



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

# POLICY P4.1.8

## TRAVEL

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Version Number	1.0
SOPs	➤ SOP P4.1.8-1 Travel Procedures
Owner	Chief Financial Officer
Contact	Chief Financial Officer
Approved Date	15 May 2019
Effective Date	1 July 2019
Next Review Date	1 July 2024
Document Control	Electronic - Printed Copies are Uncontrolled

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy and associated standard operating procedures (SOPs):
- Outline the principles and standards as to when official travel should be undertaken, and the nature of that official travel;
  - Provide the policy and procedure framework that govern the approval of official travel, and payment and acquittal of official travel expenses; and
  - Support compliance with the Award, NSW Government Travel and Transport Policy, Treasurer's Directions, Treasury Circulars and Treasury Policy and Guidelines Papers.

## 2 Definitions

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy:
- Air travel:** is travel by aircraft including charter aircraft.
  - Award:** the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009* or any successor Award.
  - Interstate travel:** is travel outside of New South Wales, but within Australia.
  - Lowest logical fare of the day:** means the cheapest fare available that meets the traveller's logistical needs such a desired date and time of departure.
  - Official travel:** is travel, both air and surface, undertaken by public officials or other persons, paid for by a public sector organisation using public monies.
  - Overseas travel:** is travel outside of Australia.
  - Public official:** is a staff member of the NSW RFS, or any other person remunerated by and performing duties under the direction or auspices of the NSW RFS.

- h. **Receipt:** is a tax invoice that provides a detailed description of the goods or services purchased. For small value purchases, the cash register receipt is often the tax invoice. Credit card stubs are not sufficient documentation and are not receipts.
- i. **Senior Executive:** a staff member employed as a Public Service senior executive under the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*.
- j. **Staff member:** means the Commissioner and all other members of staff of the NSW RFS. This includes temporary staff and persons on secondment to the NSW RFS from other agencies or departments.
- k. **Tax invoice:** has the meaning defined in section 29.70 of the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*. Broadly, to be a tax invoice a document must:
  - Be intended to be a tax invoice (this is usually denoted by inclusion of the words 'Tax Invoice');
  - Include the seller's identity (eg company name);
  - Include the seller's Australian Business Number (ABN);
  - Include the date of issue;
  - Include a brief description of the items sold, and their quantity and price;
  - Include the GST payable (if any), either by separately disclosing the amount, or if the GST is exactly one eleventh of the total price, include the words 'Total price includes GST';
  - Include the extent to which each item on the invoice includes GST; and
  - If the invoice value exceeds \$1,000, the buyer's identity or ABN (ie NSW Rural Fire Service).
- l. **Travel approval:** means approval of official travel in advance by an appropriately delegated officer, utilising the appropriate form or system.

### 3 Policy

- 3.1 The NSW RFS will meet any authorised official travel and associated actual expenses that are consistent with the Award, and that have been properly and reasonably incurred by an employee who is required to perform duties at a location other than their normal work location.
- 3.2 Staff members have an obligation to be efficient, economical and ethical in their use and management of public resources when undertaking travel.
- 3.3 All official travel shall be for official business purposes only.
- 3.4 All official travel must be approved in advance by an officer delegated under NSW RFS Policy P2.1.1 *Administrative Delegations*, with the exception of one-day journeys where no travel compensation will be sought. One-day journey where travel compensation will be sought require approval in advance (refer clause 3.40). A staff member shall not approve their own travel with the exception of the Commissioner.
- 3.5 The travel approval must be sought utilising the appropriate form or system. When completing the application, staff members should outline all anticipated modes of travel. A copy of the travel approval and relevant supporting documentation (e.g. receipts, travel diaries) will need to be included with relevant reconciliations and/or reimbursement claims.

#### Minimising Travel

- 3.6 Prior to considering official travel, staff members should consider alternative methods of conducting official business such as teleconferencing, video conferencing and online collaborative tools where appropriate.

