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| Travel Policy Development Template |
| Statewide Travel Program |

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**Insert agency memoranda, policy or other applicable header**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to advise employees traveling on official business, travel approvers, travel arrangers, and travel coordinators of their general travel expectations and procedures.

If any of the information conflicts with the most recent provisions set forth by a specific agency’s policy, then those provisions will supersede this procedure. Insert agency’s name employees or users of this directive are responsible for ensuring they have the most current version and information therein.

Insert additional introduction language. Recommended language could include:

• Overview of the agency that developed the document.

• Overview of the agency’s authority to publish the document.

• Explanation of agency’s relation/coordination with labor relations, applicable

**Definitions**

*Approver:* The traveling employee’s immediate supervisor or a designated individual authorized to approve travel reservations and/or reimbursements. An approver must serve in a supervisor or managerial role.

*Headquarters:* An employee's work headquarters is consistent with the location/county specified in the job posting approved by the hiring authority. Supervisors are not authorized to make headquarters changes.

*Short-term rental:* A commercial vehicle rental for up to 29 consecutive days to travelers conducting [official business.](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/IB10A13B05D9711E4A9828577DD5F1BF2?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=%28sc.Default%29)

*Long-term rental:* A commercial vehicle leased for 30 or more consecutive days to travelers conducting [official business.](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/IB10A13B05D9711E4A9828577DD5F1BF2?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=%28sc.Default%29)

*Reasonable accommodation:* Any modification or adjustment to a job and/or the work environment that enables a qualified individual with a disability to have equal employment opportunity.

*Transportation Network Companies*: Provide pre-arranged transportation services (also known as a rideshare) for compensation using an online-enabled application or platform to connect passengers with drivers using a personal vehicle.

*Travelers:* Employees, committee members, and all who travel on behalf of their agency for official business.

*Travel arranger:* A person authorized to make travel arrangements on behalf of a traveler.

Insert additional agency specific definitions that a traveler would need.

Insert additional agency specific definitions that a traveler would need.

Insert additional agency specific definitions that a traveler would need.

**Procedure**

All travel shall be performed in the most economical and efficient manner that meets the traveler’s business needs. Employees authorized to travel for official business purposes must adhere to the following general guidelines and requirements, regardless of funding source. All travel must be approved by an employee’s supervisor or designated approver.

 Insert your agency‘s policy for reasonable accommodation related information. This could include any modifications made to the workplace that enable qualified individuals with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities.

Travelers shall submit an expense claim for all expenses incurred while on official travel status, including those directly paid for by the agency (such as airline or rental car costs).

Insert your agency’s policies regarding expense claim submission.

**Travel Expenses**

Allowable costs for transportation expenses will be based on the method of transportation that is in the best interest of the agency, considering both direct expenses and the employee's time.

For travel that is not the most economical and/or not in the best interest of the agency, the traveler must prepare and submit a justification and cost comparison with the expense claim. The traveler will only be reimbursed for the least costly method.

Concur Account

Insert your agency’s specific policy or procedure for creating a Concur profile.

**Pre-Trip Approvals by Supervisor/Manager**

(NOTE: The Pre-Trip Approval section here is optional and contingent on your agency having Concur Pre-Trip Approval active.)

Travelers must receive prior (pre-trip) approval for all travel from their supervisor before making travel arrangements in the authorized online booking tool or with the contracted travel agency. For reservations booked via authorized online booking tool, the traveler’s approver will automatically receive a system-generated email to review and approve the travel reservation. For agent-assisted reservations, the travel agent will email the traveler’s approver to obtain approval before the travel is booked/ticketed.

Travel Booking Method

All business travel except for hotel rooms with negotiated rates for conferences should be booked through the contracted travel vendors. Comprehensive travel services are offered via the online booking tool, which is the primary means for booking travel. Call-in service is also available through the contracted travel agency.

Travel Related Loyalty/Reward Programs

Travelers may retain frequent flyer miles and points when traveling on official business; however, participation in these programs shouldn’t result in any of the following:

* Booking a higher cost flight or class of service.
* Booking a flight outside of the authorized online booking tool.
* Using a non-preferred, non-contracted provider in lieu of available preferred or contracted providers.
* Incurring any incremental costs beyond the lowest fares.

