

Travel and subsistence

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) rules relating to travel and subsistence are contained in chapter 9 of the staff handbook. This emphasises that business needs should be considered in making decisions about higher cost travel options. However there are further steps that we must now take to ensure we drive down travel costs and eliminate any unnecessary expenditure.

Rail travel

With immediate effect, all civil servants are expected to travel standard class on rail journeys unless they can demonstrate a good business reason for not doing so. Specifically:

- All bookings should be made via the Redfern booking portal (see link, top right).
- Anyone making first class rail travel arrangements must make the case in advance and seek agreement from their director or director general. A form to support this process is available from the 'Travel forms' section of the forms cabinet (see related links). Travel by rail is covered in sections 9.2.12 and 13 of the staff handbook which already sets out certain exceptions and places an onus on staff to consider business need and whether the extra expenditure is justified before higher cost options are used.
- It will be the responsibility of the individual concerned to retain the approval form to ensure that they have sought agreement and have the necessary documentation to support travel claims.

Air travel

Other than in certain exceptional circumstances, economy class should be used for all domestic air travel within the UK. These exceptions are set out in section 9.2.17 of the staff handbook. All bookings should be made at standard/economy class via the Redfern online booking system.

Taxis

The staff handbook also sets out the expectation that, wherever practicable, we should use public transport for all official journeys. The circumstances where use of a taxi might be justified, for example for reasons of personal safety or because of pregnancy or a temporary or permanent disability are set out in section 9.2.16.

Hotel accommodation

The hotel policy of £85 per night outside London and £125 per night inside London remains in place. This has been benchmarked against OGDs (other government departments), although these allowances will be subject to a cross government review and may be subject to alteration. Accordingly, you are advised to check the Redfern online booking system for details.

Travel booking procedures

All air, rail and hotel bookings must be made through Redfern Travel, the Department's preferred travel management company:

- The Redfern contract fulfils our duty of care and carbon reporting responsibilities as well as allowing us to monitor value for money effectively. Any travel spend which is off contract weakens our management information and our ability to report against government targets.
- As such CPD (corporate procurement division) will be investigating spend registered on our expenses system and GPCs (government procurement cards) to assess non-compliance. Unless it is an emergency situation it will no longer be possible to claim reimbursement for this type of spending.

Compliance

The importance of reducing expenditure cannot be overstated. To ensure we are complying with this new direction from ministers we will be carefully monitoring travel and subsistence claims. Therefore DCLG will not automatically re-imburse travel claims booked by any other means than on the Redfern online booking system. Emergency exceptions will require sign off from a director or director general.

CPD will provide management information to support this approach including:

- A monthly list of first class travellers, which will be reviewed by the permanent secretary, to ensure compliance
- Monthly management information reports, which will also be sent to each director general covering total spend on travel, broken down into hotel, rail and air sub-categories as well as compliance with policy guidelines

CPD will also post messages on the travel section of the intranet reminding all travellers of the requirements (as listed above) for first class travel and the approval process.

Trade union

We have discussed the implications of these guidelines with the Department's trade union representatives and any changes to policy that might result.

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9.1 Travel and Subsistence

Introduction

9.1.1 You are entitled to:

- a. expenses when you travel on official business within the UK away from your normal workplace (UK travel costs are covered in [Section 9.2](#), UK subsistence arrangements are set out in [Section 9.3](#))
- b. expenses when you travel on official business overseas (overseas travel costs are covered in [Section 9.4](#), overseas subsistence arrangements are set out in [Section 9.5](#))
- c. certain expenses that might be payable, if you are offered and agree to a permanent transfer at public expense (see [Section 9.6](#))
- d. certain expenses that might be payable if you agree to work away from your normal workplace on detached duty (see [Section 9.7](#)) and
- e. the reimbursement of excess fares arising from a permanent transfer at public expense or for the duration of any detached duty (see [Section 9.8](#)).

9.1.2 Subject to the limits set out in this chapter, the expenses for which you are entitled to be reimbursed are, unless otherwise stated, those actually and necessarily incurred and must be supported by receipts. [Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim for such expenses and [Section 9.10](#) sets out arrangements for compensating you for injury or loss sustained on official business.

9.1.3 The submission of a claim knowingly containing false or inaccurate information may constitute a disciplinary offence and may lead to disciplinary action (see Part A of this Staff Handbook, Chapter 3 - [Personal conduct](#)). Where the payment has already been made, you must refund any overpaid amount. If necessary the amount will be deducted from any money owing to you from public funds.

9.1.4 If as a certifying officer you authorise a claim knowingly containing false or inaccurate information this may constitute a disciplinary offence and may lead to disciplinary action (see Part A of this Staff Handbook, Chapter 3 - [Personal conduct](#)).