#### Short Trips

- 3.7 For short trips, particularly within the Sydney metropolitan area, staff members should prioritise walking and public transport where possible.
- 3.8 Taxis and ride sharing options (e.g. Uber) should only be used where there is no appropriate and timely public transport option available.

3.9 As an organisation which by its nature owns substantial transport assets, staff members should consider if it is more effective to utilise NSW RFS vehicles where the cost incurred is equivalent to or lower than taxi and ride share options, however parking and toll fees should also be considered.

### **Fleet Vehicles**

3.10 Fleet vehicles are available for official travel, and should be utilised where:

- a. A specialised vehicle is required for work related purposes;
- b. Public transport options are limited;
- c. Driving is the most cost and time effective method of transport; and
- d. Vehicles are not otherwise operationally required.

3.11 Staff members should refer to NSW RFS Policies P8.1.1 *Passenger Motor Vehicle Usage* and P8.1.2 *Fleet Management of Passenger Motor Vehicles*.

### **Car Rentals**

3.12 Car rentals may be utilised where the use of public transport, taxis or ride shares is not an appropriate option, and fleet vehicles are not available.

3.13 Car rentals must be booked in advance through an authorised Travel Coordinator utilising the Government contracted Travel Management Service, and approved as part of the staff member's travel approval.

3.14 The standard car rental will be a small or intermediate vehicle. Where a requirement exists for a larger or specialist vehicle, this must be specifically requested and approved as part of the travel approval.

### **Private Motor Vehicles**

3.15 Staff members may use their private vehicles for official travel where other transport options are unavailable or inappropriate, provided the following conditions are met:

- a. Use of the private motor vehicle is approved in advance by an officer delegated under NSW RFS Policy P2.1.1 *Administrative Delegations* as part of the staff member's travel approval; and
- b. The vehicle is appropriately registered, and the staff member holds a comprehensive insurance policy for the vehicle.

3.16 Compensation for private motor vehicle use will usually be by way of a per kilometre allowance at the casual rate in accordance with the relevant Award and rates published by way of Treasury Circular. A travel diary that records the number of business kilometres must be maintained to substantiate the distance travelled and claimed.

3.17 The official business rate for private motor vehicle use will only be payable in exceptional circumstances, and requires:

- a. a staff member to be directed by a delegated officer to use their private motor vehicle for official business (i.e. it is not the staff member's choice and travel cannot be delayed)
- b. the staff member agrees; and
- c. no other transport is available (e.g. taxis, car rentals, public transport options and NSW RFS vehicles were unavailable at the location).

### **Costs Incidental to Motor Vehicle Travel**

3.18 The cost of car parking may be charged to the staff member's corporate credit card, and acquitted through the expense management system.

3.19 Where a staff member incurs car parking expenses and does not have a corporate credit card, the staff member may seek reimbursement through an expense claim in the expense management system. Relevant receipts will be required.

3.20 Most NSW RFS vehicles will be fitted with electronic toll passes. Where a staff member incurs a toll personally undertaking official travel, reimbursement can be sought through the expense management system on provision of relevant receipts.

3.21 Expenses related to fines (e.g. speeding fines or parking tickets) are private expenses, and will not be met by the NSW RFS.

## Air Travel

- 3.22 Approval by the Commissioner and Minister is required for overseas travel, in addition to the standard travel approval, and staff members are required to finalise their travel approval at least six weeks earlier than otherwise required to allow for the seeking of Ministerial approval.
- 3.23 For clarity, Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island are considered domestic destinations.
- 3.24 Bookings for air travel must be made through an authorised Travel Coordinator utilising the Government contracted Travel Management Service, and approved as part of the staff member's travel approval. Bookings cannot be placed in advance of the travel approval.
- 3.25 Economy class travel shall be used for all official travel with the exception of:
  - a. The Commissioner, Executive Directors and Directors who may fly premium economy or business class to Western Australia, the Northern Territory or overseas;
  - b. Staff members travelling with the Minister may, if required, travel in the same class as the Minister;
  - c. Staff members travelling with a Government delegation may, with approval of the Commissioner, travel in the same class as other delegates; and
  - d. The Minister may waive the requirement to fly economy class for medical reasons.
- 3.26 The lowest logical fare of the day must be used for all domestic flights.