Air/Rail Travel Reservation/Cancellation

Employees should follow airfare purchasing and use requirements, which ensure that employees traveling by air on official business are using the most economical fares possible. Travelers should reserve airfares that are non-refundable.

Travelers should use the contracted air carrier(s) unless seats or flights are not available in an approved fare class to accomplish the purpose of the travel. Insert your agency’s expectations for travelers booking different types of airfare.

Any upgrades added to a business flight will be at the employee’s personal expense and are not reimbursable. Examples of non-reimbursable upgrades that should be charged to a personal credit card after the business reservation is booked include, but are not limited to: **Business Select, First Class, Business Class, Premium Economy Class, Early-Bird Check-In/Pre-Boarding, CLEAR, or TSA Precheck.**

Employees should choose the most economical options (air, lodging, car rental, etc.) that meet their business needs when making travel arrangements internationally. Preferential or other luxury upgrades are not reimbursable.

Travelers may accept denied boarding compensation in situations where a flight is oversold, or the employee is ‘bumped’ from the flight for reasons beyond the employee’s control. The disruption must not impact business effectiveness or incur additional costs to the agency.

Travelers will be reimbursed for extra seat charges imposed on employees that cannot be accommodated in a single cabin seat in coach class.

Travelers may be reimbursed for reasonable baggage fees imposed and required by the carrier.

Travelers may be able to change their return flight if an earlier flight constitutes quantifiable monetary savings, i.e., staff time and reimbursable costs such as meals or incidentals.

Changes must be pre-approved either verbally or in writing by the employee’s travel approver. Flight changes must be made via the online booking tool and/or by calling the contracted travel agency.

Coach rail service may be used when necessary and economically practical compared to air or ground transportation. Rail service must be booked via the online booking tool and/or the contracted travel agency.

Travelers are responsible for cancelling their reservation within the cancelation policy as noted in Concur. If funds are lost due to the employee failing to cancel the reservation timely, the employee will be responsible for reimbursing the agency.

Airline Unused Ticket Credits

When a traveler’s non-refundable flight is cancelled, the airfare amount becomes an Unused Ticket Credit (UTC). UTCs must be applied to the traveler’s next business flight to utilize the charges previously incurred instead of making new charges.

If a UTC will not be utilized prior to expiration, travelers and managers must inform their Travel Coordinator. This includes current employees that will not be traveling, as well as employees that have separated or will separate from the agency. Insert your agency’s specific process for managing UTCs that will not be used here.

Short-term Commercial Car Rental Reservation/Cancellation

A short-term rental is defined as a commercial car rental up to 29 consecutive days.

Insert your agency’s other means of short term transportation (agency owned vehicle, bus, shuttle)

Travelers must be 21 years of age or older to rent a vehicle and should follow these expectations when using short-term car rentals:

* Car rental reservations should be booked through the online booking tool.
* All commercial car rentals should be charged to the agency’s direct bill account to receive the contracted rates, insurance, and other benefits.
* The contracted car rental company should be used except in cases when the contracted car rental company is unavailable.
* Unused reservations must be cancelled as soon as possible via the online booking tool or by calling the contracted travel agency.
* Travelers are not required to refuel rental vehicles prior to returning to the rental branch.
* Insert your agency’s policy or procedure for routing a Short-Term Vehicle Justification. (Needed for vehicles larger than sedan class)
* Insert your agency’s policy or procedure for travelers completing a defensive driving training course here.
* Insert your agency's policy for paying tolls and late fees when traveling for business.
* Insert your agency’s policy for travelers acquiring parking tickets or at-fault vehicle violations.

Long-Term Vehicle Rental Reservation

Each agency may have their own process for utilizing long-term vehicle rentals within their organization. A long-term vehicle rental is classified as 30 or more consecutive days for travelers conducting official [business. Travelers should be aware](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/IB10A13B05D9711E4A9828577DD5F1BF2?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=%28sc.Default%29) of [the following expectations](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/IB16441A05D9711E4A9828577DD5F1BF2?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=%28sc.Default%29) [when using](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/IB16441A05D9711E4A9828577DD5F1BF2?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=%28sc.Default%29) [long-term vehicle rentals:](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Document/IB16441A05D9711E4A9828577DD5F1BF2?originationContext=document&transitionType=StatuteNavigator&needToInjectTerms=False&viewType=FullText&contextData=%28sc.Default%29)

* If a long-term vehicle rental is booked though Concur, then the agency will not receive the discounted long-term rate.
* Insert your agency’s specific policy or procedure for long-term vehicle rental coordination.