9.2 UK travel

General rules for UK travel

9.2.1 Official travel is any travel you need to make on official business away from your normal workplace(s). It includes:

- a. first journey to and last journey from full-time training courses, and attendance at part-time courses (i.e. day release), but not evening classes
- b. attendance at promotion or selection boards
- c. journeys made on recall from annual leave
- d. attendance at courts as part of official duties
- e. daily travel to a detached duty office
- f. emergency call out to the permanent office
- g. additional attendance outside normal working hours
- h. public transport disruption (see Part A of this Staff Handbook - Chapter 2 - [Working in the Department](#) also paragraph 9.2.35(b))
- i. travel covered by [paragraphs 9.3.18](#), [9.3.19](#), [9.3.21](#), [9.3.22](#) and [9.3.24](#).

9.2.2 Official travel does not include:

- a. travel between your home and your normal workplace(s) for attendance during normal working hours
- b. travel on first taking up duty (unless this forms part of a new recruit's relocation costs as agreed in their appointment letter)
- c. concessionary travel
- d. journeys home at weekends while on detached duty or following a permanent transfer at public expense
- e. any travel covered by an excess fares allowance in connection with detached duty or a permanent transfer at public expense.

9.2.3 You must only travel if it is necessary and when the official business cannot be settled by any other methods such as telephone or video conferencing.

9.2.4 Bearing in mind your entitlements you are encouraged to use the most cost effective method(s) of transport that will help you to reach your destination safely, in good time and in reasonable comfort. You will need to weigh up all the journey factors, taking into account the cost of travel, the official time involved and the costs of any associated subsistence (see [Section 9.3](#)) involved in the various options. The Department will take disciplinary action against you if any expense is considered to be unreasonable and could have been avoided had the journey been better planned. Official journeys may start from home (or end there) if that is the shortest and most cost effective route.

9.2.5 Wherever practicable for travel in the UK, you must:

a. use public transport and

b. book your journeys through the Department's travel booking service (see [Travel Services](#)) who will be able to advise you on itineraries and to offer (or match) the best value tickets. If you use the travel booking service, the cost of the travel tickets will be invoiced directly to the Department.

9.2.6 If it is not possible, or if it is inefficient (in terms of cost or official time), to use public transport, the use of a hire car or privately owned vehicle may be authorised by your line manager. However serious consideration should be given to the Department's commitment to 'green' issues before car use is authorised see [Travel Services](#)). If a car is used as the only viable option, car sharing should always be considered.

9.2.7 Staff will not suffer any detriment as a result of choosing not to use their own private vehicle for work purposes.

Travel receipts

9.2.8 Wherever possible receipts for all expenditure must be obtained and you must keep these for future reference by yourself, your certifying officer, auditor, or the Inland revenue. You must keep your receipts for the current year and the preceding three years. If you leave the Department you should pass them to HR Travel and Transfer Team. Where occasionally it is not possible to provide receipts or travel tickets - for instance if you use a vending machine or when the travel ticket is retained by the operator, you must keep a note of the reason why your travel ticket or receipts are not available.

Gratuities

9.2.9 Gratuities will be reimbursed where they are included in the receipt and are not excessive. Your line managers will also authorise the reimbursement of reasonable and low value non-receipted gratuities where you have received help with heavy luggage or equipment or help with your luggage if you are pregnant or have a temporary or permanent disability.

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Home to workplace journeys

9.2.10 Your journey from home to your normal workplace(s) is not official travel and these costs must not be claimed. However additional costs for the home to office journey may be allowed as set out in sub paragraphs 9.2.1 (f) and (g) and in paragraph 9.2.11.

Staying late at work

9.2.11 If you agree to stay at work late, you are entitled to claim motor mileage allowance for a return journey by car (at public transport rate - see [Annex A](#)) or the costs of a taxi home (see paragraph 9.2.16 (f)) if

- a. it would be unreasonable, for reasons of personal safety, to use public transport or
- b. if public transport is sporadic and unreliable or no longer available when you finish work.

Travel by rail

9.2.12 Subject to the exceptions set out in this paragraph and paragraph 9.2.13, if you are below band 5, you must travel standard class. If you are in range 4.2, 4.7, 4.8, band 5 or above (or if you are in the senior civil service) you may travel first class (certain other staff in band 4 may have the reserved right to travel first class - contact Human Resources if you believe you have this right). Before the higher cost travel is used, however, you must consider the business need and whether the extra expenditure is justified. [Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

9.2.13 All staff may travel first class under the following conditions:

- a. you need to travel with someone who is travelling first class
- b. the facilities provided in standard class do not meet your needs because you are pregnant or suffering from a temporary or permanent disability
- c. there are no seats available in standard class or in circumstances when it is necessary to buy a meal on the train and this is not possible when travelling in standard class
- d. if you need to travel overnight and use a sleeping berth.

