



TRAVEL & CONFERENCES

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this Chapter

This Chapter details the New York City Department of Education's ("DOE") Guidelines for *Travel and Conferences*. When writing this chapter, the committee followed applicable rules and regulations found in both the [State of New York Office of the State Comptroller Travel Manual](#) and the [City of New York Office of the Comptroller Internal Control and Accountability Directive 6 – Travel, Meals, Lodging and Miscellaneous Agency Expenses](#). Where necessary, guidelines have been modified to address the specific needs of the DOE.

1.1.1 This chapter includes the following topics:

- Definitions and rules to guide the DOE employee who is traveling on business and his/her supervisor or approving authority, with respect to determining the circumstances under and extent to which an employee may be eligible for **transportation, lodging and meals** either provided or reimbursed by the DOE when the employee is on official business and traveling locally or under circumstances that require overnight lodging.
- Guidelines for determining whether and the extent to which an employee may be provided with or reimbursed for **transportation and meals** when the employee, who is not traveling, works or conducts official business beyond his/her regular work hours or on days that are not the employee's regular work days, or is otherwise engaged in a qualifying activity on behalf of the DOE.
- Costs such as facilities, food and other incidental expenses associated with conducting **internal DOE meetings or conferences**.
- Situations where a **non-governmental entity offers to pay for or defray** the cost of official activities engaged in by DOE employees.



1.1.2 Trips for Students

This chapter does **NOT** include procedures regarding trips for students. These procedures are detailed in [Chancellor's Regulation A-670](#).

1.2 Admonitions

Employees, who make or cause a false entry to be made in the records of the Department of Education (DOE,) with the intent to defraud, are subject to administrative and/or disciplinary action, including termination and criminal prosecution. Electronic and hard copy travel forms are business records of the DOE. The information contained in the travel form(s), including, but not limited to representations as to the cost and official business nature of the travel, are relied upon by the DOE in making payments/reimbursements.

1.3 Travel Reimbursement and Approval Certification (TRAC) Form

A new interactive electronic form introduced during school year 2007-2008, has replaced all of the following previously used Travel and Conference forms:

- Application to Attend Meeting, Conference or Convention Outside of NYC – OP221
- Authorization to Use Personal Car
- Business Expense Report – OD-7
- Exceptions to Regulations for Reimbursement
- Small Item Payment Process (SIPP) (former Imprest Fund Expenditure)
- Local Travel/Authorization for Imprest Fund Expenditure – Carfare



The TRAC however **does not replace** the ["Travel Related Expenses Paid for by Non-Governmental Entities Form"](#) which must be used when a non-governmental entity offers to pay for or defray the cost of official activities engaged in by DOE employees.

The TRAC allows the traveler to request permission for travel from his/her approving authority, and apply for reimbursement of eligible travel related expenditures electronically **1**

See section 2.1 and 2.2 for more information regarding the **TRAC**.

1 Documentation must be faxed or scanned then e-mailed.



2. GENERAL INFORMATION ON TRAVEL, LODGING AND MEALS

2.1 Prior Approval Necessary

All employees traveling on official DOE business regardless of destination, title or position must request and secure prior approval for out of town travel through TRAC.

2.2 Travel Reimbursement and Approval Certification (TRAC) Form

2.2.1 The on-line Travel Reimbursement and Approval Certification (TRAC) form process has been developed primarily to address 1) requests to travel out of town and requests for payment or reimbursement of costs associated with that out-of town travel; and 2) requests for costs associated with local travel. [CLICK HERE to access the TRAC form on line.](#)

The traveler must access the TRAC form, enter all necessary information, associated with the out of town travel and/or request for local travel, and submit it electronically to the approving authority.

2.2.2 The approving authority may request additional information or documentation and will have the option to authorize or reject the request.

2.2.3 If approved, a TRAC number will be assigned to the TRAC form. The TRAC number and authorization to travel will be electronically transmitted to the requester.

2.2.4 If rejected, the requester will automatically be notified. No TRAC number will be assigned.

2.2.5 For out of town travel, there must be an approved budget within the cost limits set forth in this Chapter. Upon approval for out of town travel, the required account information provided on the TRAC form will be pre-encumbered in FAMIS.



- 2.2.6** When air or lodging travel arrangements are made and/or travel is completed, the TRAC is retrieved by the assigned TRAC number and the traveler will enter and confirm his/her arrangements and/or the actual expenses.
- 2.2.7** All eligible travel-related expenditures will be charged against the TRAC pre-encumbrance.
- 2.2.8** Copies of supporting documentation along with itemized statement(s) of costs/expenditures must be electronically transmitted to the approving authority receiving the TRAC unless original documentation is required by the approving authority for review (with personal information redacted).²
- 2.2.9** Payment and/or reimbursement of local travel expenses will automatically be processed and charged against the required account information stated on the TRAC form.
- 2.2.10** The hardcopy of the approved TRAC and related supporting documentation are DOE records and, as such, must be maintained at the approving site and made available immediately upon request for audit or review.
- 2.2.11** If the employee submitted a copy of proof of expenditure, the original must be retained by the employee in such manner as to make the original immediately available. The original must be retained for a period of six (6) years.

² Supporting documentation includes receipts when required, a statement of the business purpose of the travel, an agenda of the meeting or conference attended (if applicable) that shows that the business discussed relates to the employee's duties and responsibilities, a listing of conference attendees (if applicable) for whom reimbursement of expenses is being requested.



2.2.12 The employee must certify that the information contained and/or provided on the TRAC is true and accurate, including, but not limited to the representations as to the cost and official business nature of the travel.

2.3 Approving Authority

The approving authority is a superintendent, head of office, principal, or head of a Financial Management Center/Integrated Service Center (FMC/ISC) or his/her designee. The designee's name must be kept on file at the respective site.

