

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

OAS 5770.1
January 28, 2015

GSA ORDER

SUBJECT: Local Travel

1. Purpose. To provide guidance on the reimbursement of transportation expenses incurred on official business within the local area of an employee's official worksite/duty station or appropriate alternative worksite.
2. Background. While the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) regulates expense reimbursement for temporary duty (TDY) travel away from the official station for GSA employees, it does not provide guidance for local travel expense reimbursement. Also, due to new policies, such as telework, the scope of local travel must be clarified.
3. Scope and applicability. This directive provides guidance for reimbursing transportation expenses incurred on official business performed near a GSA employee's official worksite/duty station. Non-GSA employees who perform local travel at the request of GSA may be reimbursed as provided by their contract or inter- and intra-government agreement, as applicable. Reimbursement to non-GSA employees will be processed through the financial system, not the e-Gov Travel System (ETS).
4. Cancellation. This directive cancels chapter 7 of PFM P 4290.1 GSA Internal Travel Regulations and Control of Official Travel, dated August 24, 2004 (as extended).
5. Revisions. This directive limits the reimbursement of local travel expenses to the amount that exceeds an employee's daily commuting costs. It also defines "commuting expense."
6. Responsibilities. The Travel Policy and Charge Card Program Office (H1BB) develops local travel policy for GSA employees. Regional offices may supplement this policy, but regional policy may not change or conflict with official policy. Regional policy must be cleared by H1BB.
7. Signature.

/S/

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Policy	1
2. Definition of local travel.....	1
3. Commuting expenses	1
4. Mass transit subsidies	1
5. Local travel areas	2
a. Central office employees	2
b. Regional employees	2
c. Full-time telework employees	2
6. Travel authorization	2
7. Government contractor-issued travel charge card	2
8. Tokens, tickets, and passes	2
9. Local transportation expenses	2
a. Government owned automobile (GOA).....	3
b. Privately owned vehicle (POV).....	3
c. Mass transit services	3
d. Tolls, fares, etc.	3
e. Taxicab	3
10. Per diem	3
a. Prohibition	3
b. Exception for protection of human life or Federal property	3
11. Claiming reimbursement	4
Appendix: Local Travel Scenarios	A-1

LOCAL TRAVEL

1. Policy. Reimbursement for transportation expenses incurred by a GSA employee performing official duties near his/her worksite/duty station¹ will be limited to the amount that exceeds the employee's round-trip regular commuting costs, even if that commute is not performed every day.

2. Definition of local travel. Local travel is travel necessary to conduct official GSA business and is performed by the most direct route within and adjacent to an employee's official worksite/duty station or appropriate alternative worksite. The proximity of travel to the employee's official worksite/duty station determines whether expenses are reimbursed as local travel expenses, as described in this policy, or as TDY travel expenses, as described in the FTR. Local travel does not include any official travel that is part of a TDY travel authorization, including travel to a common carrier terminal in the employee's local travel area in conjunction with TDY.

3. Commuting expenses. Commuting expenses are costs incurred while traveling between an employee's residence and his/her official worksite/duty station. Commuting expenses are calculated on a daily basis and are based on the method of transportation used for that day's commute. For example, if an employee purchases a monthly bus pass, but chooses to drive on the day he or she conducts local travel, the employee may be reimbursed for driving expenses (e.g., mileage, parking, tolls), that exceed the normal commuting costs of driving from his or her residence to the official station. When computing the amount for reimbursement, expenses are considered individually, rather than in aggregate, so that all excess mileage, tolls, and parking fees are reimbursed even if certain expenses are less than normal commuting costs. The cost of the pro-rated "unused" bus pass is not a reimbursable expense.

