

IODP-TAMU POLICY ON TRAVEL

Revised/Approved: January 14, 2016

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

This document is the Texas A&M Research Foundation Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (TAMRF-IODP) statement of travel policy on reimbursement of “allowable and reasonable” travel related expenses. NOTE: This policy is applicable to travel in connection with IODP activities where appropriate. Each traveler must be familiar with this policy prior to travel to ensure that costs incurred will be reimbursable. Expenses resulting from emergencies or circumstances not addressed in the IODP Travel Policy or the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) will be subject to approval by the IODP Director or Department Manager. Travelers are strongly encouraged to book their travel through the Travel Service Administrator to avoid incurring unallowable expenses.

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

Travelers, with the exception of the Director, cannot authorize their own travel. Travel authorization mentioned herein will be delegated as follows:

IODP Managers: travel for managers is approved by the Director; in the absence of the Director, a Manager designated by the Director or the IODP-TAMUS General Manager can approve the travel.

All other personnel: travel for all other personnel is approved by Managers or delegates of the appropriate department.

All travel performed for official IODP business requires a completed and approved Travel Authorization/Advance Request submitted to the Travel Service Administrator. The travel authorization form is available from the Travel Service Administrator or can be downloaded from the IODP Intranet (<http://iodp.tamu.edu/travel/expenses.html>).

TRAVEL ADVANCES/CORPORATE CREDIT CARD

TRAVEL ADVANCES

Travelers may request that the Travel Department calculate an advance based on reasonably estimated allowable business expenses. Please note the following:

1. Travel advances will not be issued for amounts under \$100.00 or for a day trip unless unusual circumstances warrant an advance.
2. Travelers are encouraged to complete an Individual Direct Deposit Authorization Form for travel advances/reimbursements to be directly deposited into an individual's checking account. The form can be downloaded from the website (http://iodp.tamu.edu/travel/forms/ACH_Individual_Enrollment_Form.pdf) and submitted to the Financial Specialist for processing.
3. Advance funds for a canceled trip must be returned immediately. The advance cannot be used for any subsequent trips.
4. IRS regulations prohibit issuing travel advances more than 30 days prior to date of official travel.
5. Advance requests will normally be denied if an advance from a previous trip is outstanding.

REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSES

Allowable travel expenses paid by the traveler will be reimbursed according to the TAMRF-IODP policy when submitted on an Expense Account form with the required receipts.

Forms and instructions may be obtained from the Travel Department or downloaded (<http://iodp.tamu.edu/travel/expenses.html>).

The traveler will be notified if the final expense account reconciliation results in a reimbursement other than the original amount submitted.

PERSONAL TRAVEL/ROUTING TAKEN IN CONJUNCTION WITH BUSINESS TRAVEL

Personal travel may be booked with the business portion with Supervisor approval. The specific personal travel dates must be indicated on the Travel Authorization/Advance Request and the Travel Expense Account form. The following will be applicable in determining the travelers' "allowable business" cost.

The Travel Service Administrator will produce an "allowable itinerary," according to the travelers' "official business." This will govern reimbursement when the traveler's personal routing differs from the official scheduled routing. Any additional expense (e.g., increase in airfare or additional nights lodging incurred as a result of the personal routing) must be paid by the traveler.

When traveling on IODP business, employees are allowed a 1- night stay at their business destination upon arrival and a 1-night stay prior to departure unless the business itinerary (14 hours or greater) requires a rest period. If a travel itinerary includes personal travel immediately preceding or following a business event, a rest period may not apply. The number of nights allowed may vary depending upon the business itinerary and business need.

CLAIMING TRAVEL EXPENSES

A. LODGING

U.S. government lodging per diem rates are used when booking hotels. When these rates cannot be obtained, TAMRF-IODP will allow without justification a maximum rate of \$250.00/night (taxes excluded). Costs for lodging shall not generally exceed the maximum rate of \$250.00/night or the published federal rate, whichever is higher. Reimbursement will not exceed 300% of the federal rate under any circumstance.

