Travel Update

State of Utah
Department of Administrative Services
Division of Finance
www.finance.utah.gov

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A newsletter for state government travelers and travel planners

## The Best Advice for Summer Is 'Book In Advance'

This year's summer travel season presents two problems—overbooked flights and full hotels. Here are some suggestions to help you avoid as many problems as possible when traveling on state business this summer.

*State employees traveling on business will be competing with summer vacationers for both airline flights and hotel rooms this summer. Book reservations well in advance to avoid problems.*

### Overbooked Flights

Because airlines are flying smaller aircraft to save on fuel, flights are extremely full these days. This is more true than ever during the busy summer vacation season. As a result, it is imperative that you **book your airline reservations far enough in advance to get a seat assignment**. Because airlines frequently overbook flights, without a seat assignment you are likely to be "bumped" from a flight. If you are unable to obtain a seat assignment on the flight you want, the best thing to do is to make a reservation for another flight where a seat assignment is available.

Another very important recommendation is to **reconfirm your flight 3 hours before you leave for the airport** to be sure the flight has not been canceled. You can confirm the flight by checking the airline's Web site or by calling the airline directly. During regular business hours you can also call the State Travel Office. **Do not** call our Emergency Line to confirm flights.

### Full Hotels

Because hotels cater to vacationers during the summer months, they will make fewer rooms available at the state rate. This means that, in order to find a room at the state lodging rate, employees traveling on state business during the summer **must book in-state lodging as far ahead as possible**.

Travelers should be flexible and should not expect to be able to book a specific hotel. If you are unable to obtain in-state lodging at the per diem for a specific city, call Diann Donoviel at 801-538-3103 or Tami Nelson at 801-538-3109. They will help you find a room at the state per diem rate. Keep in mind that in order to receive reimbursement for a lodging rate above per diem, reservations must be made through the State Travel Office.

The State will reimburse the actual lodging cost **up to** $55 plus tax for in-state lodging, with the following exceptions:

- Moab, Cedar City, St. George – **up to** $65 plus tax
- Metropolitan Salt Lake City (Draper to Centerville), Park City, Heber City, Tooele, Midway – **up to** $68 plus tax
- Ogden, Layton, Provo/Orem – **up to** $63 plus tax
- Price – **up to** $60 plus tax

## The State Travel Office Can Help If Your Flight Is Canceled

It is happening more and more these days—travelers get to the airport and discover that their flights have been canceled. If this happens to you, take action immediately. Here is what to do:

- Immediately call the State Travel Office Emergency Line to find out what other flights are available on that airline. State Travel cannot reissue your airline ticket, but they can give you reasonable options to request from the airline.
- Next, call the airline directly and ask to be accommodated on their next available flight.
- If the airline is unable to book a seat for you on their next flight, they must accommodate you on another airline. State Travel also will give you options for flights on other airlines that you may request from the original airline.
- The original airline must book you on a second airline. Neither you nor the State Travel Office can make the reservation.
- The original airline must print a paper ticket for the flight on the new airline.

If your flight has been canceled, during regular business hours call our Daytime Emergency Line at 801-537-9124. After hours and on weekends and holidays, call our After Hours Emergency Line at 1-800-358-1019. Remember that **they will only be able to tell you what other flights are available and will not be able to reschedule your flight**. ✈

## State Travelers Must Use Contract Airlines

Because state employees travel at taxpayers' expense, we all must do everything we can to minimize travel costs.

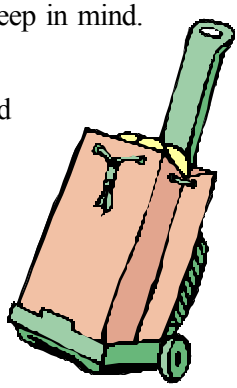
Travelers may not be aware that when the State signs a contract with an airline for flights between two specific cities (city-pairs), we guarantee that our employees will fly on that airline to travel between those two cities on state business. These contract airfares are our biggest contributor to saving taxpayer dollars. Because the airlines rely on revenue generated from contracts signed with the State of Utah, if we do not keep our commitment, the airlines will no longer bid on our contracts.

