



Department of Veterans Affairs

Financial Policy

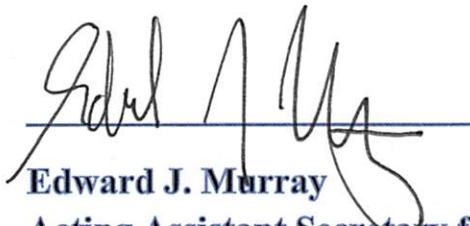
Volume XIV

Travel

Chapter 4

Miscellaneous Travel Expenses

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward J. Murray", is written over a horizontal line.

Edward J. Murray
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9.28.2017

Date

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0401 OVERVIEW

This chapter establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) financial policies and procedures regarding miscellaneous travel expenses. Travelers are authorized certain necessary travel and transportation-related miscellaneous expenses incurred on official business, other than incidental expenses (defined as part of per diem in Volume XIV, Chapter 2, *Travel Per Diem*). Union rights and privileges related to travel expenses, as defined in union agreements do not supersede the regulations contained in the FTR.

This chapter implements and supplements those portions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) pertaining to temporary duty (TDY) travel allowances.

0402 REVISIONS

Section	Revision	Office	Effective Date
0401	Updated statement to reflect that union agreements do not supersede the FTR.	OFP (047G)	September 2017
040502C	Added definitions for Conveyance Costs, Gasoline, Driving related insurance, Parking Fees at a Terminal, POV Use on TDY, Taxi, Transportation related tips, and Transportation to/from Terminal.	OFP (047G)	September 2017
Various	Added transportation network companies to include (UBER, LYFT, etc.): FTR Bulletin 16-5.	OFP (047G)	September 2017
040502	Changed tip from 15 to 20 percent.	OFP (047G)	September 2017
Various	Completed 5 year review.	OFP (047G)	October 2014
0401 Overview	Removed FTR definitions	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040201B Policies General	Reworded to match FTR §301-70.300	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040201E Policies General	Renamed Appendix A	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202A Miscellaneous Travel Expenses	Clarified local AO authority for lesser amount miscellaneous expenses that does not require a formal local policy. Renamed Appendix B.	APS (047GA)	October 2014

Section	Revision	Office	Effective Date
040202B	Moved Conveyance Costs, Gasoline, Insurance Driving Related, Parking Fees at a Terminal, POV Use on TDY, Taxi, Tips Transportation Related, and Transportation to/from Terminal to Volume XIV – Chapter 3 Transportation Expenses	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B	Removed itemized Legal Service Fees, Medical Fees, Permanent Resident Card, and Physical Examination Fees and leaving combination of all of them in 040202B26	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B	Removed resort fees as lodging fees cover this	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B	Removed VAT Certificate	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B1,12,16,	Changed IBA travel card to Government contractor-issued charge card for consistency	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B2	Renamed Appendix C	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B3	Clarified handling of Government property	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B10	Renamed Appendix D	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B12	Removed 1 percent from 1 percent charge	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B15	Added footnote that VA may reimburse GPS for rental car on a case by case basis as needed for the mission	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B18	Changed OCONUS to outside CONUS	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B21	Changed tourism to resort for consistency	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B22	Removed OCONUS from foreign and non-foreign area	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040202B23	Added “The purchase card will be used for the purchase of equipment or materials”	APS (047GA)	October 2014
0404	Removed Charge Card Oversight and Travel Policy Service	APS (047GA)	October 2014

Section	Revision	Office	Effective Date
040401 CFO Roles and Responsibilities	Removed “CFO may authorize actual expense greater than 150 percent up to 300 percent”	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040402 Under Secretaries Roles and Responsibilities	Removed TDY and PCS authorities and voucher. Removed “Under Secretaries and the Chairman of the Board of Veterans’ Appeals may authorize actual expense greater than 150 percent up to 300 percent.”	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040403 OFP Roles and Responsibilities	Clarified paragraph	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040404 AOs Roles and Responsibilities	Clarified paragraphs	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040404H	Added AO responsibilities to examine excess weight for baggage reimbursement is not duplicated with laundry reimbursement	APS (047GA)	October 2014
040405 Travelers Roles and Responsibilities	Clarified paragraphs	APS (047GA)	October 2014
0405 Procedures	Renamed Appendix A, B, C, and D for clarity	APS (047GA)	October 2014
0406 Definitions	Clarified FTR and TMC. Added Foreign and Non-Foreign Areas to clarify OCONUS. Removed OCONUS	APS (047GA)	October 2014
Appendix A	Clarified to match FTR 301-12.1	APS (047GA)	October 2014
Appendix B	Added footnote that VA may reimburse GPS for rental car on a case by case basis as needed for the mission. Moved Gasoline for POV to Volume XIV – Chapter 3 Transportation Expenses	APS (047GA)	October 2014

