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GENERAL LETTER NO. 212 (Revised September 1998)

SUBJECT: **State Employee Reimbursement Regulations and Policies**

I. TRANSPORTATION COSTS-AIR, RAIL AND VEHICLE RENTALS

All agencies must comply with the provisions of the recently revised State Travel Regulations (copy attached). Please note that where variations occur between collective bargaining contracts and this General Letter, the contracts have precedence.

The new regulations delegate authority to agency heads to authorize travel expense reimbursements, except that the Comptroller's Office will continue to administer tuition, training or travel reimbursements applicable to certain collective bargaining agreements. Within the guidelines set forth in the regulations, and any travel policies issued by the State Comptroller or the Department of Administrative Services, each agency must establish its own written procedure for travel reimbursement decisions and approvals.

Air Travel: All air travel must be arranged through the State Travel Agent at the lowest reasonable rate. Factors such as time of arrival and departure, business requirements and route of travel may be considered when determining whether it is reasonable to arrange a flight at a rate other than the lowest rate available.

Rail Travel: Rail travel must be arranged through the State Travel Agent. If the travel agent cannot book the particular rail service required by the agency, the agency must then book rail travel in accordance with established procurement policies.

Vehicle Rental: Vehicle rentals must be arranged through the State Travel Agent. Use of personally-owned vehicles

and mileage reimbursements are governed by General Letter No. 115, "Policy for the Use of State-Owned Motor Vehicles And Personally-Owned Motor Vehicles on State Business."

Bus Travel: Bus travel must be booked by the agency, in accordance with established procurement policies, at the lowest reasonable rate available.

(**Note:** Please see Office of the State Comptroller Memorandum No. 98-27 and No. 98-27a for more specific procedures for arranging travel through the State Travel Agent.)

II. REIMBURSEMENT OF LODGING COSTS

All State agencies must book reservations for lodging through the State Travel Agent. Lodging reimbursement is limited to the lowest reasonable rate available for booking by the State Travel Agent. The State agency is responsible for determining whether it is reasonable to authorize a rate that is higher than the lowest available rate. When making this determination, the agency may consider factors such as the distance from the lodging to the site of business, transportation costs, and the security of employees.

III. MEAL REIMBURSEMENT RATE

Eligibility for reimbursement for meals is governed by Section 5-141c-5 of the State Travel Regulations. Reimbursement shall be commensurate with the rates listed on the Travel Reimbursement Reference Chart issued by the Department of Administrative Services.

The per diem information includes a breakdown of the amount allocated to breakfast, lunch and dinner. Employees are entitled to the full per diem for "Meal and Incidentals" for each full day's travel. If any meal is otherwise provided in the cost of the conference or seminar, the allocated amount for that meal should be deducted. The determination of whether an employee is entitled to a full day's reimbursement is governed by the

arrival and departure times set forth in Section 5-141c-5.

Taxes on meals are fully reimbursable. Gratuities are reimbursable at a rate of 15%.

IV. BLANKET TRAVEL AUTHORIZATIONS Agencies may approve blanket authorizations for travel for employees required to travel on a continuous basis as part of their regular duties. The authorization must state the time period for the authorization and the scope of the authorization.

Please contact the Department of Administrative Services at (860) 713-5100 if you have any questions about State Travel regulations and policies.

Barbara Waters   Date   10/8/98

Commissioner

Department of Administrative Services