

The Ledger

A Newsletter of the University Controller's Organization

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New Travel Regulations Effective October 1, 2006

Effective October 1, 2006, State Travel Regulations were revised and the changes are outlined below:

- In-State and Out-of-State lodging rates have changed. Please see Procedure 20335r on our website <http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335r.html>.
- In addition to requiring boarding passes for air travel, boarding passes are now also required for rail reimbursements made **directly** to employees.
- When **non-luxury conference** hotels are used, the Controller's Office may approve a lodging rate that is less than the applicable per person guideline rate multiplied by the number of official business travelers in the room. For example, if two people share a room at a conference hotel in Atlanta, a room rate less than \$248 (\$124 X 2) could be approved.
- Business meals must involve substantive and bona fide business discussions and cannot consist entirely of university employees from one department or college. They normally include non-Virginia Tech employees. An example of a business meal would be a meal for the purpose of recruiting or interviewing candidates for the university. Business meals must be approved by the department head and by the Controller's Office.
- Employees in travel status may sometimes attend meals that qualify as business meals. When this is done, the per diem allowance applicable to the business meal must be clearly excluded from the daily M&IE reimbursement.
- Any overtime meal allowance based on the number of hours worked is considered taxable wages by the IRS and will be treated as taxable income and processed through payroll by the Controller's Office.
- Charges for changes to tickets/reservations to accommodate personal comfort, convenience and taste are **not reimbursable**. Change fees must be explained on the Travel Reimbursement Voucher.
- Business class for rail travel may be granted under the following circumstances:
 - (1) When it does not cost more than the lowest available tourist/coach fare (comparison must be attached to travel voucher).
 - (2) When reserved coach seats are not offered on the route.
 - (3) If the traveler pays the difference.

Travel Estimate and Approval Form Clarification

A Department Head or designee can approve up to 50% above the allowable lodging rate for the area traveled on the Travel Estimate and Approval Form. The lodging exception request section of this form asks for the allowable lodging rate and the requested lodging rate. The allowable lodging rate is the standard rate established by the State and can be found on our website at <http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335r.html> . The requested lodging rate is the hotel rate that the traveler is asking for an exception.

For example, if a traveler is requesting an exception for a conference hotel in Atlanta that has a rate of \$160, the allowable lodging rate would be \$124 (excluding taxes) and the requested lodging rate would be \$160 (excluding taxes). The maximum amount that could be approved in this case would be \$186 (excluding taxes), which is 50% above the allowable rate of \$124.

The above lodging exception request would be entered on the Travel Estimate and Approval Form as follows:

ALLOWABLE Lodging Rate (excluding taxes)	\$124.00
REQUESTED Lodging Rate (excluding taxes)	\$160.00
Difference from Allowable to Requested	(\$ 36.00) 29.03%*
*Percentage above the Allowable Rate	

Justification for excess lodging rate: All other hotels in the area were \$200 per night or higher. This is the best rate that could be found for these travel days.

Contract Travel Agencies and Contract Moving Companies

The University recently executed new travel agency and moving company contracts.

The official contract travel agencies are:

- University Travel
- Martin Travel
- World Travel
- Destination Anywhere Travel
- Omni Travel

Please reference our website for more information regarding these travel agencies at <http://www.co.vt.edu/procedures/p20335e.html>

University contracted Moving and Relocation companies are:

- Mayflower Transit, LLC
- Lawrence Transportation Systems
- Armstrong Relocation

Armstrong Relocation has a website designed for Virginia Tech that employees may use to initiate a move. Their website is <http://www.vt-relocation.com/>.

Please reference <http://www.purch.vt.edu/html.docs/TC/moving.html> for more information regarding these moving companies.

Travel Card Training Reminder

In order to comply with state regulations for the GE/Mastercard Travel card, all cardholders are required to annually complete a training program related to the travel card.

If you have a GE/Mastercard Travel card, please access our travel card training at:
<http://www.co.vt.edu/>

Click on "GE Travel Card Training" on the left hand side. Once the training program opens, you can click on "slide show" at the bottom right hand corner to see the full presentation. After you have completed the training, submit the certification form at the end.

Please submit your training certification by **October 31st, 2006**.

You must have Acrobat Reader 7.0 in order for the certification to work. You can download Acrobat Reader 7.0 at:
<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

If you have technical difficulties with the training program, please contact Michelle Pochick (mpochick@vt.edu) at 231-9308.

Direct Pay Procedures

Direct Pay Procedures (Policy 3220) were revised effective September 7, 2006.

Revisions are related mainly to new authorities provided for by restructuring legislation. There are some new categories of transactions that can now be enacted at the departmental level. Also, dollar limitations have been increased on several transaction categories.

You can view Policy 3220 by accessing the Purchasing Department website:
<http://www.purch.vt.edu/> or, by conducting a search in the primary university website.