Section	Revision	Office	Effective Date
Appendix C	Clarified paragraphs. Added reference to airlines websites on carry-on baggage for current information. Added FTR 301-12.2d to excess baggage and removed it from checking and handling baggage. Added FTR 301-12.2a to excess weight on baggage.	APS (047GA)	October 2014

0403 DEFINITIONS

Approving Official (AO). A supervisor at least one level above the traveler who is entitled to pre-authorize TDY travel and approve related entitlements.

Continental United States (CONUS). The 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia.

Federal Travel Regulation (FTR). The FTR implements statutory requirements and Executive branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense.

Foreign Area. Any area, including the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, situated both outside CONUS and the non-foreign areas.

Meals and Incidental Expense (M&IE) Allowance. A daily allowance provided to travelers during TDY trips to cover the cost associated with reasonable meals and required travel-related expenses such as tips.

Non-Foreign Area. The states of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States (excludes the former Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, which are considered foreign areas for the purposes of the FTR).

Official Travel. Travel under an official travel authorization from an employee's official station or other authorized point of departure to a TDY location and return from a TDY location, between two TDY locations, or relocation at the direction of a Federal agency.

Temporary Duty (TDY) Location. A place away from an employee's official station, where the employee is authorized to travel.

Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel. Travel by an employee on official business, as authorized by an employee's AO through a travel authorization.

Travel Authorization. Written or electronic permission to travel on authorized official

business for the Government resulting in reimbursement for expenses on a travel claim (voucher). Travel may be authorized on a blanket (unlimited or limited) authorization or on a trip-by-trip authorization. An unlimited authorization allows an employee to travel for any official purpose without further authorization. A limited authorization allows an employee to travel on official business without further authorization under certain specific conditions (e.g., travel to specific geographic area(s) for specific purpose(s), subject to trip cost ceilings, or for specific periods of time.) A trip-by-trip authorization allows an individual or group of individuals to take one or more official business trips, which must include purpose, itinerary, and estimated costs.

Travel Management Center (TMC). A travel agency firm under contract with the Government to provide reservation, tickets, and related travel management services for official travel.

Traveler. An individual, as defined by the FTR, who is authorized to perform official Government travel.

0404 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Assistant Secretary for Management/Chief Financial Officer (CFO) oversees all financial management activities relating to the Department's programs and operations, as required by the CFO Act of 1990 and 38 U.S.C. §309, CFO. Specific responsibilities include the direction, management, and provision of policy guidance and oversight of VA's financial management personnel, activities, and operations. The CFO establishes financial policy inclusive of travel, systems, and operating procedures for all VA financial entities and provides guidance on all aspects of financial management.

Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, CFOs, Finance Officers, Chiefs of Finance Activities, Chief Accountants and other key officials are responsible for ensuring compliance with the policies and procedures set forth in this chapter and will designate one or more persons to answer questions pertaining to the preparation of this policy.

The Office of Financial Policy (OFP) under the CFO's direction, provides Department-wide financial policy and guidance. OFP develops, coordinates, issues, evaluates, and reviews VA's travel policies and procedures for compliance with all financial laws and regulations.