4. Mass transit subsidies. The GSA Fare Subsidy Program offers qualifying employees a financial incentive to use mass transit and other options for commuting to and from work in an effort to reduce traffic congestion and dangerous pollutants in metropolitan areas. GSA employees who commute by public transportation, including subway, bus, train, or qualified vanpool, may receive "transit passes" or "fare media" through the program. The subsidy is only intended to cover the costs of commuting to an

¹ [HCO 6040.1A GSA Mobility and Telework Policy](#) paragraph 6d defines the official worksite/duty station as "the location where the employee regularly performs his or her official work duties Designation ... must be determined on a case-by-case basis using the following considerations:

(1) The official worksite is the ... place where the employee would normally work if not teleworking - as long as the employee is scheduled to report physically at least twice each biweekly pay period to that Agency worksite;

(2) The official worksite for an employee who is not scheduled to report at least twice a biweekly pay period to the Agency worksite (includes virtual workers/full time teleworkers) is the location of the appropriate alternative worksite (except in certain temporary duty situations);

(3) The official worksite for an employee whose work location varies on a recurring basis (mobile work), and who does not report at least twice each biweekly pay period to the Agency worksite, is the Agency worksite, as long as the employee is performing work within the same geographic area (established for the purpose of a given pay entitlement) as the Agency worksite."

employee's official worksite/duty station and return to home. It is not intended to pay for local travel to/from/between other places of official business, such as travel to an offsite meeting location.

5. Local travel areas.

a. Central Office employees.

(1) The local travel area for Central Office employees whose official worksite/duty station is in the Washington, DC metropolitan area has been established as follows: The District of Columbia, the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, and Falls Church in Virginia; Arlington and Fairfax Counties in Virginia; and Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in Maryland.

(2) For Central Office employees whose official worksite/duty station is located in a regional office, excluding the National Capital Region office (e.g., satellite employee), the local travel area is established by the respective Regional Administrator.

b. Regional employees. Regional Administrators (RAs) will determine their region's local travel area. RAs may use a mileage radius, the corporate limits of the city or town, or the usual commuting area of the official worksite/duty station (area served by local transportation services such as buses, streetcars, subways and trains). No part of the area, however, can be more than 50 miles from where the employee regularly performs his/her duties or from an invitational traveler's residence or regular place of business.

c. Full-time telework employees. Employees who telework full-time will have a local travel area of 50 miles from their residence or other appropriate alternative worksite designated as their official worksite/duty station. ([HCO 6040.1A GSA Mobility and Telework Policy.](#))

6. Travel authorization. A written or electronic travel authorization will not be issued for travel solely within an employee's local travel area.

7. Government contractor-issued travel charge card. Travel charge cards will not be used to pay for expenses unrelated to official TDY travel, including local travel, except for situations of imminent danger to human life or Federal property.

8. Tokens, tickets and passes. In areas where mass transit services are available (subways, buses, etc.), offices should obtain tokens, tickets, and/or passes in advance with a purchase card ([OAS 4200.1A Management and Use of the GSA SmartPay® Purchase Card](#)), to eliminate the need for reimbursing these costs via a local travel voucher. Offices should establish procedures to prevent inappropriate use of these items.

9. Local transportation expenses. Based on cost and other factors (e.g., distance traveled, number of travelers, urgency), employees should select the method of travel

most advantageous to the Government. Otherwise, reimbursement will be limited to the constructive amount of using the most advantageous method of travel (see examples in Appendix).

- a. Government-owned automobile (GOA). A GOA must be used for local travel whenever available and most advantageous to the Government.
- b. Privately owned vehicle (POV). Local travel via POV will be reimbursed based on the actual distance traveled (as shown on the odometer), minus the employee's normal round-trip commuting distance/expenses, times the applicable mileage rate on <http://www.gsa.gov/mileage>. POVs include privately owned automobiles (POA), privately owned motorcycles, and privately owned airplanes. Reimbursement will be limited to the GOA rate when a GOA was available and advantageous to the Government, but a POA is used due to the personal choice of the employee instead.
- c. Mass transit services. Travel between places of business via bus, subway, ferry, streetcar, etc., may be reimbursed as a transportation expense.
- d. Tolls, fares, etc. Parking, ferry fares, and tolls may be reimbursed as a transportation expense when their use is determined to be necessary and advantageous to the Government.
- e. Taxicab.

