

Rusk Independent School District
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Travel Guidelines

Employees of Rusk ISD will be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while conducting school business in accordance with the State of Texas Travel Information in effect at the beginning of the district's fiscal year. Reimbursement rates for mileage, meals, and lodging will be the maximum state reimbursement rates in effect at the beginning of the fiscal year and will remain at those rates for the entire fiscal year. State rates in effect at October 1 are in effect for Rusk ISD at September 1.

In order for travel expenses to qualify for reimbursement, the following guidelines should be followed:

All trips must be authorized by the employee's immediate supervisor.

Out-of-state travel must have prior approval of the Superintendent.

Travel should be coordinated with others when possible.

Every effort should be made to coordinate schedules so that hotel and transportation arrangements can be shared.

School vehicles must be used when possible. Failure to request a school vehicle in advance will jeopardize reimbursement.

Reimbursement requests for most out-of-district travel and all overnight travel shall be made using the district's *Travel Expense Claim Form*. Employees who accumulate daily travel on a monthly basis shall use an appropriate form for other than overnight travel.

Completing the *Travel Expense Claim Form*:

All pertinent information must be completed. Times of departure and return are necessary for determining allowable meal reimbursement.

An agenda and proof of attendance must be attached to document purpose of travel.

The immediate supervisor shall verify and approve the reimbursement claimed.

All necessary signatures should be obtained prior to submitting the form for reimbursement.

The claim form should be submitted as soon as possible after the travel occurs. A delay in submitting a request may jeopardize reimbursement.

General information:

Mileage Mileage shall be paid from work headquarters or employee's home whichever is shorter. Travelers will be required to calculate mileage by one of the following methods:

- Odometer reading (point-to-point method)
- Electronic mapping source (such as that on www.Mapquest.com or any other online mapping service). If this method is chosen, the traveler must print out the driving directions provided by the site and attach them to the travel voucher.
- District pre-determined mileage for certain destinations

Travelers are required to select the shortest and most economical route but may justify the selection of another route if it was chosen for safety reasons and specific justification of the selection is given.

School vehicles must be used when possible. Failure to request a school vehicle in advance will jeopardize reimbursement. Mileage should be coordinated with others when possible.

Lodging Lodging will be reimbursed at actual expense not to exceed the maximum reimbursement rate per the State of Texas Travel Information. A paid receipt must be submitted for reimbursement. Lodging should be coordinated with others when possible.

Parking A paid receipt must be submitted for reimbursement. Self-parking should be used if at all possible. Valet parking will only be reimbursed if it is the only parking available or in special circumstances such as safety concerns. Special circumstances must be documented.

Meals Meals will be reimbursed at actual expense not to exceed the maximum reimbursement rate per the State of Texas Travel Information. The maximum reimbursement rate per the State of Texas Travel Information for the intended destination will be used for the entire trip, inclusive of travel to and from destination. Times of departure and return are necessary for determining allowable meal reimbursement. The maximum reimbursement rate will be divided between breakfast, lunch, and dinner for reimbursement purposes. The individual meal rates can be found on the travel claim form. Food, beverages, and snacks outside of regular meals are not reimbursable. Meals are reimbursed based on length of travel as follows:

1. Less than overnight travel – Receipts are required for reimbursement. Reimbursement is limited to actual expense not to exceed allowable individual meal rates. According to IRS regulations, meals for less than overnight travel are taxable as wages. These reimbursements will be made through payroll.
2. Overnight travel – Receipts are required for reimbursement. Reimbursement is limited to actual expense not to exceed maximum reimbursement allowable per the state guide rates.

Please note that individual meal rates are in effect even if meal expense is paid as a group. Individuals are responsible for any amount over the allowed amount.

Airfare

Air transportation generally should be used only if travel expenses via air are equal to or less than travel expenses via automobile for the same trip. All trips via airplane need prior approval by the Superintendent. Air travel arrangements are normally made through the central office.

Travel arrangements:

The transportation department should be contacted regarding the use of school vehicles.

Hotel accommodations should be made at the campus/department level. Purchase orders should be processed containing all pertinent information regarding arrangements. Central office staff will verify amount, tax treatment, and method of payment with the hotel after the purchase order is approved. At that time, the school credit card can be used to hold and guarantee the room for late arrival. The school credit card can also replace a personal credit card that was used to reserve the room if requested. However, nothing should actually be charged to either credit card. Central office staff will contact employee regarding the payment arrangements made.

Purchase orders should be processed for registration fees.