

How to reserve & reimburse for Lodging

Staying within the allowable maximum lodging rate

When selecting a lodging facility:

Be sure that the lodging expenses incurred comply with the reimbursement policy and will be reimbursable.

Steps to take when choosing a lodging facility:

- a) Look up the maximum allowable lodging rate in effect at the time of travel for the specific area.
- b) Look at various lodging facilities to determine which one will give you the best rate.
- c) When looking for a lodging facility, refer to SAAM [10.30.30.a](#):
 - Be aware that **all fees** are to be added to the cost of the lodging, and
 - The total cost including **all fees** must not exceed the max. allowable lodging rate
- d) Ask the lodging facility about **all of the fees** they will be charging (*mandatory and/or fees which can be waived*)
Fees charged by the lodging facility may include, but are not limited to:
 - Cleaning fees,
 - Insurance fees,
 - Destination fees / Tourism fees,
 - Resort fee,
 - Energy / Utility Surcharge,
 - Legislated Employee Benefit,
 - [Seattle Tourism Tax](#) = fee. This is different from the TPA fee that Dept. of Revenue administers. (The Seattle Tourism Tax seems to be imposed on the hotel rather than the guest – and passed onto the guest, therefore this would be considered to be part of the lodging costs and not a tax).
- e) Know that the traveler is responsible for paying lodging costs in excess of the allowance. *Reference SAAM 10.30.30.a.*
- f) All costs must be considered when selecting the travel alternative that is most economical. *Reference SAAM 10.10.20*
 - This includes consideration for the fees that are probable such as cancellation fees
 - Cancellation terms must be weighed when choosing a lodging facility.
 - Since cancellation terms vary depending on the commercial lodging facility and/or based on how it is booked, an agency should have internal policies and procedures to address cancellation policies. The agency should determine what cancellation terms are reasonable, and when a cancellation fee would be a state business expense and when this would be the expense of the traveler. *Reference SAAM 10.10.10.a (3).*

Applicable sales taxes and/or hotel/motel taxes:

Tip: In Washington state use [DOR's Tax Rate look-up tool](#) to determine what is considered an applicable tax.

- State Sales
- Local City/County Sales
- Special Hotel / Motel taxes
 - **These may include, but not limited to...**
 - King County's [Convention and Trade Center](#) tax (*shows as a tax on DOR's webpage → see resources below*)
 - [TPA](#)¹ – Tourism Promotional Area fee (*shows on DOR's webpage as a fee → see resources below*)

¹ Consider this a **tax** for reimbursement purposes because the RCW states...

- 1) That this must be collected from the person who is purchasing the lodging, and
- 2) This fee must be remitted to the Department of Revenue.

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APPLICABLE SAAM POLICIES:

Reimbursements must comply with state and agency policies.

SAAM [10.10.15](#) states that

- *The employee is responsible for being familiar with state and agency travel and transportation regulations **before** embarking on travel.*

SAAM [10.10.20](#) states that

- *In addition to complying with state travel policies and procedures, an agency head or authorized designee must select the travel alternative that is **most economical** to the state.*

SAAM [10.30.10.a](#) states that

- ***Reimburse lodging expenses** at actual costs, as evidenced by a receipt, **up to the specific daily maximum allowable lodging rate** in effect at the time of travel for the specific area or locality, unless an exception:*
 - *Is specifically provided by statute, or*
 - *Is authorized by Subsection [10.30.20](#)*

SAAM [10.30.30.a](#) states that

- *The **maximum reimbursable lodging rate** includes, but is not limited to, the basic commercial lodging cost, resort fees, cleaning fees, and service fees. The only additional lodging expenses that are reimbursable beyond the maximum lodging rate are any applicable sales taxes and/or hotel/motel taxes on those amounts. **Lodging costs in excess of the allowance and the associated taxes on the excess will be paid by the traveler.** When this occurs, taxes are to be prorated between the allowable and unallowable costs.*

Exceptions can be requested via [10.30.20](#) (a or b):

- *The agency head or authorized designee **approval must be made in advance** of the travel.*
- *The exception **must meet one of the listed exceptions** in policy.*

SAAM [10.10.15](#) states that

- *A traveler on official state business is responsible for **paying any excess costs** and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.*

SAAM [10.60.10](#)

- *This subsection of policy allows a traveler to be reimbursed for **Mandatory** fees related to lodging, however the total lodging reimbursement to include fees must still not exceed the daily maximum allowable lodging rate (or receive prior approval to exceed per diem under one of the exceptions) as noted in SAAM [10.30](#).*

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RESOURCES:

DES's contract for an online booking tool:

DES Contract ([07614](#)) → an online booking tool.