2.4 Responsibility of the Traveler

- Understand DOE rules and regulations as detailed in this SOP.
- Include a detailed statement explaining the official business purpose for which expenses were incurred. General statements, such as, "on official business," "by direction of," or "in connection with duties" does not meet the requirement.
- Submit the TRAC and all necessary supporting travel documents to an approving authority.
- Use the Procurement Card (P-Card) for all expenditures where appropriate.
- Use the contracted travel vendor. Division of Contracts and Purchasing's (DCP's) Office of Client Services, 718-935-4444, can provide the name of the contracted vendor and contract number.

Note:

A Principal Weekly article published in the June 1, 2010 edition of the "Principal's Weekly Newsletter" details new travel procedures pertaining to a new travel contract for out of city travel. You may access this article by clicking the following link:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/ronlyres/A6834038-CE7B-41A4-96AF-46E8B39649D9/84009/PWJun110NewTravelProcedures.pdf>



- Make accurate and timely electronic submissions (through TRAC) for reimbursement of eligible travel related expenditures. General intra-office travel is reimbursable (Metro Card or mileage reimbursement) if on official business. Costs for car service are reimbursable if transporting material.
- Claim reimbursement only for actual and allowable expenditures.

2.5 Responsibility of the Supervisor or Approving Authority

- Understand DOE rules and regulations as detailed in this SOP.
- Approve through **TRAC** all requests for DOE business-related travel **regardless of destination** (except for travel outside of the United States (US) – section 4.5) and all estimated (entered when permission to travel is requested) and/or actual expenses.
- Approve TRAC requests only when necessary, and for a DOE purpose.
- Review forms and supporting records to determine compliance with the applicable rules and regulations outlined in this SOP and for overall reasonableness and cost in relationship to the employee's scope of responsibility, destination (if applicable) and method of travel and accuracy of computation.
- Forward documents to appropriate offices in a timely manner.
- Maintain a hardcopy of the approved **TRAC**, with related supporting documentation, at the approving site as a DOE business record.
- Ensure that missing or insufficient information is completed by the employee before forwarding the **TRAC** for processing.

2.6 Trips Sponsored by Political and/or Religious Organizations

Trips to attend conferences or conventions sponsored by political and religious organizations must be approved by the Chancellor or his/her designee (Executive Director, DFO) before entering the travel request in TRAC.



2.7 Payment or Reimbursement for Meals

Payment or reimbursement for meals is permitted **only** when the traveler is in **overnight travel status** as defined in section 4.1.

2.8 Overtime Meal Allowance During Travel

Meals may be approved notwithstanding that overnight travel criteria are not met if the traveler is a non-management employee covered by a collective bargaining agreement that provides for meals for employees who are compensated for overtime at the rate of straight time and who work two or more continuous hours of overtime. Employees who are paid in excess of straight time for overtime or who receive an overtime meal allowance, are **not eligible** for a travel meal allowance.

2.9 Transportation Between Home and Primary Work Site

Commuting expenses, that is, expenses associated with the first trip to and the last trip from the primary worksite, are not reimbursable. However, if the employee has to travel to a temporary field location³ and the traveling costs to the field location exceed the traveling costs to the primary worksite, the employee may be reimbursed for the excess costs.

2.10 Most Efficient and Cost Effective Method of Travel

Travel should be by the most efficient and cost effective method of transportation available. A common carrier usually provides the least costly and most expeditious means of transportation. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Chancellor or his/her designee, and for good cause, coach fares and/or economy class for air travel must be used.

Note:

DOE's contracted travel vendor is obligated to obtain the most economical air fares.

³ Location other than the employee's primary worksite where an employee has been assigned to work on a temporary basis.



2.11 Travel Other than by Public Transportation

If an employee is unable to use public transportation **and** the site supervisor has approved the use of other means of transportation, the employee must clearly indicate on the **TRAC** why public transportation could **not** be used.

2.12 MetroCards

- Schools, districts, and FMCs/CFNs are authorized to maintain a supply of MetroCards for use by staff on official business, and in certain circumstances, individuals not employed by the DOE who may be asked to render a service to a particular school or site.
- MetroCards must be **stored in a secure location** with access limited to authorized staff. The school, district, or FMC/CFN should designate an individual who will act as the “custodian” of the MetroCards.
- An employee may be issued an unlimited daily, weekly or monthly MetroCard if it is determined to be cost effective.
- The “custodian” distributing the MetroCards must **maintain a record** of the following when distributing a MetroCard to an employee, and where applicable, to non-DOE individuals who have been asked to render a service to the school or site:
 - The serial number or other identification for the MetroCard being issued
 - The departure location
 - The final destination
 - The date of the trip
 - The name of employee or non-employee receiving the card.



2.13 E-Z Pass

Employees who use a personal *E-Z Pass* account to pay for tolls incurred on official business will be reimbursed upon production of a toll record issued by E-Z Pass. Although receipts are not available in the *E-Z Pass* lanes, *E-Z Pass* statements are mailed to account holders. More immediate access to the toll record can be obtained through the [E-Z Pass website](#).

E-Z Pass accounts in the name of the DOE may be established only for vehicles used *exclusively* for official business.

2.14 Travel by Air, AMTRAK and Common Carrier

The DOE has entered into a [contract with a travel agency](#) for employee travel by air, AMTRAK and certain common carriers. This vendor is obligated to provide the most economical air fares. Before booking transport by any means, the employee must contact the contracted vendor and use the vendor's services unless the vendor does not provide service by a carrier that serves between the trip start-point and destination. In those cases, the employee must provide a written statement as part of TRAC that the vendor was contacted on a specific date and could not provide transportation. DCP's Office of Client Services, 718-935-4444, can provide the name of the contracted vendor and contract number.

