



# Travel Expense Reimbursement Guidelines

In compliance with state policy and board policy <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/519p3.html> and MN State College and Universities System Office expense reimbursement guidelines available at: [http://www.finance.mnscu.edu/accounting/businessoffice/forms/docs/expense\\_reimbursement\\_guidelines\\_09141.pdf](http://www.finance.mnscu.edu/accounting/businessoffice/forms/docs/expense_reimbursement_guidelines_09141.pdf) this information outlines the general guidelines regarding travel expense reimbursement and answers the most frequently asked questions

Employee expense reimbursement form: Link to [Expense Form](#)

- Complete form completely.
- Enter your cost center in MAPS Code B field.
- Enter each travel date in which you are requesting reimbursement.
- Make sure to complete time of departure/time of arrival and location
- For Employee Expense Reimbursement Only
- All expense reimbursement requests must have original signatures from both the employee and supervisor. The person authorizing the reimbursement must be the responsible person for the cost center being charged. If the supervisor is not responsible for the expensed cost center an additional signature is required by cost center responsible person as well. (By signing the expense report you are stating/verifying the expense is correct and authorized.)

## **Prior Approval**

Faculty members are required to complete the Travel Authorization Form and have it approved prior to making travel arrangements. If using a personal vehicle include google map indicating trip miles. Link to: [Travel Authorization](#)

## **Do I Need Prior Approval To Travel Out-Of-State?**

Yes, the President needs to sign and approve all out-of-state travel.

## **Meals**

### **What Are The Maximum Meal Allowances?**

Employees are to claim **actual** expenses for employee meals, but reimbursement, including tips, may not exceed the maximums listed below. Meal receipts are not required however meals should not be treated as "per diem" amounts. Alcoholic beverages may never be reimbursed. By signing your expense report you are stating the amounts listed are actual and correct amounts.

Maximum rates are set by labor negotiations and the Department of Employee Relations. These rates may change for any or all of the different unions each time the contracts are renegotiated. Meals exceeding these maximums require the filing of a special expense form **prior** to the event.

The following rates are effective for the period from January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

Breakfast	\$ 9.00
Lunch	\$11.00
Dinner	\$16.00

### **When Am I Eligible For Meal Reimbursement?**

- Breakfast –In travel status overnight or when the trip begins before 6:00 a.m.
- Lunch –In travel status AND more than 35 miles from work station through the normal lunch period.
- Dinner –In travel status overnight or when the trip ends after 7:00 p.m.
- Times of departure and return must be indicated on the expense report for all meal reimbursement requests.
- Actual meal costs are to be recorded separately for the appropriate date, under the correct heading on the expense report. Meals will be reimbursed for actual costs up to the maximum reimbursement amount allowed for eligible meals.

**Total Meals (No Overnight Stay)** - according to Internal Revenue Service regulations, reimbursements of meals for travel not involving overnight lodging are taxable. Therefore, when the expenses are paid, federal, state and FICA taxes

will be withheld from the employee's paycheck. The amount of the expense will be added to wages on the employee's W-2 form.

When the College is paying the cost of commercial transportation, conference registration, or hotel lodging, and a meal is included as a part of the travel/conference/lodging, employees are not eligible to be reimbursed for the same meal.

When traveling to a high cost metro area, the higher meal allowance is not allowed until you arrive at your destination city. The higher meal allowance is allowed up until your departure. Contact the Payroll Office at (320)222-6076 for details.

#### **Can I Request Reimbursement for Meals/ Food Purchases When not in Travel Status?**

- Prior approval is required using the Special Expense Form. Link to [Special Expense Form](#)
- The criteria that must be met for an expense to be considered a Special Expense are provided in MnSCU Procedure 5.20.1 Special expenses found at: <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/520p1.html>
- Food purchases, wherever practicable are to be made following purchasing policy/procedures. (Special Expense Form is required when following purchasing procedures as well) Link to [Purchasing Policy/Procedures](#)
- If an employee pays for meeting related meals or refreshments, the employee may be reimbursed through the Special expense process.
- Original receipts are required for any meals/food purchases made using the Special Expense process. (Cancelled check or credit card receipts cannot be substituted for original receipts)

#### **Registration Fee**

If using a purchase order, submit your registration form along with a requisition to the Purchasing Office.

