



MEMORANDUM

February 1, 2008

TO: Directors and Fiscal Officers of State Agencies, Boards, and Commissions

FROM: Aaron Erickson 
Deputy Director,
State Accounting

SUBJECT: Amendment to Travel rule: Rule 126-1-02 of the Administrative Code;
New Per Diem-based OBM Travel Rule

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of changes to the OBM travel rule that were approved by JCARR on December 3, 2008 and are effective February 1, 2008.

This memorandum serves as a summary only and is not intended to cover all provisions governing the rates and requirements for reimbursement of travel. Please refer to the specific provisions of the applicable bargaining contract(s) to determine rates applicable to your agency's bargaining unit employees. Refer to the OBM travel rule, Rule 126-1-02 of the Administrative Code, *Rates and Requirements for Reimbursement of Travel Expenses of State Agents*, for information about travel reimbursement for exempt employees.

In-State & Out-of-State Travel

Effective February 1, 2008, there is no distinction between in-state and out-of-state travel. The OBM travel rule refers to either continental U.S. travel or out-of-country travel. Continental U.S. travel is travel within the United States and Canada. Out-of-country is travel outside of the United States and Canada.

Transportation Expenses

Effective February 1, 2008, state agents who travel by privately owned automobiles may be reimbursed for mileage incurred on state business at the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) standard business mileage rate. The IRS's current standard business rate is 50.5 cents/mile.

Receipts are required for all service expenses incurred in connection with the operation of state-owned automobiles, all common carrier expenses, and all miscellaneous transportation expenses exceeding \$10/day. If a state agent accumulates transportation expenses of \$25 or more in one day, all receipts are required.

A state agent shall not be reimbursed for mileage commuting from his/her residence to his/her headquarters nor from his/her headquarters to his/her residence. For example, if the state agent's normal commute from his/her residence to headquarters is ten (10) miles, and a state agent commutes from his/her residence to his/her authorized destination that is thirty (30) miles away, the state agent shall only be reimbursed for twenty (20) miles.

Meal Per Diem

Effective February 1, 2008, the rule establishes a statewide per diem for meal reimbursement. Reimbursement for meals for state agents is authorized only when overnight lodging is required. Standard meal reimbursement rates (including tips) are set forth below:

Breakfast	\$6
Lunch	\$9
Dinner	\$12
<u>Incidentals</u>	<u>\$4</u>
Total	\$31

OBM may update the per diem annually to adjust to the revisions to the Federal per diem schedule. The per diem is designed to offset the additional cost of travel, not to entirely pay for the traveler's meal. The amount of reimbursement shall be adjusted on departure and return days based on the time of departure and return. Travelers are expected to pro-rate per diem on travel days based upon their travel schedule. Please refer to the OBM travel rule for the pro-rated meal reimbursement schedule.

Note: With the adoption of the per diem, travelers will only be reimbursed at the per diem rate. If a traveler spends more than the per diem and has receipts to document the expense, he/she will only be reimbursed at the per diem rate.

Gratuities

Effective February 1, 2008, state agents may no longer request reimbursement for gratuities. Gratuities are included in the per diem rates as established by OBM.

Meal Receipts

Effective February 1, 2008, OBM will not require state agents to submit receipts with their requests for reimbursement for meals. The head of a state agency (or his/her designee) may require that amounts claimed for meal expenses are supported by receipts, although meal receipts may not be required under this rule. Original receipts shall be submitted to the state agency.

Lodging Rates

Effective February 1, 2008, the reimbursement rate for lodging rates in commercial establishments within the Continental U.S. is \$80 per state agent per night plus applicable taxes or the lowest government rate in the area with approval from the state agency head or his/her designee.

Out-of-country lodging in commercial establishments is authorized per state agent per calendar day a rate determined to be reasonable by the head of the state agency or his/her designee.

Overnight lodging may be reimbursed only when the state agent is traveling on official state business **and** is either:

- (a) At a location greater than 45 miles of both that state agent's residence and headquarters, or:
- (b) At a location greater than 30 miles of both the state agent's residence and headquarters for conference purposes.

Receipts are required for all lodging expenses.

Conferences Meals

If a conference includes or provides a meal, the state agent shall not be reimbursed for that same meal under paragraph (D) of this rule.

Exceptions

Agencies seeking exceptions to this rule should submit a request to the Director of OBM by the head of a state agency or his/her designee, prior to the expense being incurred. No exception shall remain in effect for more than one year.

The complete OBM travel rule can be found at on the OBM website at www.obm.ohio.gov and questions about travel should be directed to Judy Johnson at 614-466-1569 or by e-mail at judy.johnson@obm.state.oh.us.

AE:kmm