DOE Offices and Schools are required to initiate in the Financial Accounting Management Information System (FAMIS) Portal a Purchase Order (PO) to the current contracted vendor for all encumbrances related to travel.

- The PO must be approved by the approving authority.
- Once approved, the PO is automatically routed for an additional approval at DFO's Bureau of Finance.
- Once final approval is entered, the encumbered PO is transmitted to the contracted vendor.



2.14.1 Frequent Flyer Miles

In accordance with the NYC Conflicts of Interest Board's ruling (Advisory Opinion 2006-5), DOE employees may accumulate and use for personal travel frequent flyer miles they earned while traveling on official DOE business. However, employees may not make a selection of travel arrangements at additional expense to the DOE in order to receive or increase frequent flyer benefits.

2.14.2 Expenses To and From Transportation Terminal

Employees will be reimbursed the actual costs for taxi or common carriers between residence/work site and transportation terminals or for personal car mileage in accordance with their collective bargaining unit. The DOE will determine if costs are reasonable and necessary.

2.14.3 Unused Tickets

If a trip is cancelled with just cause, a credit for future travel will be issued to the DOE by the travel vendor. This credit should be used for travel within the same fiscal year to avoid accounting concerns.

If the flight is cancelled by the airline, a cash refund will be issued by the travel vendor to the DOE.

2.15 Taxes

- **Meals:** All taxes are included in the per diem meal rate.
- **Lodging:** Taxes are not included in the maximum GSA lodging rates.
- For travel **in NYS**, employees must use the DOE's [Exempt Organization Certificate](#). Taxes paid on lodging costs in NYS are not reimbursable. For **travel outside NYS**, applicable state taxes are reimbursable.



2.16 Sundry Charges

2.16.1 Baggage Transfer Charges

Reasonable baggage transfer and storage charges are reimbursable.

2.16.2 Personal Expenses

Personal expenses, such as laundry, valet service, movie rentals, theater or cruises, entertainment, and transportation to and from eating establishments are not reimbursable. Social activities such as site seeing and golf outings, are considered personal expenses and will not be reimbursed.

2.16.3 Tipping and Gratuities

Customary and reasonable tips and gratuities (not to exceed 18% of cost less taxes if applicable) for *transportation* services and at lodging establishments (e.g., bell services) are reimbursable expenses. The cost of tips for *meal* service is incorporated into the per diem and other meal rates provided in this SOP and, therefore, are not reimbursable.

2.16.4 Telephone Calls

- Only telephone charges incurred for official DOE business will be reimbursed.
- Employees on overnight travel will be reimbursed for two personal calls of reasonable duration (10 minutes of charge time) for each day of travel.
- Calls from personal cellular telephones may be reimbursed only in cases of emergency and when no other telephone was available.



2.16.5 Miscellaneous Office Services

The cost of fax, express mail, photocopying, postage, modem connection or other incidental office business services to further a DOE business purpose is reimbursable. Employees must document the date, time and purpose and provide receipts.

2.16.6 Membership Fees

Membership fees in job-related professional organizations will be reimbursed when authorized by the approving authority. Organizational memberships must be in the name of the DOE in care of the employee. The employee's job title must be identified.

2.17 Vehicles

2.17.1 When Vehicles May Be Used

It may be impossible or impractical to use public transportation to carry out an employee's professional obligations. The approving authority will make the determination **on a case-by-case basis** whether a DOE-owned vehicle, privately-owned vehicle, rental car, car service or taxi may be used.⁴

All receipts related to the use of non-public transportation (parking, tolls) must be electronically transferred to the approving authority receiving the **TRAC**.

2.17.2 DOE-Owned Vehicles

The Division of School Facilities' (DSF's) Office of Fleet Management, 409 Red Hook Lane, Brooklyn, New York 11201, telephone (718) 935-5743, oversees purchase and maintenance of the DOE's vehicles and reports on their use.

⁴ *Travelers should attempt to access a DOE vehicle before any other means of private transportation is used.*



2.17.2.1 General Guidelines – DOE-Owned Vehicles

- Each FMC/CFN is responsible for assigning vehicles within its operation.
- Approval by the approving authority must be obtained before using a DOE-owned vehicle.
- The approving authority may approve an employee's use of a DOE-owned vehicle assigned to his/her FMC/CFN on a **regular basis (vehicle is taken to the employee's primary residence overnight)** if at least one (1) of the following conditions exist:
 - An employee must work **extensive hours** outside his/her normal business hours.
 - An employee's primary responsibility includes **extensive field work**.
 - An employee's work assignment requires him/her to be **readily available** to travel from home or assignment on a twenty-four (24) hour basis.
 - The **vehicle cannot safely be left at the work location overnight**.

Note:

If the vehicle is used by an employee on a regular basis and the usage includes commuting to and from the DOE worksite, the employee's gross wages will be increased at the rate of \$3.00 per day for W-2 reporting purposes only because the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) considers such use to be a taxable fringe benefit.



- Expenditures for gasoline, emergency repairs, towing, car washes, tolls and parking will be reimbursed. Mileage will not be reimbursed. The license plate number of the vehicle must be noted on all requests for reimbursement.

2.17.2.2 User's Obligations – DOE Vehicles

Upon receiving approval from his/her approving authority, an employee using a DOE-owned vehicle must comply with the following:

- The vehicle may only be used for official business.
- A daily log must be maintained detailing hours of use, locations visited and daily mileage. The log must be signed by the driver and then approved by his/her approving authority. The log must be maintained at each FMC/CFN with a copy forwarded within ten (10) working days after the end of the month to DSF's Office of Fleet Management, 409 Red Hook Lane, Brooklyn, New York 11201.
- If the vehicle is kept overnight, it must be parked at the employee's primary residence. If the employee must park elsewhere, approval must be obtained from the Executive Director, Superintendent or other Approving Authority.
- All employees who drive a DOE-owned vehicle must have a valid driver's license issued by the state in which he/she resides. A copy of this license must be on file with his/her supervisor. Additionally, the employee's license must be free of the following violations within ONE (1) year from date of requesting the DOE vehicle
 - DUI - Driving Under the Influence
 - DWI – Driving While Intoxicated
 - DWAI – Driving While Ability Impaired (or similar violation if licensed outside NYS).