Approving Official will ensure all travel is authorized and performed consistent with the FTR, VA travel policy, and any other agency-specific guidance relating to travel issues, including:

- Authorize only official travel for travelers under their jurisdiction in advance of the travel;

- Determine if the travel is essential for the purpose of carrying out the mission of VA.
- Ensure adequate funds are available before authorizing travel;
- Ensure all travel is performed in the most economical and effective manner;
- Ensure VA's E-Gov Travel Service (ETS) is used to prepare, process, approve, and route travel authorizations and vouchers for official TDY travel, including the requirement to use the ETS for making reservations;
- Examine expense reports to ensure the justification, supporting documentation, and receipts are attached and to ensure that travel for which reimbursement is claimed was performed as authorized to pay for all authorized expenses made to the Government contractor-issued charge card;
- Ensure travelers under their jurisdiction complete Standard Form 3881, ACH Vendor/Miscellaneous Payment Enrollment Form and submit to VAFSC Vendorizing Team to receive travel advances and reimbursements electronically, file expense reports with electronically attached receipts, and comply with the Government Travel Charge Card Program guidelines; and
- Examine excess weight for baggage expense reimbursement is not duplication of laundry or dry cleaning expense reimbursement.

Travelers will be knowledgeable of the FTR, and comply with VA's Travel Charge Card Program guidance contained in Volume XVI, Chapter 2, Government Travel Charge Card Program, and any other agency-specific guidance relating to:

- Arrange travel using VA's ETS, including reservations for transportation, lodging, and rental cars;
- Minimize costs of official travel by exercising the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business will not be reimbursed and are not acceptable under this policy. Travelers will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference for convenience;
- Ensure travel is authorized by the AO prior to departure;
- Cancel transportation and lodging reservations timely;
- Claim and obtain, where applicable, exemptions of tax imposed on hotel accommodations in locations listed in the Federal Acquisition Service's GSA

SmartPay Website. Only certificates issued by the locality granting the exemption may be used;

- Submit Travel claim for reimbursement of expenses within 5 business days upon return to the official station, except that travelers in an extended travel status will submit expense reports currently, i.e., at least once each month if travel period exceeds 30 days. Local expense reports may be submitted monthly or quarterly; and
- Liquidate travel advances.

0405 POLICIES

040501 GENERAL.

- A. VA will authorize miscellaneous travel expenses for official travel if approving officials (AOs) deem them appropriate.
- B. The AO will limit payment of miscellaneous travel expenses to only those expenses that are necessary and in the best interest of the Government. AO's may approve miscellaneous travel expenses after travel when the expenses were not anticipated prior to departure and proper justification is included on the travel voucher.
- C. Travelers and the AO will discuss and establish a clear understanding of which miscellaneous travel expenses are authorized for a specific trip. Many expenses can be avoided with proper planning or use of Government-provided alternatives.
- D. Travelers will itemize each miscellaneous travel expense with its estimated cost on the travel authorization. A lump sum for miscellaneous travel expenses is not allowed.
- E. Reimbursable Miscellaneous Travel Expenses, for a list of common miscellaneous travel expenses that may be reimbursable to the traveler. Refer to Appendix A.

040502 MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSES.

- A. VA will reimburse travelers for certain miscellaneous travel expenses in conjunction with TDY. Volume XIV, Chapter 1, Travel Administration, details receipt requirements. The AOs at various VA locations may require receipts for a lesser amount than VA requires and will publish the amount in local travel guidelines or other such communication (i.e., memorandum). Refer to Appendix B, Non-Reimbursable Miscellaneous Travel Expenses, for a summary list of miscellaneous travel expenses that are not reimbursable.
- B. The following is a list of common miscellaneous travel expenses incurred by travelers on TDY:

1. Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Fees. Administrative fees for using an ATM are reimbursable when used to obtain money with the Government contractor-issued charge card up to the amount authorized on the travel authorization by the AO for an ATM travel advance. Administrative fees for using an ATM with a personal credit or debit card are not reimbursable.
2. Baggage Expenses. Reimbursement is authorized for necessary travel and transportation-related baggage expenses incurred on official business. Excess baggage transportation costs must be authorized in advance by the AO. Refer to Appendix C, Reimbursable Baggage Expenses, for additional information. These expenses include:
 - a. Baggage Transfer Not to Exceed (NTE) the customary local rates and the necessity for the transfer must be explained.
 - b. Baggage Storage (with explanation).
 - c. Curbside Baggage Check-in Fee (Note: This fee is not reimbursed when there is no cost at the travel counter).
3. Baggage Handling Tips. Reimbursement is authorized under miscellaneous expenses to a traveler with disability/special needs or a traveler transporting Government property. Otherwise, baggage handling tips are not miscellaneous travel expenses and are covered by the incidental expense portion of Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) covered in [Travel Per Diem, Volume XIV, Chapter 2](#).
4. Birth Certificate. The cost of obtaining a birth certificate or other acceptable evidence of birth for official foreign travel is authorized.
5. Carrier Terminal Fees. Airport transit, service charge/tax, landing, port tax, embarkation/debarkation or similar mandatory charge assessed against a traveler on arrival/departure from a carrier terminal is authorized, when not included in the ticket cost.
6. Cell Phone Use. When a cell phone is used for official communication, each call must be documented showing the additional cost incurred outside of the normal usage covered in the cell phone contract. Prepaid communication services (i.e. prepaid phone cards, cell phones) are not reimbursable.
7. Check Cashing. Fees for cashing U.S. Government checks/drafts or traveler's checks, issued for travel expense reimbursement in a foreign country, are authorized.
8. Check Costs. The cost of traveler's checks, money orders, or certified checks up to the amount of estimated per diem and/or travel expenses is authorized.

9. Clerical Assistance. The purchase card should be used for clerical assistance that may be reimbursable when authorized in advance by the AO.
10. Communication Services. Government-owned/leased services should be used for official communications, but when Government services are not available, commercial communications services may be used. Prepaid communication devices (i.e., prepaid phone cards, cell phones) are not reimbursable. Refer to Appendix D, Reimbursable Communication Services, for additional information on reimbursement for communication expenses.
11. Computer Connections. Connections (e.g., internet connections) used for computers to perform official Government business are reimbursable when authorized/approved in advance by the AO. In-flight computer connections are not reimbursable, unless preapproved by the AO and determined to be used for official Government business.
12. Currency Conversion Fees. The currency conversion fee is reimbursable when the “international transaction fee” for official qualifying transactions is charged to the Government contractor-issued charge card. This charge is listed as a separate line item on the card billing statement. Losses resulting from currency conversions are not reimbursable ([63 Comp. Gen. 554 \(1984\)](#)¹).

Note: Exchange Rates. A traveler who pays with Government contractor-issued charge card for foreign expenses should check with the contractor issuing the card to determine the final bill in U.S. currency prior to submitting the travel claim. The currency exchange rate at which the Government contractor-issued charge card bill was settled may be used to determine foreign expenses charged to the card.

13. Disease Prevention Measures. When authorized, charges for inoculations and other disease preventive medical prophylaxes (e.g., oral anti-malarial prophylaxis) that are not available through a Federal dispensary for foreign travel are reimbursable. This does not include travel expenses incurred to obtain the required inoculations.
14. Conveyance Costs. Administrative costs related to travel from the home or office that may be authorized to and from the transportation terminal. Conveyance may include taxi, transportation network companies, hotel shuttle, public bus or train service.
15. Gasoline. Gasoline for a rental car is reimbursable.
16. Energy Surcharge Fees. Additional fees for energy surcharges of lodging establishments are reimbursable when not optional for the traveler.

¹ A traveler is not liable to pay the Government for gains resulting from currency conversion.

17. Global Positioning System (GPS) for a Rental Car. The optional GPS for a rental car is not reimbursable. ²⁽¹⁾
18. Government Contractor-Issued Charge Card Delinquent Late Payment Fee. VA travelers are responsible for any fee associated with a late payment of the Government contractor-issued charge card, unless through no personal fault, the traveler is unable to file a travel voucher because of circumstances specific to the travel.
19. Insurance, Driving-Related. Driving-related insurance is reimbursable when the AO determines that legal requirements/procedures of the foreign country involved make it necessary to carry driving-related insurance ([55 Comp. Gen. 1343, 1976](#)) to cover potential liability for damage, personal injury, or death to third parties when travel is authorized by Government conveyance/private-owned conveyance/rental car.
20. Interpreter Services. Reimbursable when authorized in advance by the AO.
21. Laundry/Dry Cleaning Expenses:
 - Reimbursable for Continental United States (CONUS) Travel. Costs for personal laundry, dry cleaning and/or pressing of clothing, incurred during TDY travel involving at least six consecutive nights lodging, are separately reimbursable travel expenses. The purpose of laundry/dry cleaning is for reusing clothes while on TDY. Expenses incurred on the last day of the TDY or after the completion of the TDY are not reimbursable;
 - Not Reimbursable for outside CONUS Travel. Laundry/dry cleaning and/or pressing of clothing are not a separately reimbursable travel expense for outside CONUS travel. It is part of the Meals and Incidental Expense (M&IE) allowance included within the per diem rates/Actual Expense Allowance (AEA) authorized for outside CONUS travel.
22. License/Permit - International Driver. Reimbursable when traveling TDY to a country that requires an international driver's license/permit. Also, the cost of license/ permit photos is reimbursable. Refer to [Road Safety Overseas](#) for additional information on driving abroad. This reimbursement applies only to employees.
23. Lodging Fees/Daytime Lodging Charges. Reimbursable when authorized in advance by the AO. These include room occupancy lodging charges for late departure, early arrival, or airport daytime lodging facilities due to travel arrangements that are not for the traveler's convenience.

