

Chapter 5 – Long Term Assignment (LTA) and Long-Term Assignment Differential (LTAD) (Over 30 Days Travel)

Long-Term Assignment (LTA)

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References: [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Administration, Title 2 Sections 599.615, 599.615.1, 599.616, 599.616.1, 599.619, 599.621, 599.626, and 599.626.1](#), [Bargaining Unit Contracts](#), [State Controller's Office \(SCO\) Payroll Procedure Manual N141.1.2](#), and [California Department of Human Resources \(CalHR\) PML 88-10](#)

OVERVIEW

A long-term assignment (LTA) is defined as any assignment of 31 days or more in a single location a minimum of 50 miles away from an employee's headquarters and primary residence. A "single location" is defined as including a major metropolitan area, cities in vicinity to one another, and locations that straddle county or state lines. These physical situations do not represent "different" locations.

An employee's return home for weekends or incidental short-term travel to another location does not break the continuity of a long-term assignment. Short breaks in either Temporary or Indefinite Assignments do not automatically create a new assignment. The Internal Revenue Service has ruled that breaks between assignments as long as four to six weeks within a 12-month period do not necessarily terminate a long-term travel Indefinite Assignment for tax purposes. Employers must consider the facts and circumstances to determine the true intent of the assignment.

Bargaining Units 9 and 11 employees, supervising engineers (S09) and managing engineers (M09) who are assigned in writing to a long-term assignment for more than one year (365 days) at the outset of their assignment and who otherwise qualify for long-term per diem, may qualify for monthly pay differentials in lieu of long-term per diem for meals and receipted lodging. For additional information, see [Long-Term Assignment Differential](#).

Bargaining Unit 9 employees may qualify for personal expense differentials when they incur personal, non-receipted expenses as the result of said travel which are not reimbursed under statutes, regulations, policies or collective bargaining provisions pertaining to business travel and travel expenses. For additional information, see [Personal Expense Differential](#).

LONG-TERM ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION AND CERTIFICATION OF SUBSISTENCE RATES

An employee on a LTA is required to complete and submit a "Long-Term Assignment Information and Certification of Subsistence Rates" Form [FA-1350](#), to his or her LTA supervisor for approval. Once approved, a copy of the form must

be submitted to the Division of Accounting's Travel Policy Section. LTA expenses will not be reimbursed until the Travel Policy Section receives a complete and approved FA-1350. In addition, the supervisor will also complete a "Caltrans Long-Term Assignment Cost Analysis" Form [FA-1310](#) and provide written justification that identifies how the LTA benefits Caltrans, the program will make the final decision on which option is in the best interest of the state. An approved Form FA-1350 and FA-1310 will be sent to the Division of Accounting Travel Payments and Policy Section by either:

- **Inter-office mail:** Mail Station 25.
- **U.S. Mail:** PO Box 168018, Sacramento, CA 95816-8018.

When changes are made to an assignment, an employee or an employee's supervisor must submit a revised and approved Form [FA-1350](#) and Form [FA-1310](#), to the Travel Payments and Policy Section. Changes include, but are not limited to, a change in the:

- Assignment date.
- Employee's residence (LTA or primary).
- Geographical location of the assignment.
- Method of reimbursement (short-term, long-term, long-term differential, etc.).

Long-Term Assignment Lease and Moving Expenses

LEASE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS

Lease settlement agreements are not reimbursable. If an employee signs a lease agreement while on long-term assignment (LTA) and does not fulfill the time period specified in the lease, any costs incurred as a result of breaking the lease are the responsibility of the employee. Before the agreement is signed, the employee is encouraged to ask for a special provision in the lease agreement that allows the employee to break the lease without penalty when necessitated by a change in the employee's work location.

MOVING EXPENSES

Employees are not allowed reimbursement for moving expenses or any other expenses connected with establishing their LTA residence. Non-reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to, private vehicle mileage to locate accommodations; cleaning and security deposits; cable, telephone, or other hook-up fees; utility deposits; or any other miscellaneous living expenses.

