travel means travel to all destinations outside the United States or its territories.
2. System-related travel means international travel by an employee, trustee, student, volunteer, or other participant for business purposes or in a program sponsored by or under the direction of the system, or its colleges, universities or system office.
3. Travel warning means a travel warning, alert, or equivalent determination by the United States Secretary of State.

Subpart B. Authorization and Approval.

Presidents and system office employees. All international travel by presidents and system office employees must receive written approval by the chancellor or designee prior to the proposed travel.

College and university employees. All international travel by college or university employees must receive written approval by the college or university president prior to the proposed travel.

Student, volunteer or other participants must receive written approval by the organizing official, either the college or university president or the chancellor or his/her designee prior to the proposed travel.

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, subject to reasonableness determinations, 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; and
6. Miscellaneous expenses incurred with travel such as baggage handling and parking fees.

Receipts for expenses should be attached to the employee's 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 to Countries Under Travel Warnings Generally Prohibited.

No system-related travel may be made to countries or areas under a U.S. Department of State travel warning unless prior approval has been obtained in writing from the chancellor or designee. (See travel warning information at <http://www.travel.state.gov>.) Such prior approval will be granted only in limited circumstances and will consider:

1. The academic, professional development or business purpose of the travel and the identity of the foreign travel host or sponsor, if any;
2. The benefits of the travel to the system and the participants and the importance of the trip to the mission of the college, university or system;
3. Whether the objectives of the proposed travel could be accomplished in an alternative location that is not subject to a travel warning;
4. The political, physical, security and travel conditions in the country or region in which travel will occur, and the ability to evacuate system travelers if necessary;
5. The proximity of the proposed travel to a location identified by the Department of State as a safety concern;
6. The manageability of legal risk to the system; and
7. Any other factors identified by the chancellor or designee.

System participants, or if a minor the parent or guardian, must sign a written release acknowledging the travel warning.

Subpart E. Ongoing Monitoring of Health and Safety Conditions.

1. Participants in system-related travel are responsible to stay informed about U.S. Department of State and government health organization travel warnings and other indicators of health or safety risks in the country, region or area where international travel is planned or occurring.
2. System employees who are organizing or leading study abroad travel must regularly monitor U.S. Department of State travel safety information for the proposed travel destination(s) up to the date of departure and immediately inform the appropriate campus or system office administrators of the issuance or modification of a travel warning for the destination.

Subpart F. Suspending International Travel. The chancellor or designee or the sponsoring college or university president may suspend system-related international travel at any time, including while it is in progress, if significant health or safety concerns are raised by any source,

including the U.S. Department of State, travel warnings from government health organizations, national disasters, on-site staff officials or other indicators of potential health or safety threats. If such concerns are raised, the factors described above shall be considered in deciding whether to suspend the travel.

Subpart G. Individual Student Action. A student who participates in an education abroad opportunity without prior college or university approval in a country or region subject to a travel warning must take a leave of absence from the college or university and cannot be registered for any system credits during this period. Any student who chooses to participate in a program in a country, region or area where the system has suspended its programs does so voluntarily and is acting outside the control and responsibility of the system. Students on leave of absence from a system college or university are not eligible for financial aid from the system.

Subpart H. Travel Vaccination Requirements. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has travel vaccination requirements, food and water precautions and other pertinent information at the following Internet address:
<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/content/vaccinations.aspx>, Travelers' Health, Vaccinations. International travelers are responsible to consult this site prior to undertaking international travel.

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

Subpart J. 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; or
- 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 11. Responsibility and Accountability. The traveler is responsible for complying with state statutes, laws, regulations, and policies; Minnesota State Colleges and Universities travel policy and procedures; the traveler's respective bargaining agreement or compensation plan; and federal laws and IRS guidelines. The traveler is also responsible 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.

Date of Implementation: 07/01/98,

Date of Adoption: 07/01/98,

Date and Subject of Revision:

8/26/13 - Amended Part 9, to emphasis that the primary control in preventing duplicate expense reports is supervisory review. Further amended Part 9, Subpart B to align with recent amendments to Minnesota Management and Budget's policies and procedures regarding employee travel expense receipts.

1/25/12 - The Chancellor amends all current system procedures effective February 15, 2012, to change the term "Office of the Chancellor" to "system office" or similar term reflecting the grammatical context of the sentence.

1/25/11 - Technical changes have been made to the procedure. The International travel section has been expanded to address travel to countries or regions under travel warnings.

10/04/10 - Defines when fees for more than one piece of baggage are reimbursable.

9/28/10 - Travelers will be reimbursed for checked baggage fees to and from traveler's flight destination.

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