



# GAO Technical Bulletin

Arizona Department of Administration ♦ General Accounting Office

Subject:	<b><i>Pre-Approval of Out-of-State Travel for Activities That Cost \$5,000 or More or That Involve Three or More Individuals</i></b>	Issued:	05/06/11
Manual Section(s):	II-D: State of Arizona Travel Policy	Effective:	05/09/11
Supersede(s):	II-D; IV-B-3-j & k	Page:	1 of 3

TO: Technical Bulletin Administrators Agency Travel Coordinators All Agencies	FROM: D. Clark Partridge State Comptroller
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## **AUTHORITY**

A.R.S. § 38-621	Persons eligible to receive travel expenses
A.R.S. § 38-622	Authorization for travel; claims
A.R.S. § 38-624	Lodging expenses; meal and incidental expense reimbursement and long-term subsistence allowance; items covered by reimbursement; amount predetermined by department of administration
A.R.S. § 38-626	Out-of-state travel; approval; exemptions
A.R.S. § 38-626.01	Authorization for certain out-of-state travel by state employees
A.R.S. § 41-703	Duties of director
A.R.S. § 41-722	Powers and duties relating to finance
A.R.S. § 41-732	Powers and duties relating to general accounting activities

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Activity:** For purposes of this technical bulletin, the term activity refers to all elements of travel relating to a single trip or single event. These elements include the cost of travel, lodging, meals, local transportation, conference registration fees, etc.

**Agency:** Any department, authority, board, commission, council, administration, court, registrar, office, institution, or other entity in the Executive, Legislative, or Judicial branch of Arizona State Government.

**Agency head:** The chief executive officer of any agency.

**Form GAO-3:** The GAO's Signature Authorization Form.

**Form GAO-509:** The GAO's Out-of-State Travel Approval Request Form or its equivalent.

**Form GAO-509S:** The GAO's Out-of-State Travel Approval Request Supplement or its equivalent.

**GAO:** General Accounting Office; a division of the Arizona Department of Administration.

**He/him/his:** For brevity and clarity, masculine singular pronouns are consistently used in reference to a person; feminine or plural pronouns, as appropriate, may be substituted.

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SAAM: The State of Arizona Accounting Manual.

State Comptroller: A chief financial officer of the State of Arizona and principal executive of the GAO.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Until the publication of this technical bulletin it had been State policy that an activity that required the out-of-state travel of three or more individuals or that was estimated to cost \$5,000 or more required the pre-approval of the State Comptroller. To improve statewide efficiency, State policy is changing, effective with the publication of this technical bulletin, to empower agency heads and, under certain conditions, his delegates to approve these travel activities. This technical bulletin also distributes, as an addendum, matters that agency heads and their delegates should bear in mind when deciding whether to approve travel activities.

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

1. The requirement that agencies receive GAO pre-approval for an out-of-state activity that meets one or more of the following criteria is herewith superseded:
  - a. The cost of the activity is anticipated to equal or exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000), as specified in SAAM II-D; IV-B-3-j, page 12.
  - b. The number of travelers for a given activity equals or exceeds three (3), as specified in SAAM II-D; IV-B-3-k, page 12.
2. The activity described in paragraph 1, above, must, using Forms GAO-509 and 509S, which have been updated to reflect these changes, be pre-approved by one of the following:
  - a. The agency head, or
  - b. A deputy agency head, or
  - c. A division head, if so delegated by the agency head and documented on Form GAO-3, or
  - d. With the prior written approval of the State Comptroller, one delegated such authority by the agency head.
3. The best interest of the State is paramount when considering the approval of an activity described in paragraph 1, above. A document entitled "Considerations for Out-of-State Travel," a quick reference guide that can be kept at one's desk, is provided as an attachment

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to this technical bulletin to help agency heads and their delegates when deciding whether to approve certain requests for out-of-state travel.

4. Properly executed Forms GAO-509 and 509S relating to the activity described in paragraph 1, above, plus all of the documentation supporting the contents of those forms, must be maintained for audit, inspection or presentation upon request for a period of three (3) fiscal years after the fiscal year in which the activity to which they pertain was completed.
5. The State Comptroller may require agencies to secure the pre-approval of the travel activities described in paragraph 1, above, if it is determined that the agency head or his delegates have not complied with the requirements of this technical bulletin.
6. Requests for exceptions to statewide travel policy, such as hotel rates in excess of those published in SAAM, must still be sent, in writing, to the State Comptroller.

**ON-LINE AVAILABILITY**

Copies of all Technical Bulletins and many GAO Forms are available for viewing and downloading from the General Accounting Office Website located at:

<http://www.gao.az.gov>

**AREAS IMPACTED**

All State Agencies.

**CONTACTS**

If you have any questions concerning this Technical Bulletin, please contact your GAO Liaison. You may also e-mail questions or comments concerning State policy and procedure to us at:

[gaopolicy@azdoa.gov](mailto:gaopolicy@azdoa.gov)