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TRAVEL UPDATE

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A Utah Department of Administrative Services, Division of Finance quarterly communication service

www.finance.utah.gov



New and Renewed Contracts

Airlines

We are happy to announce that our airline contracts have been extended for another year. The airlines have agreed to do this with no increase in price. You will find a list of contracted cities and rates by visiting the travel web page at www.finance.utah.gov/travel and clicking on the “contracted airlines” link.

Rental Cars

Our contracts with Budget Rent a Car and Enterprise Rent a Car were set to expire on 7/31/09. We have been able to extend those contracts through 10/31/09. We are currently working on obtaining new contracts for rental car services through WSCA (Western States Contracting Alliance). Contracting through WSCA will enable us to obtain much lower rates without sacrificing services. We will have more information on this new contract in the next issue of the Travel Update Newsletter.

Business Travel Card Services

Effective 7/1/09 we began our new contract with UMB Bank for our business travel card services. If you need to obtain a new travel card for a traveler, you can access the application and user agreement (required to be signed and turned in with application) on the travel web page. Both forms are located in the right column. Once the application and user agreement are filled out, they need to be sent to Barbara Sutherland in the Division of Finance for processing. If you have any questions please contact Tami Nelson at 801-538-3109, taminelson@utah.gov or Barbara Sutherland at 801-538-3020, bsutherland@utah.gov.

New and Renewed Contracts

Travel Policy & Procedures FAQs

Quarterly Training Classes

A Word from our Contracted Agency

State Travel Office or Internet?

Who's Who in the State Travel Office

Travel Policy and Procedure FAQs

by Tami Nelson



Q.

If a 3rd party is paying for my expenses to go on a trip, do I have to follow per diem rules?

A.

Yes. When you are traveling as a State of Utah employee you are required to follow the State of Utah per diem rates as stated in the travel policy. Please refer to [FIACCT 10-02.02](#) letter D for details.

Q.

If a hotel is offering a “state rate” for lodging, will I be reimbursed in full for the cost?

A.

You will only receive reimbursement (room rate plus tax) up to the maximum lodging per diem for the city in which you are staying according to travel policy. Lodging facilities are not required to follow our per diem guidelines. For example, a lodging facility may offer a “special rate” for state government employees traveling on business which can be higher than our posted per diem. If you just ask for the state rate without verifying that it is actually the allowable rate, they may end up charging you a higher rate. If this happens, then you will only be reimbursed at the allowable lodging per diem rate.

Note! If you book a reservation through the State Travel Office and the allowable lodging per diem rate is not available, you will be reimbursed at the actual cost.



Quarterly Training Classes

The State Travel Office is pleased to announce that the next set of dates for travel policy training are now available to all individuals involved in the booking and reconciling of travel for the State. Classes will be held quarterly and are designed to provide procedural guidelines for beginning as well as experienced travel planners. A thorough review of policies and procedures related to the booking of business travel on behalf of State of Utah travelers will be included. In addition, rules and regulations governing each general travel expense type will be discussed in depth. The intent of this class is to help department personnel comply with state travel policies and increase their efficiency in the management of their travel activities.

The next class will be held on Tuesday, October 6, 2009. Each class will be held in the State Office Building Auditorium. You will find the next set of confirmed dates as well as be able to register for these classes by going to the State Travel web site at www.finance.utah.gov/travel and clicking on the “Travel Training” link.

For more information, you may visit our website or contact Tami Nelson at 801-538-3109.



A Word From Our Contracted Travel Agency

It seems today that everyone is charging extra fees for everything just to make a quick buck-*especially* the airlines. They charge you for baggage, walking your child to the gate, seat assignments, being overweight, and meals just to mention a few. Some airlines have even gone as far as trying to charge for a glass of water. And if that wasn't enough they then tried to charge you for using the restroom on board the aircraft! Luckily that trend didn't last too long...

In this industry it is very difficult for us as travel agents to keep all of this ever changing information stored in our heads. That's why you should always check directly with the carrier for any changes or updates to their baggage policies. Usually the best place to look is the individual carrier's website.

Denise Francis, CBT Team Leader

For the most popular carriers that we book here, this is the latest list of fees for domestic travel. The fees are subject to change at any time.

American Airlines	1 st bag \$20.00 2 nd bag \$25.00	Northwest Airlines	1 st bag \$20.00 2 nd bag \$30.00
Continental Airlines	1 st bag \$20.00 2 nd bag \$25.00	Southwest Airlines	1 st bag free 2 nd bag free
Delta Airlines	1 st bag \$20.00 2 nd bag \$30.00	United Airlines	1 st bag \$20.00 2 nd bag \$30.00
Frontier Airlines	1 st bag \$15.00 2 nd bag \$25.00		

Please keep in mind that most carriers do have a 50lb maximum for weight. If you go over their weight restrictions, they will charge you yet another fee. Do you see why you might need a math degree in order to figure out exactly what the cost of your flight will be? Seems to me the easiest thing to do is to just layer all of your clothes on yourself when flying to your destination and not checking any bags at all! Just kidding, of course.

Note: Baggage fees are reimbursable as a miscellaneous expense, but remember that receipts are required for all miscellaneous expenses of \$20 or more.

State Travel Office or Internet?

The use of the State Travel Office is required by state policy FIACCT 10-02.00. The article below provides some independent support for this practice.

Since 2001, Topaz International has conducted comparative studies of corporate travel airfares between actual corporate travel agency booked itineraries and various public internet sites, including Orbitz, Expedia, Travelocity and airline direct websites.

During the most recent results from 2008, Topaz found that business travel itineraries booked by a designated corporate travel agency averaged \$61 less than the same itinerary booked on a public internet site.

	Percentage of Time Agency Fare is Equal to or Lower than Internet Fares	Average Agency Fare	Average Internet Fare	Difference
2001	93.26%	\$458	\$629	\$171
2002	91.13%	\$594	\$748	\$154
2003	91.02%	\$503	\$572	\$69
2004	93.57%	\$478	\$558	\$80
2005	93.29%	\$427	\$483	\$56
2006	94.03%	\$508	\$583	\$75
2007	94.85%	\$442	\$498	\$56
2008	91.56%	\$497	\$558	\$61

“The challenge of travel management professionals during difficult economic times is to ensure their travelers are spending precious resources wisely, and airfare is one of the highest expenditures in many corporations,” says Bradley J. Seitz, President and CEO at Topaz International.

The State Travel Office is staffed with professional and experienced travel agents. However, if an occasion arises where a traveler or travel planner finds a lower fare on the internet than what is being quoted by our agents, please call Tami Nelson or Kevin Lucus immediately. We will verify this information, advise the agents of any discrepancy and take whatever action is appropriate.



(Information from this article was extracted from a press release by Topaz International, May 1, 2009.)

Who's Who in the State Travel Office

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HELP!

*Emergency Line During Business Hours, 7am to 6pm, Monday through Thursday
8am to 5pm, Fridays*

801-537-9124

*In-State Toll Free During Business Hours, 7am to 6pm, Monday through Thursday
8am to 5pm, Fridays*

866-489-9834

After Hours Emergency Hotline

888-739-7018