

OLYMPIC ESD 114 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE STAFF TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT

6213P

This administrative procedure establishes Olympic Educational Service District 114 (OESD) practices for staff travel and travel reimbursement. OESD staff are subject to OESD Board Policy 6214 – Staff Travel, and the Washington State travel regulations contained in Chapter 10 of the State Administrative & Accounting Manual (SAAM).

Travel is conducted consistent with the following travel regulations and in a manner that is cost efficient to OESD.

- Travel costs are to be directly work related, necessary for OESD business, and obtained at the most economical price.
- Alternatives to travel such as teleconferencing, video conferencing and less expensive methods of travel such as car-pooling, joint travel arrangements with other agencies, and restricting the number of staff traveling should be considered.
- Combined business and personal travel must not result in additional cost to OESD.
- Excessive or unnecessary expenses will not be approved or reimbursed.
- The number of employees attending a conference, convention, meeting or training session should be limited to the minimum necessary.

1. TRAVEL REQUESTS AND APPROVAL OF TRAVEL

All travel for official OESD business must be approved in advance.

Travel Request forms will include the estimated cost of the trip and will be approved by the Supervisor before being sent to the Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent for approval. Travel Request Forms are available on the OESD Intranet website.

Travel Requests are required for:

- Travel Out-of-State – All travel outside the state of Washington requires prior approval of a Travel Request Form by the Superintendent.
- Travel Outside of OESD Boundaries – All travel outside OESD boundaries for conferences requires prior approval of a Travel Request Form by the Assistant Superintendent.
- Travel for Conference and Workshops in which a registration fee is paid.

Travel Request Forms are not required, but Supervisor approval is required for:

- Travel within OESD Boundaries – All travel for job related meetings.
- Travel by Staff Contracted for Temporary Services – Travel for staff employed via the Employment Contract for Temporary Services is approved when the Superintendent signs the contract.
- Alteration of travel plans and itineraries which result in extra travel expenses due to emergencies or severe inclement weather must have prior approval by the employee's Supervisor. No reimbursement is allowed for additional travel expense that result from travel for the convenience of the employee.

2. TRAVEL ADVANCES

Travel advances in the amount of \$50.00 or more are permitted to defray employees' anticipated

reimbursable expenses for lodging, meals and other expenses (except mileage) while on official OESD business. The request for travel advance is included in the Travel Request Form and must be received in the Business Office at least three weeks prior to the date the advance is needed and will be deposited via ACH to the employee's financial institution. Advance checks will be issued one day prior to the trip if a travel request.

Unexpended travel advance must be returned on or before the 10th day following the travel period. Funds are considered taxable income per IRS regulations if not accounted for within 120 days of conclusion of travel.

To protect OESD from any losses resulting from advances made, OESD shall have a prior lien against and a right to withhold all amounts payable or to become payable by OESD to the employee up to the amount of the advances, until repayment is made.

3. TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT FORM

Travel reimbursement forms are available on the OESD intranet. Reimbursement forms must be signed by the employee, the Supervisor and submitted to the Business Office for processing by the 15th of the month and no later than 60 days of travel. Travel claims should reflect travel from the beginning of the month to the end of the same month and be completed in detail including departure dates and times, purpose of trip, mileage, meal and lodging costs. Do not submit combined months.

4. LODGING

Out of state lodging and per diem rates are located at <http://www.gsa.gov/travel.htm>. Select US Per Diem Rates by Location (Continental USA) to view rates for the contiguous states. Taxes may be added to the lodging rates shown in these tables.

An employee will be reimbursed for lodging expenses when the employees is required to stay overnight more than fifty (50) miles beyond the employee's resident or official work station, whichever is closer. Lodging arrangements should be made in advance by issuing a purchase order or by OESD department purchasing card.

Bed and Breakfasts (B & B's) lodging is acceptable. The lodging rate includes breakfast; therefore, a breakfast meal allowance would not be claimed as a separate expense.

When an employee uses a travel trailer or camper in lieu of commercial lodging facilities for his/her own convenience, he/she shall be reimbursed for the actual space rental cost, as evidenced by a receipt, up to a daily maximum of \$40.00. The employee will not be reimbursed for the rental or lease cost of the travel trailer or camper.

When a purchase order or credit card cannot be used, the lodging will have to be paid by the employee and claimed for reimbursement. Employees have the option of requesting a travel advance that includes the cost of lodging or paying the cost personally.

The reimbursement for lodging shall not exceed the maximum allowable per diem rate for lodging (plus tax) for the location. Tipping will not be reimbursed on lodging expenses. Original receipts are required for all lodging expenses.

