

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FISCAL DIVISION  
PROCEDURAL MEMORANDUM**

<b>GENERAL SUBJECT:</b> VDOT TRAVEL GUIDELINES	<b>NUMBER:</b> PM-FD-4
<b>SPECIFIC SUBJECT:</b> VDOT TRAVEL GUIDELINES	<b>DATE:</b> January 1, 2019
	<b>SUPERCEDES:</b> ALL PREVIOUS VERSIONS FOR TRAVEL BEFORE January 1 , 2019
<b>APPROVED:</b>  <i>Signed approval on file</i>	<b>JANICE LONG CONTROLLER</b>

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

**January 1, 2019**



## New Personal Mileage Reimbursement rate effective January 1, 2019

## New lodging rate effective October 1, 2018

### POLICY

All Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) employees who travel on State business must conform to these policies and procedures. Travel costs should be limited to only those expenses that are necessary for providing essential services to the Commonwealth's citizens. When planning travel and incurring travel expenses, economy, prudence and necessity should be our primary concern.

For **business** travel within the state that conforms to the state rates and is below the thresholds addressed under 'TRAVEL PLANNING', the responsible District or Division leader can approve the business travel.

VDOT's Controller or designee must approve any exceptions to these policies and procedures. Some exceptions may require additional approval of the Commissioner's Office and/or State Comptroller.

### DEFINITIONS

**Base Point:** Place, office or building where traveler works on a regular basis. Employees are limited to one base point.

**Commuting Distance:** Round trip distance traveled routinely by employees between their residence and base point.

**Incidental Expense:** Service fees, tips, and transportation between lodging and meals.

**International Travel:** Travel to areas outside the 48 contiguous states.

**M&IE:** Meals and Incidental Expenses

**Official Station:** Area within 25 miles of employee's base point.

**Receipts:** Refers to ORIGINAL unless otherwise indicated.

**Travel Status:** Travel outside an employee's official station, unless part of the employee's regular routine duties.

**Emergency:** A sudden, unexpected, or unpredictable occurrence; or an event involving clear and imminent danger; or when 24-hour operations begin.

## INTRODUCTION

VDOT will reimburse individuals traveling on official State business for reasonable and necessary expenses for employee's NON-ROUTINE travel at state rates, as applicable. These expenses are subject to public review and should be reasonable in appearance as well as fact. Prudent judgment is expected of employees making travel arrangements and expenditures.

All exceptions to this policy require approval of VDOT's Controller or designee.

## TRAVEL PLANNING

**Prior approval from VDOT management must be documented (generally via email) in advance of the travel dates for the following:**

- Any proposed overnight travel in which the total cost is expected to exceed \$500.
- Out of state travel
- International travel
- Meals and/or Lodging exceeding guidelines

All known costs associated with the trip, such as lodging, transportation, meals, air fare, registration and any other travel costs or fees, including those that are direct billed, must be included and itemized in the documentation of approval. *Approval should be obtained at least 5 working days prior to the travel date and attached to the travel reimbursement request.*

**Advance approval by VDOT management is required and must be documented (generally via email) for any proposed overnight travel in which the total cost is expected to exceed \$500.**

**Appropriate management includes:**

- Area Headquarters and Residency Staff – Assistant Residency Administrator level or higher
- District staff – District Section Head level or higher
- Division staff – Assistant Division Administrator level or higher

**Note: An employee in a position that requires frequent, similar travel to perform their job duties is exempt from this requirement. Written approval from the division/district administrator and CFO stating that an estimate is unnecessary for a particular employee must be kept on file in lieu of individual emails for each trip.**

**Advance approval by the Chief Deputy Commissioner is required for:**

- International travel

This approval must be documented (generally via email) and attached with the travel reimbursement documents. Include the date of the Chief Deputy Commissioner's approval in the comments field in Cardinal.