² If these items are necessary to complete the mission, VA may reimburse these costs as miscellaneous expenses. This is done on a case by case basis as needed for the mission.

24. Lodging, Mandatory Fees, or Charges. These fees or charges are separately reimbursable, in addition to the room rate, when the expense is not optional and are approved by the AO. Fees or charges include, but are not limited to, resort fees, safe fee, or a service charge.
25. Lodging Tax:
- CONUS and non-foreign areas. Lodging tax reimbursement is limited to the tax on reimbursable lodging costs. For example, if the authorized maximum lodging rate is \$60/night, and lodging that costs \$110/night is chosen, tax on \$60 (the maximum authorized lodging amount) may be reimbursed.
- Foreign areas. Lodging tax in foreign areas is not reimbursable because it is considered part of per diem rate.
26. Mission-Related Expenses. Mission-related expenses are not reimbursable as travel expenses. These include, but are not limited to, equipment and materials (e.g., batteries, tools, film, paper, books, medical supplies) and similar items. The purchase card will be used for the purchase of equipment or materials.
27. Non-refundable Room Deposits, Forfeited Rental Deposits or Prepaid Rent, and Early Checkout Penalties when TDY is Curtailed/Canceled/Interrupted. When advance lodging arrangements (including deposits for rental units) are made and TDY is curtailed/canceled/interrupted, lodging cost reimbursement may be authorized by the AO. Reimbursement must not exceed the remaining amount of per diem/AEA plus appropriate lodging tax that would have been paid had the TDY not been curtailed/ canceled/interrupted ([59 Comp. Gen. 609 \(1980\)](#)). The AO will consider the following when approving these expenses:
- Traveler acted reasonably and prudently in incurring lodging expenses;
 - Traveler had a reasonable expectation of completing the TDY as authorized;
 - Assignment was changed for official purposes or for an acceptable reason beyond the traveler's control; and
 - Traveler took reasonable steps to obtain a refund once the TDY was officially canceled or curtailed.
28. Paper Tickets. Additional costs associated with providing paper tickets to the traveler may be authorized in advance by the AO, as necessary, to meet Government requirements (e.g., a potential work stoppage by the airline or special circumstances involving international travel to foreign countries). Paper tickets acquired for personal convenience are not reimbursable and are the traveler's financial responsibility.

29. Parking Fees at a Terminal. Transportation terminal parking fees (while on TDY) are authorized when advantageous to the Government.
30. Passport, Visa, Permanent Resident Card, Photographs, Physical Exams, and Legal Services. Reimbursement authority is for an employee who is:
 - A U.S. citizen (An eligible dependent does not have to be a U.S. citizen);
 - Hired locally or transported to a foreign area at Government expense;
 - Serving under a service or renewal agreement (Permanent Duty Travel and TDY for overseas travel); or
 - Required to obtain or renew a passport, mandatory biometric visa requirements, and/or visas as a result of continued employment in a foreign area.
31. Personal Expenses. Personal expenses are not reimbursable. These include batteries, tools, film, gifts, pet care, hotel concierge, workout room/gym fees, and similar items.
32. Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV) (e.g., airplane, automobile, motorcycle) Use on TDY. The following official business costs are allowable:
 - TDY mileage allowance. Gasoline expenses are not reimbursable because it is included in the mileage allowance;
 - Ferry fares, bridge, road and tunnel tolls;
 - Automobile parking fees related to official business only; and
 - Aircraft landing, parking, and tie-down fees.
33. Registered Traveler Membership Fee. Individual traveler's membership in a registered and/or trusted traveler program is not a reimbursable expense. Use of Government funds to obtain membership in such a program is statutorily prohibited by [5 U.S.C. 5946](#).
34. Registration Fee. The purchase card should be used when paying a registration fee. Reimbursement is authorized when the fee is a condition for attendance. When the registration fee includes the cost of meals, the per diem allowance will be reduced appropriately.
35. Reports/Correspondence Preparation Services. Services of typists, data processors or stenographers, and the use of computers, printers, faxing machines and scanners are reimbursable when authorized in advance by the AO. Reimbursement does not cover any materials.