- a. Just follow the links to the [NASPO site](#) and register to use the [online booking tool](#).
 - i. NASPO ValuePoint Lodging is a nationwide lodging program that contains over 11,000 qualified lodging facilities consisting of over 1,000,000 rooms that will honor GSA Per-Diem Rates for State and Political Subdivision employees traveling on official business.
 - ii. Also, from NASPO's webpage, see the [fees](#) section explaining which fee's will not be charged.

If you have any trouble with the NASPO online booking tool

Contact: Diane White with DES

Phone: (360) 407-9366

Email: Diane.white@des.wa.gov

DOR's tax rate look up tool:

In Washington state: Use DOR's Tax Rate look-up tool to determine what is considered an applicable tax:

- <https://webgis.dor.wa.gov/taxratelookup/SalesTax.aspx>
 - Enter the lodging address & submit,
 - Then view the lodging tab to see applicable taxes (see examples shown below)...

EXAMPLE #1

King County has a [Convention and Trade Center](#) tax

- Notice: this is an official tax and shows on DOR's webpage as such.

Sales & Use	Motor Vehicle Sales/Rentals	Lodging
Lodging Sales		
Effective dates	4/1/19 - 6/30/19	
Location code (view map)	5026	
City	Seattle	
County	King	
State Sales and Use Tax	.065	
Local City/County Sales and Use Tax	.021	
Convention and Trade Center	.070	
Total tax rate	.156	

City	Seattle
County	King
Location Code	1726
Regional Transit Authority (RTA)	SOUND TRANSIT DISTRICT
Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)	King PTBA
Rural County Opportunity Empowerment Zone (CEZ)	No
Indian Country	No

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EXAMPLE #2

A hotel located in Wenatchee (80 9th street ne, east Wenatchee, 98802)

- Notice: the taxes shown on DOR's webpage include: State and Local taxes, plus hotel/motel tax.

Sales & Use	Motor Vehicle Sales/Rentals	Lodging
Lodging Sales		
Effective dates	4/1/19 - 6/30/19	
Location code (view map)	5902	
City	East Wenatchee	
County	Douglas	
State Sales and Use Tax	.065	
Local City/County Sales and Use Tax	.015	
Special Hotel/Motel	.040	
Total tax rate	.120	

City	East Wenatchee
County	Douglas
Location Code	0902
Regional Transit Authority (RTA)	No
Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)	Chelan-Douglas PTBA
Rural County Opportunity Empowerment Zone (CEZ)	No
Indian Country	No


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EXAMPLE #3

The city of Selah has a \$2.00 [TPA](#) fee (reference: [RCW 35.101.090](#)),

- Notice: this is referenced DOR’s webpage as a Lodging Fee.
 - Technically the \$2 is a fee. However, for reimbursement purposes, we are considering this to be an applicable sales taxes and/or hotel/motel tax that is reimbursable beyond the maximum lodging rate for the following reasons:
 - 1) The fee must be collected from the person who is purchasing the lodging, and
 - 2) The fee must be remitted to the Department of Revenue.

Sales & Use	Motor Vehicle Sales/Rentals	Lodging
Lodging Sales		
Effective dates	4/1/19 - 6/30/19	
Location code (view map)	3907	
City	Selah	
County	Yakima	
State Sales and Use Tax	.065	
Local City/County Sales and Use Tax	.017	
Total tax rate	.082	
Lodging Fees - Per Room Per Night		
Location Code	Fee Description	4/1/19 - 6/30/19
3907	City of Selah - 40 or greater rooms	\$2.00 

City	Selah
County	Yakima
Location Code	3907
Regional Transit Authority (RTA)	No
Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)	No