

Chapter 4 – Short-Term Travel (Lodging and Meals) Starting October 1, 2024

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Lodging Rates and Requirements

References: [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Administration, Title 2 Sections 599.619, 599.624, 599.624.1, 599.625, and 599.625.1, DGS State Administrative Manual \(SAM\) Section 4117.3, Bargaining Unit Contracts, California Department of Human Resources Manual Section 2201-2203, California Department of Human Resources Travel Program FAQs](#)

OVERVIEW

Employees on short-term travel status shall be reimbursed for actual expenses for received lodging up to the maximum rates provided in this section unless directed to travel under the provisions of California Code of Regulations (CCR) 599.624 or 599.624.1 (Contracting for Subsistence). Lodging provided by the state or included in hotel expenses or conference fees, or in transportation costs such as airline tickets, or otherwise provided shall not be claimed for reimbursement.

Reimbursement for short-term lodging will be authorized only when the traveler incurs expenses arising from the use of reasonable, moderately priced lodging establishments such as hotels, motels, bed and breakfast inns, and campgrounds that cater to the general public. Costs associated with use of time shares and other privately-owned venues are not commercial lodging establishments and will not be reimbursed. The circumstances of travel will determine the rate allowed.

Short-term travel status is defined as travel a minimum of 50 miles away from the employee's designated headquarters and primary residence and lasting no more than 30 calendar days in a "single location." A single location is defined as a major metropolitan area, cities in vicinity to one another, and any locations that straddle county or state lines within a 50-mile radius.

For more information on out-of-state travel, see [Out-of-State/Country Travel \(OST\)](#).

LODGING RECEIPTS

All lodging reimbursement requires a receipt from a commercial lodging establishment. Receipts must show the name and address of the lodging establishment, the employee's name, check-in/check-out date, expenses incurred (hotel rate, taxes, etc.) and indicate charges as paid in full (zero balance). No lodging will be reimbursed without a valid receipt.

THIRD PARTY VENDORS

For third party (Priceline, Expedia, etc.) lodging reimbursement requirements, see [Third Party Vendors](#).

STAYING WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

Employees who stay with friends or relatives are not eligible for lodging reimbursement.

VACATION, CTO, OR SICK LEAVE

Lodging expenses will not be allowed when an employee is authorized for vacation or compensating time off (CTO) while on short-term travel status. If an employee is granted sick leave while traveling on state business, the employee may be authorized to claim reimbursement for travel expenses, up to a maximum of three days. For information on exceeding the three days, see Travel Exceptions, [Subsistence While on Sick Leave](#).

LODGING RESOURCES

It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the nightly lodging rate is at or below the authorized federal standard and non-standard rates found in this section. Lodging reimbursements will be limited to the maximum allowance determined by the geographical area and the employee's representation status (bargaining unit or non-represented).

Travelers are being directed to use [Concur](#) to view lodging information and to book travel. Employees must have an active Concur account to view lodging. Contact the [Travel Policy Section](#) for login information.

Concur, the State's online travel booking tool, maintains a database of over 85,000 hotels. Concur will display a detailed description of the hotel properties found in the search, as well as all properties that offer a State government rate. Additional information is provided for each hotel, including a hotel description, transportation, general room information, facilities, hotel policies, information on ADA accessible guest rooms, roll-in showers, and much more.

Requests to exceed the maximum lodging rate must be approved by the Division of Accounting's Travel Policy Section 15 calendar days prior to travel. See Travel Exceptions, [Excess Lodging Rate Requests](#).

SHORT-TERM RENTALS (SUCH AS AIRBNB)

This is a residential property that is rented to a visitor for fewer than 30 days through a centralized online platform. The rental is advertised and payments for the rental are securely processed. For purposes of travel reimbursement, a short-term rental shall be considered a commercial lodging establishment.

If you use a non-traditional lodging vendor such as Airbnb.com the daily room rate is determined by combining the accommodations total, service fees, and cleaning fees. Divide the total rental costs by the number of nights to find the daily room rate. Taxes do not affect the daily base room rate calculation. Obtain an Excess Lodging Rate Request if needed. For an example of the calculation please see [TIP 18-05 Short-Term Rental Daily Room Rate](#).