- An employee is prohibited from operating a DOE vehicle if:
 - His/her driver's license has been suspended within the last 3 years.
 - Two (2) or more moving violations within the last 3 years.

2.17.2.3 The EMPLOYEE must do the following in the event of an ACCIDENT/INCIDENT while operating a DOE-owned vehicle:

- Immediately notify the police
- Immediately notify his/her supervisor – provide copy of police accident report

2.17.2.4 The SUPERVISOR must do the following in the event an employee reports an ACCIDENT/INCIDENT while operating a DOE-owned vehicle:

- Immediately notify DSF's Office of Fleet Management, 409 Red Hook Lane, Brooklyn, New York 11201.

2.17.2.5 The EMPLOYEE must do the following in the event a violation/summons is issued while operating a:

DOE-Owned,
Privately-Owned
or
Rental Car Vehicle:



- **Parking Violation**

The employee who was responsible for the vehicle at the time the summons was issued must pay the fine either immediately (if the employee is not contesting the violation) or upon notification that the adjudication process⁵ resulted in a finding that the vehicle was parked illegally.

- **Moving Violation**

The employee must immediately notify his/her supervisor (and rental agency if applicable). The employee will be responsible for any fines.

2.17.3 **Privately Owned Vehicle**

2.17.3.1 **General Guidelines – Privately-Owned Vehicles**

- Each FMC/CFN must develop written procedures for approving the use of a private vehicle for official DOE business. These procedures must be consistent with the regulations detailed in this SOP.
- The “Private Vehicle Information” section of the **TRAC**⁶ must be completed in full by the employee and submitted with a copy of the employee’s driver’s license. The approving authority cannot approve the use of the private vehicle unless all relevant information on the **TRAC** has been provided and the license submitted.

⁵ The adjudication process begins with the employee’s completion of the City of New York Official Business Affidavit for Parking Violation summons which can be obtained from the Office of Fleet Management. The completed affidavit (with a copy of the summons and the DOE Parking Permit, if any was assigned to the vehicle) should be forwarded to DSF’s Office of Fleet Management, 409 Red Hook Lane, Brooklyn, New York 11201

⁶ The Private Vehicle Information section of the TRAC requires the employee to identify the vehicle by state of registration and plate number and to certify that the employee’s license has not been suspended, that no violations or criminal charges are pending against the employee; that the vehicle inspection is current, that minimum legal threshold of automobile insurance is in effect and that the employee is the registered owner or has been authorized by the registered owner to operate the vehicle and use it to conduct DOE business.



- If time does not permit pre-approval, the approving authority may, at his/her discretion, approve the use of a private vehicle at a later date if all relevant **TRAC** information has been provided and the license submitted.

Note:

Permission to use private vehicles should only be granted when alternative means of transportation are not practicable. Permission should not be granted because it is the employees' preferred means of transportation or for convenience.

2.17.3.2 – Before operating a personal vehicle for DOE Business, the employee must certify to the following:

- He/she is the registered owner of the vehicle or has been authorized by the registered owner to operate the vehicle and use it to conduct DOE business.
- His/her driver's license is **not** suspended.
- He/she does **not** have any of the following violations within ONE (1) year from date of this application:
 - **DUI** - Driving Under the Influence
 - **DWI** – Driving While Intoxicate
 - **DWAI** – Driving While Ability Impaired (or similar violation if licensed outside NYS).
- He/she has minimum auto insurance is in effect on the vehicle to be used for official DOE business.



- That vehicle inspection is current on the vehicle to be used for official DOE business.
- He/she will maintain a daily log indicating the mileage and points of departure and destination.

2.17.3.3 Expenses Related to Use of Privately-Owned Vehicles

- The **mileage allowance** for the approved use of a private vehicle is \$0.28 per mile. ⁷
- **Costs incurred for gasoline, motor oil and fluids, accessories, repairs, depreciation, towing** and other similar items will **not** be reimbursed inasmuch as those costs are factored into the mileage allowance.
- **Parking charges** are reimbursable under the following circumstances:
 - The expense was reasonable, necessary, and related to official DOE business.
 - Suitable free parking was not available.
 - A parking receipt is submitted unless a meter was used.
- In addition to mileage, **tolls** will be reimbursed. (See EZ Pass section 2.13 for information about use of a personal E-Z Pass account).
- All requests for reimbursement should be made on the **TRAC** form. Receipts for parking and tolls must be electronically transferred to the person receiving the **TRAC**.

⁷ Since mileage rates may change, memoranda citing current figures will be issued periodically.



- If the employee's private **E-Z Pass was used**, a copy of the statement with the appropriate toll transaction(s) circled must be forwarded. Forward this with the **TRAC**.

2.17.3.4 Private Vehicle Travel Record

If an employee uses his/her private vehicle for business travel or to conduct official business, *and* if more than 100 miles are traveled, or more than two locations are visited per day, a *Private Vehicle Travel Record* **8** must be electronically submitted to the individual receiving the **TRAC**.

The *Private Vehicle Travel Record* must contain the following:

- Date and purpose of travel
- Travel itinerary, listing each stop and/or final destination
- Initial and ending odometer readings
- Calculation showing multiplication of total mileage by mileage rate allowance

2.17.3.5 The EMPLOYEE must do the Following in the event of an ACCIDENT/INCIDENT while operating a Privately-Owned vehicle used on Official DOE Business:

- Report accident/incident to police;
- Report accident/incident to insurance company;

8 FMCs/CFNs may design a form unique to their respective priorities.



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- Provide reports from police and insurance company to immediate supervisor (in the event of a lawsuit).
- Comply with all applicable laws of the jurisdiction within which the accident occurred, as well as all applicable laws of the jurisdiction that issued the employee's driver's license.