Seat reservation

9.2.14 The costs of reserving a seat will be reimbursed. [Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

Bus and coach

9.2.15 The costs of bus and coach fares used for official travel will be reimbursed. [Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

Use of taxis

9.2.16 You are entitled to be reimbursed for the use of a taxi:

- a. when no other method of public transport is available (e.g. when travelling late at night)
- b. when carrying heavy official papers, baggage or equipment
- c. for reasons of personal safety
- d. if you are unable to use public transport because of pregnancy or a temporary or permanent disability
- e. if there will be an overall saving including any claim for subsistence or to ensure journey connection or arrival time
- f. under the circumstances described in paragraph 9.2.11.
- g. it is more cost effective when travelling in a group.

[Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

Air travel

9.2.17 Air travel should be considered for long distance travel within the UK. As domestic flights are normally of short duration, if you fly, you must travel economy class unless:

- a. you are a Director or above in the senior civil service (in which case you may travel in Business/Club Class)
- b. there are no tickets available in economy class
- c. the facilities provided in economy class do not meet your needs if you are pregnant or suffering from a temporary or permanent disability
- d. you accompany someone who is travelling in a higher class.

[Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

Use of benefits accrued as a result of official travel

9.2.18 Benefits accrued as a result of official travel (for instance 'Air Miles') must not be used for personal travel. You are encouraged to use them to off set the cost of future official journeys. See also Part A of this Staff Handbook, Chapter 3 - [Personal Conduct](#).

Travel by sea

9.2.19 If you need to travel within the UK by sea you may travel first class. If you need to travel overnight, you are entitled to be reimbursed the cost of a sleeping berth and the actual cost of breakfast. [Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

Use of privately owned motor vehicles for UK travel

9.2.20 You must not use a vehicle for official travel unless you satisfy the Department's ownership, insurance and documentation requirements (set out in paragraphs 9.2.25 to 9.2.28 below).

9.2.21 If you use a motor vehicle for official travel in the UK:

- a. you are entitled to be reimbursed at the motor mileage allowance rate set out in [Annex A](#)
- b. you are entitled to be reimbursed for the amount of mileage set out in paragraph 9.2.35 and
- c. your certifying officer is entitled to see the documents relating to ownership and insurance before certifying any claim for reimbursement.

[Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

Motor mileage allowance

9.2.22 You are entitled to be paid motor mileage allowance either at public transport rate (PTR) or at standard mileage rate (SMR) - paragraphs 9.2.23 and 9.2.24 set out how to determine which rate applies. The current rates are set out in [Annex A](#) - you should note the maximum limit of 10,000 miles per annum that may be reimbursed at the higher SMR rate.

9.2.23 If you could reasonably have used public transport for the journey in question, you must claim PTR. You are entitled to be reimbursed at PTR if you satisfy the vehicle ownership, insurance and documentation requirements set out in paragraphs 9.2.25 to 9.2.28.

9.2.24 You are entitled to be reimbursed at SMR if you satisfy the vehicle ownership, insurance and documentation requirements set out in paragraphs 9.2.25 to 9.2.28, and:

- a. it is not practicable to use public transport for the journey or

b if the total costs of the journey (including subsistence costs) are less than public transport because you share the journey with colleagues or

c. you need to carry heavy equipment or

d. you are pregnant or have a temporary or permanent disability which makes the use of public transport difficult.

Ownership

9.2.25 The vehicle ownership requirements referred to in paragraphs 9.2.20, 9.2.21, 9.2.23 and 9.2.24 are that the motor vehicle in question:

a. is owned by you or being purchased by you on credit terms and is registered in your name or

b. has been hired by you for your private use or

c. is not registered in your name but is in your lawful possession where you have permission from the owner to use the vehicle and have adequate insurance cover as set out in paragraphs 9.2.26 to 9.2.28 (and paragraph 9.2.28 if you claim SMR).

Insurance

9.2.26 To be eligible to claim any motor mileage allowance (whether PTR or SMR) you must ensure that your private motor vehicle insurance policy contains either:

a. a clause permitting the use of the vehicle by you in person in connection with your business or

b. a clause specifically permitting the use of the vehicle by you in person on the business of the Department for Communities and Local Government or

c. where the vehicle is not registered in your name, has a clause specifically permitting use of the vehicle by you on the business of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

9.2.27 If you claim motor mileage allowance at PTR, your private motor vehicle insurance policy must also cover, without financial limit, claims in respect of:

a. bodily injury to or death of third parties

b. bodily injury or death of any passengers

c. damage to the property of third parties and/or passengers.

