

Policy Number: 215.0

Policy: Travel

Effective Date: 3/2013

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Approved by: Business Services Director

POLICY:

I. Travel Policy:

- A. The Legislature creates laws governing travel, the Montana Department of Administration prescribes regulations to follow, and the effective managerial controls and enforcement rest with Montana State University Billings.

The two references with information regarding state employees' travel are:

1. Montana Codes Annotated (MCA) - Title 2, Chapter 18, Part 5 .
2. Montana Operations Manual (MOM) – Policy 1910 Employee Travel.

- B. Personal contact is often the most economical and practical method of achieving effective communication and objectives. However, an employee should follow these guidelines when considering travel:

1. All travel must be approved in advance, including expenditures for the trip. All travel expenditures must be at the lowest most economical cost to the state. Approval for travel is authorized by the department head or designated representative. If the fund controller is not the same person than that person should sign the travel pre-approval too.
2. The number of personnel attending a given function requiring travel will be held to the absolute minimum.
3. Meal allowance is a fixed amount per meal, inclusive of taxes and tips, not reimbursement for actual costs incurred, an employee is generally entitled to receive a meal allowance if they are in a travel status and meet the travel status criteria. However, they may not request reimbursement for meals included in the cost of a conference registration that is paid by their agency or for meals provided by the State or another governmental entity.
4. Transportation shall be the most economical in terms of direct cost to the state and the employee's time away from the office.
 - a. Seat Upgrades, etc are not an allowable expense.
 - b. Commercial Airfare--State travel policy requires travelers to use the State Purchasing card for individual employee (not team or large group) airfare purchases. This applies to ticket purchases made through a travel agent, purchased directly from an airline, or purchased from an online travel source.
 - i. IN LIEU OF AIRFARE, an employee may wish to use other than the most economical and expeditious mode of transportation to complete a travel oriented work assignment. For example, an employee may prefer to drive a private vehicle to a particular destination rather than fly. To drive would require more travel time and more cost than airfare. When other than the least expensive class service is used, a full explanation of the justifying circumstances MUST be included with the claim. The employee will be given "air travel equivalent"--the most economical airfare in lieu of mileage and allowable meals and lodging as though the trip had been made on a commercial airline. The remaining travel time (in excess of air travel time) would have to be completed on the employee's time (non-working hours of vacation).

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- c. A Rental Vehicle is the preferred method of travel for out of town trips.
 - i. Rental Car reservations can be made with any Vendor contracting with the State. [Click Here](#) to review the FAQ's and reserve a car.
 - ii. In the event a rental vehicle is not available a request for the higher rate can be submitted in Chrome River.
 - d. Personal Vehicles -- MSUB employees may use their personal vehicle and received reimbursement at the Montana Standard Rate. No MSUB employee will be compensated for driving their own vehicle unless it is used for State business.
- 5. Employees using automobiles in an approved travel status will obey all posted speed limits and will make every effort to maximize the benefits to the State.
- 6. Although Montana State University Billings is encouraged to assist and support other states and organizations, Montana cannot do so at its own expense. Therefore, only travel that will benefit the State of Montana will be allowed. If another state or organization is willing to pay travel costs for a Montana State employee for lecturing or providing other assistance, the department head may contribute the employee's personal service costs to the project.
- 7. The State of Montana will not pay any employee's travel costs to attend a function that does not benefit the State. To promote employee initiative and efforts of self-improvement, the department head may provide an employee time off with pay to participate in the desired function.
- 8. As part of the Montana State University International Travel Policy, all MSUB students, faculty, and staff traveling internationally that is organized, sponsored or supported by the University, must register their travel. ****Please note these will redirect to our Bozeman sites****
- 9. To read the policy, please visit http://www.montana.edu/policy/international_travel/
- 10. To Register your International Travel [Click Here](#)
- 11. **International Travel Insurance:** It is required that each traveler secure international travel insurance, as personal and/or MSUB University insurance plans may not cover policy holders while traveling internationally, even if traveling on behalf of the University (refer to your Plan administrator). In compliance with the MUS System directive, the MSU Office of International Programs (OIP) offers international travel insurance through GeoBlue which offers affordable options to University Faculty, Staff and Students traveling abroad.
- 12. Access the GeoBlue international travel insurance website [HERE](#).