If you paid the registration fee directly, request reimbursement on the Employee Expense Form, and provide the original receipt. (Cancelled check or credit card receipts cannot be substituted for original receipts.)

#### **Parking**

Pay for parking personally. Request reimbursement through the Employee Expense Report. Provide original receipts. The only parking that does not require a receipt is metered parking. (Cancelled check or credit card receipts cannot be substituted for original receipts.)

#### **Lodging**

##### **What Are The Maximum Lodging Allowances?**

There is no rate schedule, but reimbursement is limited to the single room rate at a reasonably priced, licensed lodging facility. Inquire about government rates when making reservations.

##### **Are Receipts Required To Claim Lodging Reimbursement?**

The original itemized lodging receipt, reflecting a balance due of zero, showing detailed charges, including room rate and tax, is required. (Cancelled check or credit card receipts cannot be substituted for original receipts.)

##### **What If Two Employees Share Accommodations?**

Each employee may claim one half of the lodging expenses. You will not be reimbursed for expenses incurred by another employee even if you did pay for his/her share. Each employee is required to submit his/her expenses on his/her own expense report with receipts. When employees share accommodations, one employee submits the original receipt and the other submits a copy, each claiming half the room rate and cross reference the name of the employee with whom the room was shared.

##### **What Amount Of Lodging Reimbursement Will I Be Allowed To Claim If My Spouse Accompanies Me?**

The State of Minnesota allows reimbursement at the single rate. The employee should have the establishment certify the single rate on the receipt.

##### **Will I Be Reimbursed For Lodging If I Spend The Night With Friends or Relatives?**

No, the State of Minnesota does not allow reimbursement when lodging with friends or relatives.

#### **Vehicle Travel Information**

##### **Use of Ridgewater College Motor Pool Vehicle**

To determine your eligibility to drive state owned or leased vehicles for college activities - complete the Vehicle Use Agreement found at <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/procedure/519p3g1-consent.pdf>. Return this form to the Human Resource Office. The submission and review process may take 7 to 10 business days to process. An employee's driving record must be acceptable before reserving a state owned or leased vehicle. You will receive an email notification upon completion of this process and you are eligible to drive a state owned or leased vehicle.

Employees are encouraged to utilize the Motor Pool whenever practical for In-state travel. Reservations can be made by accessing the Outlook calendar for each vehicle. Contact the front desk with questions/concerns, Willmar (320) 222-5984 or Hutchinson (320) 234-8502

(Leased Vehicles are not to be taken out-of-state and used for short trips only. Vehicles are not to be parked off campus for an extended period of time.)

**When Using a State Owned or Leased Vehicle Remember To:**

- Completely fill out the mileage log found in the vehicle for each trip.
- Fill up the vehicle after every use.
- Remove your debris from the vehicle after use.
- Close all windows and lock doors after use.
- Car pool when traveling to Hutchinson/Willmar to reduce the number of vehicles traveling to the same campus.
- Cancel your reservation if you are not planning to use the vehicle.

**\*NO SMOKING IS ALLOWED IN STATE VEHICLES\***

**State Owned and Leased Vehicle Gas Card Usage Reminders:**

- Each state owned and leased vehicle has a "Voyager Fleet Card" in a compartment near the driver's seat.
- Gas receipts are required, place receipts in the pouch attached to the vehicle keys.
- Leave the gas card, brochure and station guide in the vehicle after use.
- Each vehicle will have a brochure explaining how to use the gas card. The ID/Pin numbers are located within the gas card packet.

**Accidents – What to Do:**

- Secure the names and addresses of all injured persons; owners and drivers and their driver's license numbers; and license plate number of all vehicles involved.
- Be sure to get the names and addresses of all witnesses.
- DO NOT admit liability or make any statement except to the police or an identified representative of the College or the State Department of Administration.
- Additional information is available in State Leased Vehicles and at <http://mn.gov/admin/government/vehicles/accident-reporting/>

**Roadside Assistance:**

- Call 1-800-227-2273. You will be asked for your client #5AC6-01, your vehicle # and current odometer reading. This information is in the ARI packet in the vehicle.
- If you are already in a service facility, have the shop inspect the vehicle and call ARI for authorization.

