# SUBJECT

Prior agency approval required to exceed established lodging rates, for out-of-state travel, mileage rates below published rates, and approval for out-of-state travel to authorized locations/areas.

# PURPOSE

This filing specifies prior approval requirements for (1) lodging up to 50 percent above established rates, (2) lodging at conference rates, (3) out-of-state travel, (4) mileage rates below published rates, and (5) approved out-of-state travel locations/areas.

# AUTHORITATIVE REFERENCE

K.S.A. 75-3207a K.S.A. 75-3208 K.A.R. 1-16-18

K.S.A. 75-3731 K.S.A. 75-3216

# GENERAL INFORMATION

*Lodging up to 50% Above Established Rate Approval Requirements*

K.S.A. 75-3207a requires the Secretary of Administration to establish subsistence reimbursement rates for both in-state and out-of-state travel for official state business. Employees who are subject to these reimbursement limitations may, with proper approval, be reimbursed for actual lodging expenses which exceed the established rate limitations by up to 50 percent. The approval requirements under K.S.A. 75-3208 for receiving this higher reimbursement are as follows:

1. A state officer or employee may exceed the daily lodging reimbursement limitation if written approval is obtained from the agency head or designee who is authorized to approve the travel.

2. No approval is required for an agency head or appointive members of a board, commission, or similar body that appoints an agency head *unless* the appointing authority of that individual requires approval by the appointing authority.

*Lodging at Conference Rate Approval Requirements*

Under K.A.R. 1-16-18a, if an employee is required or authorized to attend a conference, the agency head or the agency head's designee may approve reimbursement or direct payment of actual lodging expenses. The reimbursement or direct payment of actual lodging expenses shall be effective for the approved conference and for official state business related to the conference and applicable only to the state employee attending the conference. Approval for lodging at conference rates must be obtained prior to the employee’s date of travel.

*Out-of-State Travel Approval Requirements*

K.S.A. 75-3208 specifies the approval requirements for employee travel beyond the borders of the state. The approval requirements are as follows:

1. *Judicial* – Except as otherwise prescribed by a majority of the justices of the Supreme Court, the Judicial Administrator or designee may grant written approval for out-of-state travel by an officer or employee of the judicial branch.

2. *Legislative* – Except as otherwise authorized or provided by statute, the Legislative Coordinating Council may grant approval for out-of-state travel by a legislator or an officer or employee of an agency in the legislative branch or a designee of the Legislative Coordinating Council may grant written approval for out-of-state travel by an officer or employee of a legislative branch agency,

3. *Executive* – Except as otherwise prescribed by the officer, board or commission that appointed an agency head (chief administrative officer), the agency head or designee may grant written approval for out-of-state travel by an officer or employee of the executive branch agency.

*Mileage Rate Approval For Personally Owned Vehicles*

K.S.A. 75-3203a specifies that employees authorized to travel by privately-owned or operated conveyance may be reimbursed for allowable miles traveled at a rate fixed and established by the Secretary. Privately-owned or operated conveyances include automobiles (passenger cars, SUVs, trucks, vans, etc.), airplanes, motorcycles, and other similar privately-owned conveyances.

Under K.A.R. 1-18-1a, the agency may pay a specified mileage rate that is lower than the above rates when an employee's travel is not required by the agency and the employee is informed of the specified rate in advance of the travel.

Written approval must follow one of the two approval methods explained below.

K.S.A. 75-3731 requires the Department of Administration (DofA) to ensure that all obligations submitted for payment have been incurred in accordance with law. Lodging up to 50% above established rates, lodging at conference rates, out-of-state travel, and mileage rates below published rates must be properly approved prior to travel by the agency head or designee under the provisions of K.S.A. 75-3207a or 75-3208.

The DA-115 Authorized Agency Officials and Approved Out-of-State Travel Locations/Areas, specifies the authorized agency approvers for these four travel rate exceptions:

* lodging up to 50% above established rates,
* lodging at conference rates,
* out-of-state travel, and
* mileage rates below published rates.

If an agency establishes a mileage reimbursement rate lower than the published rate either through agency policy or through advance notice for specific travel events, the DA-115 is used to document K.A.R. 1-18-1a designee(s).

In addition, the DA-115 documents the Approval Method used for the employees designated to authorize travel:

*Approval Methods*

1. *SMART Travel Authorization* – The agency utilizes the SMART Travel and Expense module for approvals via a travel authorization. Agencies must have agency workflow established so approval is provided by the agency head or designee listed on the DA-115 for the three travel rate exceptions listed above.

2. Authorization *Outside SMART* – Under this method, approval must be provided by the authorized agency official listed on the DA-115 for the three travel rate exceptions listed above. The supporting audit trail documentation may take the form of either:

* a signed letter,
* a signed agency travel authorization form, or
* an e-mail sent from authorized agency official.

A copy of the approval must be retained with the travel expense documentation.

The approval document (a SMART Travel Authorization, Letter, Agency Travel Authorization Form, or E-mail) must contain enough information to allow the agency to determine that the travel authorized and the travel undertaken is the same. The minimum information to be provided in the approval document includes the traveler’s name, destination, mode of travel, purpose of travel, and dates of travel. Complete itemization of estimated travel expenses is required.

Prior to final approval in the SMART Travel and Expense module for travel reimbursement, the agency must ensure that proper approvals have been obtained and approval documentation is maintained with the travel expense report documentation for audit purposes.

Certain out-of-state travel does not require approval. Approval is not required for:

1. An agency head or appointive members of a board, commission, or similar body that appoints an agency head *unless* the appointing authority of that individual requires approval by the appointing authority.

2. Other agencies, departments, or individuals specifically exempted by law.

*Approval for Out-of-State Travel to Authorized Locations*

Under the provisions of K.S.A. 75-3208, the agency head or designee may grant written approval for out-of-state travel. Approval on a trip-by-trip basis is considered best practice. Alternatively, an agency head may choose to adopt an internal policy to approve travel to certain out-of-state locations or areas. If an agency chooses this alternative, the agency policy must be formalized and documented on the DA-115. See Policy Manual (PM) 10,001 Authorized Agency Officials and Approved Out-of-State Travel Locations/Areas.

The Department of Administration will rely on the DA-115 to determine the authorized agency approvers when performing audits of travel expense reports to verify that proper approval was granted for the three travel rate exceptions listed previously. The DA-115 will also be used to document the agency alternative policy for approved out-of-state travel locations as authorized by the agency head or designee.

As an internal control review, agency internal policies established under this alternative method and documented on the DA-115 will be reviewed against actual travel locations.

**USEFUL RESOURCES**

All of the resources below can be found on the [Policy Manual | Kansas Department of Administration (ks.gov)](https://admin.ks.gov/offices/accounts-reports/state-agencies/finance/policy-manual) website.

DA-115 - Agency Authorized Officials and Approved Out-of-State Travel Locations/Areas

PM 10,001 - Authorized Agency Officials and Approved Out-of-State Travel Locations/Areas

**CONTACT SOURCES**

For information concerning approval requirements to exceed established lodging reimbursement rates or for out-of-state travel, please contact:

Department of Administration

Office of Accounts and Reports

[Audit Services Team](https://admin.ks.gov/offices/oar/directory) (Email: ARPreaudit@ks.gov)