

**OFFICE OF INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES  
POLICY & PROCEDURE #345**

**TRAVEL, HOTEL TAX EXEMPTION, AND STATE CREDIT CARDS**

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**TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT:**

The Department will reimburse its employees for all allowable expenses, up to the current maximum amounts allowed for such expenses, incurred by employees while traveling away from their official headquarters and homes. Such reimbursements must be consistent with state and federal laws and related departmental regulations.

All out-of-state travel requires the prior written approval of the OIS Director.

Travel expense claims for OIS employees must be submitted on Form 5353, **Employee Travel Expense Statement** in the Excel format with the required receipts to the supervisor for approval. Travel expenses incurred in a calendar month must be included on a travel expense statement for that month. There should be no overlapping from one month to the next on the same statement. Submission will be made when incurred expenses exceed a total of \$25.00 or at least once a month. When an expense claim requires more than one page, each additional page must carry necessary signatures of certification and approval.

As the final approving authority, IIC's will be held accountable for the accuracy of travel statements and for compliance with DHR Travel Regulations. All travel expenses incurred by the region will be consolidated on a travel expense analysis report and submitted to the Chief Investigator by the fifth working day of the month following the month of travel.

For additional travel policies, refer to Georgia Department of Human Resources Travel Regulation Booklet (Form 5344) or contact the Office of Financial Services, Travel Subsection.

**HOTEL TAX EXEMPTION:**

The 1987 General Assembly passed Act 621 amending O.C.G.A. 48-13-51. This Act states that Georgia government employees traveling on official business should not be charged county or municipal excise tax on lodging. This optional excise tax is normally three percent, but can be as much as six percent in some areas.

The employee is responsible to apprise the hotel/motel operator of the law by Form HMTAXI, State of Georgia **Exemption of Local Hotel/Motel Excise Tax**. Many hotels/motels require this form to be presented at the initial registration to receive this exemption. Failure to present this form at registration may cause the hotel/motel to refuse to honor the exemption or may cause delays in checking out of the hotel/motel.

If the hotel/motel operator refuses to accept the form, the employee must complete the **Request for Reimbursement for Payment of Hotel/Motel Local and Municipal Excise Tax** form and attach it to the **Employee Travel Expense Statement** in order to be fully reimbursed.

**USE OF DOAS MOTOR VEHICLES:**

Refer to DHR Risk Management Manual pages 1.3.1 through 1.3.3.

**USE OF LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CREDIT CARDS/MAKING LONG DISTANCE CALLS:**

All investigative staff will be assigned a telephone credit card number for use while working in the field. Credit cards are not to be used for calls from the OIS Regional or State Administrative Offices; always use GIST. When an employee resigns, the credit card must be surrendered to the supervisor. If a credit card is lost or stolen, the loss should be reported immediately to the State Administrative Office.

Employees are prohibited from using GIST or assigned telephone credit cards for placing personal calls.

Telephone bills will be routinely monitored by regional supervisory and state administrative staff.

**AMERICAN EXPRESS PROGRAM**

Any OIS employee who travels frequently on state business and has incurred \$500 or more reimbursable expenses for mileage and/or subsistence during the prior year may request to be accepted for the American Express Program. To be eligible for this program in DHR, an employee must satisfy certain requirements as set forth in the DHR Travel Regulations for the American Express Program.

Once an employee is issued a card, the employee is responsible for maintaining the account in a current status in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement with American Express.

An employee obtaining the American Express Card will no longer qualify for a cash advance for travel expenses.

Applications for this program may be obtained from the Office of Financial Services, Travel Subsection or from the OIS State Administrative Office.