



**Western Cape
Government**

Western Cape Education Department

Policy for Air Travel, Road Transport and Accommodation for Official Purposes

Supported/Not supported.

Signed:

LJ ELY
DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: CORPORATE SERVICE
DATE: 20/4/22

Approved/Not approved.

Signed:

B WALTERS
ACCOUNTING OFFICER
DATE: 24/4/22

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The National Treasury issued a revised National Travel Framework (NTF) which requires of Accounting Officers and Accounting Authorities to adopt their travel and accommodation policies.
- 1.2 The purpose of the NTF is to determine minimum norms and standards for official business trips both domestically and internationally.

2. ACRONYMS

AA	Accounting Authority
ABS	Anti-Lock Braking System
AO	Accounting Officer
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COIDA	Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 1993 (Act No. 130 of 1993)
DOA	Delegation of Authority
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
MMS	Middle Management Service
NTF	National Travel Framework
OCPO	Office of the Chief Procurement Officer
PDP	Professional Driving Permit
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No.1 of 1999)
PSCBC	Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council
S&T	Subsistence and Travel
SARS	South African Revenue Service

SIPP	Standard Interline Passenger Procedure (A series of one-letter codes used in the car rental industry to describe the category and features of individual vehicles.) (Annexure A)
SMS	Senior Management Service
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TMC	Travel Management Company

3. DEFINITIONS

In this Policy, unless the context indicates otherwise, any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 or Treasury Regulations has the same meaning assigned to it in the Act or the Regulations, and—

“accommodation” means the rental of lodging facilities while away from one's place of residence while on official business;

“after-hours services” means a travel request that is actioned after normal working hours, i.e. 17h00 to 20h00 on Mondays to Fridays and twenty-four (24) hours on weekends and public holidays;

“air travel” means travel by airline on official business;

“authorising official” means the official who has delegated authority in terms of the Institution's approved delegations, to approve travel requests and expenses;

“best price of the day” means—

- (a) for airline bookings: the lowest fare offered at the time of booking, provided that this fare is offered in conjunction with suitable travel times. Travel Bookers to take cognisance of airline discount agreements negotiated by National Treasury;

- (b) for accommodation bookings: the lowest rate available at suitable accommodation establishments within reasonable distance from place of duty. The travel booker will determine the most appropriate star rating, based on an assessment of government business requirements and total cost of travel (typically, accommodation rates plus transportation costs). Travel bookers to take cognisance of the maximum allowable accommodation rates prescribed by National Treasury;

“car rental” means the rental of a vehicle for a defined period of time by a traveller for official business purposes;

“delegated official” means an official authorised in writing by the AO/AA in terms of sections 44 and 56, respectively, of the PFMA or any other enabling legislation to exercise a power or perform a duty set out in the relevant legislation, subject to such conditions as may be determined by the relevant AO/AA;

“domestic travel” means travel within the borders of the Republic of South Africa or within the borders of the foreign country where the official is based¹;

“emergency” means an event where unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances (either personal and, or, business related), including but not limited to, a death, illness, health risk, disaster management operations, or a business environmental risk, requires a booking for travel or a diversion from the original planned trip;

“Governance Committee”² means external and internal members belonging to a body that provides oversight and assurance functions over the operations of an Institution. Such Governance Committees include:

- a) The Board and its sub-committees;
- b) Departmental Audit Committees;
- c) Departmental Risk Committees;
- d) Departmental Anti-corruption Committees;

¹ The location, town, city, or country, as the case may be, where the Official in the normal course reports for work.

² Institutions may include other governance committees applicable to the Institution which include external members.

"incidental expenses" means minor expenditures associated with business travel. These expenses comprise an immaterial part of the travel and entertainment costs that a person might incur. These expenditures are usually paid by the traveler, since they are so small and are covered by the subsistence allowances under normal circumstances. Examples of these expenses are gratuity for table and room service, reading matter, private telephone calls, Liquid Refreshments which do not form part of the Meals and any similar minor expense;

"international travel" means travel outside the borders of the Republic of South Africa or outside the borders of the foreign country where the official is based³;

"institution" means a department, constitutional institution, public entity and government business enterprise listed in Schedules 2 and 3 to the PFMA;

"Institutional Travel Policy" means the internal travel policy developed by each Institution and approved by the AO/AA or delegated official which is in compliance with the minimum requirements of the NTF;

"liquid refreshments" means any drink and includes, inter alia, coffee, tea, sodas, bottled water, and fruit juices, but excludes any alcohol or spirits, malt or related substances;