Long-Term Assignments Lodging, Meal, and Incidental Rates

References: [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Administration, Title 2 Sections 599.616, 599.616.1, 599.619, 599.621, 599.633, and 599.633.1](#), and [Bargaining Unit Contracts](#)

OVERVIEW

Qualifying employees: Employees in all bargaining units and non-represented employees.

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 an employee 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 employee 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. Departments and traveling employees 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.

For more information on short-term per diem, see [Lodging Rates and Requirements](#) and [Meal and Incidental Rates and Requirements](#).

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

- The employee continues to maintain a permanent residence at the primary headquarters area, and
- The permanent residence is occupied by the employee's dependents, or
- The permanent residence is maintained at a net expense to the employee exceeding \$200 per month.
- The employee must submit substantiating evidence of these conditions to the appointing power in accordance with its requirements.

Employees who, with approval from their appointing power, after completing the work shift remain at the job or long-term assignment location past the Friday

(12)- hour clock will receive up to the federal standard reimbursement rate for meals and incidental expenses established by the General Services Administration for Friday. Those staying overnight shall not receive any additional reimbursements for meals and incidental expenses regardless of the Saturday departure time. An employee returning to the temporary residence on Sunday will receive up to 75% of the federal standard reimbursement rate for meals and incidental expenses established by the General Services Administration. This does not change Department policy regarding the meals and incidentals reimbursement clock which starts at the beginning of the work shift on Monday. If normal workweek is other than stated above, the same principle applies.

RETURNING HOME AND WEEKEND PER DIEM

Returning home and/or weekend per diem is subject to department operational need, and approval is subject to management's discretion based on each long-term assignment's circumstances. Management is required to document the frequency of how often an employee will be authorized to return to their primary residence while on LTA. This includes documenting pre-approval of said travel frequency. All transportation costs for any LTA travel (including travel between the primary residence and LTA jobsite) must be reflected in the Estimated Transportation Costs section of the Caltrans Long-Term Assignment Cost Analysis (Form [FA-1310](#)). It is also the responsibility of District/Program management to monitor and keep documentation (i.e., e-mails and/or memorandums, as appropriate) of the agreed upon LTA travel approvals.

Expenses start at the beginning of the work shift on Monday. If the normal workweek begins on a day other than Monday, the same principle applies. The 24-hour clock is used to determine when employees qualify for lodging and meals. A 12 to 24-hour period qualifies employees for full per diem, whereas, a less than 12-hour period qualifies employees for one half of per diem.

Employees may claim per diem during regularly scheduled days off (e.g., Saturdays, Sundays, holidays) provided they remain at the LTA location.

With supervisory approval, represented employees (except those in Bargaining Units 7 and 10), who after completing the work shift and remain at the job or LTA location for at least 12 hours, will receive full per diem for the last day of the work week. Those staying overnight Friday shall not receive any per diem for Saturday regardless of the Saturday departure time.

Represented employees (except those in Bargaining Units 7 and 10) who are returning to the LTA residence on Sunday will receive full per diem for Sunday.

AUTHORIZED SICK LEAVE

Employees may continue claiming lodging and meals up to a maximum of three consecutive working days per illness when absent on authorized sick leave, provided that they remain at the LTA location. For information on extending the reimbursement of lodging and meals beyond three days, see [Subsistence While on Sick Leave](#).

PERSONAL BUSINESS

Employees leaving the LTA location for personal business shall not receive reimbursement for per diem or transportation expenses. It is assumed that the employee will stay overnight at a location other than at the long-term accommodation.

