

TRV: 540 - Meal and Incidental Expense Reimbursement

REASON FOR THIS POLICY

Clear standards for meal and incidental expense reimbursement for individuals traveling on University business.

ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

- All units and departments that may authorize University business travel.
- Comptroller's Office
- Reimbursement Processing Support Unit

WHO SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY

- Individuals who travel for University business
- Supervisors of individuals who travel for University business
- Local Fiscal Oversight (LFO) designees of individuals who travel for University business

POLICY

A. Applicability

This policy applies to all University community members, including faculty, staff, students, agents, and Volunteers who travel for the purpose of conducting University business, which for purposes of this policy excludes normal or everyday personal transportation to and from the workplace.

For the purposes of travel policy, all references to "event" should be taken to include the following list: meeting, colloquium, convention, symposium, seminar, assembly, gathering, convocation, course, class, workshop, lecture, forum, event, training, summit, research travel or similar activity held by any association or organization involving discussion, research, or the exchange or dissemination of information.

B. General Requirements and Prohibitions

1. To be eligible for meal & incidental expense reimbursement (M&IE) a traveler must be more than fifty (50) miles from both their residence and primary duty post and be in travel status for six (6) or more consecutive hours.
2. Meals and incidental expenses are to be paid out-of-pocket and reimbursed to the traveler, not paid on a NAU PCard. University employees and students are not required to provide receipts for meal reimbursement; however, non-employees and non-students are required by state policy to provide itemized meal receipts for reimbursement.
 - a. Meal and incidental expense (M&IE) reimbursement rates are not per diem allowances. If the traveler does not purchase a meal, the meal is imbedded in some other cost, or the meal is provided at no charge, whether or not the traveler accepts or consumes the provided meal - the traveler is not entitled to reimbursement for that meal and the traveler's allowable daily reimbursement amount will be reduced – applies to both overnight and day trip travel.
 - b. Some meals while in travel status may qualify as Business Meals/Food and can be paid on a NAU PCard, *reference* CMP Policy 420-04 for guidelines.

3. Reimbursement for meals to destinations within the continental U.S. may not exceed the maximum reimbursement rate listed by destination in the State of Arizona Account Manual (SAAM) 5095.
 - a. The exact reimbursement rate is determined by the state, county, and city the traveler will spend the night, not necessarily where the meal was purchased or will be consumed. Exception is the day of return; meal rate is the location the traveler last stayed overnight.
 - b. If a traveler's exact state and county is not listed, then the default rate applies.
4. Reimbursement for meals to destinations outside the continental U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii, may not exceed the Department of Defense (DoD) international rates.
 - a. The exact reimbursement rate is determined by the country and city the traveler will spend the night, not necessarily where the meal was purchased or will be consumed. Exception is the day of return; meal rate is the location the traveler last stayed overnight.
 - b. If a traveler's exact city is not listed, then the default rate for that country applies.
 - c. To determine the reimbursement limitations on meals and incidentals in Alaska, Hawaii, and out-of-country locations, add the DoD *Local Meal Rate* (not the Proportional Meal Rate) to the *Local Incidental Rate* and subtract ten dollars (\$10).
5. A meal must be consumed, though not necessarily purchased, while the traveler is in travel status. The M&IE reimbursement rate includes the actual cost of the meal, tax, and tip.
 - a. If a meal is not available within a safe or reasonable walking distance, delivery service charges or transportation costs (mileage and/or taxi/rideshares) between places of lodging or business and places where meals are acquired or consumed is reimbursable as an additional transportation expense if an explanation is noted as part of the documentation. Otherwise, they are considered to be part of M&IE. A traveler's personal preference does not apply.
 - b. Reimbursement of the purchase of alcoholic beverages, including tax and tip, is prohibited.
6. Meals involving an overnight stay are considered a qualified reimbursement and are not taxable to the traveler; they are calculated as such:
 - a. Day of Departure: A traveler may claim 50% or 100% of the full-day reimbursement rate based on the traveler's destination, i.e. where the traveler will be spending the night.
 - i. Depart prior to Noon/12:00PM – 100% of full-day, less any provided meals
 - ii. Depart after Noon/12:00PM – 50% of full day, less any provided meals
 - b. Days in Between: Allowance is 50% or 100% of the full-day meal reimbursement, less any provided meals.
 - c. Day of Return: A Traveler may claim 50% or 100% of the full-day reimbursement rate of the location the traveler stayed the last night while in travel status, i.e. not the location of traveler's residence or duty post.
 - i. Return prior to Noon/12:00PM – 50% of full-day, less any provided meals
 - ii. Return after Noon/12:00PM – 100% of full-day, less any provided meals
 - d. Single-Night Travel: A traveler may not be reimbursed for more than the full-day reimbursement rate in a single calendar day or twenty-four (24) consecutive hours. Example: Traveler departs at 5:00PM one day and returns the next at 4:00PM, receives (1) full-day reimbursement, less any provided meals.
7. Meals that are reimbursed to a traveler when travel does not involve an overnight stay are taxable income and reported on the traveler's W-2.
 - a. Single Day Meal: In travel status minimum of (6) consecutive hours but less than (12) hours - \$15.00
 - b. Extended Day Meal: In travel status minimum of (12) consecutive hours but not overnight - \$27.00
 - c. Reimbursement limits apply regardless of the destination and day/time meals are purchased or consumed and less any provided meals.
8. Allocated Mealtimes for Deduction of Provided Meals:
 - Breakfast: between 12:01AM and 10:00AM
 - Lunch: between 10:01AM and 2:00PM
 - Dinner: between 2:01PM and 12:00 Midnight
9. Event Meals that Exceed Maximum M&IE Reimbursement Rate: Reimbursements for meals during an event in excess of the maximum individual M&IE reimbursement rate may be allowed when:
 - a. The charge for the meal is not included in the event fees – AND –