"meals" means breakfast, lunch and dinner and include any Liquid Refreshments;

"official business" means the authorised performance of the institution's functions in terms of its mandate and strategic, operational and performance plans;

"official" means any person employed by, or seconded to an institution, unless specified otherwise in this policy;

"place of duty" means the place, other than the place of work, where the

³ The location, town, city, or country, as the case may be, where the Official in the normal course reports for work.

official performs official business or is otherwise on duty, e.g. an external meeting venue, conference venue or workshop;

“place of work” means the place of work identified in the official's contract of employment;

“reasonable actual expenses” means essential and inevitable expenses which are inexpensive, moderate and agreeable;

“shuttle service” means the service offered by a shuttle service company to transport a traveller from one point to another;

“subsistence allowance” means any allowance paid by the institution to the official for expenses incurred or to be incurred in respect of personal subsistence and incidental expenses;

“traveller” means a person travelling at the behest of the Institution on official business;

“travel advance” means a sum of money paid to an official prior to an official business trip. An advance would typically cover reimbursable expenses such as meals, transportation, lodging, and incidental items;

“travel allowance” is any allowance paid or advance granted by the Institution to the official for the use of his or her private motor vehicle for the Institution's business purposes;

“travel authorisation form” means the official form (manual or electronic) used by the Institution reflecting the detail and order number or unique authority number of the official business trip that the relevant authorising official approves;

“travel booker” means the person coordinating travel reservations on behalf of the traveller directly, or through the TMC consultant on behalf of the traveller;

“travel expenses” means expenses incurred by a traveller while he/she is on an Official Business trip. Examples of travel expenses may include expenses on accommodation, transportation and meals;

“Travel Management Company” means the service provider contracted to provide travel management services, which is inclusive of the procurement of travel related services; and

“travel voucher” means a document issued by the TMC to confirm the reservation or payment, or both, of specific travel arrangements.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Sections 38(1)(a)(iii) and 51(1)(a)(iii) of the PFMA requires AOs and AAs to ensure that their departments, trading entities, constitutional institutions or public entities have and maintain an appropriate procurement and provisioning system which is *fair, equitable, transparent, competitive and cost-effective*.
- 4.2 Section 38(1)(b) of the PFMA requires the AOs of departments and constitutional institutions to be responsible for the effective, efficient, economical and transparent use of their respective institution's resources.
- 4.3 The AOs of departments and constitutional institutions are reminded that section 38(1)(c)(ii) of the PFMA requires the AOs to take effective and appropriate steps to prevent unauthorised expenditure (in the case of departments), irregular expenditure and fruitless and wasteful expenditure.
- 4.4 Sections 45(c) and 57(c) of the PFMA, require employees to take effective and appropriate steps to prevent unauthorised expenditure (in the case of employees of departments), irregular expenditure and fruitless and wasteful expenditure (in the case of employees of all institutions) within their respective areas of responsibility.

- 4.5 Where there is any inconsistency between the National Travel Framework and the Institutional Travel Policy and, or SOPs, the National Travel Framework will prevail.

5. THE PURPOSE, SCOPE AND APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

- 5.1 The purpose is to give effect to the mandatory implementation of NTF, cost containment measures applicable to air travel, road transport and accommodation as contained in the applicable National Treasury Instructions and Framework.
- 5.2 This policy is thus aimed at establishing procedures for the:
- arranging of air travel (domestic and international);
 - hiring of vehicle, taxi or shuttle services;
 - arranging of accommodation; and
 - cancelation of confirmed travel or accommodation arrangements.
- 5.3 This Policy applies to all departmental officials and staff of Ministries and support staff appointed by the Department.
- 5.4 This Policy does not apply to the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for the Department.

6. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 6.1 The travel arrangements will be procured via the sourcing of quotations in accordance with the Department's supply chain management procedures and policy.
- 6.2 Travel bookers and officials or travellers must impartially consider the rates and fares available. Travel bookings must not be based on personal preferences for a particular travel service provider, access to lounges or the accumulation of reward and loyalty points.
- 6.3 Travel bookers or the appointed TMC must compare the best price of the

day of various airline fares, accommodation establishment rates and car rental rates before confirming a booking, to ensure competitiveness and cost effectiveness.