9.2.28 To claim motor mileage allowance at SMR, you must have a comprehensive insurance policy covering the risks set out in paragraphs 9.2.26 and 9.2.27 and also damage to or loss of the vehicle. You should note that some insurance policies that are otherwise fully comprehensive may exclude some liabilities.

Other documentation

9.2.29 In addition to the ownership and insurance sections any privately owned vehicle used by you on official business must comply with all other requirements for use on the public roads including having a current Vehicle Excise Disc and where necessary a current test certificate. You must also have a current driving licence that entitles you to drive the vehicle. Injury benefits if travelling in a private motor vehicle.

9.2.30 If you use a private motor vehicle for official travel or you are a passenger on official travel being carried in a private motor vehicle, you will, subject to [paragraph 9.10.3](#), be treated as acting in the course of your duties for the purposes of the injury benefit provisions of the [Principal Civil Service Pensions Scheme](#). Further information on the scheme and the [Civil Service Compensation Scheme](#) which provides benefits to staff who are injured off duty while away from home on official business are available from Central Pay and Pensions.

Hire cars

9.2.31 If it is more cost effective to use a hire car for journeys you can not claim motor mileage allowance but you are entitled to be reimbursed all the costs associated with the hire of the vehicle. Details of how to hire a car, insurance requirements and other tips on hire cars are given in [Travel Services](#). [Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

Motor cycles

9.2.32 You are entitled to be paid a mileage allowance if you use a motor cycle for official travel. The current rates to which you are entitled to be reimbursed are set out at [Annex A](#). Paragraph 9.2.36 sets out the amount of mileage you can claim if you use a motor cycle for official travel and [Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

Pedal cycles

9.2.33 You are entitled to be paid a mileage allowance as set out in [Annex A](#) if you use a pedal cycle for official travel. Paragraph 9.2.35 sets out the current rates that you are entitled to claim and [Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim.

Passenger supplement

9.2.34 If you are paid PTR or SMR, you are entitled to be paid an additional allowance, at the rates shown in [Annex A](#), for carrying one or more passengers on your journey if the passengers would have otherwise been entitled to reimbursement of travel costs themselves under the terms and conditions set out in this chapter.

Equipment supplement

9.2.35 If you are paid PTR or SMR, you are entitled to be paid an additional allowance, at the rate shown in [Annex A](#), for necessarily carrying equipment or other loads which are likely to cause additional wear and tear to a private motor vehicle (as defined in sub paragraph 9.2.24(a) and (c)). Wherever practicable you must agree with your countersigning officer prior to the journey if the equipment supplement should be paid.

Amount of mileage to be claimed

9.2.36 The amount of mileage for which you can be reimbursed for in accordance with paragraph 9.2.21 and paragraphs 9.2.31 to 9.2.34 is the actual mileage based on the shortest most efficient route, taking account of the distance and time spent travelling. Your home to normal work place mileage must not form part of the claim unless a clear saving in distance and time can be shown. The only exceptions to this are:

- a. as detailed in sub paragraphs 9.2.1(f) and (g) and paragraph 9.2.11 and
- b. where public transport is disrupted or interrupted for whatever reason and you necessarily use a car, motorcycle or pedal cycle to travel to your normal workplace instead of travelling by public transport (see Part A of this Staff Handbook, Chapter 2 - Working in the Department).

9.2.37 If you claim a motor mileage allowance or motor cycle mileage allowance you must:

- a. keep a complete, permanent record, for each financial year, of all your mileage claimed at PTR, SMR or motor cycle mileage allowance (this information has to be provided to HM Revenue and Customs)
- b. ensure that, for each claim (see [Section 9.9](#)) you enter onto the claim form:
 - the mileage claimed and
 - your total, cumulative mileage claimed at PTR, SMR or motor cycle mileage allowance for the financial year and
- c. claim only at the appropriate lower rate/public transport rate shown in [Annex A](#) when 10,000 miles has been exceeded in that financial year.

Parking, garaging and tolls

9.2.38 You are entitled to be reimbursed the costs of unavoidable expenses on parking, garaging and tolls (including road and river ferries) - [Section 9.9](#) sets out how to make a claim. However you are personally liable for any parking fines you incur.

Congestion charge

9.2.39 You are entitled to be reimbursed the costs of any congestion charges unavoidably incurred whilst on official business. You are personally liable for any expenses incurred through congestion charges as a result of using your private vehicle for home to office travel.