
TRAVEL PROCEDURES

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Energy & Natural Resources (DENR) that all job related travel be necessary to the mission and function of DENR, be conducted in the most cost efficient manner, and be in compliance with the Division of Administration's current State Travel Policy ([PPM49](#)).

All high cost travel expenses (i.e: airfare, hotel rooms, vehicle rentals and registrations) **must** be placed on a DENR credit card unless prior approval has been granted from the Commissioner of Administration. Other travel related expenses will be paid by the employee (such as meals, tips and parking) and then be reimbursed through the LEO Travel Module, pursuant to [PPM49](#).

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all employees of DENR and DENR contractors.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Travel Authorizations (TA)

If a TA is required, as noted herein, the purpose of the trip must be stated in the space provided on the front of the TA form.

1. In-State Travel

- a. Routine In-State Travel: Travel Authorizations (TAs) are not required for routine in-state travel. The term "routine in-state travel", as defined by PPM49, is any travel required in the course of performing an employee's job duties within the borders of Louisiana or through adjacent states between points within Louisiana.
- b. Non-Routine In-State Travel: Employees must have a TA approved by their respective Assistant Secretary for all non-routine in-state travel before the trip begins. The term "non-routine in-state travel", as defined by PPM49, is any seminar, conference, convention or training within the borders of Louisiana or through adjacent states between points within Louisiana. Blanket TAs for non-routine travel are not allowed. TAs should be completed far enough in advance so that DENR can take advantage of the lowest airfare and hotel rates.

2. Out-of-State Travel

Employees must have a TA approved by their respective Assistant Secretary and the DENR Secretary for all out-of-state travel before the trip begins. Blanket out-of-state TAs are not allowed. TAs should be completed far enough in advance so that DENR can take advantage of the lowest airfare and hotel rates.

NOTE: This rule does not apply to any out-of-state domiciled employee whose routine travel is required in the course of performing their job duties.

3. Supplemental Information

A memo should be attached to each TA. It should include the following detailed information.

- a. How the travel directly links to or benefits the ongoing internal initiatives, projects, goals and the DENR mission.
- b. How the employee was made aware of the event or meeting.
- c. If applicable, a list of any stakeholders with which the employee will meet.

- d. A note whether a virtual option is available. If a virtual meeting is provided, provide detail on the benefits of attending in person.
- e. If K-time is anticipated, list the approximate number of hours to be earned.
- f. Conference Specific Travel
 - i. If applicable, employee is to include the professional certification type and whether the conference is necessary to satisfy continuing education requirements.
 - ii. If speaking or presenting at a conference, provide the topic of interest, any talking points, a copy of the conference agenda along with any power point or other presentation the employee plans to present.
 - iii. An explanation of how the presentation/topic aligns with the governor's agenda, mission and philosophy for the state.

The appointing authority may request that employees, upon their return, provide a summary of the benefits or goals achieved during their travel. Additionally, the appointing authority may request a copy of a certificate of completion from any attended conference or training.

4. Complimentary Travel

Per LA.R.S.42:1115.2, when admission, lodging, transportation or reimbursement for such travel expense is paid by an entity that has a business relationship with DENR or is regulated by DENR, the traveler must complete and submit an ethics disclosure form. A completed Form 413f should be approved by the Agency Head and submitted by the traveler to the Louisiana Board of Ethics within 60 days of acceptance.

B. Funds for Travel Expenses

- 1. Persons traveling on official business will provide themselves with sufficient funds for all routine travel expenses not covered by a DENR credit card.
- 2. Controlled Billed Account (CBA) is a ghost credit card account issued in an agency's name and paid by the agency. CBAs are to be used for airfare, registration, rental cars, prepaid shuttle charges, lodging and any allowable lodging associated charges such as parking and internet charges.

C. Methods of Transportation

The most cost-effective method of transportation that will accomplish the purpose of the travel shall be selected. Among the factors to be considered should be length of travel time, employee's salary (including K-Time/Overtime cost), cost of operation of a vehicle, cost and availability of common carrier services, etc.

1. Commercial Airlines (Receipts Required)

All state travelers are to purchase the best value commercial airline ticket through the state contracted travel agency. Please note that the cost of a preferred, or premium, seat is not reimbursable.

- a. A lost airline ticket is the responsibility of the employee to whom the ticket was issued. The airline fee of searching and refunding lost tickets will be charged to the traveler. The difference between the prepaid amount and the amount refunded by the airlines must be paid by the employee.

