

DATE: July 1, 2021

TO: Agency Addressed (No. 03, 2021-2022)

FROM: Paul Whitfield, Director  
Division of Accounting and Auditing  
Department of Financial Services

SUBJECT: TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY CHAPTER 2021-37, LAWS OF FLORIDA.

Each travel voucher or other attached documentation must contain a statement describing how the travel activity is critical to the agency's mission.

For any travel voucher that seeks payment for travel to foreign countries, other states, conferences, staff-training activities, or other administrative functions, the voucher must contain evidence of the agency head's determination that such travel activities are critical to the agency's mission.

In order to make this process more efficient, each agency head may provide a signed memorandum setting forth his or her determination as to the types of activities that he or she deems mission-critical that require travel to foreign countries, other states or the District of Columbia, conferences, staff-training activities, or administrative functions. A copy of the determination memorandum can be sent to the Bureau of Auditing with a request to keep on file, otherwise a copy should be included with each voucher that seeks payment for travel activities falling within any of these five categories.

In approving any travel as being mission-critical, each agency head, or his or her designee, must identify in writing how the travel is consistent with the agency head's determination memorandum and state that he or she has considered the use of teleconferencing and other forms of electronic communication as an alternative to the travel. This section does not apply to travel for law enforcement purposes, military purposes, emergency management activities, or public health activities.

In addition, each travel voucher or Purchasing Card charge that seeks payment for lodging associated with a meeting, conference, or convention organized or sponsored by an agency may not exceed the traveler's daily room rate of \$175. For clarification:

- An agency is deemed to have sponsored a meeting, conference, or convention if they contributed money for the meeting, conference, or convention. Money provided for a traveler's registration fee or for an Agency's membership fee to the organization hosting the conference or convention is not deemed as sponsorship.

- An agency is deemed to have organized a meeting, conference, or convention if they are involved in selecting the location or planning the activities to be conducted.
- For purposes of this section, a meeting does not include travel activities for conducting an audit, examination, inspection, investigation, or travel activities related to a litigation or emergency response.

To minimize the impact to employees, managers need to verify compliance with lodging rate restrictions before authorizing the employee to incur travel expenses. An employee will be required to expend his or her own funds for any daily room rate that exceeds the \$175 per day restriction, plus associated taxes.

The lodging restrictions do not apply to travel activities for conducting business external to the agency, including but not limited to, audit, investigation, litigation, or examination. However, where daily room rate for these activities exceed \$175 travelers are reminded that the most economical use is required in all situations. Travelers should be prepared to justify costs that appear excessive, pursuant to the Reference Guide for State Expenditures.

<https://www.myfloridacfo.com/Division/AA/Manuals/documents/ReferenceGuideforStateExpenditures.pdf>.

Please call the Bureau of Auditing at (850) 413-5512 if you have any questions.