Staying at hotels where meetings are held: a traveler may stay at a hotel where his/her meeting is being held even if the rate exceeds the maximum hotel rate (up to the limits described above). A notation must be made on the expense voucher that the traveler stayed in the meeting hotel.

The cost of a day room or access to a travel lounge is permitted when there is a mandatory layover by the airlines of 6 hours or more. The cost for the room may not exceed the maximum rate for lodging (\$250.00 or federal rate, if higher).

Itemized hotel receipts are required. A credit card statement or hotel confirmation cannot be accepted in lieu of the itemized hotel receipt. **Please note the following:**

1. If receipts have been lost or destroyed, the traveler must obtain a duplicate receipt.

2. Hotel receipts reflecting foreign currency will be converted according to the currency exchange rate in effect at the time of travel obtained from the OANDA website or according to the travelers' credit card or bank statement that reflects the actual U.S. amount billed.
3. It is the traveler's responsibility to ensure that lodging reservations are canceled if travel plans change. The traveler must notify the Travel Service Administrator or the hotel directly to cancel reservations, or be held personally responsible for any cancellation fee.
4. When traveling on IODP business, employees are allowed a 1- night stay at their business destination upon arrival and a 1- night stay prior to departure unless the business itinerary (14 hours or greater) requires a rest period. If a travel itinerary includes personal travel immediately preceding or following a business event, a rest period may not apply. The number of nights allowed may vary depending upon the business itinerary and business need.

Note: Employees of TAMU/TAMUS are entitled to an exemption from state hotel occupancy taxes. In order to advantage of this, the traveler must present an exemption certificate at the time of check-in. The form is available at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxforms/12-302.pdf>.

B. MEALS

Meal expenses will be reimbursed on the **Per Diem Method** according to the federally approved rates for the travel destination. Travelers may be reimbursed up to 75% of the applicable per diem rate for that location while in travel status (in route to the destination) and up to 100% on the day of arrival at the destination.

Note: per diem will not be paid for a meal when available on board ship or when included in the registration fee, all-inclusive resort/hotel rate, or other mandatory fee.

The meal per diem rates include taxes, tips to food servers, and foreign transaction fees. Some meal rates for frequently traveled US cities, postcruise meeting locations, and port call locations can be located at <http://iodp.tamu.edu/travel/perdiem.html>. Contact the Travel Services Department for per diem rates that apply to your travel.

Expedition travel per diem calculations will be based on embarking/disembarking city locations and the time the traveler boarded the ship and came ashore.

Note: IRS regulations state that reimbursement for meals on non-overnight trips must be reported by the employer as taxable income.

C. TRANSPORTATION

1. AIR TRANSPORTATION

Air transportation should be arranged through the Travel Service Administrator to reduce the risk of incurring personal liability for unallowable costs. A traveler who elects to purchase their own airline ticket **must satisfy the** receipt requirement (i.e., an airline electronic ticket showing itinerary, class of service, and the total airfare paid), and this documentation must be submitted with the travel expense voucher. The Travel Service Administrator will provide an "allowable itinerary" indicating the flight cost to determine the reimbursable cost to the traveler.

REST PERIOD

When scheduled flight time, including stopovers, exceeds 14 hours, a rest period not to exceed 24 hours prior to the beginning of official business may be allowed at the destination, with prior approval of the traveler's Supervisor/Manager. A rest period may be granted at either the conclusion of an "outgoing" or a "return" flight.

COACH CLASS SEATING UPGRADES

Under coach class seating upgrade programs (e.g., Coach Elite, Coach Plus, Preferred Coach, Main Cabin Extra) the Travel Services Administrator may obtain, for a fee, a more desirable seat choice in the coach class cabin on an IODP selected flight under the following conditions.

1. At time of ticket purchase, a window or aisle seat is not available and aisle/window/extended leg room seats are only available through purchase of an economy seat upgrade.
2. Pre-reserved seating is only available for last row, rear of the plane.