**Advance approval by the Chief Financial Officer is required for:**

- Out-of-state travel (except D.C.) regardless of the funding source

This approval must be documented (generally via email) and attached with the travel reimbursement documents. Include the date of the Chief Financial Officer's approval in the comments field in Cardinal.

- Meals and/or lodging exceeding the travel guidelines (see section titled "Lodging, Meals & Incidental Expenses Reimbursement Rates")

- Travelers must submit cost comparisons as part of their justification. Submit name and addresses of hotels used for alternate cost comparisons justifying the exception. Travelers and their supervisors are responsible for exercising good judgment and ensuring that costs are reasonable in appearance as well as in fact.
- The justification for the additional amount must be entered in the comments field on the expense report page in Cardinal. Any additional information that cannot fit in that field can be submitted to the CFO via email.
- Meals and/or lodging exceeding the travel guidelines will automatically route in Cardinal to the employee's Directorate Chief and then to the Chief Financial Officer for approval.
- The Chief Financial Officer will deny any Travel Request not received (in advance OR that does not adequately justify the costs).

**Please Note:** lodging rates that exceed the guidelines by more than 150% require Chief Financial Officer and DOA approval BEFORE the trip. Additionally, the Cardinal system will automatically route the reimbursement to the Chief Financial Officer for payment approval. If the lodging rate is not approved in advance, the traveler is responsible for charges in excess of the allowable amount

**Advance approval by the Chief Financial Officer is also required for:**

- Lodging other than hotels and motels (e.g. apartments). Submit cost comparison statement for the total cost using alternate accommodation including length of contract (See Temporary Transfer procedures for forms and guidance.).

## TRAINING

### Training Funded Through the Statewide Learning Plan and Budget

Beginning July 1, 2016, requests for attendance at Training events that are funded through the Statewide Learning Plan and Budget, whether or not travel is involved, are to be made through VDOT's Human Resources Division prior to the event. The Human Resources Division will secure appropriate management approvals and once approved the applicable notifications will be issued by the Human Resources Division. Approval notifications from the Human Resources Division must be attached **electronically in pdf format** to the travel reimbursement request along with all other required documentation (hotel bills, etc.) in order for the district accounting/Fiscal office to process payment.

## NON-VDOT SPONSORED CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, and WORKSHOPS

In planning meetings or conferences, first preferences should be given to state-owned facilities.

Beginning July 1, 2016, **advance** approval from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is required via e-mail, for overnight travel attendance and reimbursement, if more than three VDOT attendees, at non-VDOT sponsored Conferences, Seminars and Workshops, and any Training NOT funded by the Statewide Learning Plan and Budget by Human Resources Division. The e-mail approval from the CFO must be attached with the Travel Expense Report. Sponsoring divisions or districts must determine the number and names of VDOT employees attending from all work units and if more than three, must provide the information via email to the Chief Financial Officer for approval in advance of the event. Only those approved by the Chief Financial Officer will be given authorization for travel and travel reimbursement.

Day travel by more than three VDOT employees to non-VDOT sponsored conferences, seminars and workshops must be approved by the District/Division Administrator or designee.

Please see the [Job Aid for Advance Approval by Chief Financial Officer \(CFO\) for Non-VDOT Sponsored Conferences, Seminars and Workshops when more than Three VDOT Employees are attending.](#)

## TRAVEL CHARGE CARD

Travel charge cards are available for State employees who travel overnight at least twice a year on State business.

Travel cards are for reimbursable travel expenses and also for any personal expenses not easily separated from business expenses. Cardholders use cards to obtain travel advances from automatic teller machines (ATM's). They may also charge lodging, meals, or other travel expenses. Charge card bills are sent to the employee, who is responsible for payment, including any late charges for payments more than 60 days overdue.

Monthly travel card statements are provided to Division and District Administrators. Division and District Administrators are responsible for ensuring that travel card usage complies with Fiscal Division guidelines. That review should provide reasonable assurance that cash advances and charges are legitimate travel expenses.

Travel Charge Cards may be obtained from Fiscal Division --- 804-371-8874.