- b. Tickets which are unused by a traveler will be monitored by the DENR Travel Administrator. Upon notification of an unused ticket, the DENR Travel Administrator will notify the appropriate Assistant Secretary to confirm that the ticket will be used before it expires. In addition, the DENR Secretary will be notified three months prior to expiration of all unused tickets. The DENR Secretary will determine whether the traveler must reimburse DENR. Additionally, the traveler will monitor unused tickets every 30 days to determine if they will be utilized. If it is determined that the ticket will not be utilized prior to expiration and there is the possibility to transfer the ticket, the traveler must immediately advise the DENR Travel Administrator that the ticket is available for use. The DENR Travel Administrator should then act accordingly.

2. Motor Vehicle

No vehicle may be operated in violation of state or local laws. No traveler may operate a vehicle without having in his/her possession a valid U.S. driver's license. Safety restraints shall be used by the driver and passengers of vehicles. All accidents, major and minor, shall be reported first to the local police department or appropriate law enforcement agency. In addition, an [accident report form](#), available on the DENR Intranet, shall be completed as soon as possible and must be returned to the DENR Fiscal – Administrative Services Fleet Manager within 24 hours, together with names and addresses of principals and witnesses.

Operating a state-owned vehicle, state-rented vehicle or state leased vehicle or operating a non-state owned vehicle for business while intoxicated as set forth in R.S. 14:98 and 14:98.1 is strictly prohibited, unauthorized, and expressly violates the terms and conditions of use of said vehicle.

Personal use of a state-owned, state-rented or state-leased vehicle is not permitted.

No person may be authorized to operate or travel in a state owned or rental vehicle unless that person is a classified or unclassified employee of the State of Louisiana; any duly appointed member of a state board, commission, or advisory council; or any other person who has received specific approval, and is deemed as an authorized traveler. A file must be kept containing all of these approvals.

Any persons who are not official state employees must sign an [Acknowledgement of Non-State Employees Utilizing State Vehicles form](#) prior to riding in or driving a state-owned vehicle or rental vehicle on behalf of the State. A file must be kept containing all of these approvals.

Students not employed by the State shall not be authorized to drive state-owned or rented vehicles for use on official state business. A student may be deemed as an "authorized traveler" on behalf of the State by the Department Head or his designee. An authorized traveler can be reimbursed for their travel expenses. The Acknowledgement of Non-State Employees Utilizing State Vehicles form acknowledging the fact that the state assumes no liability for any loss, injury, or death resulting from said travel must be signed as part of the approval process. A file must be kept containing all of these approvals.

Persons operating a state owned, rental, or personal vehicle on official state business will be completely responsible for all traffic, driving and parking violations received. This does not include state-owned or rental vehicle violations, i.e. inspection sticker, as the State and/or

rental company would be liable for any cost associated with these types of violations.

All traffic accidents, citations or arrests for any moving violation when occurring in a vehicle owned, leased or rented by DENR or while operating a personal vehicle on DENR business must be reported to the appointing authority pursuant to [DENR Human Resources Policy No. 9. - Vehicle Operations and Monitoring](#).

a. State-Owned Vehicle

Travelers in state-owned automobiles who purchase needed fuel, repairs and equipment while on travel status shall make use of all fleet discount allowances and state bulk purchasing contracts where applicable. Reimbursements require a receipt and only regular unleaded gasoline, or diesel when applicable, should be used. If the traveler utilizes anything other than regular unleaded gasoline unless vehicle requires diesel, or any other manufactory mandated grade, without justification and prior approval from the DENR Secretary, the traveler must reimburse the agency the difference between what was paid and the state average gasoline rate.

If a state-owned vehicle is to be used to travel to a destination more than 500 miles from its usual location, documentation that this is the most cost-effective means of travel should be readily available in the department's travel reimbursement files.

State-owned vehicles may be used for out-of-state travel only if permission by the DENR Secretary has been given prior to departure. When the use of a state-owned vehicle has been approved by the DENR Secretary for out-of-state travel for the traveler's convenience; the traveler is personally responsible for any other expense in-route to and from their destination, which is inclusive of meals and lodging.

Employees traveling out-of-state with a State-owned vehicle must notify DENR Fiscal – Administrative Services Fleet Manager prior to departure so that the Fueltrac card can be modified to allow for out-of-state fuel purchases.

b. Rented Motor Vehicles (Receipts Required)

The state has [mandatory vehicle rental contracts](#) for in-state travel with Enterprise Rent-A-Car and out-of-state travel with Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Hertz Car Rental Corp. and National Car Rental.

Only regular unleaded gasoline, or diesel when applicable, should be used. If the traveler utilizes anything other than regular unleaded gasoline, unless vehicle requires diesel or any other manufactory mandated grade, without justification and prior approval from the DENR Secretary, the traveler must reimburse the agency the difference between what was paid and the state average gasoline rate.