2.17.3.6 The SUPERVISOR must do the following in the event an employee reports an ACCIDENT/INCIDENT while operating a Privately-Owned vehicle used on Official DOE Business:

- Immediately notify DSF's Office of Fleet Management, 409 Red Hook Lane, Brooklyn, New York 11201.

2.17.3.7 If a VIOLATION/SUMMONS is issued while operating a Privately-Owned Vehicle on Official DOE Business:

Employees must follow section 2.17.2.5 guidelines

2.17.4 Rental Car

2.17.4.1 General Guidelines – Rental Car

All requests for reimbursement for the cost of a rental car must be made on the **TRAC** form. Receipts for parking and tolls must be electronically transferred to the person receiving the **TRAC**.

2.17.4.2 Use the DOE Contracted Rental Car Vendor

The employee should call DCP's Office of Client Services at 718-935-4444 to ascertain the contracted vendor. Bidding is required if there is no active rental car contract, and the anticipated total cost for a car rental will be in excess of \$250. Bidding guidelines and thresholds in the SOP chapter on "[OTPS Purchases](#)" must be followed.



Reimbursable costs include the rental fee of a compact car for up to two (2) DOE employees traveling together or a midsize vehicle for three (3) or more DOE employees traveling together,, mileage fees, gasoline charges, parking expenses, and tolls.

2.17.4.3 If Using the P-Card to rent the vehicle

In addition to any other requirements imposed by the car rental agency, the person to whom the P-card is issued must be the one signing the rental agreement. The last four digits of the P-Card account number should be written next to the renter's signature.

2.17.4.4 P-Card Insurance

The P-Card provides for (collision/damage and personal effects) insurance as follows

- Up to **\$50,000 per incident** on claims for which the cardholder or any other authorized driver is legally responsible to the rental agency on a primary basis. Generally, this is coverage for bodily injury and/or property damage claims that the rental car company must pay to someone injured in a car accident that is determined to be due in whole or in part to the negligence of the cardholder or someone permitted by the cardholder to drive the rental car. In other words, the property damage aspect of the coverage is not for damage or loss of the rental car but damage or loss of other people's property as a result of an accident.)
- Physical damage and theft of the vehicle up to its market value, not to exceed **\$50,000**. This covers occurrences of fire, theft and/or collision that result in damage to or loss of the rental vehicle.
- Reasonable and customary charges imposed by the rental agency for the period the vehicle is being repaired ("Loss of Use" charges).



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- Reasonable and customary towing charges to the nearest qualified repair facility imposed by the rental agency on a covered loss.
- Secondary Personal Effects insurance to cover damage or theft of personal property that was in the rental car. The employee must first file a claim under other applicable insurance (e.g., home or business), if any. Whatever is not covered by the employee's insurance will be covered by the P-Card. Maximum coverage per rental period is **\$1,000 per covered person, per occurrence**. The total benefits per rental period cannot exceed **\$2,000**.

THEREFORE, employees **cannot use the P-Card to purchase the optional collision/damage waiver and the personal effects insurance** offered by the rental car agency. If the P-card is used for that purpose, the employee will be required to refund to the DOE the cost of the insurance. If the employee wishes to obtain additional coverage above the amount provided by the P-Card, the employee cannot use the P-card to do so and will not be reimbursed for its cost. If the P-card is used for the purchase of additional coverage, the employee will be required to refund to the DOE the cost of the insurance.

2.17.4.5 If not using the P-Card to rent the vehicle

- The employee will **not** be reimbursed for the purchase of optional insurance coverage in the amounts indicated in 2.17.4.4, above if (s)he uses a personal credit card to rent the vehicle and the credit card company provides (without cost) the same coverage as does the P-Card. If, however, the credit card coverage is **less** than indicated in 2.17.4.4 above, the employee may purchase additional coverage up to the limits stated in section 2.17.4.4, and will be reimbursed for the additional coverage.
- An employee will not be reimbursed for the purchase of additional coverage in **excess** of that stated in 2.17.4.4 above.



2.17.4.6 The EMPLOYEE Must Do the Following in the Event of an ACCIDENT/INCIDENT While Operating a Rental Car on Official DOE Business:

- Immediately notify the police
- Immediately notify the rental car agency – provide copy of the police report
- Immediately notify his/her insurance company (if applicable) – provide copy police accident report
- Immediately notify his/her supervisor – provide copy of police accident report

2.17.4.7 Do the following if a **violation/summons is issued while operating a Rental Car on Official DOE Business:**

Employees must follow section 2.17.2.5 guidelines

2.17.5 Car Service

2.17.5.1 General Guidelines

- All requests for reimbursement of car service expenses should be made on the **TRAC** form. Receipts for parking and tolls must be electronically transferred to the person receiving the **TRAC**.
- Reasonable fares and customary tipping will be allowed.



3. LOCAL TRAVEL NOT SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Note:

Topic 5 discusses rules for lodging and meals that are relative to DOE sponsored events.

3.1 When an Individual is Traveling Locally, Only Transportation Costs are Reimbursable

Local Travel is:

All travel within, or to a destination within, the boundaries of NYC's five boroughs.



4. OVERNIGHT TRAVEL NOT SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Note:

Topic 5 discusses rules for lodging and meals that are relative to DOE sponsored events.