Employees must always request government rates for lodging.

Lodging Exceptions

In certain instances, lodging expenses more than the State allowed rate may be authorized. When lodging expenses are more than State allowed rates, an Exceptions to the Maximum Lodging Amount from should be approved in advance of the travel.

If lodging costs exceed the maximum lodging allowance for a specific locality, actual lodging costs are authorized not to exceed 150% of the applicable maximum per diem amount for the location plus applicable meal rates if any of the following conditions exist:

- A. Costs in the area have escalated for a brief period of time either during special events or disasters;
- B. Lodging accommodations in the area are not available at or below the maximum lodging amount, and the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging at a more distant site are consumed by an increase in transportation and other costs;
- C. An employee attends a meeting, conference, convention, or training where the employee is expected to have business interaction with other participants in addition to scheduled events, and maximum benefit will be achieved by authorizing the employee to stay at the lodging facility where the meeting, conference, convention, or training session is held;
- D. To comply with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, or when the health and safety of the traveler is at risk; or
- E. Meeting room facilities are necessary, and it is more economical for the employee to acquire special lodging accommodations such as a suite rather than to acquire a meeting room and a room for lodging.

If lodging costs exceed the Exception Lodging allowance for a specific locality, actual lodging costs may be authorized in excess of 150% of the applicable maximum per diem amount for the location when approved by the Assistant Superintendent if all three of the following conditions apply:

1. The employee is required to attend a meeting, conference, convention, or training session where the employee is expected to have a business interaction with other participants in addition to scheduled events; and
2. It is anticipated that maximum benefit will be achieved by authorizing the employee to stay at the lodging facilities where the meeting, conference, convention, or training session is held; and
3. The lowest available advertised lodging rate at the lodging facility exceeds 150% of the applicable maximum per diem amount for the location.

Documentation supporting the lodging rates is to be attached to the travel voucher or its file location referenced.

When any exception to the Maximum Allowable Lodging Amount is used, the employee must select the most economical room available under the circumstances. In addition, the employee must complete a Lodging Exception Form providing an explanation on why an exception to the maximum lodging amount is necessary and attach it to the related purchase order and travel vouchers.

If an employee becomes ill or is injured while on travel status, meals and lodging costs will continue until the employee returns to the assignment, to his/her official workstation or to his/her place of residence.

Members of the Board of Directors' lodging expenses are reimbursed per RCW 28A.310.16.

5. MEALS

The cost of certain meals incurred by employees and others while in the conduct of official OESD business are reimbursable.

- A. Meal expenses for non-overnight travel assignments may be reimbursed when the following two criteria are met:
1. Eleven Hour Rule – A traveler may be reimbursed for meal expenses when the traveler has been in travel status for at least eleven hours.
 2. In travel status during the entire meal period – travelers must be in travel status during the entire agency-determined meal period(s) in order to qualify to collect meal payments for meal(s). The traveler may not stop for a meal just to meet the eleven-hour rule.

Agency defined meal periods:

Breakfast	7 AM to 8 AM
Lunch	12 PM to 1 PM
Dinner	5 PM to 6 PM

Meals are reimbursed at actual cost including tip (maximum 15%) and sales tax or the state subsistence rate (Schedule A) for the location (whichever is less). Receipts for meals must be attached to the travel claim when the employee is not eligible to claim per diem.

Per the Internal Revenue Service, meals reimbursed to an employee are taxable unless the traveler was away from his/her home overnight or long enough to require substantial rest or sleep.

Reimbursement for subsistence is not authorized when an employee does not incur expenses for meals because they are furnished.

- B. The cost of meals incurred within the vicinity of an employee's official work station are non-reimbursable because ordinary meals are the responsibility of the employee.
- C. Reimbursement for alcoholic beverage expenses is prohibited.
- D. Members of the Board of Director's meal expenses are reimbursed per RCW 28A.310.160.
- E. **TIPPING**
Reimbursement of amounts paid for tipping is allowed when claiming actual meal expenditures, provided such expenditures do not exceed 15% of the cost of the meal or fare.

6. COFFEE AND LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AND MEALS FOR OESD SPONSORED MEETINGS AND TRAINING SESSIONS

- A. Coffee and Light Refreshments for Meetings and Training Sessions
Light refreshments such as muffins, pastries, fruit, coffee and tea can be provided at OESD sponsored meetings and training sessions without charging participants. The quantities purchased should match the attendance as closely as possible.
- B. Meals for Meetings, Conferences, and Training Sessions

Advisory Board Meetings

When an advisory board meets at the OESD and a meal is served, all participants should pay for their meal unless there is prior approval by the administrator to serve a meal at the meeting.