- 6.4 All role players involved in travel, travel arrangements, authorisations and approvals must exercise good and ethical judgement when incurring, authorising and approving travel expenses.
- 6.5 Officials must obtain approval from the Accounting Officer or delegated official for any official business travel arrangements using the Departmental Travel authorisation form and policies and processes.
- 6.6 The Accounting Officer or delegated official authorising the travel request must satisfy him/herself of the following, prior to approving travel requests:
- a) the necessity to travel, limited to official business trips in support of the Department's mandate;
 - b) the number of officials or travellers;
 - c) the benefit to the Department;
 - d) other alternatives to travelling (e.g. MS Teams, Skype, video conference, tele conference); and
 - e) compliance with this Policy.
- 6.7 Compliance with this Policy is the responsibility of all officials, travellers, travel bookers, appointed TMCs and any other person involved with travel related matters.
- 6.8 In all cases where proof of travel expenses is required, e.g. receipts, such proof must accompany the claim for reimbursement.
- 6.9 Officials or travellers must safeguard the Department's information and assets while travelling on official business and must avoid compromising on security.
- 6.10 Each official or traveller must maintain, for official business purposes, the

validity of necessary personal travel documents such as a passport, visa, international driver's license, etc. The official or traveller may claim any justifiable costs of doing so from the department where prior approval was obtained from the Accounting Officer or delegated official.

- 6.11 The requests for international travel and number of the delegation must be limited to critical official business trips and to officials or travellers directly involved in the subject matter of the meeting or event.
- 6.12 Requests for international travel must include the following:
- a) A formal invitation or motivation or both for the visit and its benefit for the Department's mandate;
 - b) an indication of whether the trip is fully or partly sponsored;
 - c) the financial implications of the visit; and
 - d) any support staff, or other officials, including the roles of each official (if applicable).
- 6.13 The departmental official or traveller must familiarise themselves with the necessary protocols prescribed by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation⁴ for International Travel.
- 6.14 Before a traveller departs on an international trip, he/she is obliged to seek advice on the following, for their own benefit:
- a) What is the most appropriate method of payment for accommodation and services, e.g. cash, virtual cards, cash cards, daily allowance advance or foreign debit cards;
 - b) what is the most practical currency;
 - c) the need to visit a travel clinic where vaccination is required;
 - d) the political and security situation in the country;
 - e) applicable business etiquette;
 - f) weather conditions; and
 - g) South African Embassy's office address and contact details in the country to be visited.

⁴ <http://www.dirco.gov.za/protocol/index.html>

7. APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATIONS

- 7.1 Officials or travellers are not allowed to approve their own travel requests and travel expenditure.
- 7.2 All travel approvals must be in writing and signed by the Accounting Officer or delegated official prior to the procurement process and departure. In cases where obtaining verbal authorisation from the authorising official, it is the responsibility of the official or traveller to have the authorisation ratified by the Accounting Officer or delegated official within 72 hours from obtaining the verbal authorisation or where not practical, within 24 hours upon return to the place of work.
- 7.3 All requests for international travel must be submitted via the Department to the DG: International Relations and approved by the MEC of the Western Cape Education Department.
- 7.4 The requirements for the approval and authorisation of air travel, hiring of vehicles, taxis and/or shuttle services and accommodation is dealt with below.

8. ARRANGING AIR TRAVEL

- 8.1 Air travel should only be undertaken after remote communication tools, such as teleconferencing and video conferencing, have been considered. All officials must make every attempt to reduce travel costs by comparing the cost advantage of using alternative communication tools.
- 8.2 Officials in the department must ensure that they familiarise themselves with the requirements of the National Treasury Instructions on the Cost Containment Measures in order to ensure that they comply with the procedures applicable to domestic or international travel.

- 8.3 The Accounting Officer or Delegated Official must be satisfied that there is a demonstrated business need and must consider the following when selecting a fare for air travel:
- a) Fare class: all air travel must be booked using the best price of the day and in the class of travel permitted under this policy.
 - b) Fare type: apply the use of restricted fare types as follows:
 - i. where there is a high degree of certainty of arrival or departure times, officials or travellers, travel bookers and TMC must consider restricted fare types;
 - ii. where there is a possibility that a scheduled meeting will not proceed, or there is uncertainty around the time that a scheduled meeting may conclude, officials or travellers, travel bookers and TMC must consider whether the additional cost of flexible fares outweighs the cost of possible changes or cancellation fees.
 - c) Value for money: travellers, travel bookers and TMC must compare fare classes and types across airlines servicing the particular route required.
 - d) Advance booking: in order to benefit from the available best price of the day, domestic travel should be booked at least seven days in advance, where possible. The most cost-effective options are available when making travel bookings/reservations more than 14 days prior to departure. International travel should be booked at least three weeks in advance, where possible.
- 8.5 The standard for air travel of five (5) hours or less must be in economy class and includes air travel to neighbouring and regional countries. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the Accounting Officer or Delegated official.
- 8.6 Flight tickets and the hiring of vehicles outside the province for official journeys must be arranged well in advance in order to qualify for the **best fare of the day**. Discounts are availed to travelers who book and confirm such bookings at least 30 days prior to the date of travel.