## Airline Loyalty Schemes

- 3.27 Staff members shall not accept loyalty or frequent flyer points from any airline in respect of official travel.

## Airline Lounges

- 3.28 The NSW RFS will not meet the cost of airline lounge membership for staff members. Staff members who wish to maintain such membership will need to do so at their own cost.
- 3.29 The Commissioner may approve an exemption to allow the NSW RFS to purchase membership for a staff member at his absolute discretion.

## Accommodation

- 3.30 Where a staff member is travelling overnight, accommodation shall be booked either by a Travel Coordinator using the Government contracted Travel Management Service (or an alternate method), or by the staff member using their corporate credit card.
- 3.31 The standard of accommodation should be in the mid-range of available options at the relevant destination (usually referred to as three star or three diamond).

## Travel Compensation – Overnight Travel

- 3.32 Staff members who travel on average more than once per quarter will be provided with a corporate credit card to utilise for travel expenses when travelling on authorised official travel.
- 3.33 All staff members that are allocated a corporate credit card shall charge the cost of actual meal expenses when travelling on authorised travel to the corporate credit card, retain receipts for all actual meal expenses, and complete appropriate reconciliations.
- 3.34 Staff members that have not been allocated a corporate credit card shall retrospectively claim the appropriate meal allowance payable with respect to authorised official travel through the NSW RFS expense management system. Travel advances are not available. Such claims will be approved by the staff member's manager through the expense management system. The pre-approved travel approval must be attached to the claim.
- 3.35 Alcohol shall not be charged to the NSW RFS under any circumstances.
- 3.36 The cost of accommodation of authorised official travel will have been met by the NSW RFS, either by the Travel Coordinator having booked accommodation through the Government contracted Travel Management Service (or alternate method) or a staff member having paid for their accommodation (and/or the accommodation of accompanying staff members who have not been allocated a corporate credit card) on their corporate credit card.
- 3.37 The total cost of a staff member's accommodation and meals for a day when travelling on authorised official travel shall not exceed the travel rate included in the Award and published by way of Treasury Circular (or

Australian Taxation Office Taxation Determination for Senior Executives), other than where approved in advance in extraordinary and/or unusual circumstances.

- 3.38 Incidentials allowances (where entitled) shall be claimed through the expense management system.
- 3.39 Claims for travel compensation must be submitted within six weeks of the conclusion of travel.

### **Travel Compensation – One-Day Journeys**

- 3.40 A staff member who has been approved to undertake a one-day journey by way of a travel approval may retrospectively claim a meal allowance through the expense management system, up to the value of the allowance published by way of Treasury Circular as follows:
  - a. Breakfast when required to commence travel at or before 6.00am and at least one hour before the prescribed starting time;
  - b. An evening meal when required to travel until or beyond 6.30pm; and
  - c. Lunch when required to travel at least 100 kilometres, and lunch is taken at least 50 kilometres from the staff member's usual work location.
- 3.41 Staff members that are allocated a corporate credit card are not to charge a meal to their corporate credit card in the above circumstances, but are instead to claim the allowance through the expense management system as described above.

### **Camping Allowances**

- 3.42 Camping allowance is **not** payable where staff members are accommodated at established base camps.
- 3.43 Staff members required to camp will be eligible for a camping allowance published by way of Treasury Circular at the 'established camp' rate. This allowance can be claimed through the expense management system.
- 3.44 Should a staff member exceed 40 days of camping in a calendar year, an additional allowance is available as published by way of Treasury Circular and can be claimed through the expense management system.
- 3.45 Camping equipment allowances will not normally be available as the NSW RFS provides camping equipment as required.

