

Chapter 19 – Non-State Employee Travel

Consultants and Contractors Travel

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References: [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Administration, Title 2 Sections 599.615 through 599.638.1](#), [California Department of Human Resources \(CalHR\) PML 2013-043](#), [PML 2015-041](#), and [PML 2016-020](#)

OVERVIEW

The information on this web site contains travel guidelines for consultants and contractors (non-state employees) doing business with Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

Reimbursement provisions are limited to the subsistence rates for excluded/non-represented employees. The guidelines outlined below reflect the most common expenses associated with travel. The department will reimburse non-state employee travel at the non-represented lodging and per diem rate unless otherwise identified under contract.

Questions regarding allowable expenses should be directed to the Caltrans contract manager.

No allowance or payment will be made for moving and relocation expenses. In addition, no allowance or payment will be made for any non-business-related expenses, which includes in-state, out-of-state and out-of-country travel, or when returning home during the course of an assignment.

SHORT-TERM TRAVEL

When the following conditions are met, short-term lodging and meals may be allowed if travel is:

- No more than 30 calendar days (not paid per diem days)
- At least 50 miles away from a consultant/contractor's headquarters and the permanent residence

Note: The consultant/contractor's return home for the weekends or non-business related travel, does not break up the continuity of the assignment.

Exceptions to these conditions must be approved by the Division of Accounting, Travel Policy Section, prior to travel. See [Exception Guidelines](#).

An itemized receipt is required for lodging reimbursement. The receipt must be pre-printed with the hotel name and address, include the consultant/contractor's name, and indicate charges as paid in full (zero balance).

SHORT-TERM LODGING RATES

Effective October 1, 2024, the State is adopting federal standard and non-standard rates at time of travel for receipted lodging that will align with the applicable standard and non-standard federal lodging rates, as follows:

- [GSA](#) (in-state and certain out-of-state locations): The continental United States and Washington, D.C. (CONUS)
- [DOD](#) (certain out-of-state locations): Non-foreign areas outside CONUS (Alaska, Hawaii, U.S. Territories and Possessions)
- [State Department](#) (out-of-country): Foreign areas

GSA FY 2025 Daily Lodging Rates for California as follows:

County	2024 Oct	Nov	Dec	2025 Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Standard Rate applies for all locations without specified rates	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110	\$110
Alameda	\$145	\$145	\$145	\$145	\$145	\$145	\$145	\$145	\$145	\$145	\$145	\$145
City Limits of Santa Monica	\$273	\$273	\$273	\$273	\$273	\$273	\$273	\$273	\$273	\$273	\$273	\$273
Contra Costa	\$147	\$147	\$147	\$147	\$147	\$147	\$147	\$147	\$147	\$147	\$147	\$147
El Dorado	\$141	\$141	\$247	\$247	\$247	\$247	\$143	\$143	\$171	\$171	\$171	\$141
Fresno	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129
Humboldt	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$125	\$172	\$172	\$172	\$125
Inyo/ NAWS China Lake	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142
Kern	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132
Los Angeles/ Orange/ Ventura/ Edwards AFB less the city of Santa Monica	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191
Madera	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135	\$135
Marin	\$153	\$153	\$153	\$153	\$153	\$153	\$153	\$153	\$175	\$175	\$175	\$175
Mariposa	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$203	\$203	\$203	\$203	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181	\$181

Mendocino	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129	\$129
Mono	\$139	\$139	\$195	\$195	\$195	\$195	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139
Monterey	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$191	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$279	\$279	\$191
Napa	\$246	\$246	\$172	\$172	\$246	\$246	\$246	\$246	\$246	\$246	\$246	\$246
Nevada	\$142	\$142	\$169	\$169	\$169	\$146	\$146	\$146	\$173	\$173	\$173	\$142
Placer	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131
Riverside	\$186	\$186	\$186	\$186	\$186	\$186	\$186	\$141	\$141	\$141	\$141	\$141
Sacramento	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150
San Bernardino	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$124	\$124
San Diego	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$199	\$237	\$237	\$199	\$199
San Francisco	\$272	\$272	\$272	\$259	\$259	\$259	\$259	\$259	\$259	\$259	\$259	\$272
San Joaquin	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132	\$132
San Luis Obispo	\$163	\$163	\$163	\$163	\$163	\$163	\$163	\$163	\$203	\$203	\$163	\$163
San Mateo	\$183	\$183	\$183	\$183	\$183	\$183	\$183	\$183	\$183	\$183	\$183	\$183
Santa Barbara	\$205	\$205	\$205	\$205	\$205	\$205	\$205	\$205	\$205	\$262	\$262	\$205
Santa Clara	\$192	\$192	\$192	\$192	\$192	\$192	\$192	\$192	\$192	\$192	\$192	\$192
Santa Cruz	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$176	\$176	\$176	\$139
Sonoma	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157	\$157
Tulare	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131	\$131
Yolo	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142	\$142