4.1 Overnight Travel

- Overnight travel may be incurred in connection with official business. When authorizing overnight travel for training, education and professional conferences or other official DOE business, the approving authority must ensure that the traveler's written travel request describe how this travel provides a specific educational or other benefit that cannot be gained in any other manner or within NYC or other local travel destination. Also, the approving authority must consider the consequences of not having the traveler at the school or office, and the expense of the trip must be weighed carefully against the benefits to be derived from the travel.
- Payment/reimbursement for overnight travel expenses are permitted whenever authorized in accordance with this SOP chapter.
- If an employee is covered by a collective bargaining agreement, the relevant terms of the collective bargaining agreement will apply for reimbursement of travel expenses.
- To receive the full per diem meal rate it is necessary for travelers to be in (1) overnight travel status *and* (2) eligible for both breakfast and dinner.



4.2 Overnight Lodging

4.2.1 Payment for overnight lodging is permitted if the following conditions are met:

- The travel results in, or would result in, a work day of more than 11½ hours from departure from home to return home; or
- Starting time of activity is so early that starting the trip from home or work location to arrive on time would require an employee to leave before 7 a.m.; or
- The business of the conference or meeting extends into or begins in the evening, and the employee will be unable to return home or to his/her work location by 11 p.m.; or
- The conference, seminar or convention requires on-site preparation the day before the conference by the person attending, or
- It becomes necessary to secure lodging because it becomes impossible or imprudent to travel home due to an unforeseeable situation.
- If lodging is provided by another agency or organization, this should be indicated on the TRAC, and the employee may claim just the meal allowance(s) established by the US General Services Administration ([GSA](#)).

4.2.2 The GSA establishes maximum rates for overnight lodging, exclusive of applicable taxes, by state, county, and/or city. For lodging within New York State, employees must use the DOE's tax exempt certificate as the DOE will not reimburse employees or pay for the portion of lodging costs that represents NYS taxes.



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4.2.3 If the lodging rate exceeds the maximum rate per day specified in the [GSA](#) guidelines, the attendee/traveler must obtain prior approval from the Executive Director, Division of Financial Operations (DFO) who is the Chancellor's designee for approving thresholds above GSA rates. The approving authority may authorize payment or reimbursement under the following circumstances:

- There is no other available low-cost lodging in the vicinity of the conference site, or
- There are other professional and/or cost-saving benefits by staying at the conference site. For example, the employee is a presenter or an officer of the sponsoring organization; the conference site accepts DOE and NYC payment methods, or results in reduced transportation and/or meal costs for the employee, and/or the conference site is at a hotel (or other type of lodging) which charges a rate higher than the [GSA](#) rate.
- Employees who spend less than the [GSA](#) rate will be reimbursed only for actual lodging expenditures. Employee(s) must electronically forward lodging receipt(s) in all cases to the approving authority receiving the TRAC.

4.2.4 Conference registration, workshop and/or relevant activity charges are reimbursable, provided such fees are itemized in the conference registration literature. Costs for nonessential, personal or social activities unrelated to official business are not reimbursable.

4.2.5 See other sections of this SOP for supporting documentation requirements and reimbursement methods.



4.3 Transportation

- 4.3.1** In all travel situations, the most economical and practical means of transportation should be selected. Additional factors, including the number of people traveling, luggage and materials to be transported, meeting schedules, employee health, safety and comfort, the cost of employee time and the impact on the employee's ability to efficiently conduct official business upon arrival, should be considered when deciding on the most appropriate means of transportation.
- 4.3.2** See sections 2.10 and 2.17 of this SOP for the general guidelines on use of public transit, DOE vehicle, personal vehicle, car rental, taxicab/car service.
- 4.3.3** When transportation transfers to conference events are included as part of conference registration, reimbursement for other types of transportation will not be provided unless justified and documented.

4.4 Meals

- 4.4.1** Notwithstanding the actual expenditure, the overnight traveler is entitled to the GSA daily meal rate. Please [click here](#) to access the home page of GSA: The GSA daily meal rate for overnight travel includes taxes and tips. Meal allowances for destinations within the United States vary according to the travel destination, and consist of individual breakfast, lunch and dinner components. Per diem rates for meals are allowances which employees receive regardless of actual expenditures. It is a flat rate that does not require production of receipts.
- 4.4.2** When employees travel less than a full day, partial meal reimbursement will be made, in accordance with the breakfast, lunch and dinner components of the [GSA rates](#).



4.4.3 Payment for breakfast, lunch and/or dinner will be allowed when overnight travel requires **leaving home** or the primary work station before the following hours:

Breakfast 7 a.m.

Lunch 11 a.m.

Dinner 6 p.m.

4.4.4 Payment for breakfast, lunch and/or dinner will be allowed when the overnight travel requires **arrival at home** or the primary work station after the following hours:

Breakfast 8 a.m.

Lunch 2 p.m.

Dinner 7 p.m.

4.4.5 Where the registration fee includes one or more meals, the per diem allowance must be reduced accordingly.

4.5 Travel Outside the United States for DOE Personnel (International Trips)

This section does **NOT** include procedures regarding international trips for students. These procedures are detailed in [Chancellor's Regulation A-670](#).

4.5.1 All rules and regulations regarding out of town trips (overnight trips) as detailed in this chapter must be followed for International Trips as well.



4.5.2 Approvals for International Trips

DFO Personnel	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
School Based Personnel other than the Principal (3-Level Process)	Principal	Superintendent	Executive Director, Division of Financial Operations Chancellor's Designee
School Principal (2-Level Process)	Not Applicable	Superintendent	Executive Director, Division of Financial Operations Chancellor's Designee
Other Personnel not in a School Site (2-Level Process)	Not Applicable	Executive Director or Site Supervisor (See note 3)	Executive Director, Division of Financial Operations Chancellor's Designee

Notes:

1. Once the TRAC is approved on the first level, it will be automatically emailed to the second and/or third level. All travelers and approving officials will be notified regarding the disposition of the TRAC. If the TRAC is rejected on any level it becomes void and a new TRAC must be promulgated.
2. Ethics Officer Approval - Provisions detailed in Section 6 of this chapter – Travel and Conference Expenses Paid for by Non- Governmental Entities must be followed for International Trips.
3. The Executive Director, DFO does **NOT** approve the validity of international trips. This rests solely with the site supervisor and the superintendent. DFO's Executive Director does approve when GSA thresholds have been exceeded and/or when international trips require financial considerations.