36. Room Rental. Room rental is reimbursable when authorized in advance by the AO only when used for official business at a lodging facility. Travelers will use the purchase card if the room is used for a meeting or conference.

37. Service and Processing Fees. Service and processing fees (e.g., transaction fees) for arranging official transportation, rental car, and lodging accommodations are authorized:

- When procured through the Travel Management Center (TMC) and
- When a TMC is not available.

Note: Reimbursement is authorized only when every reasonable attempt has been made by the traveler to engage the TMC in the process and the TMC is not available prior to the commencement of official travel.

38. Storage of Property Used on Official Business. Storage is reimbursable when authorized in advance by the AO.

39. Taxi and transportation network companies. Reimbursement for expenses may be approved when other modes of transportation, such as public transportation, airport shuttle services, or Government-sponsored vans are not reasonably available, and reimbursement is the most cost-effective method. Taxis and transportation network companies may be reimbursed for the following purposes:

- To and from common carrier terminals;
- To and from meeting sites, as necessary; or
- To obtain suitable meals only when they cannot be obtained at or near the TDY site. The traveler will provide a justification to the AO (e.g., medical requirements for a particular diet).

40. Technology Equipment. Use of computers, printers, faxing machines, scanners, telegrams, cablegrams, or radiograms is authorized when approved in advance by the AO.

41. Tips for Handling Government Property. Transportation-related tips for handling Government property at terminals and lodging facilities are authorized.

42. Tips, Transportation-Related. The amount paid for transportation-related tips for taxis, transportation network companies, limousines, and courtesy transportation may be reimbursed but must not exceed 20 percent of the customary fare rounded up to the nearest 25 cents. Tips paid for complimentary (no cost) shuttle service may be reimbursed but must not exceed \$3. Tips for valet parking service are included under Meals and Incidental Expenses and are not a separate miscellaneous expense.

43. Toll Collection Transponder Installed in a Rental Car. Activation of the Toll Collection Transponder installed in a rental car for optional use is not reimbursable².
44. Transportation to/from Terminal. Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV) transportation costs for TDY travel to and from the transportation terminal are authorized when advantageous to the Government.

040503 CELL PHONE USAGE

1. When a cell phone is used for official communication, each call must be documented showing the additional cost incurred outside of the normal usage covered in the cell phone contract.
2. Phone Calls (Official). The AO will consider the following when approving charges for official phone calls:
 - Certain communications to a traveler's home/family are official (e.g., to advise of the traveler's safe arrival, inform/inquire about medical conditions, and advise regarding changes in itinerary);
 - Actual cost of phone calls NTE \$5 per day (or NTE \$35 per week) except in emergencies (traveler will provide justification for phone calls in emergency situations);
 - Reimbursement for personal calls will not be approved when the traveler is issued a VA communication device (e.g., Blackberry)' and
 - Prepaid communication services (i.e., prepaid phone cards, cell phones) are not reimbursable.

Procedural and other guidance to assist the traveler can be found either in Section 0402 Policies or in relevant appendices as indicated below:

040501 Appendix A: Reimbursable Miscellaneous Travel Expenses.

040502 Appendix B: Non-Reimbursable Miscellaneous Travel Expenses.

040503 Appendix C: Reimbursable Baggage Expenses.

040504 Appendix D: Reimbursable Communication Services.

² If these items are necessary to complete the mission, VA may reimburse these costs as miscellaneous expenses. This is done on a case by case basis as needed for the mission.