TICKET CHANGES/UNUSED TICKETS

Any changes made to an IODP purchased ticket must be made through the Travel Service Administrator. Unauthorized changes could result in additional airfare or change fees at the travelers' expense. The traveler must notify the Travel Service Administrator of any unused flight segments for IODP credit processing.

LOST/DELAYED BAGGAGE

Purchase of personal items, luggage replacement, or any other associated cost due to lost/delayed baggage will be at the traveler's expense and are not reimbursable. Purchase of work supply items due to lost baggage will be reimbursed when receipts are submitted.

CHARTERED, PERSONALLY OWNED, OR RENTED AIRCRAFT

Approval must be obtained before arrangements can be made to charter an aircraft. The only exception to obtaining approval is in the case of a medical emergency or supplying the IODP ship. Arrangements for such use must be discussed with the IODP Director or TAMRF-IODP General Manager well in advance and must receive express prior written approval.

Note: University insurance coverage applies only if the pilot holds a commercial pilot's license.

2. GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Ground transportation expenses will be reimbursed under the conditions in the following sections.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE

Use of a privately owned vehicle (POV) is reimbursable at the current IRS approved mileage rate, which can be found on the IODP intranet under "Expense Account Reimbursement." This rate includes expenses for vehicle maintenance, gas, and oil. Reimbursement for mileage cannot exceed the equivalent of economy airfare except under the following circumstances, when total mileage may be allowed. (In all cases below, an explanation must be noted by the traveler on the travel expense voucher.)

1. When a POV is required to transport official materials/equipment.

2. When several persons are traveling together on business (mileage may be reimbursed to the owner of the vehicle only—not accompanying persons).
3. When the POV is used for local transportation in lieu of a rental car at the official destination and the total mileage does not exceed the equivalent of allowable airfare, plus the cost of a midsize rental car.
4. Mileage will be allowed to and from the business location and to obtain meals when suitable meals cannot be obtained at or within walking distance of the place of lodging and/or business location. Appropriate documentation must be entered on the travel expense voucher.

Mileage reimbursement is based on travel by the most direct route between the departure and destination points. When mileage cannot easily be verified on MapQuest (e.g., traveling through various countries, field trips, etc.), a log must be kept of the mileage between points.

Traveler use of a POV to travel to and or from a port call **must** obtain written approval from their Manager or Supervisor.

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING INSURANCE COVERAGE

Other than worker's compensation, IODP-TAMU/TAMRF will NOT be liable for any claims or deductibles should an accident occur when using a POV. We urge you to check with your individual coverage when using a POV for business purposes

MOTORCYCLES

The use of privately owned motorcycles is reimbursable at the current IRS approved mileage rate.

COMMERCIAL RENTAL

Car rentals should be arranged through the Travel Service Administrator to reduce the risk of incurring personal liability for unallowable costs. **The Travel Service Administrator will provide a confirmation of the car rental that will include an estimated total and an explanation of what coverage is provided in the rate.** Receipts must be submitted for reimbursement of car rental expenses. Rental vehicles should be used only when necessary to obtain economical or practical transportation (e.g., when it would cost more to travel by taxi, bus, etc.). Gasoline expenses incurred for official business use of the rental car are reimbursable. For a single expense of \$75.00 or more a receipt is required. Rental cars will not be authorized if the traveler is staying at the hotel where the meeting is held unless the hotel does not have food facilities on the premises and there is no suitable eating establishment within walking distance (or if the area surrounding the hotel is perceived unsafe in which to walk), or the rental car is used to transport several IODP employees to the same destination. Deviations from the above policy will need prior approval by the appropriate Manager or Supervisor and TAMRF-IODP General Manager.

Use of a car larger than midsize will not be authorized unless (1) large equipment must be transported for official IODP business, (2) more than four program employees are traveling together on official business, or (3) documentation is provided showing the cost of larger than a midsize car was equal to or less than the cost of the midsize. The justification must be written on the Travel Authorization form before the Travel Service Administrator can book a car larger than midsize. The rental car receipt must show itemized costs. Upgrade charges are not allowable unless one of the above reasons apply. If the car is retained for personal leave days, the rental fee must be reimbursed proportionately to the business days.