(1) A taxicab may be used if advantageous to the Government and necessary for urgent business. Taxicabs may also be authorized for local travel between an employee's office and residence if the employee depends on public transportation to perform official duties and he/she is directed to work outside of his/her regular hours and the local travel occurs during darkness or hours of infrequently scheduled public transportation.

(2) Reimbursement is limited to taxicab fare for the usually traveled route plus tip (maximum 15% rounded up to the next dollar).

(3) Receipts are required for any single taxicab fare (including tip) that exceeds \$25.

10. Per diem.

a. Prohibition. No per diem or actual subsistence expense allowance (lodging or meals) will be paid for travel within an employee's local travel area.

b. Exception for protection of human life or Federal property. The Administrator of General Services or his/her designee may authorize reimbursement of subsistence/per diem expenses for an employee who must remain at his/her official worksite/duty station or appropriate alternative worksite due to imminent danger to human life or Federal

property, and as a result, incurs lodging and/or meal expenses. The Administrator or his/her designee must authorize in writing the need to incur subsistence/per diem expenses and the employee must then upload this authorization into the e-Gov Travel System (ETS) and request reimbursement. The reimbursement will be processed on a local voucher as a miscellaneous expense. As situations permit, contact the Office of General Counsel in writing for additional guidance before incurring any expense that may be covered by this exception.

11. Claiming reimbursement.

a. Approving officials must review claims for accuracy before approval. Relevant factors include mode of transportation utilized, distance traveled, and the amount that exceeds the employee's commuting costs. The approval official must ensure that the mode of transportation used was more advantageous to the Government than other available modes of transportation.

b. Claims must be filed on an ETS local voucher (travel.gsa.gov).

c. Claims should be filed monthly or when the amount for reimbursement exceeds \$25. If required, however, claims may be filed sooner.

d. When travel involves two or more GSA employees on official business, one employee should pay and claim the entire expense (e.g., taxicab fare, bridge toll, etc.).

e. All taxicab fare receipts exceeding \$25 and any other local travel expense receipt exceeding \$75 must be attached to the ETS voucher.

f. Employees must explain all taxicab use described in paragraph 9(e)(1). That explanation must include the employee's departure time from the office and justification for use of the taxicab.

Appendix. Local Travel Scenarios

This Appendix applies GSA's local travel policy to real-life scenarios. Each scenario explains and calculates an employee's local travel and commuting expenses, and if applicable, the reimbursement amount. All mileage rates used below are examples only. Current mileage reimbursement rates are posted at www.gsa.gov/mileage. The scenarios also explain how different facts would affect reimbursement calculations.

Scenario 1. Sarah commutes 15 miles (one-way) to her official worksite and incurs a \$20 daily parking fee. On the day of local travel she reports to her official worksite in her privately owned automobile (POA) and incurs a \$10 short-term parking fee before driving 10 miles to an off-site meeting where she incurs another \$10 parking fee. After the meeting, she drives 25 miles to her home. Assuming a rate of 55.5 cents/mile when a POA is most advantageous, what is her reimbursable local travel expense?

Expense Description	Day's Expenses	Commuting Expenses	Reimbursable Expenses
Mileage	50 miles	30 miles	20 miles
Parking	\$20	\$20	\$0

Reimbursement: 20 miles x 55.5 cents/mile = **\$11.10**

Explanation 1. Sarah would be reimbursed for the 20 additional miles. The \$10 parking fee incurred at the meeting, however, is not reimbursable because it does not exceed her normal parking expenses usually incurred as part of her commute. If she had been required to return to her official worksite, and as a result, incurred additional mileage and parking expenses before going home, the additional mileage would be reimbursed. The additional parking would also be reimbursed, if it exceeded her normal \$20 parking expenses.