0406 AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

[5 U.S.C. 5946, Membership fees; expenses of attendance at meetings; limitations](#)

[41 C.F.R. Chapters 300-304, Federal Travel Regulation \(FTR\)](#)

[Comptroller General Decision, 55 Comp. Gen. 1343 \(1976\), Insurance on Overseas Automobiles](#)

[Comptroller General Decision, 63 Comp. Gen. 554 \(1984\), Losses Incurred on a Currency Exchange](#)

[Comptroller General Decision, 59 Comp. Gen. 609 \(1980\), Lodging Expenses – Curtailed Temporary Duty](#)

0407 RESCISSIONS

040701 VA Financial Policies and Procedures, Volume XIV, Travel; Chapter 4, *Miscellaneous Travel Expenses*, April 2011.

040702 VA Financial Policies and Procedures, Volume XIV, Travel; Chapter 4, *Miscellaneous Travel Expenses*, September 2014.

0408 QUESTIONS

Questions concerning these financial policies and procedures should be directed as follows:

VHA	VAFSCtravelpolicy@va.gov
VBA	TRAVEL.VBACO@va.gov
NCA	NCABudgetService@va.gov
OIT	VACOITTravel@va.gov
All Others	TravelPolicy@va.gov

APPENDIX A: REIMBURSABLE MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSES

The table below describes reimbursement for miscellaneous travel expenses that are necessary and in the interest of the Government; refer to [FTR §301-12.1](#) and [FTR § 301-70.300](#). For the requirements on when advanced approval is required from the AO for miscellaneous travel expenses, refer back to the applicable expense in the chapter policy.

Allowable Reimbursement for Miscellaneous Expenses

Expense Types	Allowable Items
General expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baggage expenses • Services of guides, interpreters, drivers • Services of an attendant, when necessary, to accommodate special need ³ • Use of computers, printers, faxing machines, and scanners • Services of typists, data processors, or stenographers • Storage of property used on official business • Hire of conference center room or hotel room for official business • Official telephone calls, phone calls home, faxes ⁴ • Lodging taxes (CONUS and non-foreign areas), unless tax exempt by state • Laundry, cleaning, and pressing of clothing (non-foreign only for six or more consecutive nights at the TDY location) • Energy surcharge and lodging resort fees (when such fees are not optional)
Fees to obtain money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees for travelers checks, certified checks, money orders • Transaction fees for use of ATMs—Government contractor-issued charge card

³ For limits on the amount that may be paid to an attendant, other than travel expenses, see 5 U.S.C. 3102 and guidance at http://www.opm.gov/disability/mngr_6-01-B.asp.

⁴ Traveler should use Government provided services for all official communications. When they are not available, commercial services may be used. Reimbursement may be approved.

Allowable Reimbursement for Miscellaneous Expenses

Expense Types	Allowable Items
Special expenses of foreign travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissions on conversion of foreign currency• Passport and/or visa fees, including fees for a physical examination if one is required to obtain a passport and/or visa and such examination could not be obtained at a Government facility. Reimbursement for such fees may include travel and transportation costs to the passport/visa issuing office if located outside the local commuting area of the employee's official duty station and the traveler's presence at that office is mandatory.• Costs of photographs for passports and visas• Foreign country exit fees• Costs of birth, health, and identity certificates• Charges for inoculations that cannot be obtained through a Federal dispensary

APPENDIX B: NON-REIMBURSABLE MISCELLANEOUS TRAVEL EXPENSES

Expense Type	Expenses Not Allowed
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative fees for use of an ATM charged to a personal credit or debit card • Baggage handling tips at transportation terminals or lodging establishments for personal luggage unless medically justified • Prepaid communication services: prepaid phone cards, cell phones, etc. • In-flight communication services • Losses resulting from currency conversions • GPS or transponder for a rental car ⁵ • Hotel taxes for foreign travel • Laundry and dry cleaning expenses when travel is outside CONUS • Cost of equipment or materials for mission-related TDY. Note: The purchase card will be used for the purchase of equipment or materials. • Transportation paper tickets provided for the convenience of the traveler • Retail personal purchases: luggage, clothing, eye glasses, etc. • Personal expenses

⁵ If these items are necessary to complete the mission, VA may reimburse these costs as miscellaneous expenses. This is done on a case by case basis as needed for the mission.

