

# State of Arizona Travel Meal Policy for Cooperators

The State of Arizona adopted a new travel policy that not only updated lodging and meal rates effective 01/27/25 but also included some rules. For a full description of the policy and rates you can visit <https://gao.az.gov/state-arizona-accounting-manual-saam>. Scroll to 50 Travel section then scroll to section 95, title Maximum Mileage, Lodging, Meal, Parking and Incidental Expenses Reimbursement Rates.

We continue to operate under the special meal rates for wildland firefighting personnel until July 25, 2024. **All reimbursements are still based on actual expenses** and rates provided in these policies are maximum limits per person. Below summarizes the changes that will go into effect for cooperators on **April 1, 2025** with some examples.

## NEW RULES

Travel days of departure and return involving an overnight stay = 75% of the full-day meal rates. The rates to be used are based on the destination location (the place where the employee arrives and spends the night). It doesn't matter the times of departure or arrival, the length of the travel day or the number of meals purchased and consumed. For example if full-day meal rate is \$74.00 \* 75% = \$55.50 max allowance for that travel day.

Breakdown of Meals: You no longer have to allocate meals between breakfast, lunch or dinner. In other words, if you qualify for full day rate of \$74.00 you don't have to show what was spent for each meal, just the total of what was spent for the day. For example if you spent: breakfast = \$14.00, lunch = \$16.50, dinner = \$39.25, total reimbursement = \$69.75 because you spent less than the \$74.00. If you had spent \$80.00 for meals, then you could only claim the \$74.00 max limit.

Meals Provided? When a meal is provided, reduce the total allowance amount by the specific meal provided according to the current meal guide below or the special firefighter meal rates depending on which meal rates you follow.

Meal Expense Reimbursement Rates for Travel in the Continental US as they correspond to their applicable full day rates: Effective 01/27/2025						Wildland Firefighting Effective to 7/25/2024
Breakfast	\$12.00	\$13.00	\$14.00	\$15.00	\$16.00	\$15.00
Lunch	\$14.00	\$16.00	\$18.00	\$19.00	\$21.00	\$18.00
Dinner	\$32.00	\$35.00	\$38.00	\$42.00	\$45.00	\$41.00
Full Day Rate	\$58.00	\$64.00	\$70.00	\$76.00	\$82.00	\$74.00
Departure & Return Travel Day with over-night stay of 75%	\$43.50	\$48.00	\$52.50	\$57.00	\$61.50	\$55.50

Below are two examples; one uses the State's travel meal rates and the other firefighter meal rates for [a travel day](#).  
*Scenario: Return travel day from Palm Springs, CA in June 2025 and would arrive home to Phoenix later that day. A full breakfast was provided by hotel that morning. You would use Phoenix's rate 75% rate.*

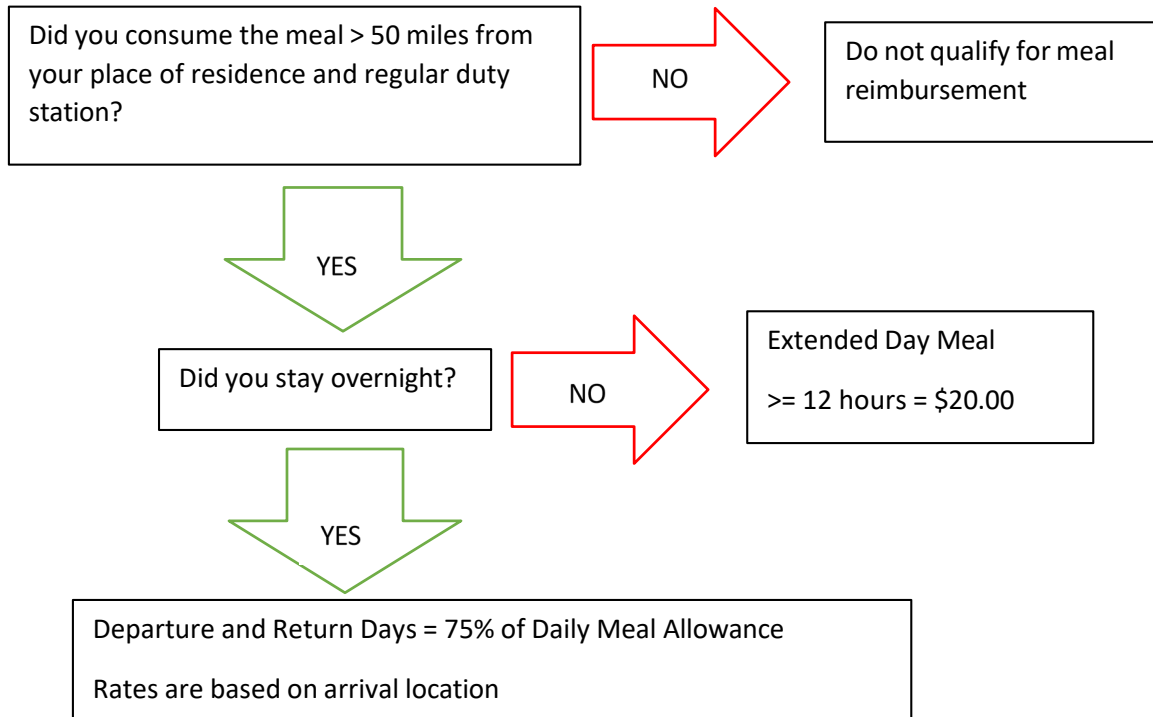
State travel policy: Return Travel allowance = \$57.00 – \$15.00 (breakfast provided) = **\$42.00** max allowance

Firefighter policy: Return Travel allowance = \$55.50 – \$15.00 (breakfast provided) = **\$40.50** max allowance

Keep in mind that the rules in the Annual Operating Plan (AKA: General Provisions) still apply for in-state vs out-of-state assignments. As a reminder they are:

- Travel In-State: Lodging: requires a Resource S# or written approval from an Agency Representative. Cooperator is considered self-sufficient for the first 12 hours. If meals are not provided after 12 hours, then follow travel policy.
- Travel Out-of-State: Lodging & Meals: No Resource number or documentation is needed while in travel status. Once arrived at assignment and lodging or meals are not provided, simply include an explanation with paperwork.

# Travel Summary Guideline



## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- IF ANY MEALS WERE PROVIDED, THEN YOU NEED TO DEDUCT FROM ALLOWANCE. (SEE MEAL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT RATE BY MEAL)
- DO NOT NEED TO ITEMIZE BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER.
- REIMBURSEMENT IS FOR MEALS PURCHASED OR MAX ALLOWANCE WHICHEVER IS LESS
- GRATUITY LIMITS:
  - RESTAURANT = 15 TO 20% OF PRE-TAX BILL
  - BUFFET, FAST FOOD, CARRY-OUT = 0

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