*Rate is for actual lodging expenses, supported by a receipt up to the amount listed, plus applicable taxes and fees based on the approved lodging rate or approved lodging exception rate.

SHORT-TERM MEAL, INCIDENTAL RATES AND REQUIREMENTS

Meals provided by the state when included in hotel expenses or conference fees, in transportation costs such as airline tickets, or otherwise provided shall not be

claimed for reimbursement. Snacks and continental breakfasts such as rolls, juice and coffee are not considered to be meals.

The term "incidental expenses" means fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff on ships. It does not include taxicab fares, lodging taxes, or the cost of telegrams, faxes, or telephone calls.

Effective October 1, 2024, for all consultants and contractors on authorized short-term travel status, the reimbursement rates for meal and incidental expenses (M&IE) will be as follows:

M&IE Expense Category	Effective October 1, 2024: Reimbursement Rate for Actual Expense
Breakfast	Up to \$16
Lunch	Up to \$19
Dinner	Up to \$28
Incidentals	Up to \$5
M&IE Total (when neither the first nor last day of travel)	Up to \$68
First & Last Day of Travel (Up to 75% of total)	Up to \$51

M&IE total: Up to the full daily amount received for a single calendar day of travel when that day is neither the first nor last day of travel.

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Incidentals: M&IE Total = Breakfast + Lunch + Dinner + Incidentals. Separate amounts for meals and incidentals as sometimes meal amounts must be deducted by the appropriate amount when such meals are furnished to the traveler or included in a conference registration, etc. For meals provided, the traveler must deduct the meal cost from the applicable M&IE rate.

First & Last Day of Travel: Up to the amount received on the first and last day of travel and equals 75% of total M&IE.

In computing reimbursement for continuous short-term travel of 24 hours or more, the employee will be reimbursed for actual meal and incidental costs up to 75% of the applicable M&IE standard rate for day of departure and the last day of travel, and up to 100% for full days of travel for each complete 24 hours of travel as indicated below:

TRAVEL LESS THAN 24 HOURS

No lunch or incidentals may be reimbursed on travel of less than 12 hours. When trips are less than 24 hours with no overnight stay, meals are reportable and taxable income.

For more information, see [Tax Reporting and Withholding Requirements](#).

For continuous travel of less than 24 hours, employees may claim actual expenses as follows:

When travel status is:	Maximum reimbursement for actual expenses is:
Travel less than 12 hours	Not eligible for M&IE reimbursement
More than 12 but less than 24 hours	Up to 75% of the applicable M&IE standard rate for each calendar day in a travel status

LONG-TERM ASSIGNMENT TRAVEL

A long-term assignment (LTA) is any assignment:

- Of 31 days or more in a single location.
- A minimum of 50 miles away from a consultant's or contractor's headquarters.
- A minimum of 50 miles away from a consultant's or contractor's primary residence.
-

A "single location" is defined as including a major metropolitan area, cities in the vicinity of one another, and locations that straddle country or state lines (within a 50-mile radius). These physical situations do not represent "different" locations.

The State adopted the federal standard meal and incidental expense (M&IE) reimbursement rates for long-term meals and receipted lodging shall be reimbursed up to the maximum federal standard reimbursement rates. The long-term daily expense rate shall be authorized when consultant or contractors can reasonably be expected to incur expenses in one location comparable to those arising from the use of establishments catering to long-term visitors, and when the consultant is expected to be in one location for 31 or more consecutive days. Actual expenses for long-term meals, incidentals, and receipted lodging will be reimbursed up to the maximum rates provided for short-term travel. Meals and/or lodging provided by the state shall not be claimed for reimbursement.