Long-Term Assignments Transportation Expenses

References: [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\), Administration, Title 2 Sections 599.626 and 599.626.1](#), [California Department of Human Resources \(CalHR\) PML 88-10](#), and Caltrans Vehicle Home Storage Permit Guidelines

OVERVIEW

Qualifying employees: All bargaining units and non-represented employees. Department policy requires an employee to use the method of transportation that is in the best interest of the State, considering both direct expenses as well as employee time. Employees using a State owned (or leased) vehicle must report personal use via Form [PM-0041](#) Personal Use of State Vehicle. Transportation expenses will be allowed in the following instances:

- Between living accommodations at the long-term assignment (LTA) location and restaurants to obtain meals.
- Between living accommodations at the LTA location and the job site.
- Between the employee's primary/permanent residence and the LTA location at the start and end of the assignment.
- In the conduct of official State business.
- To and from a common carrier when authorized to return to the employee's primary/permanent location.
- To commute daily to and from the LTA job site when no subsistence expenses are claimed and with the appointing authority's approval.
- When the appointing authority approves the employee's return to headquarters.
- When the appointing authority has given prior approval to the employee to return to his or her primary/permanent residence on regularly scheduled day(s) off.

No transportation expenses are allowed when the employee leaves the LTA location for personal business.

See [Transportation](#) for detailed information regarding automobile transportation.

COMMUTE MILEAGE IN LIEU OF SUBSISTENCE

When commuting daily to the LTA location in lieu of subsistence (per diem) reimbursement, mileage is reimbursed from the employee's primary/permanent residence or headquarters, whichever is less. The appointing authority must authorize the payment of commute mileage on the "Long-Term Assignment Information and Certification of Subsistence Rates" Form [FA-1350](#). The form must indicate "Commute mileage in lieu of subsistence."

Bridge and road tolls are not reimbursable when claiming commute mileage in lieu of subsistence.

PRIVATE VEHICLES

An employee may claim transportation expenses within the following guidelines:

- Actual mileage up to 25 miles per day for obtaining meals during regularly scheduled days off (weekends and holidays) provided the employee does not return to his or her primary/permanent residence or headquarters but remains at the LTA location.
- Actual private car mileage up to 25 miles per day for travel between the employee's living accommodations at the LTA location, the LTA job site, and to obtain meals.
- Appropriate transportation expenses (including bridge and road tolls) when returning with supervisor's approval to the primary/permanent residence or headquarters on days off. An employee should review the [Cost Comparison](#) criteria when driving in lieu of flying in Chapter 15.

An employee who uses his or her private vehicle on State business and who claims actual daily mileage up to 25 miles per day must separate the mileage reported on the travel expense claim from any additional business mileage incurred during regular work hours.

Supervisors are required to review claims for reasonableness of mileage claimed.

STATE OWNED (OR LEASED) VEHICLES

All employees on an Long Term Assignment are required to complete and submit a "Personal Use of State Vehicle" Form [PM-0041](#), for personal use of all State-owned (or leased) vehicles to his or her supervisor on the last day of each month. The form is required when using a state owned (or leased) vehicle for daily commutes from the LTA residence to the LTA job site, miscellaneous non-business trips, etc. Employees assigned a Home Storage Permit (HSP) must submit the Form [PM-0041](#) via the Division of Equipment's HSP database.

See the policy on the use of State-owned or leased vehicles at the Division of Equipment site.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring the accuracy when approving the Form [PM-0041](#).

Employees without an approved HSP that have personal use to report must email or mail the PM-0041 to the Division of Accounting's Travel Payments and Policy Section no later than the third (3rd) calendar day of the subsequent month.

Mail to the Division of Accounting's Travel Payments and Policy Section:

Inter-office mail: Mail Station 25.

U.S. mail: PO Box 168018, Sacramento, CA 95816-8018.

Overnight courier: Available at District cashiering offices.

PARKING AND TOLLS

Parking and tolls are not reimbursable while at the LTA location, except to and from a common carrier when authorized by the supervisor to return to the employee's primary/permanent residence or headquarters.

Long-Term Assignment Differential (LTAD)

References: [Bargaining Unit Contracts](#)

OVERVIEW

Qualifying employees: Bargaining Units 9 and 11 and supervisors (S09). Also, managers (M09) assigned to the Toll Bridge Construction Program.