### **Private Travel**

- 3.46 Private travel shall not be approved as an adjunct to official travel except in exceptional circumstances. Any such travel which includes overseas travel will require the approval of the Commissioner, and any such travel that does not include overseas travel will require the approval of the relevant Director. Approval must be obtained in advance.
- 3.47 The Government contracted Travel Management Supplier and corporate credit cards shall not be used to book private travel, accommodation, transport or for any other private purpose.

### **Travel with Volunteers**

- 3.48 Staff members who hold a corporate credit card travelling with volunteer members are authorised to meet the actual expenses for any necessary accommodation and meals for that volunteer, and are required to maintain relevant documentation and receipts in accordance with this policy.

### **Tipping**

- 3.49 Tips should not be paid in respect of travel, accommodation or meals within Australia. Should a staff member wish to leave a tip, this is considered a private expense, and shall be met from private funds.
- 3.50 When travelling overseas, staff members may incur expenses for tips in countries where tipping is customary, provided such tips are reasonable and in accordance with local expectations.

### **Petty Cash**

- 3.51 Payment of any allowances or reimbursements under this policy will be made through the expense management system via electronic funds transfer, and no payments are to be made through petty cash.

## 4 Related documents

- NSW Government *Travel and Transport Policy*
- Crown Employees (*Public Service Conditions of Employment*) Reviewed Award 2009
- NSW Treasury Circular TC 18-14 Industrial Relations Meal, Travelling and Other Allowances for 2018-19 (updated annually)
- Australian Taxation Office Taxation Determination TD 2018/11 *Income Tax: What are the Reasonable Travel and Overtime Meal Allowance Expense Amounts for the 2018-19 income year* (updated annually)
- [Service Standard SS1.1.7 Code of Conduct and Ethics](#)
- [Policy P2.1.1 Administrative Delegations](#)
- [Policy P4.1.5 Corporate Credit Cards](#)
- [Policy P8.1.1 Passenger Motor Vehicle Usage](#)
- [Policy P8.1.2 Fleet Management of Passenger Motor Vehicles](#)

## 5 Amendments

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
15 May 2019	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➢ Repeals and remakes policies:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1.1.6 Travel – General v1.1</li><li>• 6.1.1 Air Travel v1.1</li><li>• 1.1.7 Private Motor Vehicle Allowance v 1.0.</li></ul></li><li>➢ Renumbered to align with policy index and updated to correct format.</li><li>➢ Complete review of previous policies to align with the current NSW Government Travel and Transport Policy and Treasurer's Directions, Circulars and Policy and Guidelines papers.</li></ul>

# **SOP P4.1.8-1**

## **TRAVEL PROCEDURES**

### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 This procedure defines the procedures and processes associated with official travel.

### **2 Procedures**

#### **Travel Coordinators**

- 2.1 The Executive Director, Infrastructure Services will appoint authorised Travel Coordinators who are approved to organise travel on behalf of staff members for a particular Section or Region.
- 2.2 There will be a minimum of one Travel Coordinator appointed for:
- a. State Headquarters (per Directorate);
  - b. Region East;
  - c. Region North;
  - d. Region South;
  - e. Region West;
  - f. Planning and Environment Services; and
  - g. State Mitigation Service.
- 2.3 The Travel Coordinator will book travel, accommodation and hire cars, where necessary, on behalf of staff within their area of responsibility only. A Travel Coordinator cannot book their own travel (except where the Travel Coordinator is responsible for booking a group booking including themselves, in which case the Travel Coordinator may book their own travel as part of the group, but the booking must then be reviewed by the Travel Coordinator's line manager).
- 2.4 Travel Coordinators will not book travel, accommodation or hire cars in advance of a travel approval. It is the responsibility of the traveller to provide the Travel Coordinator with an appropriately completed and authorised travel approval.
- 2.5 When Major Incident Conditions are in force, the Major Incident Logistics Support Section or State Logistics within State Operations may arrange and coordinate travel.

