

Travel Tips

Travel reimbursement is based on the Office of Financial Management State Administrative and Accounting Manual (SAMM) Chapter 10.

Meals:

Designated normal meal periods are:

Breakfast:	between the hours of 6:30 and 8:00 a.m.
Lunch:	between the hours of 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
Dinner:	between the hours of 5:30 and 7:00 p.m.

For overnight travel, the traveler must be in travel status the entire meal period(2) to qualify for meal reimbursement. For non-overnight travel see criteria below for meal allowance. ([SAMM 10.40.50.](#))

Out of state meal rates, use [GSA](#) per diem rates. GSA rates include a \$5 incidental. Use the meal breakdown on the Washington State per diem map (<http://ofm.wa.gov/resources/travel.asp>), it includes the \$5 incidental. Click on the link under the Washington state per diem maps, current map to see the rates. If the total amount is not included on the map, use the following calculations rounded to the nearest dollar:

- The breakfast portion is 25 percent of the set daily meals entitlement.
- The lunch portion is 30 percent of the set daily meals entitlement.
- The dinner portion is 45 percent of the set daily meals entitlement.

For non-overnight travel assignments, the following two criteria must be met to receive a meal allowance:

1. Three Hour Rule.

A traveler may be reimbursed for meal expenses only when the traveler is in travel status for the traveler's entire regularly scheduled working hours plus an additional three hours. The three hours may consist of hours occurring before, after, or a combination of both before and after the traveler's regularly scheduled working hours for the day.

2. In travel status during the entire meal period.

Travelers must be in travel status during the **entire** agency-determined meal period(s) in order to qualify to collect *meal* payments for meal(s). The traveler may not stop for a meal just to meet the three hour rule.

Out-of-state travel or travel requiring the purchase of air fare:

Prepare a Travel Authorization (A40), in advance and obtain approval from your supervisor or authorized designee.

Include on the A40 for the reason for travel, dates, and desired departure and return times. If the hotel rate is above per diem, provide an explanation and policy that allows for the overcharge. ([See SAAM 10.30.20.](#)) **All exceptions to the maximum allowable lodging rates must be approved in advance of travel.**

Include a copy of the A40 with the travel reimbursement request.

Meals with meetings and coffee and light refreshments:

Meals with meetings and coffee and light refreshments **must be approved in advance** by the agency head or authorized designee.

Documentation of prior approval must be submitted with the reimbursement request along with the names of the state organizations or persons attending the meeting and the purpose of the meeting or expenditure.