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT RENTAL CAR INSURANCE

- Reservations confirmed using a “state contracted rental car vendor” includes Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or Loss/Damage Waiver (LDW). Reference the following: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-rental-car-contract/general-rental-car-contact-information/#insurance>
- When a non-state-contracted rental car vendor is used, the cost of Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) is reimbursable; however, the cost of Additional Liability Insurance (e.g., PAI or personal effects insurance) is NOT allowable except in foreign countries.
- Car rental agencies use different terminology when referring to car rental insurances or waivers. If uncertain about the nature of the waiver or insurance, ask the agent for an explanation to avoid incurring an unallowable expense.
- When leasing vehicles in foreign countries, it is advisable to purchase all available and reasonable levels of waivers and insurance including PAI.

TAXICAB, LIMOUSINE, BUS, TRAIN

Taxi, limousine, bus, and train fares must be itemized on the expense account form with the date and to/from locations. Limousine service from city to city will be used only when other practical means (e.g., train, bus) are not available or limousine service is more economical. Receipts are required for any single fare of \$75.00 or more.

3. OTHER TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

Other reimbursable transportation expenses include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Airport departure taxes.
- Parking and toll fees: a receipt required for single expense of \$75.00 or more. Parking fees are allowable **except** long-term parking or automobile storage for the duration of an IODP cruise.

D. COMMUNICATIONS

Costs incurred for “official project business” telecommunications/internet may be claimed.

E. PASSPORTS

Reimbursement for the cost incurred in obtaining or renewing a passport may be made to an employee who, in the regular course of his/her duties, is required to travel internationally for official IODP business. The maximum allowable reimbursement will be the current cost of the allowable services at the time of the passport application. Expedited service and additional passport pages are allowable with the department Manager’s approval.

Note: Postage and/or mileage for obtaining/renewing a passport are not reimbursable.

F. FOREIGN VISAS (EXCLUDING U.S. WORK VISAS)

Reimbursement is provided for cost incurred for obtaining foreign visas when required for international travel associated with IODP.

Note: Postage and/or mileage for obtaining a visa are reimbursable.

G. MISCELLANEOUS

Receipts are required for any single expense over \$75.00.

Examples of allowable miscellaneous expenses include but are not limited to the following:

1. Registration fees (for conferences, meetings, etc.).
2. Miscellaneous supplies (not office supplies).
3. Fees for traveler's checks.
4. Special transportation and assistance for project equipment and materials.
5. Postage for official IODP mail.
6. Tips: itemize miscellaneous tips (tips to food servers are included as part of the federal meal allowances and cannot be claimed separately). A reasonable tip is considered to be 15% of the expense (e.g., taxi fare) or \$1 per bag for porter or bellman service.
7. Laundry/dry cleaning: allowed for trips incurring a minimum of four consecutive nights of official travel.
8. Luggage check-in fee: allowable for one piece of luggage for trips lasting up to 5 days or two pieces of luggage for trips lasting over 5 days. *Note: IODP does NOT allow reimbursement of an "overweight" fee imposed on luggage.*
9. Communication during international travel: allowable for one call per day to a maximum of \$15.00 per day. *Note: expedition participants are allowed personal calls as specified above only while the ship is in port. While at sea or during a maintenance period, personal communication cost cannot be claimed.*
10. Foreign transaction/Currency exchange fees: when a loss is incurred in currency exchange, the loss may be claimed. The traveler must submit both receipts for the purchasing and selling of monies if the loss exceeds \$75.00.

UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES

The following expenses **are NOT** reimbursable:

- Entertainment or social activity expenses
- Alcoholic beverages
- Traffic fines

APPENDIX I

STATE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Effective November 2, 1992, Texas A&M University initiated the new State Travel Management Plan (STMP). As part of this plan, the State of Texas negotiates contracts with travel industry vendors for reduced rates on car rentals, hotels/motels and airlines.