An employee as identified above who is assigned in writing to a long-term assignment of more than one year (365 days) at the outset of his or her assignment, and who otherwise qualifies for long-term per diem, shall receive a monthly pay differential in lieu of long-term per diem. **Long-term assignment differential (LTAD) reimbursement for managers (M09) is restricted to the department's Toll Bridge Construction Program.**

The long-term assignment (LTA) monthly differential will be paid for a period starting the first day of the actual assignment and will end the last day of the assignment. The monthly differential shall be pro-rated for months in which the LTA begins or ends in the middle of the month.

Thirty (30) days advance notice must be provided to Division of Human Resources for initiation and/or cancellation of LTAD payment.

Effective July 1, 2022, The LTA monthly differential will increase from \$1,800 per month to \$3,000 per month. Employees in Bargaining Unit 9 qualify for LTAD regardless if a separate permanent residence is maintained at their headquarters location or not. Employees in Bargaining Unit 11, supervisors (S09), and managers (M09) must maintain a separate permanent residence at their headquarters location as described for purposes of long-term travel reimbursement in [Long-Term Lodging, Meal, and Incidental Rates](#) of this guide.

Payment is included in the employee's payroll warrant. Questions regarding long-term differential payments should be directed to the [Office of Transaction Services](#).

To qualify for LTAD, affected employees are required to submit receipts as proof that actual lodging expenses were incurred. Receipts are to be retained by the employee's supervisor.

Short-term expenses approved at the start of the assignment and transportation costs associated with the long-term assignment are considered taxable expenses. See [Tax Withholding and Reporting Information](#) for more information regarding taxability.

The LTAD may continue while the employee is away from the LTA location on short-term business travel or other absences. Short-term business travel expenses

incurred away from the LTA location must be submitted on a travel expense claim.

EMPLOYEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the employee's responsibility to submit an approved "Authorization for Caltrans Long-Term Differential" Form [PM-0915](#), to his or her supervisor for approval to claim the long-term assignment differential.

An employee qualifies to receive long-term assignment differential when all the following conditions are met:

- The assignment is anticipated to be over one year (365 days).
- The employee is in either Bargaining Units 9, 11, S09, or M09.
- The employee has obtained long-term accommodations.
- The employee provides a copy of his or her valid monthly lodging receipt to his or her supervisor each month for the duration of the assignment.
- All lodging receipts must show the name and address of the lodging establishment, employee's name, month for which rent is paid, date and amount paid.

SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Thirty (30) days advance notice must be provided to Division of Human Resources for initiation and/or cancellation of LTAD payment.

Approve and email the "Long-Term Assignment Information and Certification of Subsistence Rates" Form [FA-1350](#), to the Division of Accounting's Travel Policy Section. The supervisor should ensure the dates of the assignment are correct. The dates should reflect the actual start date and estimated completion date of the assignment.

Approve and email the "Caltrans Long-Term Assignment Cost Analysis" Form [FA-1310](#), to the Division of Accounting's Travel Policy Section.

Approve and mail the initial Form PM-0915 to the Division of Human Resources, Office of Transaction Services at the address below:

- **Inter-office mail:** Mail Station 47
- **U.S. mail:** PO Box 168037, Sacramento, CA 95816-8037

Communicate changes to an employee's assignment by:

- Mailing a revised Form PM-0915 to the Division of Human Resources, Office of Transaction Services.

- Emailing a revised Form [FA-1350](#) to the Travel Payments and Policy Section. See Long-Term Assignment Information and Certification of Subsistence Rates when a revised form is necessary.
- Ensure that the dates on the form reflect the dates the employee qualifies for the long-term differential and the estimated completion date.
- Obtain from the employee his or her monthly lodging receipt each month. It is the supervisor who approves Form PM-0915 responsibility to maintain a file of the monthly lodging receipts.
- LTAD documents, including receipts will be retained for five (5) years from the conclusion of last LTAD payment by the supervisor who approved Form PM-0915.