- b. The meal features a speaker, formal panel discussion, or other activity integral to the purpose of the event. Supporting documentation is required to substantiate the business meal and must be included with the Expense Claim.

Event Meals can be considered Business Meals/Food, reference CMP Policy 420-04 for guidelines.

10. Special Dietary Needs: It is the traveler's responsibility to request, on a timely basis, any needed accommodation from an airline, lodging establishment, event coordinator, etc. to meet a traveler's specific dietary need. If the traveler's request for an accommodation is denied, in order to claim a reimbursement for an expenditure related to a meal that otherwise would have been provided without cost to the traveler, the traveler must provide a statement that details and certifies:
 - a. To whom the request was made and denied (vendor/organization, name of individual and position)
 - b. The reason given for the denial
 - c. The special dietary need(s) of the traveler that could not be accommodated, example: severe gluten allergy (celiac disease) and a pizza/pasta meal is being provided.
11. Business Travel with Personal Time: A traveler is eligible for M&IE reimbursement for travel time to and from the primary business destination city, in addition to regular M&IE eligibility. All other reimbursement policies apply, including travel durations and business destination meal rates.

C. Incidentals include, but are not limited to:

- Laundry service
- Housekeeping/cleaning tips
- Room Service tips
- Transportation to and from meals
- Tips for meals
- Meal delivery charges

D. Industry standards for tipping, pre-tax bill amount:

- Sit down restaurant – max. 20%
- Buffett, fast food, or carryout – 0%
- Transportation: Taxi, ride-share, shuttle – max. 15%

Any amount over will not be reimbursed to the traveler.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Traveler: agrees to and will adhere to all university travel policies, will always seek pre-trip authorization and approval from department leadership to expend funds for travel, and will provide all policy required and requested documentation to the travel specialist pre and post travel.

Departmental Supervisors: reviews business travel requests of direct report employees and Volunteers as required by travel policy and verifies business need.

Local Fiscal Oversight Designee: reviews all travel requests and verifies funding source (speedchart, sub_dept, account codes) and determines and communicates any funding caps or limitations.

Departmental Leadership: ensure that only properly qualified and authorized individuals are allowed to travel on official University business for University programs and activities under their direction and control.

Reimbursement Processing Support Unit Staff: initiates and completes all travel expense claims and reimbursement via Expense Report or Check Request; and assists with booking travel upon request.

PROCEDURES

[Justification for Exception to Policy](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Forms or Tools

[Annual Travel Certification \(ATC\)](#)

[Authorized Driver](#)

[Cost Comparison How-To](#)

[Currency Converters](#) - <http://www.xe.com/> **OR** <http://www.oanda.com/converter>

[Employee Service Center \(ESC\)](#)

[Enterprise Car Rental – NAU Contract](#)

[Google Translate – *documents and receipts*](#)

[Long-Term Travel Case Submission Business Process & Blanket Travel Approval Memo](#)

[Mobile Phone App: ServiceNow! – NAU Employee Service Center](#)

[NAU Mileage Log](#)

[Out-of-State Request for Multiple Representation](#)

[Current Arizona State Reimbursement Rates \(SAAM\) – Lodging & Meals Schedule](#)

[US Department of Defense \(DoD\) Reimbursement Rates – Lodging & Meals Schedule](#)

[Travel Case Submission How-To - *transcript*](#)

[Travel Case Submission Quick Reference](#)

[Travel Advance/Zelle Workbook](#)

[Traveler Itinerary - *template*](#)

Cross-References

[Comptroller's Office](#)

[NAU Risk Management](#)

[NAU Transit Services – Fleet Services](#)

[The Office of Foreign Assets Control \(OFAC\)](#)

Sources

[State of Arizona Travel Policy](#)

[Arizona Board of Regents Travel Policy](#)

[Arizona Revised Statutes § 38-621 – 38-627](#)

[Fly America Act](#)

APPENDIX

None.