- 8.7 As a rule, departmental staff applications for flight bookings and hiring of vehicles must be submitted 30 days in advance. All late applications must be accompanied by written motivation explaining why such request was submitted late.
- 8.8 The completed and approved official application form for an official journey (VA26A) must be submitted to the Supply Chain in order for a travel agent to make the necessary flight, accommodation, shuttle services arrangements and/or hire vehicles. This does not apply to any arrangements made in respect of the MEC as the Office of the Minister has the approval to make their own arrangement in this regard.
- 8.9 The application for a flight booking must be approved at least at director level. In the case of a booking for director or person of higher rank, the application must be approved by an official of at least one rank/level above the applicant.
- 8.10 When air travel is to be undertaken by the Accounting Officer, the authority to approve that trip is vested in the Minister (MEC).
- 8.11 All domestic air travel shall be limited to economy class, unless approved otherwise by the Accounting Officer or delegated official.
- 8.12 The Accounting Officer or delegated authority may on written motivation, in the following circumstances/instances approve the application for the purchase of business class tickets:
- a) for employees with disabilities;
 - b) for employees with special needs;
 - c) in cases where economy class flights are not available, or
 - d) where the business class ticket is the same price or cheaper than the economy class ticket.

8.13 Any travel arrangements made in terms of 8.12 above must be documented and the reasons for such arrangements must be recorded for audit purposes.

8.14 All requests for international travel must be approved by the MEC of the Department. The standard of air travel for international flights exceeding five (5) hours shall be economy class, however, the Accounting Officer is authorised to approve a higher class based on the merits of each request and subject to the request for international travelling being approved by the MEC.

8.15 When travelling abroad, the following classes of air travel shall be applicable to officials:

Rank	Classes of Travel
Superintendent-General and Deputy Directors-General	No higher than Business Class
All other officials	Economy Class

8.16 Approval must be obtained from the Accounting Officer for an official who would normally travel Economy Class to be allowed to travel in Business Class with members of a delegation on an international flight. This is only applicable in the cases of inter-departmental delegations abroad and where it is in the interest of the province that the group sit together.

8.17 In highly exceptional circumstances, the Accounting Officer or delegated official may grant approval for a seat upgrade to the next higher class if a seat in the Economy Class of a domestic flight is unavailable and travelling on that date is imperative.

8.18 If exceptional circumstances necessitate a change to a booking, it must be authorised by the Accounting Officer or delegated official, irrespective of whether it has a cost implication or not. The Accounting Officer or delegated official must keep these changes to a minimum to mitigate the incurrence of fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

- 8.19 The cost associated with changes will be subject to the rules of the particular airline and may include penalty fees.
- 8.20 The cost incurred because of changes requested by an official or traveller for his or her convenience or lack of discipline will be for the official or traveller's own (personal) account. If the official or traveller does not immediately settle the additional expense, the department will cover the initial cost, and if the traveller is found liable, recover the amount from the official or traveller.
- 8.21 However, when the changes are because of changed business requirements or any circumstances outside the traveller's control, the Department will carry the cost for such changes and if such expense is not justifiable in the circumstances, it is fruitless and wasteful expenditure.

9. HIRING OF A VEHICLE, TAXI OR SHUTTLE SERVICE

- 9.1 The department must ensure that the officials in its employ utilise the most cost-effective mode of transport (e.g. car rental, public transport, shuttle services, etc.) at all times.
- 9.2 The department will make use of selected service providers for the hiring of vehicles, taxis and/or shuttle services.
- 9.3 The Car Rental Vehicle Categories will apply at the different employee levels/designation as per the table below:

Employee Level/Designation	Vehicle Category	Shuttle & Transfer Services
Accounting Officer	Intermediate 4-5 Door Manual or Automatic Vehicle with air-conditioning (IDAR/ RDAR/ FDMR/ FDAR/ FCAR/ ICAR/ ICMR) ⁵	Luxury Sedan

⁵ ACRIS or SIPP codes are used by car rental companies to define car models. Each character represents a definable feature of the vehicle: 1st character denotes the category based on size, cost, power and luxury factor; 2nd character defines the vehicle type for example if it is a SUV or sedan; 3rd character describes the transmission and the 4th character defines the fuel type and whether air-conditioned.

