

## Procedure 20335d: Automobile Travel

Travel routing, whether by public transportation, privately-owned vehicle, state-owned vehicle or for-hire conveyance, shall be the most direct practicable route.

The use of State-owned vehicles, or state-contract Enterprise vehicles, is generally preferred over the use of personal vehicles. The traveler can elect to use a personal vehicle when a fleet services or contract vehicle is available; however, reimbursement is at the lesser rate (see rate below). When planning and paying for travel using state funds, economy, prudence and necessity are of primary concern. State funds are not intended to accommodate personal comfort, convenience, and taste.

Authorized users of Virginia Tech's Fleet Services (FS) must have a valid U.S. Driver's License and be an employee (unless specific departmental approval is obtained for other parties). The FS website ([www.fs.vt.edu](http://www.fs.vt.edu)) has additional policy details and their online reservation system.

The Enterprise state contract is available to all parties traveling on official business of the University. Thus, when economically beneficial, the Enterprise state contract should be used for any university business travel originating in the state of Virginia (excluding Northern Virginia). The Commonwealth of Virginia website has additional details for using the Enterprise contract.

Please use the trip calculator below to obtain additional contact details and complete your automobile cost analysis for submission with your travel reimbursement request.

### Trip Calculator:

[www.controller.vt.edu/Forms/TravelCalc.html](http://www.controller.vt.edu/Forms/TravelCalc.html)

### A. Personal Vehicles

Reimbursements for the use of personal vehicles are made at the following rates which are based on the costs of maintaining fleet services vehicles and the most recent business standard mileage rate as established by the Internal Revenue Service: Note: Effective January 1, 2021, the IRS established the standard mileage rate as 56 cents per mile for mileage incurred on or after January 1, 2021. The rate was 57.5 cents per mile in 2020.

45 Cents Per Mile	Round trip is 200 miles or more and a Fleet Services, or state contract Enterprise, vehicle is available.
56 Cents Per Mile	Round trip is less than 200 miles and a Fleet Services, or state contract Enterprise, vehicle is available.
56 Cents Per Mile	Fleet Services, or state contract Enterprise, vehicle is not available*
56 Cents Per Mile	Round trip is 200 miles or more, a Fleet Services, or state contract Enterprise, vehicle is available and there is an economic benefit to the Commonwealth for

	using a personal vehicle. The economic benefit must be well supported with an analysis of the personal vehicle versus the state vehicle.**
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\*Fleet Services must provide a certification that no vehicle was available if Blacksburg campus is traveler's base point. If a state contract Enterprise vehicle is unavailable in the area of your travel, and you are requesting the higher mileage rate for reimbursement, then documentation of that must be presented with your reimbursement request submission.

\*\* Please note when travel plans require a cost benefit analysis (ex. higher mileage rate is requested when round trip is 200 miles or more and fleet service vehicle, or state enterprise car, is available), this must be completed prior to traveling. This must be prepared during planning and attached to your travel reimbursement request for reimbursement. This will help ensure documentation requirements are met and that reimbursements are processed in a timely manner. Examples of factors that can be considered in the cost benefit analysis are:

- Distance to the nearest car rental location and the hours of operation
- Administrative time required to obtain the rental car
- The type of vehicle required and the number of travelers

When a traveler elects to use a personal vehicle, the traveler is responsible for all expenses should the vehicle either break down or be involved in an accident while on the business trip.

Commuting mileage, defined as round-trip mileage traveled routinely by the employee between his residence and base point, and other commuting costs incurred on normal workdays are considered a personal expense and are not reimbursable. Base point is defined as place, office, or building where the traveler performs his/her duties on a routine basis. Multiple base points are not allowed.

Mileage incurred when the individual is required to work on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday that is not a scheduled workday may be reimbursed.

Mileage incurred for on-campus travel or travel within the Town of Blacksburg (the general area in which the employee's office/work is located) is not reimbursable. Please see the map at the end of the procedure.

When a trip requires airline transportation and reasonable public transportation is not available, the traveler may be reimbursed at the private-vehicle mileage rate for a maximum of two round trips between the airport and the lesser of the distance between the official station or employee residence. If a traveler elects to use a taxi to travel to the Roanoke airport from Blacksburg or the employee's residence, the traveler may be reimbursed. Receipts must be provided if the expense exceeds \$75.