This guarantee is made in the Request for Proposal for airline bids, which states, "The State of Utah will require all state agency travelers to obtain service from the contractor for any city-pair. The contract carriers are to be used." In addition, State Accounting Policy FIACCT 10-02.06, Travel – Reimbursements – Transportation, says that "air transportation is limited to state-contracted rates."

This may mean, for example, that we will book our travelers on the state-contracted American Airlines connecting flight from Salt Lake City to Atlanta, rather than on the more expensive direct flight on Delta Airlines. ✈

## Pack Smart for Today's Airport Security

With increased passenger and baggage screening at airports, here are some packing options and other considerations you should keep in mind.



### Checked Bag Packing Tips

- ✓ Do not pack food in checked bags. Chocolate, cheese, and other foods have the same density as explosives and may trigger a manual bag search.
- ✓ Pack undeveloped film in carry-on bags only, as placing in checked baggage might result in damage from screening.
- ✓ Make contents easy to check and repack by grouping small items in clear containers or plastic bags.
- ✓ Avoid stacking dense items such as books—spread out for easier viewing.
- ✓ Place shoes on top as they may contain metal parts that require hand inspection. Use clear shoe bags in place of cloth.
- ✓ Overpacked bags take longer to check manually and are more difficult to repack. Take less, or pack into two bags.

### Minimize Screening Time

- ✓ Speed up hand searches by packing a bag that has one large open space rather than compartments, and don't use the small pockets.
- ✓ Pack carry-on bags so contents are easily examined. See-through containers speed hand checking of cosmetics or groups of clothing.
- ✓ Powdery products (talcum powder, makeup, flour, coffee creamer, craft products) bring out the Hazardous Materials Team. Seal these products in strong plastic bags in your checked baggage only.
- ✓ No knives or cutting instruments of any size will be allowed in the aircraft cabin but may be carried in checked luggage.
- ✓ No sharp objects of any kind will be allowed through security (scissors, corkscrews, metal nail files, knitting needles). Pack these in checked luggage.
- ✓ The FAA allows walking canes and umbrellas on board. You can pack safety razors, nail clippers, and tweezers in carry-on bags.
- ✓ Place your wallet and jewelry in a carry-on when passing through screening so they will be X-rayed.
- ✓ Metal buttons, zippers, hair accessories, shoe fittings and shanks may add up to wanding and pat down searches. Pare down by packing metal items in a checked bag or placing in your carry-on.
- ✓ Limit electronic equipment (cell phones, CD players, pagers, games, etc.) and place them in your carry-on bag. You may be asked to prove that they work, so have batteries installed.
- ✓ Laptops must be removed from a bag and X-rayed separately.
- ✓ Check for all your belongings before leaving the screening area. Wallets, keys and coins, jewelry, cell phones—even laptops—are often forgotten.
- ✓ Purchase beverages after passing through security. Otherwise, containers must be carefully examined. ✈

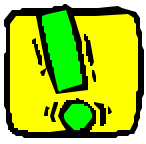
## Check Our Web Site for Fiscal Year Updates

Updated information for fiscal year 06 is now available on the Division of Finance Web site at www.finance.utah.gov. This includes:

- ✗ Policies and Procedures (select *Publications*, *Accounting Policies and Procedures*)
- ✗ Mileage Reimbursement Forms (select *Publications*, *Forms*)
- ✗ Travel FindIt Guide (select *State Travel*, *FindIt Guide*)

## Airport Shuttle Contract Expires

The State's contract with Express Shuttle, an airport shuttle service, has expired and will not be extended. Because not enough employees were using the shuttle option for traveling to and from the airport, we did not renegotiate the contract.



The State will reimburse mileage to and from the airport when employees are traveling on state business.

## Note These Changes Announced by Lodging Providers

Here are two changes recently announced by lodging providers:

- ✷ The state per diem rate for the Peery Hotel in Salt Lake City now includes self-parking.
- ✷ All La Quinta, Baymont, and Woodfield properties now accept the state per diem rates for lodging. ✈

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