

Relevant Legislation/ Reference Document	Section 500, 504-505, 507, 510, 515-517, 523-526, 900, 1201, 1210, 1218 of the General Order
Commencement Date	20 July 2017
Review Date	The review date is 12 months after the commencement date and every three years after that.

POLICY STATEMENT

1 Intent

The Office of the Auditor-General (OAG) is responsible for staff travelling locally and internationally subject to meeting the conditions set in this policy, set under the General Order 2011 and any other provisional conditions set by the Auditor-General.

As per General Order 2011, Section 500 (a), Travelling is defined as:

- (i) Travelling on transfer from one station to another
- (ii) The period spent away from an Officer's station while on official duty

In addition, this policy includes official travel which may be undertaken in the following conditions:

- (iii) Continuing education and trainings
- (iv) For attending OAG related workshops
- (v) To attend approved seminars or conferences
- (vi) Invited for special projects
- (vii) Any other official activities/duties, subject to approval by Auditor-General

2 Scope

Staff applying for local & international travel will be considered based on the following criteria's:

- (i) Exceptional work performance
- (ii) Has not attended the same training before
- (iii) Nomination by Supervisor with justification
- (iv) Training need or
- (v) Any other criteria set by the Auditor-General and Deputy Auditor-General

Where a local travel has been approved, the OAG will provide the following assistance: -

- (i) Arrange for official transport for passage between the Office and the venue
- (ii) Payment of meals and accommodation costs for the duration of the conference /course
- (iii) Payment of conference /course registration fees
- (iv) Payment of the employee's normal salary for the duration of the conference /course

Where an external/international travel has been approved, the OAG or the sponsor will provide the following assistance: -

- (i) Payment of travel costs to and from the conference/ course venue
- (ii) Payment of meals and accommodation costs for the duration of the conference /course
- (iii) Payment of the employee's normal salary for the duration of the conference /course
- (iv) Payment of conference /course registration fees
- (v) Cost incurred during transit journey. This includes meal & beverages.
- (vi) Any travel insurance required

3 Objective(s)

Appropriate planning & execution for staff travel needs (local & International).

Utilizing the training resources available to up-skill OAG Staff.

Ensuring staff travelling on official duties are fully complying with the terms outlined by the training provider.

4 Definitions and Acronyms

Define terms used in the policy and explain any acronyms, for example:

Policy Maker	Senior Admin Officer Training, Policy Development and Research/Logistics
Management	Approval of Auditor-General or Deputy Auditor

5 Policy Maker

Auditor-General

6 Supporting Documents/References

General Order

Policy Development Framework

7 Key Words

Authorization

Travelling on Duty

Travel Insurance

8 Monitoring

All travel needs must be arranged before departing on the journey.

9 Supporting Procedures and Guidelines

The guidelines to the policy are attached as Annexure I and 2 to this policy. This information will provide the background to the development of the policy should Officers need clarification.

RESPONSIBILITIES	
Implementation	The Supervisors and Directors are responsible for implementing the policy.
Compliance	The applicant is responsible for complying with the policy.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Corporate Services is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the policy.
Development and/or Review	The Corporate Services division will be responsible for developing and/or reviewing the policy.
Interpretation and Advice	The Deputy Auditor-General is responsible for interpreting and advising on the policy.

ANNEXURE 1

Definitions

Travel request and approval process may be unfamiliar to staff. These are simplified below:

1.0 Authorization

Staff may request for transport use for any short distance travel request specified in this policy, however long distance travel may be booked with Admin Registry Officer in accordance with the OAG Motor Vehicle Policy.

For external/international travel, prior to making any travel arrangements a travel request must be approved by the Auditor-General. Staff may sought travel recommendations from their Department Heads and the respective Directors, prior to requesting travel request to the Auditor-General.

For any external or international training, the Office of the Auditor-General will provide a letter of approval for the travel request. The same would be used to notify the training provider and for booking purposes. Staff must ensure that all the necessary documents including visa, passport, ticket, travel insurance, transit journey, accommodation details, abroad travel details and any other essential travel details has been rightfully arranged before the journey begins.

The OAG Accounts Department will require the letter of approval, itinerary, invitation letter, agenda and any other relevant documents to pay for the travel expense (if any).