SHORT-TERM LODGING RATES FOR REGULAR STATE BUSINESS

Effective October 1, 2024, the State is adopting federal standard and non-standard reimbursement lodging rates at time of travel for received 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 for lodging only): Non-foreign areas outside CONUS (Alaska, Hawaii, U.S. Territories and Possessions)
- [State Department](#) (out-of-country): Foreign areas

From October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026, for all state employees on authorized short-term travel status the maximum short-term lodging rates for received lodging expenses will be as follows:

County	2025 Oct	Nov	Dec	2026 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	\$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	\$192
Santa Cruz	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$139	\$176	\$176	\$176	\$176	\$139
Sonoma	\$157	\$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	\$131
Yolo	\$142	\$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.

NOTE: For short-term lodging rates prior to the rates listed above, please see [Historical Lodging Rates](#).

ENERGY, RESORT, AND TOURISM FEES

Energy, tourism, and resort fees assessed to hotel guests are reimbursable.

HOTEL/MOTEL TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX

The transient occupancy tax (room tax) is imposed by cities within the State of California. Lodging establishments have the option to assess or waive the tax.

Upon making reservations, employees should inquire if the lodging establishment honors the tax waiver. If honored, employees are expected to complete and present a Hotel/Motel Transient Occupancy Tax Waiver Form [STD. 236](#) when registering at the hotel. Transient occupancy taxes not waived by hotels and motels are reimbursable.

STATE SPONSORED CONFERENCES OR CONVENTIONS

For receipted lodging while attending state sponsored conferences and conventions, when the lodging is contracted by the state sponsor for the event, and the appointing authority has granted prior approval for attendance and lodging at the contract rate and establishment: Actual lodging up to \$110 plus applicable taxes.

See Travel Exceptions, [Excess Lodging Rate Request](#) for approval requirements.

NON-STATE SPONSORED CONFERENCES OR CONVENTIONS

For receipted lodging while attending non-state sponsored conferences and conventions, when the lodging is contracted by the sponsor for the event, and the appointing authority has granted prior approval for attendance and lodging at the contracted rate and establishment: Actual lodging when approved in advance by the appointing authority.

See Travel Exceptions, [Excess Lodging Rate Request](#) for approval requirements.

Reimbursement of lodging expenses in excess of specified amounts, excluding taxes requires advance written approval from the California Department of Human Resources (CalHR). CalHR may delegate approval authority to departmental appointing powers or increase the lodging maximum rate for the geographical area and period of time deemed necessary to meet the needs of the State. An employee may not claim lodging, meal, or incidental expenses within 50 miles of his/her home or headquarters.

Meal and Incidental Rates and Requirements

References: [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Administration, Title 2 Sections 599.619, 599.621](#), and [599.633, California Department of Human Resources Manual Section 2201-2203](#), [California Department of Human Resources Travel Program FAQs](#), and [Bargaining Unit Contracts](#)

OVERVIEW

Employees on short-term travel status shall be reimbursed for actual meal and incidental expenses up to the maximum rates provided in this section unless directed to travel under the provisions of California Code of Regulations (CCR) Administrative Code, Title 2 Sections [599.624 or 599.624.1](#) (Contracting for Subsistence).

Short-term travel status is defined as travel a minimum of 50 miles away from the employee's designated headquarters and primary residence and lasting no more than 30 calendar days in a "single location". A single location is defined as a major metropolitan area, cities in vicinity to one another, and any locations that straddle county or state lines within a 50-mile radius.

Reimbursement for short-term meals will be authorized only when the traveler incurs expenses arising from the use of reasonable, moderately priced meal establishments such as restaurants, cafes, and diners, etc. that cater to the public.

Meals provided by the state or included in hotel expenses or conference fees, or in transportation costs such as airline tickets, or otherwise provided shall not be claimed for reimbursement. Employees who are unable to consume meals provided by the state, or included in hotel expenses, or conference/registration fees because of time constraints or other considerations, such as reasonable accommodation, may be reimbursed in accordance with the rates established in this section, provided an alternate meal was purchased. Snacks and continental breakfasts such as rolls, juice and coffee are not considered to be meals.