**Use of Personal Vehicle for College Business**

- The employee's personal automobile liability insurance will be the primary layer of insurance coverage.
- The State/College will not reimburse the employee for their deductible or subsequent damage to their vehicle.
- There is no compensation for the loss of use of employee's vehicle.
- A crash occurring while using a personal vehicle for state business may result in higher insurance premiums for the employee.
- Any judgment due to an accident on college business over the employee's personal policy limit and coverage afforded by the state's primary and excess policies would come from the College and the employee's cost center.
- Using a personal vehicle for college business purposes should be the last resort.

**What Is The Rate of Reimbursement For Using My Personal Vehicle On State Business?**

The following rates are effective for travel effective January 1, 2016.

- 47.0¢ per mile when the employee elects to use a personal vehicle when a motor pool vehicle was available
- 54.0¢ per mile when a motor pool vehicle was not available.

Mileage shall be paid based on the most direct route (shortest distance). Ridgewater College cannot pay for an employee to drive to their primary work location; therefore, when traveling, please list the mileage with the most direct route (shortest distance) whether it is from your home location or work location. Reimbursable miles for travel between Hutchinson and Willmar are 54 miles.

- Trip and local miles must be listed separately by day on the Employee Expense Reimbursement Form. Employee will be reimbursed mileage at the "higher rate" if a state vehicle was requested and not available. Ridgewater College payroll will reimburse the request at the lower rate if the box on the expense reimbursement form is not checked that indicates "no state vehicle was available when requested." There must be an indication of vehicle availability for all travel dates to receive the higher rate.
- Employee will be reimbursed mileage at the "lower rate" if a state vehicle was available and declined by the employee

When an employee elects to drive a personal vehicle rather than fly, reimbursement for personal vehicle use in lieu of airfare is at the lower reimbursement rate and shall not exceed the lowest round trip coach airfare. Employees utilizing this option must include with their expense report an airfare quote dated at least two weeks prior to the trip. Your expenses by personal car cannot exceed this quote and you will be reimbursed the lesser of the two amounts.

### **May I Claim Reimbursement For A Rental Car?**

Yes, a rental car may be considered if business travel is required and public transportation is clearly not adequate or is expected to be more expensive. Rental car usage requires justification (indicating why a rental car was used instead of public transportation) on the Travel Authorization Form.

If a rental car is necessary, employees must rent from the state's contract rental car vendor –Enterprise Rent-A-Car Company. The State has entered into nationwide contracts with Enterprise that have full insurance coverage built in; therefore, additional insurance should not be purchased when renting through Enterprise. The cost of any additional coverage will not be reimbursed.

Vehicle Rental – Local initiation of rental; short and long term:

Contact Mike at Enterprise Rentals in Willmar (320) 214-0744. Reference State Contract Number 440294; Release #V-33(5). The rental vehicle can be picked up at their Willmar office or delivery of a vehicle to Hutchinson can be arranged for an additional fee of \$60.00 (they will waive the pick-up fee).

- Request a quote; all rentals must be made in the name of the State of Minnesota/Ridgewater College to ensure insurance coverage; Renter's name (faculty/staff member) should be included as an agent of the State of MN/Ridgewater College. *If additional insurance is offered, decline it as coverage is included in the cost of the rental.*
- Prior to the trip/rental – fill out a requisition for the rental and submit it to the Dean or supervisor for approval.
- If approved, forward the requisition to the Purchasing Office for the processing of a Purchase Order.

Vehicle Rental – Out-of-state initiation of rental; short term only:

Both Enterprise Rent-A-Car (Parent Company) and National Car Rental may be used under the State contract. All prices, terms and conditions are applicable to both companies. When state, "Enterprise" refers to Enterprise Rent-A-Car and National Car Rental. First call should be to Enterprise (contact National ONLY if Enterprise is unable to provide the rental.

