

LASERS Travel Policy

Frequently Asked Questions

Revised Date: January 4, 2023

1. Who can be reimbursed for travel?

LASERS Board Members, employees and authorized persons such as advisors, consultants or contractors who are called upon to contribute time and services are eligible for reimbursement. **Note: Spouses and significant others are not eligible for reimbursement.**

2. If LASERS prepays expenses for a conference I am attending and I am unable to attend, is LASERS required to seek reimbursement from me?

No, an Attorney General Opinion (08-0263) provides that a governmental employer who prepays conference expenses is not required to seek reimbursement if the public servant is unable to attend.

3. Who is authorized to operate or travel in a state vehicle?

A classified or unclassified employee of the State of Louisiana, Member of State Board or any other person who has received specific approval from the Executive Director or designee can operate or travel in a state vehicle on official state business. Students shall not be authorized to drive a state owned or rented vehicles for use on official business if not employed by the State.

4. Do I have to use the state contracted travel agency to make travel arrangements?

No, you do not have to use Christopherson Business Travel although it is permissible to do so.

5. Can a plane ticket be changed?

Changes due to personal reasons:

Yes, you can change the ticket, but the cost for changing the ticket for personal reasons is not reimbursable. A new itinerary must be attached to the reimbursement form. This enables Accounts Payable to calculate the meal allowance.

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Changes due to business reasons:

Yes, you can change the ticket. If a change is necessary due to business reasons, then LASERS will pay for the cost of the new ticket.

6. Can I purchase a higher- level flight with LASERS credit card?

No, you cannot purchase a higher-class flight with LASERS credit card. If you are traveling on LASERS official business and desire to fly in a higher classification then what the travel policy allows, you will be responsible for that cost difference between the higher class and the coach or economy class. In addition, you will be required to book this higher-level travel type with your own credit card and not with any LASERS issued credit card. LASERS will reimburse only the coach or economy portion of the cost of the flight, while you will be responsible for the upgrade difference. For reimbursement to be processed, you are required to submit documentation to Fiscal showing the cost difference between coach or economy class and higher class at the time of booking the flight.

7. Can I purchase a ticket for my spouse or friend through the state contracted agency?

Yes, you can but the rate will not be at the state contracted price and you will need to pay for it personally.

8. What is the reimbursement rate for Mileage and how should it be calculated?

The mileage reimbursement rate is stated on LASERS Travel Policy Attachment A and will be computed by the odometer reading (provided by the traveler) from point of origin to point of return or by calculating the mileage using published software package such as Mapquest. **Note: It is important to print the page indicating mileage and attach it to the travel reimbursement form or document your odometer reading on the form.**

9. What is the procedure if the LASERS Commercial Card is used for actual meal charges, but the traveler overspent or underspent as compared to their per diem allowance?

The per diem meals allowance is totaled for the entire trip, and if the total meal charges on the LASERS Commercial Card are under the per diem allowance for the trip, the employee will be reimbursed for the difference. If the total meal charges on the LASERS Commercial Card are over the per diem allowance for the trip, the employee

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will owe the difference to LASERS. The amount to be reimbursed to the employee or owed to LASERS will be included in the employee's travel reimbursement form and will be netted against any other reimbursements owed to the employee or amounts owed back to LASERS. If the travel reimbursement form's grand total calculates an amount owed back to LASERS, a payroll deduction will be generated unless the employee repays by check.

10. Are taxi receipts required for reimbursement?

Yes, receipts are required for reimbursements in excess of \$15.

11. Are vehicle rentals allowed instead of using public ground transportation?

Yes, you can rent a vehicle but only with prior approval of the Executive Director or Designee. Such approval may be given when a vehicle rental is the most economical means for transportation.

12. Can a state-owned vehicle be used for out-of-state travel?

Yes, only if permission of the Executive Director has been given prior to departure. If a state-owned vehicle is to be used to travel to a destination of more than 500 miles from its usual location, documentation that this is the most cost-effective means of travel should be readily available in the department's travel files.

13. What size vehicles can be rented?

Generally only the cost of renting a compact or standard/intermediate vehicle is reimbursable when one or two travelers are in the vehicle, excluding spouses and family. However, if this type of vehicle is not available another vehicle can be rented. Documentation must be provided regarding the non-availability of a compact or standard/intermediate vehicle. If the vehicle will be used to transport more than two persons when conducting LASERS business, the traveler may upgrade the vehicle to the next smallest size necessary to accommodate the number of persons traveling. Another exception is you can rent a larger vehicle if the cost of a larger vehicle is no more than the rental rate for a compact.