## TEMPORARY TRAVEL ADVANCES

Travel advances are available for employees who rarely travel. Advances are issued for expenses that the employee will be required to pay out of pocket. Travel advances must be repaid by the employee within 30 days of the processing of the travel reimbursement voucher.

Employees are also eligible for one travel advance, when their Charge cards have been revoked due to non-use. It is the employee's responsibility to have the card re-activated. If an employee's travel card is revoked due to delinquent or non-payment, s/he is not eligible for a travel advance.

**Travel Advances must be entered into and approved in CARDINAL and paperwork submitted to district accounting office /Fiscal office at least 5 workdays prior to the date of travel** or an advance may not be processed. Any overage should be returned to the District Accounting (or Central Office Cash Receipts Section) within 5 workdays of return. Please make checks payable to the Treasurer of Virginia.

## LODGING

Lodging is reimbursed when employees travel outside their official station.

Lodging guidelines EXCLUDE taxes and surcharges. Taxes and surcharges are reimbursable.

However, guidelines do INCLUDE internet service fees charged when lodging is booked on-line through an internet service. This fee should be added to the room rate. If booking more than one night, the service fee should be divided by the number of nights, and an equal share added to each

nightly rate. The room rate plus the service fee are considered lodging expense and should not exceed the allowable lodging rates.

The Small Purchase Charge Card may be used to “hold” a reservation only. Payment for lodging is prohibited, unless the hotel sends a “direct bill” to the agency and is authorized through Administrative Services Division (for Central Office Divisions) or the District Program Administrator.

### **LODGING, MEALS & INCIDENTAL EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT RATES**

All lodging rates are governed by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) rates for in-state and out-of-state travel. The traveler must search for the travel destination using the search criteria on the website:

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

For an additional look up option, Cardinal query V\_AP\_EX\_TRAVEL\_RATES list the GSA rates. Open the query into an Excel spreadsheet and use the “Find” feature for the travel destination.

**\*\*NOTE: Footnotes to the GSA rates table does NOT apply to state policy. The traveler’s reimbursement is based on the city or county in which the hotel is physically located.**

**The search may return more than one possible rate for the location entered. If the location is not listed in the GSA table itself, the standard rate applies.**

**The GSA table does not list a separate standard rate for in-state and out-of-state; however; Cardinal still list them separately with different rates (see chart below). Use the rate listed in Cardinal for in-state and out-of-state locations that are not listed in the GSA table.**

<b>Standard Rates</b>	<b>Lodging</b>	<b>Meals &amp; IE</b>
In-state (INST)*	\$94	\$55
Out-of-state (OUTOS)*	\$94	\$55

\*Cardinal’s abbreviations for in-state and out-of-state listed in the location drop down box.

Lodging reservations may be made via the internet, using service providers such as Priceline.com, Expedia.com, Orbitz.com, Travelocity.com, etc. Please note the sum of the service provider fees plus the room rate may not exceed the lodging rates.

### **MEAL AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSES (M&IE)**

Meals and certain incidental travel expenses are reimbursable for overnight business travel, but may not be direct billed. These rates are all inclusive (taxes, tips, etc.). Incidental expenses include bellhop/waiter tips, valet, personal telephone calls, laundry and transportation between lodging and meals, etc.

All M&IE Rates are governed by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) rates located at the link below. These rates should also be used to determine the maximum meal reimbursement amounts for official business meals and/or the M&IE reduction.

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/101518>



## OTHER MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

### Other reimbursable travel expenses include:

- Business Telephone Calls (This includes personal cell phone charges that result from business calls--i.e. the cost of the business calls or the cost of other calls that result from exceeding “free minutes” because of business calls.)
- Internet Access, Hotel Business Center Charges
- Facsimiles
- Taxes, fees, and surcharges paid by the traveler for lodging
- Tolls, Parking Fees – require an original receipt if greater than \$75.00 attached electronically in pdf format to the Cardinal Expense Report

These expenses and any other unusual expenses require documented justification to be reimbursed.