Deputy Directors-General and all other employees of a department	Economy 4-5 door, Manual and Automatic vehicle with air-conditioning (EDMR)	Economy Sedan
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9.4 Applications for the hiring of vehicles outside the province must be submitted with flight bookings.

9.5 Notwithstanding the provision in the above table, the Accounting Officer or delegated official may provide prior written approval for the hiring of a standard or compact vehicle (CDMR/CDAR/SDAR/SCMR/SDMR) in instances where –

- (a) three or more employees are travelling together;
- (b) the return journey to be travelled exceeds 400 kilometers to and from the destination (return journey); or
- (c) the special needs of an employee are to be catered for.

9.6 A different class of vehicle (Intermediate or Standard Sports Utility Vehicle (IFMR/IFAR/SFMR/SFAR) may be rented if required for a particular terrain. Mountainous and gravel roads are considered difficult terrain and vehicles with higher ground clearance may be required.

10. BOOKING OF A GOVERNMENT OR GOVERNMENT-RENTED VEHICLE WITHIN THE PROVINCE

10.1 The official Application to Travel form (GMT2012-19) must be completed and submitted when requesting the use of a government vehicle or a government-rented vehicle within the Western Cape Province.

10.2 Should a vehicle not be available in the government pool and the service is urgently required, the relevant Director must authorise the official application for submission to the Transport Section, who will make arrangements to hire a vehicle from a vehicle rental company as per approved government contract.

10.3 When requesting a vehicle in the Western Cape, the following completed forms must be submitted to the department's GG Transport Section at least 24 hours before the intended trip:

- Application to Travel Form (GMT 2012-19)
- Application to Hire Form (GMT 2012-23)

10.4 If Government Motor Transport does not have one of its own vehicles available, it will hire a vehicle from a car rental company in the province.

11. ARRANGING ACCOMMODATION

11.1 To save costs, officials may make their own accommodation arrangements within the RSA with hotels or guesthouses (3-star rating) which offer the most advantageous rates and which are located as near as possible to the meeting venue, in line with National Treasury's Cost Containment Measures.

11.2 International accommodation arrangements will be made via the department's selected service providers.

11.3 Officials who make their own arrangements must settle their accounts when they leave the hotel or guesthouse. Upon their return to the office the official will be entitled to submit a claim for full accommodation expenses or for any related expenses, provided that such expenses do not exceed the maximum allowable rates as provided for by the National Treasury.

11.4 Alternatively, officials may request a cash advance for their accommodation arrangements within the RSA with hotels or guesthouses (3-star rating) which offer the most advantageous rates and which are located as near as possible to the meeting venue. The official is entitled to submit a claim for full accommodation expenses or for any expenses in excess of the cash advance received. Any part of the cash advance which is not used must be repaid to the department.

- 11.5 Alternatively, the official may submit 30 days in advance his/her request to the Supply Chain for accommodation for an official trip. The application for accommodation arrangements must be approved at least at director level. In the case of a booking for director or person of higher rank, the application must be approved by an official of at least one rank/level above the applicant. Such arrangement must be in line with the treasury prescripts and allocated maximum allowable rates, unless otherwise approved by the Accounting Officer or delegated official.
- 11.6 For visits abroad, the approved service agency will make the booking, taking into consideration the travelling requirements of the individual or the group.

12. CANCELLATION OF CONFIRMED TRAVEL OR ACCOMMODATION RESERVATIONS

- 12.1 Officials are responsible for the effective, efficient and economical management of public funds and must prevent fruitless and wasteful expenditure. Therefore, it is essential, when travel or accommodation reservations are no longer required, that such reservations are cancelled with the relevant service provider well in advance.
- 12.2 Should the official fail to cancel such reservations, and if he or she is unable to provide acceptable reasons for such failure, the official will be held responsible for the costs relating to the non-cancellation of reservations, including no-show fees.

13. IMPLEMENTATION

- 13.1 This Policy applies to all officials of the Department and comes into effect on date of approval by the Accounting Officer.

14. DEVIATION

- 14.1 Any deviation from this policy must be justified in writing and will be subject to approval by a Deputy Director-General or the Accounting Officer.

15. REVIEW

- 15.1 This policy will be reviewed as and when required.