

Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

Finance & Operations Travel Policy FO-TR-21
Meals

Rates

In Texas, Overnight meals may be claimed for reimbursement not to exceed the amount of your actual expenses up to, \$36 per day, whichever is less? Non-overnight meals may only be claimed if the claimant is in travel status for minimum of six consecutive hours, and may not exceed \$36.

Outside Texas, Overnight meals may be claimed for reimbursement not to exceed the amount of your actual expenses or the amount allowed for the area being visited, whichever is less. Refer to the Out of State Meals and Lodging Rates Guide, (www.gsa.gov) or contact the Travel office to find out the amount allowed for a specific area. If a claimant travels to a foreign country, Alaska, Hawaii, or US Possession, special provisions apply. Call for Travel Office for details. Non-overnight meals for outside of Texas are \$36 or actual expense, whichever is less.

Meals may not be claimed by a SHSU faculty/employee/student if incurred in Huntsville.

Note that only actual meal expenses may be claimed. Each member of SHSU is responsible for conservation of state funds and ensuring that all expenses claimed are the lowest possible. A SHSU faculty/employee may not seek reimbursement for meal expenses that he has not actually incurred. Meals claimed may not include tips, guest expenses, or alcohol, or any other non-meal item.

If a claimant will be purchasing meal items from a grocery store (or any other non-restaurant store/facility) during the trip, call for further information. Some expenses may not be reimbursable. Meal expenses must be incurred during the actual travel time period (after the time of departure and before the time of return shown on the Travel Voucher form). Purchases from a store before the trip begins or after the travel ends, may not be reimbursed. Purchases from a store while on one trip may not be claimed on later subsequent trips. Meal expenses claimed for reimbursement must be claimed during the same trip as when they were incurred.

When completing a Travel Voucher, meal receipts are not required to be attached to the Travel Voucher form. But, the receipts should be kept available for reference in the initiating department or by the claimant himself, in case the expense is audited. Files should be maintained for at least 2 years. If the initiating department or claimant does not wish to maintain these files, the meal receipts should be attached to the Travel Voucher form and they will become part of the SHSU Voucher File, which is routinely reviewed by auditors.

Due to an IRS provision, a claimant will be taxed on any non-overnight meal reimbursement. The meals will be coded "7107" on the Travel Voucher for taxing purposes. The tax will be deducted from the claimant's paycheck. Note: Claimant must be in travel status outside the employee's designated headquarters six consecutive hours on the day the expenses are incurred, in order to claim a meal expense.

Meal Receipts -- Meal expenses are required to be itemized on a daily basis. A claimant is not required to attach meal receipts to his/her Travel Voucher form when claiming reimbursement for meals; but the claimant or his department is required to keep receipts or a daily itemized record of actual meal expenses incurred for review if questioned by Internal Auditor.

Only reimbursement for meal expenses incurred may be claimed for reimbursement. In previous years, a claimant was permitted to claim a daily flat amount for meals, but state travel laws have changed. Now, a claimant may request reimbursement for only actual expenses incurred for meals according to the guidelines stated herein.

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Remember: Meals claimed for reimbursement may not include tips, guest expenses, or alcohol. A claimant is required to deduct these items from meal expenses claimed for reimbursement.

Special Provisions Applying to Actual Expenses for Meals and Lodging -In some instances a claimant may be reimbursed for more than the normal amounts allowed for meals and lodging. When a trip is in accordance with special provisions as stated on the form, "Authorization to Incur Actual Expenses for Meals and Lodging," a claimant may complete this form and submit it with the Travel Application form for the same trip. **Note: Actual expenses may not exceed twice the allowed amount.**

In order to obtain approval, this Authorization form must be processed in advance of the trip.

The Travel Office will submit the Authorization form to the SHSU President for approval. Upon approval by the SHSU President, the Travel Office will send a confirmation copy of the Authorization form to the claimant.

A copy of the Authorization form is required to be attached to the Travel Voucher form when it is submitted to Austin for processing. The Travel Office will make the copies needed in order to comply with this requirement.

Reviewed by: Norma O'Bannon-Travel Coordinator – 11-01-07
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