

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) – AR 3350(a) TRAVEL EXPENSES

1. What type of travel has to be approved?

All travel must be authorized in advance. SCUSD employees are authorized to travel locally when the travel is considered a part of the employee's job duties and is authorized by the employee's immediate supervisor.

Travel within California that is not local requires approval from the employee's immediate supervisor, Department Head, and/or Assistant Superintendent or Chief Business Official. Employees must obtain approval at least two weeks in advance of the planned travel.

Travel outside of California requires approval from the employee's immediate supervisor, Department Head, and/or Assistant Superintendent or Chief Business Official. Employees must obtain approval at least 30 days in advance of the planned travel.

2. What is considered Local Travel?

Local travel is defined as travel within Santa Clara County or neighboring counties within the San Francisco Bay Area (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz), Sacramento, or within a 150 mile radius, that is one day only, and does not involve an overnight stay.

3. Can I make my own lodging and airfare arrangements?

Only the Purchasing Department can make lodging and airfare arrangements; reimbursements are not allowed.

4. AR 3350(a) indicates the District will now use per diem to reimburse employees for meals. What is per diem?

Per diem is an daily allowance for meals and incidental expenses determined by the General Services Administration (GSA) for travel destinations in the United States. Cities/counties have an established per diem rate based on cost of living factors for those areas. GSA regularly updates per diem rates.

5. How do I find the per diem rate for (city/county, state)?

Visit www.gsa.gov/perdiem to find the rates. Click on the state you need to view that state's rates or enter the location you will be working in the search box. Most major cities are listed; the county where you will be working should be used if the city is not listed. To look up the county, visit explorer.naco.org. If the city or county you are looking for is not listed on the GSA per diem rate page, then the current standard of \$51 for meals and incidentals applies.

6. What is considered an incidental expense?

Incidental expenses include taxes and gratuities meals, housekeeping, portage, etc.

7. Will I be reimbursed the full-day per diem rate on travel days?

First and last day of travel will be reimbursed at 75% the per diem rate.

8. To be reimbursed the per diem amount, do I have to submit receipts?

Receipts for meal reimbursement are no longer required to be submitted. Employees must submit copies of the conference registration or agendas for meetings to substantiate the per diem rate claimed.

9. Will I be reimbursed the full per diem amount if the conference or meeting I am attending offers meals as part of the registration?

No. When an employee is attending a conference that includes meals as part of the registration fee, the employee must deduct the cost of the meals from the daily meal total by the rates provided on the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) Breakdown on the GSA website, even if the employee chooses to not take the conference meal.

10. How do I determine the adjusted per diem rate when meals are included in the registration fee?

The GSA website provides the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) Breakdown by breakfast, lunch, dinner and incidental expenses. First query the M&IE total rate for the travel location; then find the breakdown for meals and incidental expenses listed by the total M&IE rate.

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/meals-and-incidentals-expenses-mie-breakdown>

11. I'm attending a conference that offers coffee and pastries, but the conference registration did not indicate that breakfast would be served. Do I need to subtract out the M&IE breakfast rate from the per diem rate claimed?

No, only adjust the per diem rate if meals are provided as part of the registration fee. Typically, meals included with the conference will be specified on the registration form that is submitted with the reimbursement request. Coffee, snacks, etc. are not considered meals.

12. Will I receive per diem for a one-day conference or meeting?

Meal and incidental expense reimbursement will not be allowed within the defined Local Travel area unless meals are scheduled as an official part of conventions, conferences, workshops, or meetings, and have been approved prior to the event.

13. How do I get a meal reimbursement for multiple District employees that were paid on one check?

It is recommended that checks for meals be split and paid for separately since the District will only reimburse each employee the per diem amount.

14. Can long-term parking be reimbursed?

Yes; however, employees are expected to travel in the most direct and economical manner, and evaluate the cost of alternative options (e.g. ride-sharing, taxis, long-term parking) when selecting the mode of transportation.

15. Will my taxi or ride-share (Uber, Lyft) expenses be reimbursed?

If the taxi or ride-share expense is business related (e.g. travel to/from the airport, travel to/from conference when not within walking distance, etc.) the expense will be reimbursed. Board policy 3350 states that the District will not reimburse personal expenses. If you elect to eat at a restaurant that requires travel when there are available eating establishments within walking distance, it is a personal choice and not a reimbursable expense.

16. Are there any changes to mileage reimbursements?

Mileage continues to be reimbursed at the current IRS mileage rate for approved travel, and will be reimbursed in an amount that does not exceed the amount which would have been spent if the employee used coach or economy air transportation or other commercial transportation.

For Management employees, mileage within Santa Clara County will not be reimbursed. Travel outside Santa Clara County is calculated on the destination route beginning on the Santa Clara County border.

17. How do I calculate my reimbursable mileage when I am in travel status and the travel begins from my residence?

When travel originates or ends at the employee's residence, reimbursable mileage is calculated by taking the total actual mileage and subtracting out the employee's round trip home-to-work mileage (regular commute).

18. Can I submit my travel reimbursement claims quarterly?

No. Claims must be submitted monthly by the 30th of the subsequent month after travel has occurred. June reimbursements must be submitted on or before June 30.

19. What backup do I need to submit with my travel reimbursement claim?

You will need to submit printouts of the per diem rate for your travel destination from the GSA website, printouts of the GSA Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) Breakdown if adjustments are made to your per diem because meals were provided as part of the registration fee at the attended conference or training, and printouts of mileage traveled (MapQuest, Google, etc.). Requests for reimbursements for tolls, parking, taxis, etc. require receipts to substantiate the claim.