Upon completion of the official journey, staff are to ensure all funds utilised are reconciled and handed over with appropriate receipts and unutilised funds are returned to the respective Department Heads. Any excess funds used may be approved for reimbursement at the discretion of the Auditor-General. All travel claims/reimbursements are to be submitted within seven (7) days of return to base.

Additionally, staff are required to complete & submit a Post Training Report within 5 working days upon successful completion of the training.

For the Auditor-Generals travel request, approvals can be sought from the Secretary Constitutional Offices Commission.

2.0 Travel Arrangement

Should circumstances arise whereby the Auditor-General, Deputy Auditor-General and Directors are traveling to the same destination for the same official business, arrangements shall be made such that no more than 50% of such executive are scheduled to fly on the same flights.

3.0 Passports and Visa

Staff required to travel on duty must hold a valid passport. The cost of any visas required to undertake the journey will be reimbursed by the Office of the Auditor-General on production of a receipt. The validity of these should extend well beyond the return of date of travel.

4.0 Claims for Accommodation Charges

In the absence of Per Diem, actual hotel accommodation charges, supported by receipt are claimed on return to home base. Compulsory billed service charges or taxes levied by the hotel are accepted as part of the hotel charges.

5.0 Cancellation/Delay in Departure on Duty Travel

When travel is cancelled or postponed after an advance has been drawn, the advance must be returned to the Office of the Auditor-General immediately. Some discretion is allowable when travel is postponed for a few days only.

6.0 Travel Selection

All staff must travel in Economy class with the exception of Auditor-General and Deputy Auditor-General, who may travel business class.

7.0 Travel Insurance

Staff travelling abroad are to ensure that travel insurance is included with the travel schedule. In some cases, sponsors may provide insurance for travel within the host country only.

The Office of the Auditor-General requires staff to complete the Travel Proposal Form with an insurance company to cover for any valuable items (laptops, camera etc.) that staff may be carrying with them.

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8.0 Medical

The Office of the Auditor-General will assist with unforeseen emergency/accident medical & dental expenses incurred overseas. The staff pays the expenses incurred and on return to home base submits the receipts to accounts for action. However, this reimbursement can only be approved by the Auditor-General.

9.0 Staff Conduct

The Office of the Auditor-General will not be liable or responsible for any costs, claims, actions, loss, damages, fines, and other costs arising out of misconduct or gross negligence on the part of the staff, his spouse and dependents whilst on official business trip.

ANNEXURE 2

TRAVEL (Reference: General Orders 2011)

1.0 On Board Ship - Section 504

An Officer travelling on board a ship whilst on official duty is entitled to claim subsistence allowance provided he pays for his own meals.

2.0 Hotels – Section 505

(a) Officers traveling on duty within Fiji who have to stay at hotels or other commercial accommodation overnight may claim the actual cost of reasonable accommodation subject to the production of receipts.

(b) An officer is entitled to claim meal allowance based on the existing rates and practices.

3.0 Transfer Allowance – Section 507

(a) A transfer allowance is payable to an Officer when he is transferred from one station to another and where the transfer justifies and results in a change of residence. In the case of an Officer who requests a transfer and has not served at a station for three (3) years, no transfer allowance is payable except traveling and cartage expenses.

(b) Any Officer who is transferred as a result of the transfer of a spouse who is a non-Public Officer and who has received a transfer allowance or equivalent shall not be paid transfer allowance and traveling expenses.

4.0 When Payable – Section 510

When an Officer is traveling on duty by air within Fiji, his personal baggage allowance will be limited to the maximum free weight authorised by the operating company except in cases where the carriage of excess baggage by air is unavoidable, the Head of Department, may approve a refund upon the Officer presenting sufficient justification. In the case of Officers using the local air service to proceed overseas on duty, Government will meet the cost of excess baggage on the local air service up to the amount allowed by the international airline.

An Officer who is transferred by sea within Fiji will be entitled to free transport including marine insurance in respect of his household effects up to a maximum of 17 cubic meters. It is the responsibility of the Officer to arrange marine insurance before the actual transfer.

5.0 Transport when Traveling on Duty – Section 515

(a) Officers, who have been granted permission to draw transport allowances when traveling on duty, are expected to use their own transport. If they do not do so, they will be required to use the regular bus services unless, in Suva, the Head of Department, and in the country districts, the Senior Departmental Officer, certifies, in respect of each journey that the use of such bus services prevents the Officer from properly fulfilling his duties and that Government transport is not available and that hired transport may therefore be used.