APPENDIX C: REIMBURSABLE BAGGAGE EXPENSES

Following are general rules for number of baggage(s) based on length of TDY travel:

- One piece for 1 week of TDY travel
- Two pieces for 2 weeks of TDY travel
- Three pieces for 3 weeks or more of TDY travel

AOs may authorize an excess baggage from the above general rules when the baggage is needed to conduct official business with proper justification that it is in the interest of the Government.

Excess weight for baggage may be allowed by the AO after the fact with proper justification. For example, a traveler returns from a training conference with additional training materials received at the training location.

Travel Reimbursement for Baggage Expenses

Expense Item	Description	Allowed Reimbursement
Checked baggage	Common carriers periodically revise their rules concerning checked baggage. For current information on applicable fees for checked baggage, refer to the GSA website at http://www.gsa.gov/citypair (select “Fact Sheets” from the menu at the left and click on “Baggage Allowance”).	Fees if any charged by the common carrier for checked baggage.
Carry-on baggage	Each passenger is allowed to hand-carry one article for storage in the overhead luggage bin in the passenger cabin. Carry-on baggage may consist of garment bags, laptops, purses, or similar items that fit in the overhead bin or under the seat. Carry-on baggage is not considered checked baggage and is carried free of charge. For current information refer to airlines	Generally, there is no additional fee for carry-on baggage.

Travel Reimbursement for Baggage Expenses

Expense Item	Description	Allowed Reimbursement
Excess baggage	Excess baggage is accompanied baggage over the standard one piece of checked baggage. Excess baggage must be authorized or approved by the travel AO. Excess baggage does not include pets or the baggage of travelers purchasing tickets for personal convenience.	Authorized if excess over standard one bag is approved (Refer to FTR §301-12.2d).
Transfer of baggage	Movement of baggage between common carriers or terminals	Reimbursement is permitted (Refer to FTR §301-12.2b).
Storage of baggage	If required because of official necessity and authorized in advance.	Reimbursement is permitted (Refer to FTR §301-12.2c).
Checking and handling of baggage	Charges for handling or checking Government baggage, such as for luggage porters or curbside check-in, are allowed. Charges or tips at transportation terminals are allowed for handling Government property carried by the traveler.	Reimbursement is permitted (Refer to FTR §301-12.2e).
Excess Weight on Baggage	Charges for additional weight when checking baggage. Excess weight for baggage may be allowed by the AO after the fact with proper justification. For example, a traveler returns from a training conference with additional training materials received at the training	Fees, if any, charged by the common carrier for excess weight for accompanied baggage (Refer to FTR §301-12.2a).

APPENDIX D: REIMBURSABLE COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Type of Call	Explanation	Reimbursement
Local calls	Calls made within the limits of a traveler's official duty station or within the temporary duty location	Actual cost of calls made for official business.
Reservations and accommodations	Calls made to make or confirm airline, train, bus, hotel, or car rental reservations or accommodations	Actual cost of calls made
Long distance (within CONUS)	Official call to office or other location to conduct official business. Brief call home or to other location to inform family members of safe arrival or to check on safety of family members.	Actual cost of call conducted for official business with office or other official entity. Call made to family is limited to \$5 per day but will not exceed more than \$35 per week except for emergencies.
Long distance (outside CONUS)	Official call to office or other location to conduct official business. Brief call home or to other location to inform family members of safe arrival or to check on safety of family members.	Actual cost of calls conducted for official business with office or other official entity. Calls made to family are limited to a reasonable amount per the location as determined by the AO's.
Personal cell phone, e-mail, Internet	Agency may authorize charges for cell phones and other electronic devices for official business.	Payment is limited to the cost of the call, e-mail, or Internet access charge; reimbursement does not include the normal recurring charge for maintaining the traveler's personal cell phone, e-mail, or Internet service.
Cable, radio, facsimile, or similar services	Official correspondence sent to Government offices must be endorsed by the sender as "Official Business—Collect." All others must be prepaid.	When collect service is refused, reimbursement will be paid for the amount demanded.