The contracts normally provide reduced rates for state employees (including IODP-TAMU/TAMRF employees) traveling on official state business. TAMRF encourages all IODP employees traveling under TAMRF-administered contracts to utilize these reduced rates to the greatest extent practicable, when circumstances and other factors permit.

APPENDIX II

AIR CARRIER SELECTION

All international travel financed by the US Government must be booked on US flag air carriers to the greatest extent possible. **If a traveler arranges their own airline booking on a non-US air carrier, which is then submitted for reimbursement, they are required to attach a completed foreign carrier certification to their travel expense voucher. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in disallowance of cost incurred.**

US air carrier service also includes service provided under a **code shared** agreement with a foreign air carrier in accordance with Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, when the ticket, or documentation for an electronic ticket, identifies the US flag carrier's designator code and flight number. If a US flag air carrier would not accomplish the mission of the program or any of the reasons below, a US air carrier is considered unavailable. This includes any segment of the initial booking and any subsequent changes while en-route.

EXCEPTIONS TO THE "FLY AMERICA ACT"

1. No US flag air carrier provides service on a particular leg of the route, in which case foreign air carrier service may be used, but only to or from the nearest interchange point on a usually traveled route to connect with US flag air carrier service; or
2. A US flag air carrier involuntarily reroutes your travel on a foreign air carrier; or
3. Service on a foreign air carrier would be 3 hours or less, and use of the US flag air carrier would at least double your en route travel time; or
4. When the costs of transportation are reimbursed in full by a third party, such as a foreign government, international agency, or other non-government organization; or
5. The transportation is provided under a bilateral or multilateral air transportation agreement to which the US government and the government of a foreign country are parties, and which the Department of Transportation has determined meets the requirements of the Fly America Act.

For travel in categories below: When a US carrier is available, but all economy seats are sold out, and the trip cannot be postponed to wait for economy class, then travel should be booked in order of (1) business class, or (2) first class, before booking on a non-US carrier. If all fares on the preferred flight are sold out, and the trip cannot be postponed to wait for availability of a seat on a US air carrier, a non-US air carrier may then be used. Should either of these two situations occur, a justification should be written on the travel expense account explaining why the higher class of service was used, or a certification form must be attached to the payment document explaining the reason why it was necessary to use the non-US air carrier. **Cost savings is not an acceptable justification for using a foreign air carrier.**

WHEN FLYING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ANOTHER COUNTRY

1. If a US flag air carrier offers nonstop or direct service (no aircraft change) from your origin to your destination, you must use the US flag air carrier service unless such use would extend your travel time, including delay at origin, by 24 hours or more;
2. If a US flag air carrier does not offer nonstop or direct service (no aircraft change) between your origin and your destination, you must use a US flag air carrier on every portion of the route where it provides service unless, when compared to using a foreign air carrier, such use would:
 - a) Increase the number of aircraft changes you must make outside of the US by two or more; or
 - b) Extend your travel time by at least 6 hours or more; or
 - c) Require a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point.

TRAVEL SOLELY BETWEEN POINTS OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES

You must always use a US flag carrier when available for such travel, unless, when compared to using a foreign air carrier, such use would:

1. Increase the number of aircraft changes you must make en route by two or more; or
2. Extend your travel time by 6 hours or more; or
3. Require a connecting time of 4 hours or more at an overseas interchange point.

SHORT-DISTANCE TRAVEL REGARDLESS OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

Service for short-distance travel (3 hours or less) between two points by a US air carrier doubles the time.

CLASS OF SERVICE

It is IODP's policy to book coach economy airfares for all domestic and international travel. If space is not available in coach class on any scheduled flight in time to accomplish the purpose of the official travel, and the trip cannot be postponed to wait for availability in coach class, premium class airfare may be used. **Prior approval** (pre-booking) must be obtained from the appropriate Manager or Supervisor to use premium class airfares.-

Travelers making their own reservations must contact the Travel Service Administrator before booking any reservations in premium class to confirm that coach class is not available. Failure to do so will result in a personal liability to the traveler for the premium class airfare. Travelers may use frequent-flyer benefits to upgrade to premium class.