

Per Diem: Incident and Training Related Meal and Incidental Allowance

207.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish standardized procedures for per diem allowance of incident and district supported training and meeting related expenses incurred by members of the District.

This policy applies to all District personnel engaged in:

- Mutual aid responses under the California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA)
- Deployments coordinated through Cal OES
- District-approved training, conferences, or official travel
- Other authorized travel on behalf of the District

This policy is intended to ensure compliance with applicable Cal OES allowance requirements and to maintain fiscal accountability.

207.2 DEFINITIONS

CFAA – The California Fire Assistance Agreement governing mutual aid allowance between participating agencies.

Cal OES – The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

Per Diem – A fixed daily allowance for meals and incidental expenses.

Non-Incident Travel – District-approved travel for training, meetings, conferences, or administrative purposes.

207.3 POLICY

It is the policy of the District to reimburse members for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred during authorized travel or deployment, consistent with:

- CFAA Exhibit H (In-State Incident-Related Expenses)
- Cal OES reimbursement procedures
- Applicable state travel guidelines
- District fiscal policy

Members shall not incur expenses beyond authorized limits without prior approval from the Fire Chief or designee.

207.4 MEALS AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSES

Mutual Aid (CFAA) Incidents

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Per diem allowance for mutual aid incidents shall comply with CFAA Exhibit Rate Letter at the time of deployment.

Meal allowance:

- Is not provided when meals are supplied at no cost at incident base or by the host agency.
- Shall not exceed authorized limits unless specifically approved.
- Does not require receipts.

Non-Incident Travel

For non-incident travel, the District will reimburse meals and incidental expenses during authorized non-incident travel in accordance with U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) per diem rates. This ensures alignment with federal guidelines and provides uniformity for training, conferences, and administrative travel.

Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

Meal and Incidentals (M&IE) Allowance

- Allowance shall follow the GSA Meal and Incidental Expense (M&IE) rates for the travel location and dates.
- Members may claim the full daily rate for a travel day if the member is away for 24 hours.
- Partial-day travel rates are prorated as follows:

Departure before 7:00 a.m.	Eligible	–	–	–
Departure before 12:00 p.m.	–	Eligible	–	–
Return after 6:00 p.m.	–	–	Eligible	Eligible

- **GSA M&IE rates** are published at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
- Meals provided by the host agency, hotel, or included in registration fees shall be deducted from the applicable M&IE per diem.

207.5 INCIDENT PER DIEM PAYMENT TIMELINE

To ensure prompt allowance and fiscal accountability, the District will provide per diem payments for incident-related travel in a timely manner following submission of required documentation.

- All members responding to mutual aid incidents under CFAA or Cal#OES authority are eligible for per diem allowance in accordance.
- Per diem payments shall be issued within seven (7) calendar days after the District receives all required documentation from the member, including:

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1. Completed District Travel Expense Claim Form
 2. Cal#OES incident travel forms (e.g., F#42 or successor forms)
 3. Any required receipts or supporting documentation
- Delays in allowance caused by incomplete or inaccurate documentation are the responsibility of the member submitting the claim.

207.6 INCIDENT PER DIEM PROCEDURE

- (a) **Submission:** Members must submit per diem documentation to the Finance/Administration Office immediately following demobilization or return from the incident.
- (b) **Review:** Finance staff will review submissions for completeness and compliance with CFAA and District policy.
- (c) **Payment:** Per diem will be processed and paid within 7 calendar days of receipt of complete documentation. Payment may be issued via payroll or separate check per District procedure.
- (d) **Corrections:** If documentation is incomplete, Finance staff will notify the member within 2 business days and provide guidance for resubmission.

207.7 NON-INCIDENT ADVANCE PER DIEM PAYMENT TIMELINE

To assist members in covering authorized expenses for District-approved non-incident travel (training, conferences, meetings, administrative business), the District may issue per diem and travel advances prior to travel.

- Members with approved non-incident travel may receive per diem for meal and incidental advances.
- Advance payment shall be issued up to seven (7) calendar days prior to the start of travel, provided that all required documentation and approvals have been submitted.
- Advances are based on GSA per diem and lodging rates applicable to the travel location and dates.
- Members receiving an advance must submit a Travel Expense Reconciliation Form within 7 calendar days of returning from travel.

207.8 NON-INCIDENT PER DIEM PROCEDURE

- (a) **Travel Authorization:** Member submits a Travel Authorization Form at least 14 days before travel.
- (b) **Approval:** Fire Chief or designee approves travel and authorizes per diem advance.
- (c) **Payment:** Finance/Administration Office issues the advance up to 7 days before departure.

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- (d) **Reconciliation:** Within 7 calendar days of return, the member submits receipts and documentation to reconcile the advance.