Car Rental Insurance

When traveling within the 50 U.S. states (including Washington, D.C.), travelers must decline all optional additional insurance. When traveling to the U.S. territories and outside of the U.S., travelers must accept [the damage waiver](https://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/dgs/fmc/dgs/OFS2044.pdf) [option](https://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/dgs/fmc/dgs/OFS2044.pdf) [and may be](https://www.documents.dgs.ca.gov/dgs/fmc/dgs/OFS2044.pdf) required to purchase

additional insurance coverage in some countries. Agencies will reimburse for any coverage required by [law for approved rentals](https://cadgs.sharepoint.com/sites/OFS-Accounting/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FOFS%2DAccounting%2FShared%20Documents%2FACCT%201016%20Prepayment%20Request%5FSupplier%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FOFS%2DAccounting%2FShared%20Documents) outside [of](https://cadgs.sharepoint.com/sites/OFS-Accounting/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FOFS%2DAccounting%2FShared%20Documents%2FACCT%201016%20Prepayment%20Request%5FSupplier%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FOFS%2DAccounting%2FShared%20Documents) [the U.S.](https://cadgs.sharepoint.com/sites/OFS-Accounting/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FOFS%2DAccounting%2FShared%20Documents%2FACCT%201016%20Prepayment%20Request%5FSupplier%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FOFS%2DAccounting%2FShared%20Documents)

Private Vehicle Use

A private/personal vehicle may be used in lieu of a car rental if it is the most economical method of travel and is in the best interest of the agency. When determining whether to use a personal vehicle or rent a vehicle, travelers should utilize the [Trip Optimizer (enterprise.com)](https://legacy.enterprise.com/car_rental/deeplinkmap.do?bid=046&mcid=DBCA) to ensure the mode of ground transportation selected is the least costly option. The following policies apply to the use of a personal vehicle for official business:

* Travelers should have advance approval to drive a personal vehicle on official business. Each agency will have their own criteria for a traveler using their personal vehicle on official business.

Insert your agency’s procedure for using a personal vehicle on official business here.

* Reimbursement may be issued for mileage expenses within the agency’s travel reimbursement guidelines.
* Mileage reimbursement expenses cover the maintenance and use of the private vehicle, including but not limited to gasoline, upkeep, wear-and-tear, tires, all insurance including liability, collision, and comprehensive coverage, breakdowns, towing, any repairs, and any additional personal expenses that may be incurred by employees because of mechanical breakdown or collision.
* Fuel costs for private vehicles will not be separately reimbursed.

Use of Transportation Network Companies

Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) provide pre-arranged transportation services for compensation using an online-enabled application or platform to connect passengers with drivers using a personal vehicle. Lyft and Uber are two examples of TNCs, and are commonly referred to as “rideshare.”

The following expectations apply to the use of TNCs for official business:

* Reservations may be made on the TNC’s website or through discretionary use of the TNC’s proprietary mobile application. NOTE: the choice to use a TNC application on a personal cell phone is voluntary and at the traveler’s discretion.
* TNC services may be used for travel for authorized business reasons in lieu of a personal vehicle, rental car, or traditional taxi if deemed the most cost-effective method and in the best interest of the agency.
* Travelers are encouraged to use the lowest cost ride/car class available:
	+ Acceptable classes are UberX, UberX Share, Lyft Standard or Lyft Wait and Save.
	+ Uber Green and Lyft Green are acceptable classes as long as the costs are equal to or less than the aforementioned classes.
	+ Any vehicle in excess (size and price) of these classes requires a justification and approval by the employee's immediate supervisor/manager prior to booking. Luxury classes are never allowed for any reason.
* Employees are required to avoid surge/peak pricing whenever possible. Surge/peak pricing can be avoided by waiting a few minutes for the application to update and ride demand to change; or by moving to a different pick up location outside of the surge/peak area.
* TNC services billed to the agency may never be used for commuting and/or personal trips under any circumstance.
* Travelers will be required to reimburse the agency for any non-compliant TNC direct charges.
* Insert additional policies and processes related to TNC use here. If your agency utilizes a direct-bill TNC program (such as Uber for Business), outline the registration process and related policies.

