Travel Policy: Ground Transportation

Introduction

The Ground Transportation Policy articulates those expenses that are reimbursable for travel by Train, Bus, Rental Car, and use of Personal Vehicle.

The purpose of the Travel Policies are to provide clear policies and procedures that are compliant with state and federal regulations, promote safe travel, and allow for reasonable and manageable travel expenses while maintaining the necessary controls and accountability.

This policy is organized as follows:

- **Ground Transportation: Train, Bus, Rental Car & Personal Vehicle usage**
- **Personal Car Use**
- **Travel Advances**
- **Direct Bill of Transportation Expense**

Additional Travel Policies for the various components of travel can be found in the [Related Policies](https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/policies) section below.

Policy Statement

Brown University reimburses employees for ground transportation while travelling on University business. The most economical mode of ground transportation should be used to and from air, bus and rail terminals. Travelers may rent a car at their destination but public transportation and shuttle services should be considered.

Ground transportation expenses will be paid and/or reimbursed if the expenses are within the guidelines of this policy. The expenses must be reasonable, appropriately and adequately documented, properly authorized, and accommodated by the relevant operating budget or sponsored project funding.

All University funds—including gifts, grants, and contracts, shall be used in a reasonable and prudent manner and only for activities related to Brown’s primary mission of education, research and public service.

Additionally:

- Departments may elect to impose stricter budgetary controls over travel expenditures than those required by this policy.
- Travel charged to a sponsored project should follow the guidelines set forth by this policy unless the funding agency imposes greater restrictions.
- Intentional disregard for the University's travel policy and procedures may be considered grounds for disciplinary action, and/or for prosecution in the case of fraudulent misrepresentation of travel expenses.
- The authority for determining which travel expenditures are reimbursable under a particular grant or contract lies with the [Office of Sponsored Projects](https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/policies).

Responsibilities

**Controller’s Office:** The Controller’s Office ensures compliance with federal and state statutes and process transactions.
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**Cost Center Managers:** Cost Center Managers ensure compliance with this and other relevant University Policies. The Cost Center Manager approves air travel reimbursements.

**Financial Coordinators:** Financial Coordinators compile relevant supporting documentation and initiates travel reimbursement transactions, including travel advance request in Workday using the Create Expense business process.

**Rental Car Driver:** It is the responsibility of the rental car driver to:

- Become an authorized driver if routinely renting a vehicle for University business or driving/renting a 12 – 15 passenger van by completing a driver authorization form and driver training. See SafeDrive Policy Link Below.
- Reserve your rental through the Travel Portal using Brown’s contract numbers for preferred suppliers.
- Inspect the car at the time of rental. Any damage found should be noted on the contract before the vehicle is accepted.
- Report any accidents resulting in damage to the rental, or to a third party, to the rental agency and Insurance & Purchasing Services, fax 3-1566 or call 3-1681 within 48 hours of the accident.
- Pay parking violations, speeding tickets, and any other violations incurred when renting a vehicle. These will not be reimbursed by the University.
- Apportion business and personal usage when a car is rented for a period of time that includes both. Only usage during the period of time the driver was conducting University business will be reimbursed.

**Traveler:** The Traveler is responsible to provide all receipts and travel information to the Financial Coordinator within two weeks of completion of the trip. Additionally:

- When a Travel Advance is used the travel advance can be cleared at the time receipts and travel information is provided to the Financial Coordinator.
- The Traveler will return any unused travel advance to Brown.

**Procedures**
**Train, Bus, and Car Service**

- Train and bus transportation are encouraged when this mode of transportation is convenient for the traveler.
- Receipt for bus or train ticket is required for reimbursement.
- Use of a private sedan or car service will be reimbursed only if the cost is less than other available modes of transportation or if a valid business reason precludes the use of a more economical mode of transportation.
  - Attach the detailed valid business reason to the reimbursement request.
  - Use of a limousine is not a reimbursable expense.