### Disallowed expenses include:

- Lost or stolen articles
- Alcoholic beverages
- Damage to personal vehicles or other items
- Services to gain entry to a locked vehicle
- Movie rentals charged to hotel bills
- Any expenses related to personal negligence (e.g. non-canceled reservation, fines, etc.)
- Entertainment expenses
- Travel Insurance (Personal injury/loss, trip cancellation etc.).
- Towing charges
- Expenses for children, spouses, and companions

The above list is not inclusive. Employees and supervisors should use prudent judgment as expenses are subject to public review and should be reasonable in appearance as well as fact.

## TRAVEL CREDITS

The traveler must report any travel credits, reduced rates, or free services to the Department and deduct them from expenses claimed.

## EXCEPTIONS FOR MEAL REIMBURSEMENT

Generally, meals not requiring an overnight stay are not reimbursable. There are 3 exceptions - Business Meals, Overtime Meals, and Emergency Meals:

### Business Meals require:

- Substantive and bona fide business discussion (include description or topic of discussion and/or agenda)
- Identify all persons involved in the meal, include Itemized Receipt(s)
- Prior written approval of Division/District Administrator or Assistant District Administration for Business with written delegation authority from District Administration.

Business meals are reimbursed for actual expenses (tips and delivery), up to amount allowed by the M&IE Rates.

The purchase of all food and meals are exempt from Virginia retail sales and use tax.

All food purchases, with the exception of recognition meals (please refer to Human Resources policies and procedures for Recognition Programs) require the same approval and supporting documentation as business meals.

### **Overtime and Emergency Meals Allowances: Updated July 29, 2014**

Overtime and Emergency meal allowances paid are reportable taxable income as per IRS guidelines effective for the payments beginning in calendar year 2014. Emergency meal allowances will be reimbursed quarterly through payroll. Overtime meal allowances will also be processed through payroll as the request is received from the employee. Overtime and emergency meal allowances will not be processed through Travel and Expense Module and an expense report is not required to be entered in Cardinal. For emergency/overtime meal allowances eligibility requirements and procedures, please refer to **FD-2015-1 Emergency/Overtime Meal Allowances** procedures located on Inside VDOT – Fiscal Page.

### **MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES:**

During emergency operations, VDOT will allow staff on duty to make necessary personal phone calls from the closest VDOT facility. Phone calls should be reasonable in length and frequency. A telephone log for each date and phone number must be provided by VDOT at the facility and completed by employees placing calls:

Employee Name  
Phone Number called  
Time of day

When traveling overnight, the employee may also be reimbursed for up to 10 additional minutes per day for evening calls, when s/he provides the original telephone bill.

## **PERSONAL VEHICLE USE**

**The use of state-owned vehicles for travel is strongly encouraged as the first choice for agency travel.**

Personal mileage reimbursement rates are set in the current Appropriation Act (Section 4 – 5.04f). This mileage rate can be viewed on the IRS Site: [2019 Standard Mileage Rates for Business, Medical and Moving Announced](#).

**Effective January 1, 2019**, the current rate for the first 15,000 miles driven in each fiscal year for an employee to perform official job duties is as follows:

- The traveler is reimbursed at the rate of **\$0.58** cents per mile when
  1. Travel is less than 200 miles per day\* **OR**
  2. A state-owned vehicle/OFMS rental is unavailable, **OR**
  3. When the use of a personally owned vehicle is cost-beneficial to the agency. The cost/benefit analysis must be attached to the employee's expense report. Please refer to the Department of General Services - Office of Fleet Management Services Trip Calculator. Link: [DGS Trip Calculator](#).

Note: District/Division Administrators may require additional approval to reimburse at the higher rate.