Consultants and contractors should continue to make reasonable efforts to secure lodging that is in the best interest of the state. Such lodging may include contracted or preferred providers, long-term lodging establishments, and non-hotel accommodations such as an apartment or extended stay facility. The appointing power must determine prior to the beginning of the assignment if the time away from residence or headquarters area will be more than 30 days but less than one year.

Returning home for weekends or incidental short-term travel does not break the continuity of a long-term assignment.

To qualify for full long-term travel reimbursement, consultants or contractors on a long-term field assignment must meet the following criteria:

- The consultant or contractor's assignment must qualify as a long-term assignment as described in the Overview above.
- The consultant or contractor must complete and submit the "Long-Term Assignment Information and Certification of Subsistence Rates" Form FA-1350 to his or her Caltrans assigned contract manager for approval. Contact the contract manager for a copy of the form.
- The consultant or contractor must complete and submit the "Caltrans Long-Term Assignment Cost Analysis" FA-1310 to his or her Caltrans assigned contract manager for approval. Contact the contract manager for a copy of the form.
- The Caltrans assigned contract manager must approve the FA-1350 and the FA-1310.

LONG-TERM ASSIGNMENT TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

Reimbursement for transportation expenses will be allowed in the following instances:

- Between the consultant's or contractor's primary permanent residence and the LTA location at the start and end of the assignment.
- When the Caltrans assigned contract manager approves the consultant's or contractor's return to headquarters.
- When authorized, actual private car mileage up to 25 miles per day for travel between a consultant's or contractor's living accommodations at the LTA location, the LTA job site, and to obtain meals.
- With the contract manager's approval, in lieu of claiming per diem, private vehicle mileage may be reimbursed from the consultant's or contractor's primary residence or headquarters whichever is less. The approved FA-1350 must indicate "Commute mileage in lieu of subsistence".
- Parking and tolls resulting from commuting to and from the LTA residence to the job site are not reimbursable.

REIMBURSEMENT CLAIMS

An invoice or claim submitted for reimbursement of long-term travel expenses must include the following:

- A copy of the approved "Long-Term Assignment Information and Certification of Subsistence Rates" Form FA-1350.
- A copy of the approved "Caltrans Long-Term Assignment Cost Analysis" Form FA-1310.
- The commercial lodging receipt when claimed as an expense. The receipt must be either preprinted or written and include the name, address, and phone number of the establishment, the 'to and from' dates of the stay, the amount paid, and the signature of the landlord or property manager. A copy of a canceled check or rental agreement does not meet the receipt requirement.
- LTA mileage and business miles to various job sites during the workday must be separated from mileage to and from the main job site and mileage to obtain meals.
- The receipt for airfare, rental car, or gas for a rental car when claimed as an expense.
- The receipt for train fare claimed when the expense exceeds \$24.99.
- The receipt for parking, taxi, shuttle, streetcar, local rapid transit, or toll claimed when the expense exceeds \$10.00.

Questions regarding invoices or reimbursement claims should be addressed to the Caltrans assigned contract manager.

TRANSPORTATION

Private Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Rates

For those authorized to use their personal vehicle for official State business are:

Vehicle type	Effective 1/1/2024	Effective 1/1/2023	Effective 7/1/2022	Effective 1/1/2022	Effective 1/1/2021	Effective 1/1/2020	Effective 1/1/2019	Effective 1/1/2018	Effective 1/1/2017
Personal vehicle	67 cents per mile	65.5 cents per mile	62.5 cents per mile	58.5 cents per mile	56 cents per mile	57.5 cents per mile	58 cents per mile	54.5 cents per mile	53.5 cents per mile
Specialized vehicles	67 cents per mile	65.5 cents per mile	62.5 cents per mile	58.5 cents per mile	56 cents per mile	57.5 cents per mile	58 cents per mile	54.5 cents per mile	53.5 cents per mile

Private aircraft	1.76 per mile	1.74 per mile	1.81 per mile	\$1.515 per mile	\$1.26 per mile	\$1.27 per mile	\$1.26 per mile	\$1.15 per mile	\$1.15 per mile
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Commercial Rental Cars

If authorized by the contract manager, a commercial rental car may be rented. Consultants/Contractors are not required to rent from the State of California's contracted vendors however, reimbursement for a commercial rental car costs shall not exceed the rates paid to non-represented/excluded State employees. See [Commercial Car Rental](#) for more information.

OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

When authorized under the contract with Caltrans, short-term out-of-state travel will be reimbursed at the following rates:

- Actual lodging expenses up to the per diem rates found at:
 - [GSA](#) (certain out-of-state locations)
 - [DOD](#) (certain out-of state locations)
- Actual meals will be reimbursed up to the maximum rates for in-state travel.

OUT-OF-COUNTRY TRAVEL

When authorized under the contract with Caltrans, short-term out-of-country travel will be reimbursed at the following rates.

- Actual lodging expenses up to the foreign per diem rates found at:
 - [State Department](#) (out-of-country)
- Actual meals and incidentals in accordance with published Federal Government meal and incidental rates for foreign travel for the specific dates of travel.

Foreign per diem rates are available at the [U.S. Department of State's](#) web site. Per Diem rates for meals must be claimed in accordance with a breakdown of meal and incidental allowance, [Appendix B](#), by referring to the location of foreign travel.

Receipts are required to be submitted for meals and incidentals claimed in excess of \$24.99.

Note: Valid documentation for foreign currency exchange rates must be submitted with the invoice to substantiate expenses claimed. If unavailable, the [Foreign Exchange Currency Converter](#) may be used as adequate documentation.

RECEIPT REQUIREMENTS

Type of Expense	Receipt Required (YES)	Receipt Required (NO)	Explanation
BUSINESS EXPENSES:			
Business phone calls, faxes, office supplies, etc.	X		When over \$5.00
PER DIEM EXPENSES:			
Lodging (ALL types of lodging)	X		
Meals		X	
Out-of-Country Meals	X		When the cost exceeds \$24.99
TRANSPORTATION:			
Airfare	X		
Train	X		When the cost exceeds \$24.99
Gas for rental car and State vehicles	X		Itemized receipt indicating actual expenses incurred and price per gallon. (Prepaid receipt will not be reimbursed.)
Parking, taxis, shuttles, streetcars, local rapid transit, and road tolls	X		When the cost exceeds \$10.00
Rental Cars	X		

REIMBURSEMENT OF THIRD PARTY LODGING

To comply with the receipt requirements and receive reimbursement for appropriate lodging expenses, a traveler using a third party vendor must provide:

A receipt from the third party vendor indicating the employee's name, hotel establishment providing the service, the check-in date, checkout date, itemized expenses incurred, charges paid in full, and

A receipt from the hotel that provided the service indicating the employee's name, check-in, and checkout dates.

The hotel receipt does not need to itemize the hotel rate or taxes to third party vendor.

There are no exceptions to the requirements listed above. A Travel Expense Claim (TEC) for reimbursement of third party lodging without both required receipts will result in the rejection of the claimed expense.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions requests are reviewed on a case by case basis by the Division of Accounting, Travel Payments and Policy Section.

All requests must be made through the assigned contract manager. Once approved by the Division of Accounting, a memo will be forwarded to the contract manager. The memo must be attached to the invoice to substantiate the additional expense.

Upon the contract manager's approval, the form should be emailed to the Division of Accounting, Travel Payments and Policy Section or mailed to the Division of Accounting, Travel Payments and Policy Section, MS-25 **at least 15 calendar days in advance** or as soon as the circumstances are known.

REQUESTS TO EXCEED MAXIMUM LODGING RATE, EXCLUDING TAX

Every effort should be made to use moderately priced commercial establishments that cater to the general public (avoiding resort areas, luxury hotels, condos, beach houses, cabins, etc.).

Those requesting an exception to exceed the maximum lodging rate should complete an Excess Lodging Rate Request Form [STD 255C](#).