**Rental Car**
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- Travelers may rent a car to their destination when driving is more convenient and less expensive than airline or rail travel, or it is necessary to transport equipment or materials. A tool to compare the cost of rental vs. use of personal vehicle is available on the Travel Portal.
- All individuals who intend to drive the rental vehicle must be listed on the rental agreement for insurance purposes.
- Car rental agreement receipt is required for reimbursement. Agreement estimates do not qualify as receipts.
- Gasoline purchased in conjunction with the use of a rental car will be reimbursed.

**Preferred Suppliers**

- Brown University preferred rental car agencies are National Car Rental and Enterprise Rent-a-Car. University employees should use these two car rental agencies for all vehicle rentals for University business and reserve them through Brown’s Travel Portal.
- Brown’s contractual rate with National Car Rental and Enterprise Rent-a-Car includes liability insurance and collision damage insurance. Decline all optional insurance - see sample rental agreement.
- Use of other car rental agencies is permissible when National Car Rental and Enterprise Rent-a-Car are not available in the region you are traveling.
- Spending guidelines for reimbursement will be based on contracted rates through Brown’s preferred suppliers.

**Auto Rental Insurance**

- Brown self-insures for collision damage to rental vehicles and maintains auto liability insurance through a commercial insurance carrier for damage to a third party. If a preferred supplier is not used, your department may face deductibles up to $2000 associated with any damage or accidents.
- Supplemental Liability and Collision Damage insurance MUST be purchased through the rental agency
  - If traveling outside of the United States
  - If the driver is under the age of 25 (already included in preferred suppliers)
  - For rental vans that carry 12 or 15 passengers (already included in preferred suppliers)
  - Only Brown employees and students who are renting vehicles for Brown University business purposes are covered under the University’s insurance plan. Spouses, friends, and other non-employee listed drivers are covered only under insurance provided by the rental company or under the driver’s personal insurance. All drivers must be listed on the rental agreement in order to drive the rental. The cost of covering non-employee drivers is a non-reimbursable expense.

**Auto Rental Car Accidents**

- Report any accidents resulting in damage to the rental, or to a third party, to the rental agency and Insurance & Purchasing Services, fax 3-1566 or call 3-1681 within 48 hours of the accident.
- If there is an accident involving a rental vehicle, the department will bear a portion of the loss (deductible) up to $2,000:
  - Collision damage deductible $1,000, and/or
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- Liability (if another vehicle is involved in the accident) deductible $1,000
- There may be a lower deductible if the rental was paid for by the traveler's Brown University Corporate American Express Card.
- There are no deductibles if Brown’s preferred suppliers are used.

Personal Automobile

- Personal automobiles are permitted when the cost is less than or equal to coach class air travel (using the 21 day advance fare air ticket pricing) or rail travel. Travelers will be reimbursed at the Federal Government’s prevailing rate per mile as documented in the Annual Spending Guidelines.

- When an employee is using a personal car for University business, the following apply:
  - The employee’s personal car insurance carrier is the primary insurance carrier.
  - The employee is responsible for maintaining adequate insurance coverage (state mandatory insurance requirement, at a minimum) for their protection and the protection of any passengers.
  - Brown’s insurance will only cover liability claims in excess of the employee’s auto insurance policy limit.
  - Brown Insurance does not cover collision damage, theft or insurance deductibles.
  - Employees are responsible for the following costs that may be incurred during business travel:
    - Car repairs
    - Tickets
    - Fines
    - Damage to personal vehicle
    - Theft of personal vehicle/ vehicle contents, and
    - Rental car costs during repair of personal vehicle.

Travel Advances

Travel advances are generally available to paid faculty, staff, and graduate students of Brown to assist in defraying out of pocket cash while travelling for an extended period of time. Travel advances are:

- Issued only for daily and per diem expenses. Prepaid items such as transportation and conference registration are processed using a travel expense report.
- Travel advances must be cleared within two weeks of the completion of a trip.
  - Request for any additional payment, advance or reimbursement will not be processed for any traveler with an outstanding advance that is more than two weeks beyond the established trip return date.
  - Failure to account for a cash advance after repeated attempts to contact the traveler will result in reporting the advance to the IRS on the traveler’s W-2 and withholding taxes on the advance amount from the traveler’s paycheck.
    - Per IRS regulation, once an unsettled cash advance has been added to a W-2 it cannot be reversed – even if settled.
    - The University does not issue long-term operation advances.