Scenario 2. Same as scenario 1, but Sarah chooses to use her POA when a GOA is available and most advantageous to the Government, and returns to the office to do work, incurs another \$10 parking fee and then goes home for the day. Assuming a rate of 55.5 cents/mile when a POA is most advantageous, and a rate of 24 cents/mile when a GOA is most advantageous but a POA is used instead, what is her reimbursable local travel expense?

Expense Description	Day's Expenses	Commuting Expenses	Reimbursable Expenses
Mileage	50 miles	30 miles	20 miles
Parking	\$30	\$20	\$10

Reimbursement: \$4.80 (20 miles x 24 cents/mile) + \$10 = **\$14.80**

Explanation 2. Like explanation 1, Sarah would be reimbursed the additional 20 miles, but since she failed to use an available and advantageous GOA, her reimbursement would be limited to the reduced rate. Unlike explanation 1, Sarah would be reimbursed for the additional parking since her \$30 parking expenses exceed her normal \$20 parking expenses.

Scenario 3. Bob teleworks full-time. For personal reasons, he drives 15 miles to a local coffee shop to perform his work.

Expense Description	Day's Expenses	Commuting Expenses	Reimbursable Expenses
Mileage	15 miles	0 miles	0 miles
Parking	\$0	\$0	\$0

Reimbursement: \$0

Explanation 3. As a full-time telework employee, Bob's residence is his official worksite. Since Bob was not required to perform his official duties at the coffee shop, the costs incurred while traveling there are personal expenses and are not reimbursable.

Scenario 4. Julie is a full-time telework employee. She is required to attend a meeting 45 miles round-trip from her home. Julie drives her POA, which is most advantageous to the Government in this case, to and from the meeting location. Julie incurs two \$5 tolls on her EZ Pass and a \$10 parking fee at the meeting location. What is Julie's reimbursable local travel expense?

Expense Description	Day's Expenses	Commuting Expenses	Reimbursable Expenses
Mileage	45 miles	0 miles	45 miles
Tolls	\$10	\$0	\$10
Parking	\$10	\$0	\$10

Reimbursement: $\$24.98$ (45 miles x 55.5 cents/mile) + \$10 + \$10 = **\$44.98**

Explanation 4. As a full-time telework employee, Julie's official worksite is her home. Since Julie was required to leave her home to perform her official duties at the meeting, the costs incurred traveling to the meeting, as well as the parking fee are reimbursable.

Scenario 5. Typically, Ken commutes 75 miles round-trip to his worksite/duty station via van pool. The van pool costs \$175 per month (\$125 paid with his transit subsidy and \$50 paid out of pocket). Ken is directed to attend a meeting near his worksite/duty

station. Ken drives to the meeting and incurs a \$10 parking fee. After the meeting he stops by the office to do some work and incurs another \$10 parking fee. Ken then returns home at the end of the day, driving a total of 100 miles. What is his reimbursable local travel expense?

Expense Description	Day's Expenses	Commuting Expenses	Reimbursable Expenses
Mileage	100 miles	75 miles	25 miles
Parking	\$20	\$10	\$10

Reimbursement: \$13.88 (25 miles x 55.5 cents/mile) + \$10 = **\$23.88**

Explanation 5. When an employee uses a mode of transportation for commuting that is different from what he/she normally uses, all normal commuting expenses associated with that mode are non-reimbursable expenses. In this scenario, since Ken chose to drive, rather than use the van pool, his reimbursement is based on his expenses associated with driving. Thus, the additional mileage and parking incurred at the meeting site are reimbursable. The round-trip mileage between Ken's home and worksite/duty station and the \$10 parking fee at the worksite, however, are non-reimbursable commuting expenses. In addition, Ken is not reimbursed for the pro-rated "unused" bus pass.