EXCEPTIONS TO THE 50-MILE RULE

No per diem is allowed for travel less than 50 miles of a person's headquarters and/or primary residence. An exception may be granted when one or more of the following conditions are present:

1. Public safety concerns
2. Unavoidable hardships
3. Unusual circumstances

The exception does not cover the following scenarios:

Attendance of mandatory meals

Lunch for trips of less than 24 hours

Meals or lodging at the headquarters or home location

Meals that do not meet the time requirements outlined in the meals and incidental rates and requirements section

Networking

Traffic Congestion

The request must include the following information:

1. Name and address of Consultant or Contractor; and
2. Location of headquarters /exception sites; Car mileage between each of the following:
 - Home to headquarters (# of miles)
 - Headquarters to site (# of miles)
 - Home to site (#of miles)
3. Name and description of the event or work to be completed.
4. Justification.

Non-State Employee Travel Reimbursement

References: [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Administration, Title 2 Sections 599.619, 599.623\(c\) and 599.626.1](#), [California Department of Human Resources \(CalHR\) PML MM86-01](#), and [State Administrative Manual \(SAM\) Section 8422.190](#)

OVERVIEW

In certain circumstances Caltrans may reimburse non-state employees for travel and per diem expenses. Non-state employees are defined by the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) as follows:

- **Statutory Board Members:** Individuals appointed to serve on boards or commissions established by law. The Governor, Legislature or department head appoints members. The appointing authority establishes headquarters for these board members.
- **Non-Statutory Board Members:** Individuals appointed to serve on boards, commissions or task forces that are created by agency secretaries, department directors, or executive officers on an as-needed basis to fulfill the department's mission. The appointing authority establishes headquarters for these board members.
- **Salaried Consultants:** Individuals who have a written contract with the state to perform specific duties or consultants with a verbal agreement to provide one-time services in exchange for an honorarium or speaker's fee plus travel expenses. The department establishes headquarters for salaried consultants.
- **Non-Salaried Consultants:** Individuals serving as experts in specialized areas who receive no salary. Since their expertise is only needed for limited periods, a written contract may not be required. The appointing authority establishes headquarters for non-salaried consultants.
- **Civil Service Consultants:** Individuals hired by the state to perform the duties of a consultant and have civil service status. The appointing authority establishes headquarters for consultants.
- **Volunteers:** Individuals who voluntarily perform services for the state without pay. The appointing authority establishes headquarters for volunteers.
- **Attendants for Disabled Employees:** Individuals who are readers, interpreters, drivers or attendants to disabled employees. Contact the Division of Administration, Office of Health and Safety's Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator to secure reimbursement approval for the attendant's travel expenses.

REIMBURSEMENT RATES

The reimbursement rates for travel and per diem expenses are:

- Statutory and Non-Statutory Board Members: Reimbursement for necessary travel expenses based on the rates for non-represented employees. Board members may be reimbursed for actual travel expenses up to the maximums allowed for non-represented employees when attending board, commission, and committee meetings. Board members, if not on travel status, are exempt from time constraints and the 50-mile rule when attending meetings. While on travel status other than attending board, commission or committee meetings, appointees may be reimbursed for expenses under the same conditions as non-represented employees.
- Salaried Consultants: Reimbursement for necessary travel expenses for salaried consultants under contract shall be stated in the contract but shall not exceed the rates established for non-represented employees. Salaried consultants under verbal contract will be reimbursed for necessary travel expenses based on the rates for non-represented employees.
- Non-Salaried and Civil Service Consultants: Reimbursement for necessary travel expenses based on the rates for non-represented employees.
- Volunteers: Reimbursement for necessary travel expenses based on the rates for non-represented employees.
- Attendants for Disabled Employees: Travel expenses equal to the rates allowed the disabled employee.

See [Non-represented employee rates](#).

REIMBURSEMENT CLAIMS

Claims for reimbursement should be submitted on the “Non-State or Attendant Expense Invoice” Form [FA-1301](#). Non-state employees authorized to receive travel expense reimbursement directly from departments must also complete Form [STD. 204](#) before the reimbursement is paid.

All claims must include:

- The original signatures of the claimant and the approving officer.
- An explanatory memo or a copy of the contract or participation agreement, whichever is appropriate. The memo, contract, or agreement must detail allowed travel expenses.
- Charge coding information as provided by the approving officer.
- Two copies of all required receipts. See [Receipt Requirements](#).
- Attendants for Disabled Employees must include on the claim the name of the disabled employee and describe the services provided.