No meal expense may be claimed or reimbursed more than once on any given date or during any 24-hour period. The circumstances of travel will determine the rate allowed.

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.

STAYING WITH FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

Employees who stay with friends or relatives may claim their actual meal and incidental expenses in accordance with the rates and timeframe outlined in this section.

VACATION, CTO, OR SICK LEAVE

Meal and incidental expenses will not be allowed when an employee is authorized vacation or compensating time off (CTO) while on travel status.

If an employee is granted sick leave while traveling on state business, he or she may be authorized to claim reimbursement for travel expenses, up to a maximum of three days. For information on exceeding the three days, see Travel Exceptions, [Subsistence While on Sick Leave](#).

MEAL AND INCIDENTAL REIMBURSEMENT RATES

Meal expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and incidentals will be reimbursed in the amount of actual expenses up to the following maximums. Receipts are not required to claim meal and incidental expenses up to the maximum allowable reimbursement rates specified below unless the Department or the appointing power requires that receipts be submitted. Regardless of the above exceptions, the approving officer may require additional certification and/or explanation in order to determine that an expense was actually and reasonably incurred. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the expense shall not be allowed. Receipts for meals must be maintained by the employee as substantiation that the amount claimed was not in excess of the amount of actual expense. An employee may be reimbursed for an allowable meal expense purchased at a commercial establishment (such as a restaurant, cafe, diner, grocery store/market, etc.) that caters to the general public.

Effective October 1, 2024, for all state employees on authorized short-term travel status, the reimbursement rates for actual 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

NOTE: For meals and incidental reimbursement rates prior to the rates listed above, please see [Historical Meal & Incidental Rates](#).

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:

When travel status is:		Maximum reimbursement for actual expenses is:
24 hours or more, on	The day of departure	Up to 75% of the applicable M&IE standard rate
	Full days of travel	Up to 100% of the applicable M&IE standard rate
	The last day of travel	Up to 75% of the applicable M&IE standard rate

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

TIPS FOR ALLOWABLE MEAL EXPENSES

Effective May 11, 2020, state employees may receive reimbursement for tips related to allowable meal expenses incurred while conducting approved state business as follows:

Up to \$2.00 or 20%, whichever amount is greater

State employees submitting claims for tips shall only receive reimbursement up to the maximum amount allowed for meal expenses. Expenses in excess of the maximum amount allowed are not reimbursable. For example, if the maximum allowable reimbursement for dinner is \$23.00, then the maximum allowable reimbursement for a \$23.00 dinner plus tip is \$23.00

For more information see Travel Information & Policy (TIP) 20-07 – Reimbursement on Tips for Allowable Meal and/or Transportation Expense.

Personal Expense Differential

References: [Bargaining Unit 9 Contract](#)

The personal expense differential applies to Bargaining Unit 9 employees who are required to be on State business more than 50 miles from their home and headquarters and incur personal, non-receipted expenses as the result of said travel.

Employees receiving reimbursement for business and travel expenses by other means (e.g., statutes, rules, or MOU provisions such as the long-term differential or business travel expenses) shall not be eligible for the personal expense differential.

The personal expense differential may only be requested (and shall only be approved) when the employee used facilities such as, but not limited to, house trailers and camping equipment. Staying with friends, relatives, or at one's own second residence does not qualify the employee for a personal expense differential.

Eligible employees may request a personal expense differential rate of:

\$33.00 for meals or \$33.00 for lodging for travel of less than 12 hours if expenses were incurred; and,

\$67.00 for personal, non-receipted expenses associated with travel of 12 to 24 hours if expenses are incurred.

The differential is issued directly from the State Controller's Office. Taxes are withheld from the differential at the time of issuance.

Qualifying employees must complete and submit an approved "Authorization for Non-Commercial Subsistence Differential" Form PM-0918 to:

The Division of Human Resources
Office of Transactions Services, MS-47
P.O. Box 168037
Sacramento CA 95816-8037