14. Are there any deals or discounts on vehicle rentals?

Yes, the following companies have discounts for the State:

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1. Enterprise and National - When setting up rentals for LASERS business, you will use L142800 as the corporate account number. LASERS is exempted from Louisiana sales tax. It will be the traveler's responsibility to ensure that taxes are not charged to the bill.
2. Hertz - When setting up rentals for LASERS business, you will use 2227961 as the discount code. LASERS is exempted from Louisiana sales tax. It will be the traveler's responsibility to ensure that taxes are not charged to the bill.

Note: The codes given for Enterprise, National and Hertz are to be used for Business purposes only.

15. When traveling in a state owned or rental vehicle, will gas be reimbursable?

Yes, gas is reimbursable with a receipt for regular unleaded gas, or diesel when applicable.

16. If my spouse joins me on an official state business trip, can he/she ride with me in the rented automobile?

Only if employee/board member signs a waiver releasing LASERS from liability. The waiver can be found on LASERS intranet.

17. Does the Office of Risk Management's insurance coverage pertain to vendors, spouses, family, etc.?

No, vendors, spouses, family, etc. will not be covered by the Office of Risk Management's policy of insurance.

18. What should a traveler do if a collision occurs while using a vehicle rental?

If a collision occurs while on official state business, report the accident to the Office of Risk Management Property Claims Unit as soon as possible by contacting Ann Wax at ann.wax@la.gov or (225) 219-0012. Next, employees should notify their supervisor/manager and Board Members should notify Amanda Celestine. The supervisor/manager (or Amanda in the case of Board Members) will then meet with LASERS fleet manager who will file the reports of the accident with ORM.

19. What documentation is required for reimbursement of a vehicle rental?

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A copy of the detailed receipt from the car rental company showing the employee/board member's name as lessee is required. Original receipts should be maintained by the traveler until reimbursement is made.

20. If I lose the keys to the car rental will the cost of a replacement key be reimbursable?

No, lost keys for rental vehicles are not covered under the damage waiver policy and are very costly.

21. While on an official state business trip, if a few extra days are used for personal activity, are meals, lodging, vehicle rental and gas reimbursed for these extra days?

No. The cost for meals, lodging, rental vehicle, gasoline for rental car etc. are not reimbursable for personal days. The portion attributable to personal days will be deducted for reimbursement from the receipts attached for reimbursement.

22. Should reimbursement forms show actual dates of travel if personal days are taken or travel dates of business days?

The reimbursement form should include actual travel days both business and personal. Personal travel dates should be denoted as personal in the Territory Traveled Column and should have no expenses denoted. LASERS will only reimburse business related expenses.

23. Are fees charged by airlines for checked luggage, as well as for luggage exceeding weight limits reimbursable?

LASERS allows one checked bag for each Traveler on official business. Two checked bags are allowed for business trips six days or more. Executive Director or Designee may approve reimbursement to a traveler for airline charges for a second bag and/or any additional baggage which is business related and required by the department. The traveler must present a receipt to substantiate these charges.

Travelers will be reimbursed for excess baggage charges (overweight baggage) only in the following circumstances:

- When traveling with heavy or bulky materials or equipment necessary for business.
- The excess baggage consists of organization records or property.

24. If traveler has a LASERS issued cell phone, can they claim reimbursement for

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personal calls up to five dollars per trip as per the policy?

Yes, the cell phone is for official state business and personal calls should not be made using it; therefore, the personal call allowance is granted.

25. Are business calls and business internet charges reimbursable?

Yes, but a receipt is required for both Internet access charges and telephone charges. Personal internet charges are not reimbursable.

26. How should the location of a LASERS hosted conference be determined?

The location is to be determined by soliciting three competitive bids in accordance to LASERS Procurement process. (i.e. ... if needed)

27. Do I need to keep receipts when using the LASERS Commercial Card for travel?

Yes, receipt copies for ALL charges put on the LASERS Commercial Card, including meals, must be submitted to Accounts Payable via email AccountsPayable@lasersonline.org with your Commercial Card Log. The LASERS Commercial Card is a LASERS liability card, not a personal liability card; therefore, all original receipts must be retained by the cardholder until reimbursement is made.

28. What receipts should I turn in with my Travel Reimbursement Forms?

A copy of all receipts should be submitted with your Travel Reimbursement Form including any travel related charges on the LASERS Commercial Card. All receipts or copies of receipts must be retained by the cardholder until reimbursement is made.

29. When should a travel authorization form be completed?

A travel authorization form is required for non-routine meetings, conferences, and out-of-state travel. Routine travel does not require a travel authorization form. Routine travel includes travel related to:

- Board Meetings
- Prep Seminars
- RSEA Meetings
- Legislative Meetings
- Local training/conference/seminar specifically related to employee position or

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certification such as

- CPEs for CPAs
- CLEs for Lawyers, etc.
- LAPERS Conference

A Group Travel Authorization may be used when more than one traveler in a division is traveling to the same destination for the same reason such as attending a conference or training. The Group Travel Authorization should be approved by the Division Director and/or the Executive Director or his/her designee as appropriate.