#### **Method of Transport**

- 2.6 Staff members should travel via the most economical means that is practical after taking into consideration factors such as distance, travel time, work health and safety, rest breaks and fatigue.
- 2.7 In most cases, this will mean that travel should be prioritised as follows, however the delegated officer should consider whether this is appropriate in the particular circumstance:
- a. Teleconference, video conference or online collaboration;
  - b. Walking;
  - c. Public transport;
  - d. NSW RFS vehicles or taxis and ride shares;
  - e. Car rentals;
  - f. Staff member private vehicle; and
  - g. Air travel.

## **Public Transport**

- 2.8 Where a staff member paid for public transport utilising their corporate credit card, the staff member must attach an electronic image (either photograph or scan) of the public transport ticket/receipt to their credit card reconciliation.
- 2.9 A small number of corporate Opal Cards are maintained, and may be available for use. Please liaise with your Manager or Travel Coordinator to determine availability.
- 2.10 Where the staff member has paid for the public transport personally, the cost of public transport will be reimbursed through an expense claim using the NSW RFS expense management system.
- 2.11 An electronic image (either photograph or scan) of the public transport ticket/receipt or an electronic image of the Opal Card or other public transport statement highlighting the relevant transaction for reimbursement, shall be attached to an expense claim in the NSW RFS expense management system for approval by the staff member's manager.
- 2.12 For clarity, staff members are unable to claim for the top-up of an Opal Card, but rather only for cost of specific journeys identified as official travel.
- 2.13 Payment to the staff member will be made by electronic funds transfer in the next payment run immediately following approval by the Manager.

## **Taxis**

- 2.14 Where a staff member has been allocated a corporate credit card, the staff member should charge any taxi fares to the corporate credit card. The staff member must attach an electronic image (either photograph or scan) of the receipt to their credit card reconciliation.
- 2.15 Where a staff member does not have an allocated corporate credit card, payment for taxis may be made by CabCharge voucher. CabCharge vouchers are equivalent to cash, and must be kept secure.
- 2.16 CabCharge vouchers must be completed in full by the custodian, including specifying the fare in words. Under no circumstances should the voucher be left with the driver to complete. Staff members must include their cost centre (or internal order or project code), name and the reason for travel in the comments box on the CabCharge voucher.
- 2.17 Lost or stolen vouchers must be reported immediately to the issuing officer.

## **Ride Share**

- 2.18 Ride share (e.g. Uber) can be utilised by staff members.
- 2.19 Where a staff member paid for the trip utilising their corporate credit card, the staff member must attach an electronic image (either photograph or scan) of the trip payment to their credit card reconciliation.
- 2.20 Where the staff members paid for the trip personally, the cost of the trip will be reimbursed through an expense claim using the NSW RFS expense management system.
- 2.21 An electronic image (either photograph or scan) of the cost of the trip highlighting the relevant transaction for reimbursement, shall be attached to an expense claim in the NSW RFS expense management system for approval by the staff member's manager.
- 2.22 Payment to the staff member will be made by electronic funds transfer in the next payment run immediately following approval by the Manager.

## **NSW RFS Vehicles**

- 2.23 Staff requiring the use of a NSW RFS vehicle should coordinate the use of the vehicle through the relevant Manager, or Engineering Services for pool vehicles within State Headquarters.
- 2.24 All vehicles should be returned in a clean and tidy condition and be refuelled. Any issues with the vehicle should be logged through Enterprise Asset Management and notified to the Manager.

## Rental Cars

- 2.25 Car rentals must be booked in advance through an authorised Travel Coordinator utilising the Government contracted Travel Management Service, and approved as part of the staff member's travel approval.
- 2.26 The Government contract with the rental car provider incorporates appropriate insurance.
- 2.27 Staff members should return rental cars fully refuelled wherever possible, and corporate credit cards may be utilised for this purpose.