- Attach the Travel Advance Request form to the request initiated in Workday.
Direct Bill of Transportation Expense

Payment of airfare and train service by Brown University using the Direct Bill Form is available for faculty, staff, students, visitors (individuals’ not receiving payment by Brown) and guest speakers paid no more than $5,000. Guest Speakers paid more than $5,000 and Independent Contractors cannot use direct bill.

Direct Bill of airfare for individuals not included above requires the approval of the Controller’s Office.

Direct Billing Request: To request permission for direct payment of transportation, complete the Direct Billing Form and email it to Accounts_Payable@Brown.edu

- Transportation purchased using the Direct Billing Form will be paid by the Controller’s Office at the time of purchase and reallocated to the appropriate worktags at the end of the month.
- All travel must be arranged through FCM/Garber Travel.

Forms/Instructions

Hotel Direct Billing Form
Airfare/Traine Direct Billing Form
Travel Advance Request Form
Auto Accident Report Form
Sample Auto Rental Agreement
Request for Auto Liability Insurance Identification Card

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can rent a vehicle?
University faculty, staff, and students may rent a vehicle for Brown University business purposes. Drivers must be a minimum of 21 years of age and have a valid United States driver’s license. National Car Rental and Enterprise Rent-a-Car are the University’s preferred suppliers.

ZIPCAR allows drivers 18 years of age. All individuals who intend to drive the rental vehicle must be listed on the rental agreement for insurance purposes.

What is ZIPCAR?
ZIPCAR is an internet-based service that allows you to rent a car for very short periods of time. ZIPCAR vehicles are parked on campus. The Pcard may be used to pay for ZIPCARS. Visit the Brown University Transportation Office website for more information about ZIPCARS.

What do I do if I am in an accident?
Report any accidents resulting in damage to the rental, or to a third party, to the rental agency and Insurance & Purchasing Services, fax 3-1566 or call 3-1681 within 48 hours of the accident.

What is liability insurance?
Liability insurance is for the damage and expenses to the other party that you hit. It covers their vehicle’s damage and other related expenses.

What is collision damage insurance?
Collision damage insurance is for damage to the rental vehicle, whether or not there is another vehicle involved. Examples are broken windshields, if you hit a pole, or if you hit another car.

What is a deductible?
The amount of money that your department will be financially responsible for before the University's
insurance will pay on a claim.

**Are the National Car Rental and Enterprise Rent-a-Car rates effective for international rentals?**

No, these rates are for rentals in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. If renting internationally, we recommend using a well known company and comparing daily rates. When renting a car internationally, insurance must be purchased from the rental company. Brown University's preferred travel company, FCM, can assist with these transactions.

**When renting from National or Enterprise do we still decline their insurance when renting or do we select it and it appears at a discounted rate?**

When booking an auto rental in the United States, Canada, or Puerto Rico, use Brown University's contract number with either National Car Rental or Enterprise Rent-a-Car. When the contract number is used, insurance is included in the rate. If you are offered additional insurance, decline the insurance. If booking a 15 passenger van, contact Insurance and Purchasing Services for additional assistance.

When booking an auto rental for international travel (other than Canada or Puerto Rico), always select the insurance.

**Is the contract number the same for both National Car Rental and Enterprise Rent-a-Car?**

Yes, use XZ49501 for both car rentals.

Related Policies:
- Human Resources: Interview Expense Reimbursements
- Brown University Transportation Office
- Travel Policy: Air Travel
- Business Meals & Hospitality
- Travel Policy: Lodging
- Travel Policy: Miscellaneous Expenses
- Travel Policy: Senior Staff Travelling Together
- Travel Policy: Travel and Business Meals
- Travel Policy: Traveler and Approver Responsibilities
- Visitor Travel Reimbursement
- safeDRIVE Policy and Procedures for Driver Safety (Authorized Driver)

Related Information:
- Brown's contractual rates for Enterprise and National Rental Agencies
- American Express Corporate Card
- Travel Portal
- Annual Spending Guidelines

Policy Owner: **Approved by** Assistant Vice President and University Controller

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