When travel is by personal automobile, the total transportation expenses reimbursed, including meals and lodging, should not exceed the cost of the most economical public transportation fare (air, rail, etc.) available.

Due to the individual needs of travelers with disabilities, Fleet Services is sometimes unable to provide modified vehicles to meet all requirements. Therefore, any employee (student, faculty, or staff), who due to their disability must use their own personal vehicle for business travel, can be reimbursed at the higher personal mileage reimbursement rate. In order to receive the higher personal mileage reimbursement rate, an employee with a disability seeking to use personal vehicle, must contact University ADA Services at 231-9331 (visit Univ. ADA Services website for more information at <http://www.hr.vt.edu/oea/ada/>). In order to receive the higher mileage rate on travel reimbursements due to these circumstances, please indicate the presence of a disability on any affected reimbursement request submissions. Disability status on request will be verified through University ADA services.

## B. Rental Cars

An employee who finds it necessary to rent a car while traveling on official University business may be reimbursed. Normally, car rentals are allowed only when employees are on travel status away from their base station, or it's economically beneficial at their base station. When available, and economically beneficial, the Enterprise state rental contract should be used. The authorized approver's signature on the travel reimbursement request constitutes approval for the traveler to rent a car.

The type of car rented (economy, compact, full-size, etc.) and justification for an upgrade should be included in the description field of the travel reimbursement request. Reimbursement will be for actual rental car costs--not at the mileage rate.

It is the traveler's responsibility to refuel a rental car prior to returning it to the agency. Rental agencies charge excessive amounts to refuel a vehicle and travelers will not be reimbursed for amounts paid to rental agencies for this service. The "up-front fuel option charge" where rental companies charge for a full tank of gasoline at a lower rate should also be declined because the traveler, by definition, cannot return a car "empty." Any exception to this policy for unusual situations should be directed to the Travel Supervisor in the Controller's Office.

The Controller's Office may grant exceptions to allow employees to rent cars while at their base station for unusual circumstances and where the cost of other forms of transportation are greater. Prior approval is necessary and should be directed to the Travel Supervisor. Prior approval from the Travel Supervisor is not necessary when the Fleet Services statement that no

vehicle was available is attached to the voucher, or the vehicle is needed at an off-campus location where Fleet Services is not available on a daily basis.

When car rental fees are claimed, the detailed receipt must be attached to the reimbursement request and a statement explaining the necessity for such rental should be listed on the voucher.

**B.1 Rental Car Insurance**

The option to purchase insurance offered by rental car contractors depends upon several circumstances.

- **University Employee** - If the traveler is a university employee, the traveler should decline the rental car insurance when traveling inside the territorial United States, in Canada, or in Puerto Rico because the university provides a self-insured automobile plan for employees.
- **Non-University Employee** – If the traveler is not a university or state employee, the traveler should accept the Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) insurance and Liability Damage Waiver (LDW) Insurance offered by rental car agencies. The university will reimburse these insurance expenses when the automobile rental expense is a reimbursable business expense for non-employees.
- **Travel Outside the United States** – If the individual is traveling outside the territorial United States, Canada, or Puerto Rico, the individual is required to purchase and will be reimbursed for CDW and LDW insurance.

Other types of insurance offered such as trip cancellation, personal health, or life insurance are not reimbursable.

**B.2 Rental Car Allowable/Unallowable Expenses:**

Allowable	Unallowable
Underage driving fee for employees/students	LDW and CDW for employees/students in US and Canada
Additional Driver Fee for employees/students	PAI (Personal Accident Insurance) or any personal insurance
LDW and CDW for non-employees	GPS
LDW and CDW for employees travelling outside of US/Canada	Fuel Purchase Options/Services (Upfront charge and return charge)
Upgrade Fee with justification	Frequent Flyer Surcharges
Taxes	Fees associated with family/friends (car seat, additional driver fee)
	Toll Pass
	Roadside Assistance

### C. Parking and Tolls

Parking fees and tolls may be claimed for reimbursement. The name of the facility should be listed on the reimbursement request, and receipts attached in order to be reimbursed for any expenses greater than \$75.00. The names and reasons for inclusion of a charge for passengers must be listed.

Map of Blacksburg

