

Office of the State Public Defender Administrative Policies

Subject: Lodging	Policy No.: 145
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1.0 POLICY

Allowable lodging rates for state employees, contractors, experts and other witnesses are defined by statute and updated annually in October at <https://www.gsa.gov/>. OPD will pay for lodging at the prevailing state rate, except as provided below.

2.0 PROCEDURE, EMPLOYEES

All employees are responsible for following state travel guidelines. If an employee is unable to secure a room at the current state rate, they must provide a written explanation for the variance explaining the reason.

Acceptable reasons include but are not limited to:

- Limited accommodations within a 15-mile radius of the work location.
- Rate temporarily unavailable due to seasonal demand or special functions in the area.
- Emergency travel arrangements prohibited being able to secure accommodations at the state rate.

2.1 PAYMENT

DIRECT BILL LODGING

OPD has established agreements with lodging facilities throughout the state for billing the agency directly for employees traveling on state business. This is the preferred method of paying for lodging. **Employees must request the state rate when making reservations on direct bill accounts.** The current listing is available to all employees on the public share drive. If the state rate is not available at the selected facility, the employee must seek the state rate elsewhere.

PROCARD

Employees may use their state-issued purchasing card for lodging at the state rate. **Employees must request the state rate when making reservations or checking in.** If the state rate is not available at the selected facility, the employee must seek the state rate elsewhere. The original lodging receipt must be attached to the procard log along with a written explanation for any variance from the state rate.

REIMBURSEMENT

An employee may be reimbursed for lodging paid with personal funds. The original lodging receipt must be attached to the travel voucher. Reimbursement will be for the actual cost up to the state rate unless a written explanation of any variance is attached.

3.0 PROCEDURE, NON-EMPLOYEES

CONTRACTORS

Contract service providers and expert witnesses will be reimbursed for lodging through the claims submission process up to the state rate. If a contractor is unable to secure a room at the current state rate, they must provide a written explanation of any variance attached to the room receipt.

OTHER WITNESSES

Lodging for other witnesses may be obtained using the direct bill or procard methods of payment, or through reimbursement based on the Witness Fee and Travel form included with Policy 140.

4.0 CLOSING

Questions about this policy should be directed to the Central Services Division at the following address:

Office of the State Public Defender
Central Services Division
17 W. Galena
Butte, MT 59701
Phone 406-496-6080