- The traveler is reimbursed \$ **0.246** cents per mile when
  - travel is 200 miles or more per day\* **AND**
  - a state-owned vehicle/OFMS rental was available **OR**

- Cost benefit analysis does not support personal mileages as cost beneficial to the agency, or the District/Division Administrator or designee does not certify in an attachment to the expense report that the personal vehicle use was cost beneficial to VDOT

\*For overnight travel, consider the average daily mileage over the period the State/OFMS rental vehicle would otherwise be needed.

Employees are eligible for reimbursement of non-commuting mileage when using personal vehicles for official State business. “Non-commuting” mileage is mileage in excess of the employee’s normal commute from home to official work station.

Reimbursement rates are reduced to \$0.13 per mile for travel in excess of 15,000 miles per fiscal year.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

### **Air/Rail Travel**

Documents that validate the mode and class of travel including boarding pass are required for all air and rail reimbursements made directly to the employee.

Employees should obtain tourist/economy fares for air travel. Exceptions may be approved for business class if:

#### **AIR**

- Business class is no more than the lowest available tourist/economy fare
- The employee pays the difference
- Transoceanic, intercontinental trips of more than 8 hours
- Travel to Western Europe when business is conducted within 3 hours of landing.

#### **RAIL**

- When it does not cost more than the lowest available tourist/economy fare (comparison must be attached to travel voucher), or
- When reserved economy seats are not offered on the route, or
- If the traveler pays the difference.

All exceptions require documentation. First class air or rail travel will not be reimbursed.

Air and Rail tickets may be purchased via the Small Purchase Charge Card or Travel charge card. If SPCC is used, arrangements for payment with the card shall be authorized through Administrative Services Division (for Central Office Divisions) or the District Program Administrator, including documentation supporting the necessary approvals for the ticket purchase.

### **Car Rental (Including Enterprise)**

The traveler should select the most economical agency and type of car available. When renting through Enterprise via the Statewide Enterprise contract, the traveler should return receipts for gas and car rentals to the person responsible for preparing vouchers for car rentals and gas cards. The person preparing the voucher should verify the detail receipts against the summary billings received from Enterprise / Mansfield prior to payment. Any discrepancies (missing receipts, charges for tax, etc.) should be reviewed with the traveler and/or the vendor prior to payment.

## Car Rental Insurance

If the traveler is:

State employee in the U.S.

Decline – covered by State

Non-state employee

Accept – reimbursable expense

Travelers must refuel the rental vehicle before returning it to the rental contractor, unless an exception is noted. Refueling is reimbursable with receipt. In no instance should the traveler enter into a “Fuel Agreement” or pay for fuel at the time of rental or before vehicle is used.

## TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Beginning August 1, 2017, VDOT Expense Reports for travel and non-travel will be paperless. The Expense Report in the Cardinal system must be completed and certified by the employee and approved in the Cardinal system by the supervisor for all travel and non-travel cost reimbursements. Any required supporting documentation (hotel bills, receipts, etc.) must be attached to the Expense Report in Cardinal in pdf format.

[Link to Paperless Travel Expense Report Guidance](#)

In those cases, in which the employee/traveler’s Expense Report is completed and submitted by another Cardinal user, the employee/traveler must provide a certification to the Cardinal user completing the report on the employee/traveler’s behalf. The employee/traveler may email the Cardinal user his/her certification of the expense for that specific Expense Report using the following language, which is to be electronically attached to the Expense Report in Cardinal.

**“I certify that the expenses provided and listed on the expense report were incurred by me on official business of the Commonwealth of Virginia and include only such expenses necessary in the conduct of that business.”**

Alternatively, a paper-signed certification statement made by the employee/traveler with above language for the specific Expense Report may be scanned to pdf and attached to the Expense Report in Cardinal.

**If neither the employee nor supervisor has access to Cardinal**, a paper certification may be used for certification by the employee and approval by the supervisor, and scanned as an attachment in Cardinal.

[Link to Employee Business Expense Certification](#)

Exception of certification – If the supporting documentation for an expense already has the signature of the employee, for example, Safety Shoe and Tuition Reimbursement form, the certification statement is not required.

