

# Travel Policy: Ground Transportation

## Introduction

The Ground Transportation Policy articulates those expenses that are reimbursable for travel by Train, Bus, Rental Car, and use of Personal Vehicle.

The purpose of the Travel Policies is to provide clear policies and procedures that are compliant with state and federal regulations, promote safe travel, and allow for reasonable and manageable travel expenses while maintaining the necessary controls and accountability.

This policy is organized as follows:

- Ground Transportation: Train, Bus, Rental Car & Personal Vehicle usage
- Personal Car Use
- Travel Advances

Additional Travel Policies for the various components of travel can be found in the related policies section below.

## Policy Statement

Western Michigan University reimburses employees for ground transportation while travelling on university business. The most economical mode of ground transportation should be used to and from air, bus and rail terminals. Travelers may rent a car at their destination but public transportation and shuttle services should be considered as an acceptable of ground transportation.

Ground transportation expenses will be paid and/or reimbursed if the expenses are within the guidelines of this policy. The expenses must be reasonable, appropriately and adequately documented, as stipulated by the funding department or grant.

Additionally:

- Departments may elect to impose stricter budgetary controls over travel expenditures than those required by this policy.
- Travel charged to a sponsored grant should follow the guidelines set forth by this policy unless the funding agency imposes greater restrictions.
- The authority for determining which travel expenditures are reimbursable under a particular grant or contract lies with Grants and Contracts.

**Rental Car Driver:** It is the responsibility of the rental car driver to:

- Complete an online travel authorization.
- Reserve your rental through the Hertz or Enterprise website.

- Inspect the car at the time of rental. Any damage found should be noted on the contract before the vehicle is accepted.
- Report any accidents resulting in damage to the rental, or to a third party, to the rental agency, and to Legal Affairs Risk and Compliance office formerly known as Business Services at 269-387-1900.
- Pay highway tolls.
- Pay parking violations, speeding tickets, and any other violations incurred when renting a vehicle. These will not be reimbursed by the University.
- Apportion business and personal usage when a car is rented for a period of time that includes both. Only usage during the period of time the driver was conducting University business will be reimbursed.

**Traveler:** The Traveler is responsible to complete a Travel Expense Voucher, provide all receipts and travel information and approvals to Payroll and Disbursements via email at [acctspay-dept@wmich.edu](mailto:acctspay-dept@wmich.edu)

- Travel Expense Vouchers and receipts should be submitted within 30 days of the return trip.

## Procedures

**Estimate your travel expenses:** Include departure and return dates, conference cost, hotel accommodations, car rental, gas, meals and miscellaneous estimated expenses for the travel event.

**Authorization:** Create an online travel authorization using your BroncoNet ID and password in the Employee Self Service portal as far in advance as possible.

- Blanket Authorization should be created if a rental car is consistently needed for this fund, cost center and employee.
- Pre-Authorization is required when traveling by personal car on university business outside of the local area.

**Place your reservations:** Once your travel authorization has been approved you can proceed with placing your reservation with the appropriate carrier.

## Train, Bus, and Car Service

- Train and bus transportation are encouraged when this mode of transportation is convenient for the traveler.
- Travelers should use coach class unless pre-approved by appropriate vice president.
- Receipt for bus or train ticket is required for reimbursement.

- Use of a private sedan or car service will be reimbursed only if the cost is less than other available modes of transportation or if a valid business reason precludes the use of a more economical mode of transportation.
  - Attach the detailed valid business reason to the reimbursement request.
  - Use of a limousine is not a reimbursable expense.

### **Rental Car**

- Travelers may rent a car to their destination when driving is more convenient and less expensive than airline or rail travel, or it is necessary to transport equipment or materials.
- All individuals who intend to drive the rental vehicle must be listed on the travel authorization and the rental agreement for insurance purposes.
- Gasoline purchased in conjunction with the use of a rental car will be reimbursed, receipts are required for reimbursement.
- Student field trips, which are part of organized course instruction, may be taken to vital places of interest. Student participation in field trips is on a voluntary basis and students must cover their own costs. Student's age 20 and older may drive Hertz or Enterprise rental vehicles on field trips.

### **Auto Rental Insurance**

- Rental cars are covered under the University's corporate program with [Hertz](#) and Enterprise.
- Supplemental Liability and Collision Damage insurance is available for purchase through the rental agency.
  - Only Western Michigan University employees and students who are renting vehicles for Western Michigan University business purposes are covered under the University's insurance plan. All drivers must be listed on the authorization and rental agreement in order to drive the rental.

### **Personal Automobile**

- Use of personal automobiles is permitted for travel purposes. Travelers will be reimbursed at the Federal Government's prevailing rate per mile as documented on the [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) website.
- When an employee is using a personal car for university business, the following apply:
  - The employee's personal car insurance carrier is the primary insurance carrier.
  - The employee is responsible for maintaining adequate insurance coverage (state mandatory insurance requirement, at a minimum) for their protection and the protection of any passengers.
  - Employees are responsible for the following costs that may be incurred during business travel:

- Car repairs
- Tickets
- Fines
- Damage to personal vehicle
- Theft of personal vehicle/ vehicle contents, and
- Rental car costs during repair of personal vehicle.