Commercial Lodging (Hotels, Inns, Motels, etc.)

Travelers should utilize the least expensive lodging accommodations that is within a reasonable distance of their business location. Refer to your agency’s internal financial department to determine the allowed reimbursement lodging rates by trip location and duration.

# Preferred Hotel Program Information

The Preferred Hotel Program (PHP) benefits travelers when conducting overnight business and has been established in partnership with the travel agency. The PHP consists of agreements with individual hotels and consists of negotiated rates at or below published federal General Services Administration (GSA) rates. In addition to securing rates at or below GSA rates, these hotel agreements provide complimentary amenities, last room availability, acceptance of Virtual Card Numbers (VCN), and flexible cancellation policies. Reservations should be made with PHP properties by booking in Concur or with a travel agent when possible. For more information on this program, please visit the following link: Preferred Hotel Program.

The following applies to the use of lodging while traveling for official business:

* All lodging arrangements must be made through Concur or a travel agent, except when attending a conference where a "room block' has been negotiated by the host entity or when the hotel/motel does not participate in the contracted online booking tool and is the only property in the immediate area.
* Travelers utilizing an available "room block" should do a cost comparison to determine if it is in the best interest of the agency and if so, direct contact with the hotel to book the room is permissible.
* Travelers or Travel Coordinators should be completing a cost comparison of hotel rooms when booking though Concur. This can be done on Concur when viewing the various different rooms offered at different price points.
* Lodging arrangements (arrival and departure dates) must be within a reasonable time before or after the business event. "Reasonable time" is defined as allowing enough time for travel and check-in but not as to incur additional costs.
* Employees are responsible for knowing the hotel's cancellation policy and for cancelling hotel rooms in accordance with that policy. When cancellation policies are

broken and fees are incurred without justification, travelers may be held responsible for resulting charges.

* Travelers are responsible for their personal charges and must make proper payment arrangements upon check-in or check-out. This includes providing a personal credit card upon check-in even if the hotel is direct billed, so that business and personal costs remain separate on the folio(s).
* Personal charges may include, but are not limited to: use of mini bars, room service in excess of meal allowances, movie rentals, personal phone calls and porter charges.

**Virtual Card Numbers Payments for Hotels**

* **\***Please Note**\*** Not all agencies utilize Virtual Card Numbers (VCN), only review this section if it applies to your agency.
* VCNs are single use 16-digit card numbers that are used to pay for hotel room charges, taxes, resort fees and hotel parking (if applicable).
* VCN accounts are a payment mechanism that gives the agency the ability to use direct billing for the three highest cost components of a trip, thus alleviating a significant financial burden on the traveler.
* Eliminates the need for corporate or individual travel cards issued directly to the employee/traveler.
* The mobile application called Conferma Pay makes the hotel check-in process easier for the traveler. It allows you to manage the VCN process for your hotel reservations. It shows the unique, 16-digit credit card number in the mobile app 24 hours prior to check-in and 24 hours after check-out (in the event you need to provide this card number to the front desk).
* Please take a moment to read the [Virtual Card Program Benefits](https://www.dgs.ca.gov/-/media/Divisions/OFAM/Statewide-Travel-Program/Forms/Miscellaneous/VCN-Resources-Docs/VCN-Flyer-2024.pdf)
* Further information for VCN can be found here: [Virtual Payment and VCN Resources](https://www.dgs.ca.gov/OFAM/Travel/Resources/Page-Content/Resources-List-Folder/Virtual-Payment-and-Virtual-Card-Number)
* Insert your agency’s policy for VCN use, including where to send hotel receipts.

Short-Term Lodging Rentals

Short-term lodging rentals are defined as residential properties that are rented to a traveler for fewer than 30 days through a centralized online platform whereby the rental is advertised, and payments for the rental are securely processed.

Insert your agency’s policy for booking Airbnb and VRBO reservations.

* Short-term rental charges must be paid using a personal payment method.

Travel Advances

If necessary, travelers can submit a Travel Advance request.

Insert your agency specific contacts and directives regarding Travel Advances.