## Private Motor Vehicles

- 2.28 Prior to authorising the use of a private motor vehicle, the delegated officer must sight the registration and comprehensive insurance policy for the vehicle.
- 2.29 A copy of the registration and comprehensive insurance policy shall be attached to the travel approval.
- 2.30 Payment of the private motor vehicle allowance will be through the NSW RFS expense management system. An electronic image of the travel approval, registration and insurance, along with the travel diary that substantiates the business kilometres travelled, must be attached to the claim for payment of the allowance.
- 2.31 No additional payment for fuel, maintenance or any other costs will be made outside of the allowance, with the exception of toll fees and parking fees. An expense claim can be submitted for toll fees and parking fees through the NSW RFS expense management system, and must be accompanied with an electronic image highlighting the relevant costs.
- 2.32 Where a private motor vehicle is damaged during approved official travel, the NSW RFS may reimburse the owner the cost of the excess prescribed by the insurer or the cost of repairs if less than the prescribed excess. Punitive excess charges, including loss of no claim bonus, will not be reimbursable.

## Air Travel

- 2.33 All air travel must be booked by an authorised Travel Coordinator only. Individual staff must not book air travel directly with a carrier and cannot use their corporate credit card to purchase airline tickets.
- 2.34 A copy of the travel approval should be forwarded to the Travel Coordinator well in advance of travel. This will allow for booking of discounted fares.
- 2.35 The lowest logical fare of the day will be booked within a reasonable time of the nominated travel time. Flexible fares will not normally be purchased, and staff are responsible for ensuring the requested travel times included on the travel approval will meet their requirements.
- 2.36 The Travel Coordinator will advise the requesting officer of flight details as soon as the booking is made.
- 2.37 Changes to bookings should be kept to a minimum as changes incur charges.
- 2.38 Cancellations should be advised immediately to the Travel Coordinator. Cancellations may still incur full airfare charges.
- 2.39 Staff members should nominate on their travel request whether they require booked luggage to be included in the airfare. The Service will pay for pre-booked luggage up to the weight allowed by the relevant airline.
- 2.40 If not nominated on the travel request, then the officer will be personally responsible for all booked luggage charges.
- 2.41 Excess luggage charges will be payable by the staff member and not claimable unless it can be clearly identified that the excess luggage was work related.
- 2.42 Restrictions to cabin luggage apply and staff members should make themselves aware of these limitations by checking the relevant airline website.

## Meal allowances – Overnight Travel

- 2.43 Staff members with allocated corporate credit cards will be travelling on actual expenses. As the NSW RFS is meeting the cost of the meal, there is no entitlement to claim the difference between the actual expenses incurred and the meal allowance.

- 2.44 An electronic image (scan or photograph) of official receipts for meals must be attached to credit card transactions in the NSW RFS expense management system in order to reconcile payments. The receipt must be a detailed tax receipt rather than a credit card stub.
- 2.45 Where meals are provided by the NSW RFS (for example at a conference or during major incidents), there is no entitlement to a meal allowance or to incur actual meal expenses for that meal.

#### **Meal allowances – One-Day Travel**

- 2.46 Where a staff member is eligible, and claims a meal allowance through the expense management system, a completed travel diary (in addition to the travel approval) that demonstrates the time of travel and kilometres travelled will be required to substantiate the entitlement.

#### **Incidentals allowance**

- 2.47 An incidentals allowance is payable for each full 24 hours of travel. To claim the incidentals allowance, an expense claim should be created in the NSW RFS expense management system, for approval by the relevant Manager. A copy of the travel approval should also be electronically attached. Incidentals allowances cannot be withdrawn in cash from a corporate credit card.

### **3 Related guidelines**

- Guidelines for the use of the NSW RFS Expense Management System