Training Sessions

When participants in an all-day training session are provided a meal and the cost of that meal is included their registration, it is appropriate for the OESD to pay for all the meals provided. OESD employees who are attending the session may also be provided a meal.

When meals are provided, meals should be purchased based upon the number of participants and the department should verify that their sign in sheet agrees with the registered participants and meals served.

7. USE OF MOTOR VEHICLES

- A. All employees who use their personal automobiles for OESD business must complete the Employee Use of Personal Vehicle form and provide it to the Human Resources Office.
- B. In accordance with the State of Washington Motor Vehicle Driver Requirements, employees are required to have a license that is recognized as valid under Washington State law and carry minimum auto liability insurance. The driver of the vehicle must have his/her license and proof of insurance in his/her possession while operating any vehicle for official OESD purposes.
- C. Employees shall not use hand-held wireless communication devices while operating a vehicle while on OESD business unless in hands-free mode. For further information see the State Motor Vehicle Driver Requirements 12.30 and RCW 46.61.667 and 668.
- D. Permanently assigned agency-owned vehicles may be used for official OESD business only. Any travel to and from the employee's residence to their official work station is considered a taxable fringe benefit for payroll purposes.
- E. Traffic accidents that occur while driving on official OESD business are to be reported by the driver within 24 hours to the Superintendent or designee and the proper law enforcement agency. An Employee Incident must be completed and provided to the OESD Worker's Compensation Trust. A formal accident report must also be completed and filed with the appropriate law enforcement agency within 24 hours of the incident. Traffic accidents occurring in a privately-owned vehicle are to be reported to the operator's own insurance carrier which will have primary coverage for any claims.
- F. Any citation issued to a driver while on official OESD business is the financial responsibility of the driver, not the OESD.

8. MILEAGE

Mileage will be reimbursed for personal vehicle use between the employee's official work station or official residence (whichever is closer) and the location of the official OESD business. If more than one employee is traveling in the same automobile on the same trip, only one employee will be eligible for reimbursement. The cost of the commute between the employee's official station and residence is not reimbursable. A mileage chart is available on the OESD Staff Intranet listing mileage to some locations in Washington State. Allowable reimbursement will be at a rate not to exceed the current mileage rate established by the Office of Financial Management (OFM 10.90.20).

9. WASHINGTON STATE FERRY FARES

Washington State Ferry fares incurred while on official OESD business may be charged to the OESD account with the State of Washington when an agency ticket is used. Tickets may be obtained by contacting the OESD Business Office. If not using a ticket obtained through OESD, then the traveler will pay out of pocket for the ticket and turn in the receipt with their travel claim for reimbursement.

10. WASHINGTON STATE BRIDGE TOLLS

A receipt for reimbursement is not needed if the traveler has a “Good to Go” transponder. This expense should be claimed on the travel expense claim and will be reimbursed at the “Good To Go” rate. If the traveler does not have a transponder then a receipt is required for reimbursement.

11. TRAVEL VIA COMMERCIAL AIRLINES

All travel by commercial airline shall be approved by the individual’s immediate Supervisor. Travel via commercial airlines will be at the most economical and lowest applicable fare not to exceed coach class or equivalent. Exceptions require approval of the Superintendent.

12. MISCELLANEOUS REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

Parking, taxi charges or ride share such as Uber or Lyft, including reasonable tip, ferry fares, bus fares, bridge tolls, room rentals for official OESD business, and OESD related convention/conference/meeting registration fees are reimbursable when on official OESD business. Receipts shall be provided when possible.

13. NON-REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

The following list includes, but is not limited to travel expenses that are considered personal and not essential to business travel:

- A. Medical and hospital costs for services.
- B. Costs of service calls for personal vehicles while on business when caused by negligence of the employee (i.e., locked out vehicle, ran out of gas, lights left on and battery is dead).
- C. Lodging laundry services, video rental, entertainment expenses, or similar expenses.
- D. Transportation costs to and from places of entertainment.
- E. Costs of personal trip insurance.

Reimbursement exceptions to any of the above circumstances must be approved by the Superintendent.

Copies of OESD travel forms are available on the OESD intranet. For additional information about travel regulations, consult the Business Office or the State Travel Regulations available in the Business Office or at the following website: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov>. Select Policies and Guidelines, then State Administration and Accounting Manual (SAAM).

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