Travelers seeking a Travel Advance should be aware of the following:

* The Travel Advance amount requested should not exceed the minimum amount necessary to cover anticipated reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.
* If a trip is cancelled or postponed indefinitely, the trip request must be cancelled, and the Travel Advance must be returned immediately.
* A traveler may only have one Travel Advance outstanding per trip. Failure to clear a prior Travel Advance may result in the denial of any future requests for additional Travel Advances.

**Traveler’s Responsibilities**

Travelers have a collective responsibility to prevent waste of their agency’s finances. All travelers involved in the travel and expense process have a fiduciary duty to the internal and external stakeholders to control costs by complying with rules and regulations.

Travelers

* Travelers must receive prior approval from their manager before making travel arrangements in Concur or with the contracted travel agency.
	+ Travelers must have a Concur account/profile to make travel arrangements.
* Employees must know the most current lodging reimbursement rates, set by the agency’s internal financial department, before booking travel.
* Use of Concur or the contracted travel agency for booking personal travel arrangements is strictly prohibited, even if the intention is to pay for the travel personally.
* Travelers are required to use direct-bill payment methods when available for business [travel](http://hrmanual.calhr.ca.gov/Home/ManualItem/1/2201) [expenses. This includes but not](http://hrmanual.calhr.ca.gov/Home/ManualItem/1/2201) limited to: airfare, rail, car rental, lodging, ground transportation, meeting and conference-related expenses, and travel agency transaction fees.
* Travelers will be responsible for reimbursing the agency for unauthorized or personal travel expenses, including but not limited to any expenses resulting from upgrades or personal itinerary additions.
* Insert any other agency specific responsibilities for travelers

Approvers (Supervisors)

* List the responsibilities your agency requires for supervisors regarding their employee’s travel. If your agency utilizes Concur pre-trip approval workflows, the following language can be used: Travel reservations booked via Concur and/or call-in service through the contracted travel agency must be approved by the employee's supervisor within the ticketing time frame to avoid cancellation.

**Expense Claims**

Travelers shall follow the training and guides to book travel online or directly through the contracted travel agency.

Reimbursement to non-agency employees (contractors, consultants, volunteers, board and commission members, etc.) must be for actual and necessary out-of-pocket expenses, consistent with applicable reimbursement rates for non-represented employees.

Insert your agency’s specific policy or procedure for the non-employee expense claim process here.

Travel Expense Verification and Reimbursement

In addition to providing pre-trip approval to travelers, authorized travel approvers such as a manager who has knowledge of the employee's travel and associated expenses incurred must provide post-trip approval by:

* Validating the business direct-bill account monthly statement.
* Insert your agency’s specific policy or procedure for accounting directives associated with expense claims.

Any unauthorized or personal expenses charged to the business direct-bill account must be reported immediately to your supervisor.

Typically travelers will submit an expense claim for all business travel expenses. Employees must substantiate the expense claim with all necessary supporting documents/receipts, which generally include the itinerary (such as air, car rental, rail, lodging and virtual payment information).

The travel reimbursement program is subject to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirements. There are no flat reimbursement rates. All items claimed should be for the actual amounts of the expenses, up to the maximum rates allowed.

Generally, expenses arising from travel between home and a traveler’s headquarters are not allowed. Insert your agency’s telework policy here, if applicable.

**Recoupment of Unused Travel Advances, Unused Ticket Funds, Direct-Billed Hotel No-Show Penalties, and Travel Transaction Fees**

Unused ticket funds, hotel and airline no-show penalties and travel transaction fees should be recovered before an employee leaves their agency. Each agency’s Travel Coordinator will organize the recoupment of unused ticket funds so that they can be used for the agency’s future travel needs.

Insert your agency’s policy for recoupment of funds related to airlines, lodging, penalties, and transaction fees

**Questions**

For questions in the following areas, please email:

* Expense claim: Insert your agency’s contact for expense claim assistance.
* Direct Bill (air, rental car, etc.): Insert your agency’s contact for direct bill assistance.
* Travel Advance: Insert your agency’s contact for travel advance assistance.
* General Travel Questions: Insert your agency’s contact for general travel questions.
* For Concur Registration and Related Questions: Insert your agency’s contact for Concur support.

Employees shall utilize the resources provided in this document and submit related questions to the resources noted above.