

ASTSWMO Special Travel Policy

March 2018

Policy, procedures, and forms for stopover, extended stay, automobile travel in excess of 500 miles, and other special travel requests

(1) STOPOVER OR PERSONAL TRAVEL AIRFARES

In order to provide ASTSWMO travelers the opportunity to stopover on the way to or from an ASTSWMO-sponsored activity, we have developed a process for providing an exception to the Association's standing policies for reimbursement of travel directly to or from the event. There are several conditions to use of this exception to policy (outlined below), but the most important feature is to document the fact that the ASTSWMO reimbursement, normally made with federal grant funds, was not greater than it would be if the individual traveled to and from the event on a non-refundable coach class fare.

This step of documenting the comparative costs of stopover travel must take place prior to booking travel and must receive written approval from the ASTSWMO staff.

CONDITIONS OF USE OF STOPOVER EXCEPTION TO POLICY: All travelers already approved for ASTSWMO reimbursement may use this exception, provided that they submit the required documentation (described below) prior to booking travel and receive written ASTSWMO approval of that request. The following specific conditions apply:

- All personal expenses for hotels, meals, and other travel expenses related to the stopover at another location or for extended stays in the location of the sponsored meeting are **ineligible** for ASTSWMO reimbursement. Only those travel expenses directly related to the sponsored activity can be reimbursed. For example, airport parking fees claimed must be limited to the days of the sponsored meeting and the travel time necessary to travel to and from the meeting. Parking days for personal or State business time cannot be claimed.
- Stopovers at other cities or locations on the way to or from the sponsored activity must be within the U.S. or its territories. The Association will not reimburse for fares that include stopovers in other countries.
- The stopovers may be as a result of personal vacation or for State business, but regardless of reason, all necessary prior approval or documentation must be completed before booking the travel. **No retroactive approvals will be provided by ASTSWMO.**
- If the cost of your airfare increases between approval and purchase, you must resubmit your Special Travel Forms to reflect the new cost. If new forms reflecting the higher price are not submitted, ASTSWMO will not cover the additional cost of your fare.
- These rules also apply to train fares.

DOCUMENTATION OF COST NEUTRALITY OR SAVINGS FOR SPECIAL TRAVEL: The key to special travel approval is the cost effectiveness of the alternative presented. ASTSWMO must be able to prove and document that the alternative travel costs were equal to or less than standard, non-refundable coach roundtrip air or train fare travel directly to and from the event. If the costs should prove greater for the alternative, it is still possible to gain approval, but the traveler must agree to claim no more than the lower cost option presented for standard roundtrip fare.

- The traveler must obtain documentation that is printed on travel agency or State travel office letterhead, stationary, or form, or a clear printout from an airline or travel website that compares both the standard roundtrip coach fare **and** the alternative stopover fare. ASTSWMO cannot accept either quotes received by phone conversations with travel agents or your own notes as adequate documentation to support the comparison. The documentation must clearly identify the authoritative source of the information and the date it was obtained.

- The traveler must complete and submit *Cost Worksheet A* for special (stopover and/or extended stay) travel tickets, include the worksheet and its supporting cost comparison documentation with a completed ASTSWMO Special Travel Exception Form, and then email a PDF of the entire package to ASTSWMO's Washington office prior to the intended date of travel. ASTSWMO will review and, if appropriate, approve the cover form, and email a copy to the traveler to be submitted with their Travel Reimbursement Form following the sponsored event. If there are any issues with the proposed exception, you will be contacted personally.
- Once the approval is provided, it is locked in and will form the comparative basis for the demonstration of savings. If the traveler purchases a more expensive ticket following the approval, ASTSWMO reserves the right to adjust the reimbursement paperwork in accordance with the lower approved cost.

(2) PRIVATE OR STATE AUTO TRAVEL IN EXCESS OF 500 MILES ROUNDTRIP

Please note that ASTSWMO will not approve a privately-owned vehicle exception after the fact; a request must be submitted and approved before the travel takes place. To receive an exception for use of privately owned vehicles in excess of 500 miles, the following conditions apply:

- **The traveler must ensure that their request to be reimbursed for privately owned vehicle use in excess of 500 miles round-trip is approved in advance** by the Association's Washington office. Complete the enclosed Special Travel Exception Form and *Cost Work Sheet B*, and return both forms and appropriate documentation to the ASTSWMO office for approval. The traveler must include a copy of this validated travel exception form with their travel reimbursement form and certify the actual mileage driven to and from the meeting site. If you are in doubt about the roundtrip mileage, we suggest you consult Google Maps or a similar web service to determine the mileage for the most direct route to and from the ASTSWMO-sponsored event.
- The total reimbursable costs involved are limited to mileage, parking, and tolls up to the cost of the standard roundtrip airline or train ticket. ASTSWMO cannot pay in excess of that airfare amount for the combined vehicular costs. The traveler is responsible for any gasoline, mechanical repairs, etc., when mileage is paid. Because travel within the Continental U.S. can be made in a single day by air travel, no additional reimbursement for any individual hotel expenses will be made, and meals and incidentals will be limited to a single travel day. Hotel parking costs will be reimbursable, but ASTSWMO will not reimburse for valet parking unless it is the only option. All receipt requirements remain as described in the ASTSWMO Travel Policy.
- Only the driver/owner of the vehicle may claim the mileage to the meeting; passengers may claim mileage to the carpool rendezvous point. If a State vehicle is used, the same procedures will apply when the traveler claims the mileage rate. If the State vehicle is being used without cost to ASTSWMO for mileage, then fuel, tolls, and parking fees are reimbursable, if properly supported by receipts.

If the traveler determines that all of the conditions of use can be met, he/she must obtain the necessary comparative cost documentation and submit those to ASTSWMO prior to the date of travel. This will involve the following steps:

- The traveler must obtain documentation, printed on State agency or State travel office letterhead, stationary, or form or a clear printout from an airline website that compares both the standard roundtrip coach fare and the cost of use of a private auto. ASTSWMO cannot accept quotes received by phone conversations with travel agents or your own notes as adequate documentation to support these comparisons. The documentation must clearly identify the authoritative source of the information and the date it was received.
- Complete the cost worksheet for privately-owned vehicle use, and provide it along with your travel exception form, airfare documentation, and a completed ASTSWMO Special Travel Exception Form prior to travel. ASTSWMO will review and approve, if appropriate, the cover form and email a copy back to the traveler to be submitted with the reimbursement claim following the sponsored event. If there are any issues with the proposed exception, you will be notified personally.

ENCLOSURE 1

ASTSWMO SPECIAL TRAVEL FORMS

Name _____ Date _____

Division/Agency _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Meeting and Dates _____

Do you have management approval to travel to the meeting listed? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, have you received reimbursement confirmation from ASTSWMO Staff? Yes _____ No _____

INSTRUCTIONS AND SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

- Please read ASTSWMO's Special Travel Policy for detailed instructions for this form.
- Please mark the appropriate category, provide the requested information, and email (barbarah@astswmo.org) the completed form in order to obtain prior approval for special travel.
- **Approval of travel exceptions must be obtained from ASTSWMO PRIOR to booking your travel. Exceptional expenses cannot be reimbursed unless approved before your trip.**
- All information must be documented to identify the authoritative source of the information and the date it was obtained. VERBAL PRICE QUOTES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.
- Must contact ASTSWMO staff if seeking to do a combination of flying, driving, or train.

EXTENDED STAY AIRLINE OR TRAIN TICKET

1. Provide the documented prices (obtained through a travel agent, State travel office, or website) for **both** the standard **NON-REFUNDABLE** coach fare **and** the alternative **NON-REFUNDABLE** fare for the extended stay, and
2. Complete *Cost Work Sheet A* to demonstrate the costs of both standard, direct airfare and your desired extended stay airfare, both must be **NON-REFUNDABLE**; then email (barbarah@astswmo.org) the forms and documentation to ASTSWMO for review and approval.

PRIVATE OR STATE AUTO TRAVEL IN EXCESS OF 500 MILES ROUND-TRIP

1. Provide documentation for the standard, direct round-trip coach airfare (obtained through a travel agent, State travel office, or website), and
2. Complete *Cost Work Sheet B* to provide the number of miles to be driven roundtrip, cost calculation at \$0.545/mile, and a demonstration that no additional cost (including parking and tolls) over the standard coach airfare will be incurred through the use of a private car; or, if a State car is being used, document fuel, toll, and parking costs for comparison to the standard airfare. Email (barbarah@astswmo.org) the forms and documentation to ASTSWMO for review and approval.

PLEASE EMAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM, THE APPROPRIATE WORKSHEET, AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION TO ASTSWMO TO OBTAIN **PRIOR APPROVAL**. APPROVAL WILL BE SENT BACK TO YOU AND A COPY MUST BE ATTACHED TO YOUR REIMBURSEMENT FORM UPON SUBMITTAL.

WORKSHEET A

Worksheet for Special Fare Travel Cost Comparison

Name _____ Dates of Extended Travel _____

Meeting and Dates _____

Airfare comparison (include ticketing service fees in all fares entered). Please attach documentation for all fares:

(a) Cost of standard coach class air or train ticket \$ _____
NON-REFUNDABLE FARES MUST BE SUBMITTED

(b) Cost of alternative/extended stay fare \$ _____
NON-REFUNDABLE FARES MUST BE SUBMITTED

PLEASE ENCLOSE THIS WORKSHEET AND ITS SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION WITH THE SPECIAL TRAVEL FORM AND SEND TO THE ASTSWMO OFFICE BY EMAIL (barbarah@astswmo.org) FOR APPROVAL PRIOR TO BOOKING YOUR TRAVEL.

PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THIS PAGE, AS RETURNED TO YOU WITH STAFF SIGNATURE AND APPROVED TRAVEL COST, WHEN YOU SUBMIT YOUR REIMBURSEMENT FORM.

ASTSWMO OFFICE USE ONLY

SPECIAL TRAVEL APPROVED UP TO \$ _____

AMOUNT APPROVED BY _____

DATE APPROVED _____

WORKSHEET B

Worksheet for Auto Travel Exceeding 500 Miles Round-trip

Name _____ Dates of Extended Travel _____

Event _____ Location _____

Establish a baseline by indicating the standard, direct coach airfare if it were used instead of a privately owned or State vehicle. See ASTSWMO's Special Travel Policy and Procedure instructions for a description of the necessary documentation for the standard airfare.

Documented cost of standard, coach class, roundtrip airfare or train fare \$ _____

Estimated mileage from home to airport and back
(# of miles _____ (\$0.545/mile) + (tolls, etc.) \$ _____

Estimated airport or train parking \$ _____

Roundtrip airline baggage fees \$ _____

Total estimated (air/train) fare/ground transportation/parking costs \$ _____

Estimated cost of reimbursement for allowable expenses related to private vehicle travel.

Estimated total mileage of _____ x (\$0.545/mile) \$ _____

Estimated toll road/bridge costs \$ _____

Estimated hotel parking costs \$ _____

Total estimated privately owned vehicle use \$ _____

PLEASE ENCLOSE THIS WORKSHEET AND ITS SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION WITH THE SPECIAL TRAVEL FORM AND SEND TO THE ASTSWMO OFFICE BY EMAIL (barbarah@astswmo.org) FOR APPROVAL PRIOR TO TRAVEL. PLEASE INCLUDE A COPY OF THIS PAGE, AS RETURNED TO YOU WITH STAFF SIGNATURE AND APPROVED TRAVEL COST, WHEN YOU SUBMIT YOUR REIMBURSEMENT FORM.

ASTSWMO OFFICE USE ONLY

AUTO TRAVEL APPROVED UP TO \$ _____

AMOUNT APPROVED BY _____

DATE APPROVED _____

ENCLOSURE 2

ASTSWMO TRAVELERS CHECKLIST

If you are considering special travel arrangements, like making personal stops en route or using a privately-owned vehicle for this travel, please review the Special Travel Policy enclosure to the ASTSWMO Travel Policies because both of these situations and others require comparative cost review and approval **prior to travel**, if ASTSWMO is to reimburse the expenses.

Please read the Travel Policy closely, especially as it applies to such requirements as original receipts and allowable expenses. Some of these may differ from your usual, State-supported travel procedures. For example, ASTSWMO will not cover such common expenses as rental cars or telephone expenses and can only reimburse on an actual cost basis (as opposed to a daily per diem). Understanding these differences before you incur expenses will ensure complete reimbursement for allowable costs. If you have any questions, call ASTSWMO's Washington, DC, office at 202-640-1061. ASTSWMO staff members are happy to discuss the situation with you – *before you confirm your travel plans*.

After your travel, but before you submit your travel reimbursement form, please use this checklist to avoid the most common errors we encounter in completed reimbursement forms:

1. If you are the payee, did you include **original** receipts for any item over \$74.99 if mailing your reimbursement? ASTSWMO does prefer to receive reimbursements via email.
2. Did you fill in a payee name and address for the reimbursement check?
3. Did you sign the form certifying that the information is correct?
4. Did you itemize the daily expenses for meals and incidentals?
5. If you are requesting a division of the total reimbursement between yourself and your State agency, did you submit the two requests on separate forms, each with its individual set of receipts?
6. Reviewing your airfare receipts, did you provide as much supporting information as possible, including all pages of your e-ticket notifications from travel agencies, passenger ticket copies, or boarding passes that collectively include your name, the cost of the **NON-REFUNDABLE** airfare (including taxes and fees), the flights used, and the dates of travel? The documentation must reflect that payment has been made.
7. Is your **paid** hotel receipt complete, reflecting your name and the itemized, daily rates and taxes claimed?
8. Have you separated taxi use for transportation to and from the meeting from any used for personal reasons like going out to dinner? The latter is an incidental expense. Be sure to list trips separately if the combined total exceeds \$74.99 and appears to require a receipt.
9. If you are claiming mileage reimbursement for travel to and from the departure airport, did you list the number of miles driven each way?
10. If there was some unusual item or problem with travel that caused additional expenses, did you include a short explanation in an accompanying note or memo?
11. If you were approved for Special Travel, did you include the signature page in your reimbursement?