



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Oregon State Office

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Portland, Oregon 97208



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Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2009-045

Expires: 9/30/2010

To: All Employees, Oregon/Washington

From: State Director, Oregon/Washington

Subject: Extended Travel Policy

Program Area: Travel

Purpose: This instruction memorandum (IM) addresses issues and explains policies related to extended travel. In addition, this IM provides guidance on types of places to stay, per diem reductions, and waiver memos for extended travel situations.

Policy/Action: When a travel assignment involves extended periods (30 days or more) at temporary duty or training locations, special provisions apply.

Per diem rates. When on extended travel, the per diem rate will be reduced to 55 percent of the full per diem rate (lodging plus M&IE) specified in the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) for the location, unless a different rate is fully justified. Under unusual situations, the reduced rate may be increased or decreased depending on the conditions and necessary cost that must be incurred by the traveler. The reduced per diem rate of 55 percent is applicable from the first day of the assignment through the last day of the assignment (Federal Administration Memorandum (FAM) No. 94-037).

Waiver memoranda. Employees on extended travel can apply for waivers of the per diem rate reduction. It is the responsibility of the traveling employee to initiate the waiver process by preparing a memorandum to the State Director requesting a rate other than the 55 percent rate provided in the FTR. The proposed rate, usually no more than 99 percent of the usual per diem rate for the locality, should be established based on the conditions that exist when the travel is performed. Therefore, if a traveler is forced to incur unusual lodging and/or meal costs due to the assignment, the rate should be based on cost data provided by the traveler. The policy of

Oregon/Washington BLM is that all applications for waivers should be submitted to the State Director for approval before the extended travel commences or within the first 15 days after it becomes clear that travel will extend beyond the 30-day threshold.

Types of lodging. When on extended travel, employees are encouraged to seek lodging at facilities offering the reduced rates. These types of facilities (corporate housing companies, rental properties, etc.) can usually be found by contacting the local BLM office or the training provider in advance of arrival at the extended travel destination.

Extended travel beyond one year. Occasionally, an employee is on extended travel longer than one year. These situations have pronounced financial implications for the traveler in that, once a year in travel status is exceeded, the Internal Revenue Service Code provides that all lodging and per diem are taxable from the first day of travel. Options for the traveler include arranging for withholding tax on the travel reimbursements or returning to the traveler's duty station of record for a period of no less than 45 consecutive days. This 45-day return period must be initiated and must be completed prior to the 1-year anniversary date (FAM No. 93-079).

Responsibility. The traveler bears the responsibility of knowing the regulations pertaining to his/her extended travel assignments, managing his/her costs in a reasonable fashion, and applying for waivers in a timely fashion.

Timeframe: This IM is effective immediately upon receipt.

Budget Impact: Reduce travel costs.

Background: BLM travelers are often unclear as to the rules and regulations regarding extended travel and how they may impact their reimbursements.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None

Coordination: None. Direction in this IM is developed to be in accordance with the (FTR) and the (FAM).

Contact: Cyndi McClelland, Oregon State Office, (503) 808-6199.

Districts with Unions are reminded to notify their unions of this instruction memorandum and satisfy any bargaining obligations before implementation. Your servicing Human Resources Office or Labor Relations Specialist can provide you with assistance in this matter.

Signed by
Cathy L. Harris
Acting Associate State Director

Authenticated by
Paj Shua Cha
Records Section

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