4.5.3 Travel outside the continental United States is reimbursed based on the per diem rate allowance established by the [U.S. Department of State](#).

4.5.4 If a claim is made for expenses paid in foreign currency, documentation showing the amount in American dollars (e.g., credit card bill) for such expenses must be provided.

4.5.5 Expenses directly related to lodging and meals are included in the per diem allowance. Incidental expenses unique to foreign travel for which reimbursement can be sought are:

- Visa fees
- Passport fees
- Cost to convert currency
- Travelers' checks charges
- Departure Taxes
- Required immunizations and inoculations not paid for by insurance



5. DOE SPONSORED MEETINGS, CONFERENCES OR RETREATS

This section provides guidelines for facility costs, lodging and the provision of food at meetings, conferences or retreats where official DOE business is conducted. DOE staff responsible for arranging and authorizing reimbursement for such events must be cognizant of the potential for abuse in this area and must closely monitor the appropriateness of such expenditures.

Upon receiving approval from an approving authority for conducting a DOE sponsored meeting, conference or retreat, the persons responsible for making and approving the arrangements must abide by the following guidelines in order to have the vendor invoice(s) for the costs associated with the event, submitted by the sponsoring DOE division, office, school or otherwise, be processed for payment.

5.1 Outside of Worksite - Without Overnight Lodging

To minimize meeting expenditures, DOE should make every effort to schedule business meetings within the City, at City offices, during customary business hours.

5.1.1 Facility

- A suitable free or low cost facility (DOE, other government or not-for-profit organization site) should be used for DOE-sponsored meetings and activities. (See also section 6.3 of this SOP chapter.)

Notes:

The DOE presently has an arrangement with St. Francis College to use free of charge their facilities for DOE events and activities. Please contact St. Francis College for additional details

- A DOE contracted facility vendor should be used if a suitable free or low cost facility is unavailable. Call DCP's Office of Client Services at 718-935-4444 or [click here](#) to ascertain contracted vendors.



- If a DOE contracted facility is unavailable, a non-contracted facility may be obtained in accordance with SOP bidding guidelines and thresholds in the chapter on "Other Than Personal Services" ("[OTPS Purchases](#)").

5.1.2 Refreshments & Meals

- DOE payment or reimbursement for refreshments and meals at meetings should not be a routine business practice.
- Meals solely among City employees taken outside the office, but not at a meeting or conference, must not be paid from City funds under any circumstances.

5.1.3 Food Providers

- The Office of School Food (OSF) (718) 707-4350) should be used if it has been determined that it is appropriate to serve refreshments and/or meals at the DOE-sponsored event. If OSF's Office of Special Events cannot fulfill the request or the site for the event requires that its catering vendor be used or there is another reason that OSF cannot be used, that condition must be explained in writing and made part of the records supporting expenditures for the event.
- If OSF is not used, the procurement of a food vendor must be in accordance with the bidding procedures of the SOP chapter "[OTPS Purchases.](#)"
- Any fees paid to a non-OSF food provider must be limited to the maximum per person meal allowances permitted by the federal GSA. The [current GSA rates](#) approved for NYC are provided on the chart in section



5.1.4 Maximum Meal Allowances Per Person for DOE Sponsored Meetings, Conferences or Retreats

- These allowances *include* tips, taxes and delivery charges. Receipts are not required.

<u>Meal</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Breakfast	\$12.00
Lunch	\$18.00
Dinner	\$31.00

Notes:

Please periodically check the GSA site ([CLICK HERE](#)) to ensure that the above chart reflects the current rates.

- Any costs incurred for alcoholic beverages are **NOT** to be paid using DOE funds under any circumstances.
- The persons responsible for scheduling and approving DOE-sponsored events should make every effort to limit the length of meetings in order not to incur meal expenditures.

5.2 Outside of Worksite - With Overnight Lodging

- Approval must be obtained from the approving authority before scheduling a DOE-sponsored event that involves overnight lodging.



When authorizing overnight travel for training, education and professional conferences or other official DOE business, the approving authority must ensure that the traveler's written travel request describe how this travel provides a specific educational or other benefit that cannot be gained in any other manner or within NYC or other local travel destination. Also, the approving authority must consider the consequences of not having the traveler at the school or office, and the expense of the trip must be weighed carefully against the benefits to be derived from the travel.

- The facility in which the overnight DOE-sponsored event is held must be procured in accordance with SOP bidding guidelines in the chapter on "[OTPS Purchases.](#)"
- The maximum daily *per capita* rate for any DOE-sponsored event that includes the cost of overnight accommodations, food, use of meeting/conference rooms and any related facilities, services such as fax, computer, telephones, copying privileges and any other incidental expenses, is \$250.00.
- DOE-sponsored events requiring overnight accommodations may involve various categories of expenditures, some of which have specific maximum allowances set by this SOP. Note that the GSA establishes maximum rates for overnight lodging, exclusive of applicable taxes, by state, county, and/or city. Persons responsible for scheduling and approving these events should consider the total cost for booking a site as it is possible that a lower total cost may be achieved even where the maximum allowance within a particular expenditure category is exceeded. Under those circumstances, the site with the lower *total* cost should be selected. A written statement explaining the reasons for exceeding any specific maximum allowance must be made part of the records supporting expenditures for the event.