Employees traveling out-of-state with a rented vehicle, who have been assigned a Fueltrac card, must notify the DENR Fiscal – Administrative Services Fleet Manager prior to departure so that the Fueltrac card can be modified to allow for out-of-state fuel purchases.

Liability of costs for lost keys or door unlocking services will be placed on the traveler.

c. Personal Vehicle (Map Required)

Employees may use their personal vehicle, with approval from the DENR Secretary to travel on behalf of DENR and receive a mileage reimbursement of up to 99 miles (round trip) per day/trip.

D. Lodging

The State has created a voluntary hotel reservation contract with [HotelPlanner](#) to assist with bookings. Lodging rates for the 48 contiguous states are based on the GSA lodging rates for the applicable location. The GSA lodging rates can be found at

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.

Employees should always use the [DENR Tax Exempt form](#) for all in-state lodging.

E. Meals

Meals and incidental rates are based on the GSA meal rates for the 48 contiguous states. The GSA meal and incidental rates can be found at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.

Meal rates include taxes and tips, travelers cannot be reimbursed separately for those items. Receipts are not required for meals within these rates unless a cash advance was received.

F. Other Expenses

1. Parking (Receipts Required)

a. Airport Parking

The State has a contract rate of \$4.50 per day for the indoor parking garage and outside fenced parking lot at the Baton Rouge airport. In order to receive the contract price at the Baton Rouge airport, the traveler must give the attendant the [airport certificate](#) and show their State ID.

Only parking at USPARK at the [New Orleans](#) airport (\$14.00/day) is reimbursable with a receipt. To receive the contract rate at the New Orleans airport, reservations can be made online at <https://www.uspark.net/locations/veterans/reservations/louisiana-state-employees-reservation-form/>. If an online reservation is not made, the traveler must present their State ID and a tax exemption form.

The traveler may be reimbursed at another airport actual expenses up to \$8.50/day, at DENR's discretion.

b. Hotel Parking

Valet parking may be reimbursed up to \$5.

2. Communication Expenses

Travelers with a state issued phone or receiving a monthly stipend are not allowed communication reimbursements for domestic travel. State business communication costs may be reimbursed with receipts. Internet access charges for official state business from hotels or other travel locations are reimbursable with receipts.

3. Luggage Allowances (Receipt Required)

Airline travelers may be reimbursed for their first checked bag.

4. Public Ground Transportation (Receipts Required)

The cost of public ground transportation, such as buses, subways, airport shuttle and taxis, are reimbursable when the expenses are incurred as part of approved travel. If utilizing Uber or Lyft type services, only a standard size vehicle is reimbursable with an itemized receipt. Reimbursement for a driver tip is limited to 20% of the total charge and must be shown on the receipt. All transportation, where receipts are not possible, are limited to \$10/day for reimbursement.

G. International Travel

International travel must be approved by the Commissioner of Administration prior to departure. Request for international travel must be accompanied by a detailed account of expected expenditures. International travelers will be reimbursed based on the U.S. Department of State per diem rates for meals [U.S. Department of State - Meals](#) and lodging [U.S. Department of State - Lodging](#).

H. Claims for Reimbursement

1. All travel reimbursement claims shall be entered into the LEO Travel Module by either the traveler, or their travel coordinator.
2. The completed reimbursement claim shall be approved in LEO or signed by the traveler and forwarded, with all necessary receipts and approvals, to their immediate supervisor (at a minimum) for approval.
3. Once the reimbursement claim has been approved, it will be submitted to Fiscal Services for final review/approval. Upon receipt of complete travel documentation, travel reimbursements will be processed.

I. Emergency Procedures

1. If there are changes that arise after travel has begun that will not change the trip cost, the traveler shall contact a supervisor and forward their updated itinerary to their CBA Accountholder upon return from travel.
2. If there are changes that arise after travel has begun that will increase the cost of the trip, the traveler shall notify their supervisor and, by the close of the next business day, their CBA Accountholder. CBA charges can only be modified by the CBA Accountholder. If unable to contact their CBA Accountholder at the time of the travel change, travelers should use personal funds to pay for increases in travel costs.

The CBA Accountholder is to contact the vendor to request that the additional travel expenses be transferred from the traveler's credit card to the CBA account. If the vendor is unable to transfer the expenses, the CBA Accountholder is to contact the DENR Travel Administrator for further instructions.

IV. EXCEPTIONS

There are no exceptions to this policy without the express written approval of the Undersecretary.

V. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this policy should be addressed to the Fiscal Administrator.

VI. REVISION HISTORY

Date	Action
July 2016	Policy Established
August 2019	Policy Revised
July 2020	Policy Revised
February 2022	Policy Revised
June 2024	Policy Revised

AUTHORIZATION:

Mark Normand, Jr., Undersecretary