

Nebraska Department of Transportation

Meal Per Diem Payment Policy - Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ document reflects the most common questions which have been received by NDOT's Accounting staff since implementation of the meal per diem payment policy by Department of Administrative Services (DAS) - State Accounting Division. Additional questions and answers will be added to this document as needed to help inform employees of the policy and procedures.

1. Where do I find the Employee Expense Reimbursement Document (ERD) form?
 - Visit <https://dotspot.nebraska.gov> and search for **ndot689**
 - Form ndot689 may also be found in the DOT Forms folder on the LAN - <\\dotfs\public\DOTForms>
 - This form is used by NDOT for all employee expense reimbursement requests, including meal per diem payment, even though the meal per diem is not technically a reimbursement since a receipt is no longer required.
2. Is there a training video on how to fill out the ERD spreadsheet?
 - Yes, please click the following link to watch the YouTube video DAS created: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQJmOdIF0iA&feature=youtu.be>. The DAS training video was recorded using a more generic ERD form than is used by NDOT but does provide good explanation of the functionality of the Travel Destination and Meals columns of the form as well as scenarios for instructional purposes.
3. Do I select a trip if I had no meal?
 - No, select a trip number only when you have a meal per diem payment to request.
4. Do I enter a trip number for each day?
 - You must select a Trip if you are requesting meal per diem payment for that day.
 - Use the 'Trips – Per Diem Calc' tab of the spreadsheet to identify the State and City (Destination) of each Trip included on the form.
5. What if I don't want to be paid for a meal or meals due to my own personal situation or preference.
 - Per instruction from DAS State Accounting, if you do not want a per diem payment to include a meal, then leave the box for that meal(s) unchecked but you must add a document to your submission stating that you do not want paid for that meal(s).
 - This is intended to protect employees from situations in which they accidentally left a box unchecked but had intended to be paid for the meal.

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6. How was the State Per Diem rate equal to 70% of the Federal GSA per diem determined?
 - LB 381, passed during the 2020 legislative session, provided DAS with the authority to set the State Per Diem rate in a range of 65% - 100% of the Federal GSA per diem. As the legislative bill was being considered, it was made clear that Legislators intended for the policy change to not result in a significant increase in fiscal impact overall to the State. DAS State Accounting performed a statewide analysis of historical daily cost for meal reimbursement of actual expenses and calculated that 70% of the federal GSA per diem rate would most closely approximate historical experience at the statewide level. The 70% is not intended to approximate individual situations and, consequently, it is understood that the impact will vary from situation to situation and from agency to agency.

7. Where is information available on the Federal GSA per diem rates?
 - <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

8. What is the purpose of checking the first and last day of travel?
 - Checking the first and Last day of travel is used to adjust to the 75% of the State Per Diem rate as required by DAS State Accounting.
 - Overnight travel needs to have both the first and last day of travel box checked.
 - One day travel will need to have the box checked also.

9. If I'm leaving for overnight travel, which meals on the first and last day may I be paid for?
 - Check all the boxes for the first and last day of travel regardless of when you left or returned for the trip, unless a meal(s) was provided by a third party or was provided by a conference or lodging facility.

10. Does it matter when I leave for one day travel to have breakfast and dinner paid?
 - Yes.
 - When an employee leaves for one-day travel at or before 6:30 a.m. or 1.5 hours before the employee's shift begins, whichever is earlier, breakfast may be paid. If normal work hours start at 7:00 a.m., then an hour and a half before would be 5:30 a.m. to be eligible for breakfast payment.
 - When an employee returns from one-day travel at or after 7:00 p.m. or 2 hours after the employee's shift ends, whichever is later, dinner may be paid.
 - Lunch is not allowed for one day travel.

11. What additional information is available along with the Expense Reimbursement Form itself to help guide preparation of the form?
 - The Expense Voucher Checklist on the DOT Spot at: <https://dotspot.nebraska.gov/media/1126/exp-v-chklst.pdf>

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- The video created by DAS is available at:
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12. If I need to speak with someone about my ERD form, who should I contact?
- Send an email to NDOT.Controller-Accounting@nebraska.gov