5.3 At the Worksite - When Light Refreshments or Modest Meals Can be Served

- Providing food at DOE internal meetings held at the worksite should not be a routine practice. Light refreshments for \$3 per person and modest meals for \$8 per person is appropriate only under the following circumstances:
 - When an out-of-town official, consultant, private firm or other party, who is not being paid by the DOE, meets with DOE employees.



- When the DOE invites vendors who are potential bidders on an RFP to a formal proposers' conference where the RFP is explained and discussed.
- At a meeting lasting more than two hours, held at the meeting organizer's worksite and attended by more than fifty people who are away from their worksites.
- At an all day meeting of unpaid volunteers.
- When an office/department/site head holds periodic meetings with key managerial staff, provided the meeting is more than two hours,

or

- At a meeting starting at least two hours before the regular work/school starting time **or** continuing **at least** two hours beyond normal work/school time, provided that attendees do not paid overtime or receive a meal allowance.
- If light refreshments and modest meals are appropriate, [OSF catering services](#) (see procedures) must be used unless doing so is not possible.
- If OSF is not used, the procurement of a food vendor must be in accordance with the bidding procedures of the SOP chapter "[OTPS Purchases.](#)"
- Any fees paid to a non-OSF food provider must be limited to the maximum per person meal allowances permitted by the federal GSA. The current GSA rates approved for NYC are provided on the chart in section 5.1.4.



6. TRAVEL AND CONFERENCES PAID FOR BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES

6.1 Travel Expenses Paid for by Non-Government Entities

All arrangements that fall under section 6.1 must be approved by the DOE's Ethics Officer as per 6.2 below.

- Employees may be invited by non-government entities, including private and/or not-for-profit organizations, to attend a meeting, conference or seminar at the non-government entity's expense. In other words, such entities are offering to pay an employee's travel, meal and/or lodging expenses. This applies even if the non-government entity is not the organization that is sponsoring the meeting, conference or seminar. Under appropriate circumstances, as determined by the Ethics Officer, payment of expenses may be accepted as a "gift to the DOE" provided that:
 - The trip is for a DOE purpose and could be properly paid for with DOE funds, meaning if the DOE had the funds available, the DOE would be willing to pay for the trip. That decision must be made by the approving authority as part of the application to the Ethics Officer.
 - The travel arrangements are appropriate to the DOE's purpose - the employee is traveling economy class and staying in reasonably priced accommodations. (If a meeting, conference or seminar is being held in a hotel, the employee may stay in the hotel, regardless of the class of the hotel).
 - Meals may be accepted if they are part of a meeting, conference or seminar. However, meals in restaurants separate from the meeting, conference or seminar site may not be accepted. Educational tours which are part of a conference may be accepted, but cruises, golf outings or similar activities are not acceptable.
 - The trip is no longer than necessary to accomplish the DOE purpose - the non-government entity cannot pay for additional days of travel.



6.2 Ethics Officer Review

- All applications for travel by DOE employees on DOE business that is paid for by non-government entities, whether private or not-for-profit must be submitted to the DOE Ethics Officer on the "[Travel Related Expenses Paid for by Non-Governmental Entities Form](#)" for final approval before travel. Approval will be based on a determination whether the conditions stated in section 6.1 above, have been met, including determination by the approving authority that the trip serves a DOE purpose and is in the scope of the employee's duties to attend.
- The "[Travel Related Expenses Paid for by Non-Governmental Entities Form](#)" is not part of the TRAC. TRAC will have to be used in the case of reimbursement for allowable expenditures not covered by the non-government entity.

6.3 DOE Meetings Paid for by Non-Government Entities

- This section applies to DOE-sponsored events attended by 50 or more DOE personnel. (By contrast, sections [6.1](#) and [6.2](#) apply to travel to attend activities not sponsored by the DOE).
- Approval under this section must be obtained *in writing* from the approving authority before the activity.
- Non-government entities, including private and/or not-for-profit organizations, may offer to pay for expenses such as facilities, overnight accommodations and/or meal costs related to official DOE meetings or conferences. The non-government entity may offer its own facilities, overnight accommodations and/or meals or pay for them elsewhere. DOE offices may accept payment of these expenses by non-government entities provided that:



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- The DOE office to which the offer of payment of meeting expenses has been made has not issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Bid (RFB) to which the non-government entity either has submitted a proposal/bid or intends to do so. It is the responsibility of the DOE office to ask the non-government entity whether they have responded, or are preparing to respond to, such RFP or RFB. In rare instances, an exception to this prohibition may be granted upon the written approval of the Ethics Officer. The prohibition on accepting expenses ends once an award has been made public.
- For daytime events where overnight lodging is not required, the per person, per day expenses do not exceed the maximums stated in 5.1.4 of this SOP.
- For overnight events, the daily *per capita* expenses for lodging and meals do not exceed a total of \$250.00. This amount may be exceeded if the approving authority gives written approval. (See section 5.2).
- Non-governmental entities paying for expenses may not make sales or other presentations at the DOE conference or meeting. This limitation does not apply if the non-government entity is providing training for equipment, software or instructional materials previously purchased or donated to the DOE. The limitation further does not apply to publishers of New York State Textbook Law (NYSTL) - approved materials. They are permitted to make presentations at DOE conferences and meetings lasting no longer than twenty minutes.
- When accepting payment of expenses from a non-government entity, the DOE office must inform the non-government entity in writing that “the acceptance of the payment of facility/lodging/meal expenses will not give you any special advantage in your present or future business dealings with the DOE.”
- It is required that the office accepting payment of expenses maintain documentation that includes the approving authority’s approval, the number of DOE personnel that attended the activity, the date(s) and location of the activity, the per person cost(s) and a copy of the writing referred to in the bullet immediately above.

Note:

Inquiries regarding anything contained in this section should be addressed to: Office of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest. Telephone: 212-374-3438; Fax: 212-374-5596.