(b) Officers other than Heads and Deputy Heads of Department who do not possess their own transport shall, if traveling on duty, be required to use the regular bus services unless, in Suva, the Head of Department, and in the country districts, the Senior Departmental Officer, certifies, in respect of each journey that the use of such bus services prevents the Officer from properly fulfilling his duties and that Government transport is not available and that hired transport may therefore be used.

6.0 Passage on Inter-Island Vessels- Section 516

Officers traveling by sea on duty or on transfer within Fiji are eligible for saloon passages (if available).

7.0 Officers Working Away from Normal Place of Work-Fares- Section 517

Where an Officer is required to work at a place or station other than his normal place of work, his Permanent Secretary or Head of Department may for a period of up to one month approve the refund of any additional reasonable fares required in traveling to work. This provision applies only in the case where the Officer is able to return home each night. A period in excess of one month will require the approval of the Permanent Secretary for the Public Service.

8.0 Journeys from Home to Office – Section 523 & 524

An Officer is not permitted to claim for journeys between his residence and his office or normal place of work.

Where circumstances warrants officers to travel by air on official duties, the officer can claim taxi fares in respect of journey to and from their residence or office and airports.

9.0 Per Diem Allowance- Section 525

An Officer traveling overseas on duty may be paid per diem allowance at rates prescribed by the Permanent Secretary for the Public Service if the per diem is not provided for by the donor agencies.

10.0 Meal Allowance – Section 526

Officers shall be paid meal allowance under the following circumstances:-

(a) Day Worker

- i) If required to work or undertake official travel two (2) hours before or beyond normal working hours.
- ii) If required to work or undertake official travel during the lunch meal period during normal working days.
- iii) In respect of Saturdays, Sundays and gazetted Public Holidays, he shall be paid a meal allowance if he is required to work and/or undertake official travel continuously for each period of not less than five (5) hours.
- iv) An additional meal allowance for each successive period of 5 hours continuous work and/or official travel immediately after the initial qualifying period above.

11.0 Allowances for Attendance – Section 900

(a) An Officer who is required by Government to undertake a training course or attachment outside Fiji will continue to receive his salary and will be paid such allowances and travelling expenses as appropriate.

12.0 Boards and Committees – Membership – Section 1201

(a) All meeting-related expenses of officers in respect of traveling, hotel accommodation/meals, subsistence, etc shall be based on rates prescribed by the respective organizations, but where these are less than Public Service rates, the latter should apply. Claims for the refund of such expenses are to be met by the organizations concerned and claims should be made directly to the organization. No such claims are to be met from Departmental funds.

(b) Officers are covered under the Workmen's Compensation Act for the duration of such meetings, including necessary traveling. Insurance may also be taken out by the Board, Commission, Council or Committees to cover its members.

13.0 Air Insurance- Section 1210

When an Officer is required to travel on duty by air, the Officer may claim, in respect of himself only, a refund of insurance premium paid on passenger flight insurance cover of an amount up to \$30,000.

14.0 Eligibility and Condition of Payment- Section 1218

In order to qualify for relocation expenses, an officer must:

Eligible person(s) will be afforded relocation expenses based on actual expenses incurred, but only for the cost equivalent of travel and transport to the officer's station of recruitment. For example, an officer recruited in Suva whose last station of duty is Labasa but wishes to relocate to Sigatoka will only be afforded the cost equivalent of relocation to Suva. The officer must pay the remainder of the transport and travel costs to Sigatoka.

10 Monitoring

The respective Department Heads will monitor the staff travel needs and the report submission after return to home base.

11 Monitoring & Implementation

To ensure effectiveness of this policy it will be reviewed on an annual basis. Taking into account of challenges to the policy and any changes to legislation and national guidance.

12 Review

This policy will be reviewed 12 months after implementation and every 3 years after that.

13 Who to Contact About this Policy

Any queries is directed to Deputy Auditor-General.

14 Approval

The travel policy becomes effective on the date approved by the Auditor-General.

15 Revision/Change Log

Version 1.0	
Policy endorsed by:	Executive Management Committee
Policy approved by:	Auditor-General
Policy effective from:	20 July 2017
Policy to be reviewed by:	20 July 2018
Manager responsible for policy:	Manager Corporate Services