### Notes:

- Ensure all supporting documentations are attached as pdf format in Expense Report in Cardinal before submitting the Expense Report.
- Once the employee’s Expense Report is submitted in Cardinal by the employee or another Cardinal user on behalf of the employee, it is very important to notify the employee’s supervisor for approval, as there is no automatic notification to the supervisor in Cardinal.

**Information required for travel expense reimbursement includes:**

- Reason for travel (include the name of the meeting, conference, training, etc.)
- Pdf format itemized lodging receipts with \$0.00 balance
- For lodging obtained through internet providers, employee will provide pdf format of final page from internet site.
- Pdf receipts for meals costing \$75 or more
- Pdf registration receipts
- “For Hire Transportation” pdf receipts required when over \$75 (Taxi, shuttle vans) – tips are reimbursable up to 15% of the fare. Reimbursement for limousine or other forms of luxury transportation services are not allowed.
- Parking and toll original receipts in pdf format, with explanation, when over \$75
- Dates of departure and return
- Travel to location
- Work hours and overtime hours for overtime meals
- Mode of travel; if personal automobile was determined to be cost-beneficial, the reason must be stated in the Notes Section in CARDINAL
- Agenda for conferences and training
- Reason for business phone calls or facsimiles
- E-mail(s) in pdf format of prior approvals from the appropriate persons or Learning Center for conferences and lodging/meal rates over the per diem or international travel (See sections on Travel Planning and Conferences, Training, Seminars and Workshops)

This information should be attached to the Cardinal Expense Report , which must be certified by the employee and approved by the supervisor.

**If a traveler is not preparing his/her own Expense Report in Cardinal, the following must be provided to the Travel & Expense Coordinator to allow for accurate and timely submission of the Expense Report on their behalf:**

- Reason for travel (including of the meeting, conference, training, workshop,etc.)
- Dates of departure and return
- Location – City, State
- Agenda, if no agenda or email specify
- Itemized lodging receipts with \$0.00 balance
- For lodging obtained through internet providers, employee will provide pdf format of final page from internet site
- Meals – list all meals provided or indicate no meals provided
- Registration receipts
- “For Hire Transportation” pdf receipts required when over \$75 (Taxi, shuttle vans) – tips are reimbursable up to 15% of the fare. Reimbursement for limousine or other forms of luxury transportation services are not allowed.
- Parking and toll original receipts in pdf, with explanation, when over \$75
- Mode of travel; State vehicle or if personal automobile was determined to be cost-beneficial, the reason must be stated and normal daily commuting miles listed
- All required approvals – E mail(s) of prior approvals from the appropriate persons or Learning Center for conferences and lodging/meal rates over the per diem or international travel (See section on Travel Planning and Conferences, Training, Seminars and Workshops)
- Employee Business Expense Certification email or form for non-Cardinal users and those not submitting their own expense report in Cardinal.

## **REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS**

Reimbursement should be requested **within 30 working** days after the trip is completed. By **certifying** the Cardinal Expense Report, the traveler:

- Certifies that the information is correct and the items included are legitimate expenses necessary to conduct of State business
- Agrees to the deduction from salary of any advances not repaid within 60 days of issuance

By **approving** the Expense Report in Cardinal, the supervisor:

- Certifies that the travel was approved and necessary for conduct of State business
- Agrees to ensure deduction from employee pay of advance not paid within 60 days of issuance

Travel and non-travel expense reimbursements made to employees from the Expense Module in the Cardinal system are deposited to the same bank account as the employee's payroll direct deposit payments. These payments are reflected in the payroll direct deposit account as soon as reimbursements are fully approved in the Cardinal system. **If employee received paycheck by Paycard, a check will be issued and mailed to employee's home address.**

**PLEASE NOTE: Both the employee and the supervisor are subject to Standards of Conduct and will be disciplined accordingly if they knowingly misrepresent expenditures in order to obtain reimbursement.**