- Contact the Enterprise Rent A Car office where you will be picking up the car. Note the rentals must be made using State of Minnesota account number XZ19113; Renter's name (faculty/staff member) should be included as an agent of the State of MN/Ridgewater College. *If additional insurance is offered, decline it as coverage is included in the cost of the rental.*
- Payment of rentals that was initiated out-of-state (vehicle picked up out of state) must be made with a personal credit card. Enterprise will not accept a Purchase Order for these rentals and we are unable to provide a college credit card number over the phone. A credit card must be presented at the time of pickup. Request reimbursement through Payroll by submitting an expense reimbursement form along with your original receipt for the rental.

NOTE: State agencies may not rent trucks or 15 passenger vehicles under any circumstances.

**A spouse or other individual may accompany a traveler, including students, on a business trip at the traveler's expense. However personal guests, including spouses are not allowed to travel in a state-owned, rented or leased vehicle.**

### **Supply Purchases**

The purchase of supply items are not to be reimbursed on the Employee Expense Form. Supply purchases are to be made following Ridgewater College purchasing policy/procedures. Link to [Purchasing Policy/Procedures](#)

Link to additional [Purchasing Guidelines](#)

On the rare occasion reimbursement of a supply purchase is approved **Do not request reimbursement of sales tax paid on supplies purchased.** Ridgewater College does not pay sales tax as we are a tax exempt organization

### **Receipts**

Original itemized receipts are required to be attached to the Employee Expense Report for all expenditure reimbursements with the exception of mileage, meals, metered parking, reasonable baggage handling and/or housekeeping tips, pay telephones, actual costs of personal phone calls up to \$3.00 per overnight stay, and metered photocopiers. Credit card receipts, copies of checks or copies of credit cards statements are not acceptable receipts. An affidavit will be required for any reimbursement request turned in without the original receipt. Link to [Affidavit Form](#) Affidavits are to be used on rare occasions and an affidavit can replace an original receipt only 4 times per fiscal year.

### **Advances**

Travel Advances are used to provide an employee with funds, in advance of a work assignment, requiring travel while performing official college duties. A travel advance is available for necessary reimbursable expenses that will be paid in cash and must total at least \$50. The advance must be requested in a reasonable period of time (10-14 days) before the first day of travel occurs. An advance is requested on a properly completed SEMA4 Employee Expense Report. Travel advances cannot be issued earlier than one pay period before the start of the travel or occurrence of the purchase. An employee can only have one outstanding advance at a time. An advance must be settled before another advance can be

issued. When the total expenses submitted are less than the advance amount the advance will be settled by taking a deduction from the employee's paycheck. For more information, please refer to Minnesota Management & Budget Operating Policy and Procedure PAY0020, [Travel Advances](#).

### **Reimbursement Timeline**

All employee expenses are reimbursed on your payroll checks and should be submitted on a timely basis.

- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires employee business expenses to be submitted for reimbursement within 60 days after the expense is incurred or the trip ends. If not submitted within 60 days, the reimbursement is categorized as supplemental wages and becomes taxable to both the Employee and the Employer. Due to this requirement submission of expense reports is expected for all expense reimbursements within 30 days of incurred travel.
- All travel reimbursements for the fiscal year ending June 30<sup>th</sup> must be submitted by July 31<sup>st</sup> or earlier to ensure prompt payment from the proper fiscal year.
- An employee expense report submitted after July 31<sup>st</sup> requires a written explanation signed by the employee and the person responsible for the cost center expensed. The signed explanation must be attached to the expense report before the payment can be processed and the expense may be paid from current fiscal year funds.

If you have any questions contact the Payroll Office at (320) 222-6076.

More information on the Ridgewater College Related Travel & Vehicle Use Policy and procedures can be found at:

[http://www.ridgewater.edu/more-rc/Documents/Chapter\\_5\\_Administration/College-Related\\_Travel\\_and\\_Vehicle\\_%20Use.pdf](http://www.ridgewater.edu/more-rc/Documents/Chapter_5_Administration/College-Related_Travel_and_Vehicle_%20Use.pdf)

For more information, please refer to Minnesota Management & Budget Operating Policy and Procedure PAY0021, [Employee Business/Travel Expenses](#).

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