

Administrative Policy No. 19.10.04

Subject: Mileage Reimbursement

Contact: Office of Accounting Services
Chief, (360) 664-5716

Authorizing Source: State Administrative & Accounting Manual (SAAM), [Chapter 10](#)

Effective Date: July 1, 2004

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Approved By: Original signed by Richard Pannkuk
Assistant Secretary / Chief Financial Officer

Purpose

This policy establishes the limitations for mileage reimbursement when conducting official state business.

Scope

This policy applies to all Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) employees, board and commission members (unless stated otherwise in statute), as well as volunteers.

This policy does not apply to contractors reimbursed by specific contractual arrangements.

Additional guidance

DSHS Administrative Policies

Subchapter [19.10](#), travel policies

[18.87, DSHS modern and mobile workplace](#)

[18.26, Disability reasonable accommodation](#)

Mileage Examples

[Policy point "B"](#)

[Policy point "C"](#)

[Policy point "D"](#)

[Policy point "E"](#)

[Policy point "F"](#)

[Claiming reimbursement through TEMS](#)

[Travel website](#)

Definitions

Advantageous means direct non-financial, work-related benefits accruing to the state.

Commute means travel between the official residence and official station, or when the official residence and official station are the same city or town, travel from the traveler's home to their first business stop within their official station/residence and the travel from their last business stop within their official station/residence to their home. In multiple official station assignments, it is the travel between the official residence and the official station where the traveler is assigned to on that particular day. This includes use of a privately owned vehicle, bus, vanpool, and other modes of transportation.

Commute route means the most direct route between the last stop (home or business stop) within the official residence and the first stop (regular workplace or business stop) within the official station, or vice versa. When the official residence and official station are the same city or town, the commute route is the most direct route from the traveler's home to their first business stop within their official station/residence and the most direct route from the last business stop within their official station/residence to their home. (See [commute mileage diagram](#))

Economical means direct financial, work-related costs that occur at the least cost to the state and which the state is responsible to pay.

Most direct route refers to the "shortest distance" as shown by a standard highway mileage guide or electronic mapping system or software.

Multiple official stations refer to the official station status of employees who are assigned on specific days / hours to work at more than one official station.

Official residence means the city, town, or other location where the traveler maintains their primary residence. For employees, this information is obtained from their personnel records. For non-employees, this information is obtained from Form 09-415 (authorization for expenditures).

Official state business are activities performed by an official or state employee, authorized volunteer, or contractor, work experience program participant, student, or employee of another governmental jurisdiction as directed by their supervisor in order to accomplish state programs or as required by the duties of their position or office.

Official station means the city, town, or other location where the traveler's office is located, or the city, town, or location where their work is performed on a permanent basis. For the purposes of these travel regulations, Olympia, Tumwater, and Lacey are the same official station. A state official or employee's official station is to be designated by their appointing authority and is to be determined by the by the agency. It is not assigned because it is the home or preferred living area of a state official or employee.

Regular workplace means the location where the traveler normally performs their work (excludes meeting and conference rooms). This is normally the traveler's office, but if the traveler is not assigned to an office, it is the location where the majority of their work is performed.

Regularly scheduled work hours means the established work schedule of an employee as documented in their personnel records. For non-employees, the regularly scheduled work hours are considered to be 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (M-F) unless documented otherwise on DSHS form [03-138](#).

Teleworking means to work, at least once every two weeks, from the employee's home, or from an office near the employee's home, rather than from the employee's official work station.

Traveler means any DSHS employee, officer, volunteer, board, or commission member traveling on behalf of DSHS on official state business.

Policy

A. Travelers must meet the following requirements, on both scheduled and non-scheduled work days, to be eligible for reimbursement of mileage expenses. The traveler must have:

1. Conducted official state business.
2. Used a privately owned vehicle if it is found to be more advantageous or economical to the state than using a state owned or operated vehicle.
 - a. Non-employees are not required to drive a state-owned or operated vehicle.
 - b. Carpooling is considered more advantageous or economical to the state, unless business requirements preclude carpooling as determined by the approving manager. When carpooling is an option, no mileage reimbursement is due.
3. Driven on the most direct route unless taking an indirect route was more advantageous or economical to the state.

- B. Commute transportation expenses are a personal obligation of the traveler and are not reimbursable by the state. All other miles driven on official state business are reimbursable.** For an example, see “policy point B” in the additional guidance section.
- C. When a traveler makes a business stop on their commute, they are only eligible for mileage reimbursement for the miles driven outside of their commute route.** For an example, see “policy point C” in the additional guidance section.
- D. When a traveler works hours or days that are not their regularly scheduled work hours, the traveler is not entitled to reimbursement for commute transportation mileage expenses.** For an example, see “policy point D” in the additional guidance section.
- E. No mileage will be reimbursed to those individuals that work at a telework site and are required to report to their official station as defined in OFM and DSHS administrative policy 18.87 (DSHS modern and mobile workplace policy).** For an example, see “policy point E” in the Additional Guidance section.
- F. Mileage reimbursement is the same regardless of the traveler’s normal mode of transportation (e.g., walking, vanpool, bus, ride share, or biking) for their commute.** For an example, see “Policy Point F” in the additional guidance section.
- G. Costs associated with the use of high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes (SAAM 10.20) will not be reimbursed.**
- H. When a traveler is being picked up or dropped off at the airport or business stop, mileage will only be reimbursed while the traveler was physically in the vehicle.**
- I. Reimbursement for the use of a privately owned motor vehicle is payable to only one traveler when two or more travelers are traveling in the same motor vehicle on the same trip.**
- J. Mileage reimbursement is paid at the rates shown in SAAM 10.90.20.**

If a state or agency owned vehicle is available, but a traveler chooses to drive their own vehicle for personal preference or convenience, **and** they receive advance approval from their appointing authority, or designee, they will be reimbursed at the reduced rate shown on the [US General Services Administration website](#)
- K. If the traveler requires a reasonable accommodation due to a disability for (work related) travel that would require an exception to travel policies, they will need to work with their supervisor or manager and human resources prior to travel expenses being incurred.**

Procedure

Procedures for [claiming reimbursement through TEMS](#) are posted on the [travel website](#).

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