

Fresh Products Branch Directive

FPB-407
1/10/92

STANDARD TRAVEL CHARGE SYSTEM

- I. **PURPOSE** This directive establishes the policy of the Fresh Products Branch (FPB) regarding charges to applicants for travel-related expenses by Federal and Federal/State market offices, and describes the procedures to be used in calculating travel charges for typical non-contract service situations. These procedures shall be effective January 1, 1991.
- II. **REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS** This Directive replaces FPB Directive 407, dated 10/22/90. Revisions have been made in Section IV to clarify which sites are not charged travel expenses, and in Section V to revise the determination of the travel expense rate and to revise the minimum hourly charge from a quarter hour to a half hour. Examples and Exhibit A have also been revised to reflect current fee rates.
- III. **POLICY** Lot fees (carlot and less-than-carlot fees) shall be set to recover the cost of on-site inspection time, supervision, and certificate processing. In addition to the lot fees, other significant costs incurred in the performance of an inspection shall be charged directly to the applicant requesting the inspection whenever practical.
- NOTE:** The Standard Travel Charge System prescribes when and how to bill applicants for travel charges; it does not in any way determine overtime entitlements, mileage, per diem, or other travel reimbursements paid to inspectors. Pay entitlements and travel reimbursements should be determined in accordance with AMS, FPB, or State directives without consideration as to whether the expense has been billed to an applicant.
- IV. **PROCEDURES FOR CHARGING TRAVEL EXPENSES** Travel charges shall be assessed for all sites serviced except:
- 1) sites which are billed on a contract basis; or
 - 2) sites to which employees are assigned for the entire work-day that are within a 25-mile radius of the inspection office (e.g. terminal market sites, dock-side import inspection sites).

Distribution: HQ, RG, FM, CM, FS, and EMP

Originating Office: PORS

File Maintenance Instructions: This Directive replaces FPB Directive 407, dated 10/22/90.

Charges for travel expenses should be determined in accordance with the procedures below:

A. Travel By Inspector-Operated Vehicle.

1. **Determine Standard Service Mileage For Each Site.** The Officer-In-Charge of each inspection office shall establish the standard service mileage for each inspection site by determining the actual round-trip mileage for direct-route travel between the local inspection office and the inspection site, subject to the approval of the Regional Director. Each inspection office should create and maintain a list of the service mileage for each commonly serviced inspection site and provide a copy to each inspector.

2. **Determine the Travel Expense Rate.** For each service mile assessed, the inspection program will charge to recover the cost of mileage and inspector travel time. The travel expense rate is determined by adding the Federal cost per mile for privately-owned vehicle reimbursement to the Federal cost for inspector salary and benefits during travel time (the inspector hourly rate/50 miles, which assumes an average speed of 50 miles per hour). The Federal travel expense rate as of October 1990 is 50 cents per service mile.

3. **Computing Travel Charges.** For each visit to an inspection site involving the use of an inspector-operated vehicle, the travel charge shall be the number of standard service miles for that site multiplied by the travel expense rate. Do not use actual mileage unless prorating charges (see Section VII).

In addition to the standard travel charge, there shall be an additional charge for travel time performed during overtime period at the applicant's request; round to the nearest half-hour the number of hours actually traveled during the overtime period and multiply by the overtime hourly rate, currently \$15.50.

If multiple inspections are performed during the same visit, travel charges should be divided equally among all certificates.

4. **Examples Of Computing Travel Charges For Travel By Car:** See Exhibit A for examples of computing charges for the four common travel situations.

B. Travel By Common Carrier.

1. **Compute Travel Time Charges.** Charge for common carrier travel time and overtime as follows:

a. **Travel Time:** Charge actual portal-to-portal travel time rounded to nearest half hour at the regular hourly rate.

b. **Travel Overtime:** When travel overtime time is performed at the applicant's request, charge actual travel time performed during the overtime period, rounded to the nearest half hour, at the overtime rate.

2. **Charge Actual Cost of Transportation.** Charge the actual cost of all transportation costs incurred (e.g. plane, subway, taxi, car rental, tolls, etc.)

3. **Example Of Computing Travel Charges For Travel By Common Carrier:** Inspector travels by commercial air service for a total of 3 hours to Site Y. One and one-half hours of return travel are performed during an overtime period at the applicant's request.

Using rates current as of 1/92, the total travel charge for the above example would be:

Travel Time:	\$93.00	(3 X \$31.00)
Overtime Travel:	23.25	(1.5 X \$15.50)
Other Costs:	<u>\$175.00</u>	(Actual cost of air fare)
TOTAL CHARGE:	\$291.25	

**V. PROCEDURES
FOR CHARGING
PER DIEM**

Charges for per diem shall be determined in accordance with the following procedures:

A. **Charge Per Diem Only For Overnight Travel.** Charge per diem only when the performance of duty requires overnight lodging. Applicants should be notified of any likely per diem charges before providing service. Do not charge applicants for the per diem incurred by an inspector temporarily assigned to a market office (see Section VIII.)

B. **Computing Per Diem Charges.**

1. **Federal inspectors.** Bill the standard GSA CONUS rate, or the prescribed maximum per diem rate if the location is a key city or county designated by GSA, for each night the inspector is in travel status.

2. **State inspectors.** Bill the State's daily rate of per diem (reimbursement for lodging and meals) for each night the inspector is in travel status.

**VI. PROCEDURES
FOR CHARGING
OTHER DIRECT
COSTS**

Other direct costs such as tolls, the cost of common carrier transportation, or the cost of shipping samples shall be charged to recover the actual expense incurred.

VII.
**PROCEDURES FOR
PRORATING
CHARGES**

Charges for travel to service two or more applicants may be prorated in accordance with the following:

1. **Prorating Travel Expense.** Inspectors shall equitably prorate to the nearest mile the actual round-trip mileage amongst all applicants serviced. However, in no case shall the number of prorated service miles charged an applicant exceed the standard number of service miles established for that site.

2. **Prorating Other Transportation Costs.** Inspectors shall equitably prorate the cost of tolls and other direct costs among all applicants that benefited from those expenses.

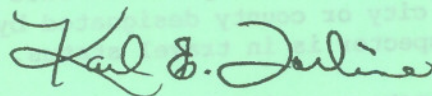
VIII. TRAVEL
CHARGES DURING
TEMPORARY DUTY
ASSIGNMENTS

Inspectors shall not charge applicants for per diem or travel expenses between the official duty station and the temporary duty site when assigned temporarily to a market office (e.g. when providing annual or sick leave relief, or staffing for peak workload periods). Local travel charges remain assessable in accordance with the above procedures.

IX.
IMPLEMENTING
THE STANDARD
TRAVEL CHARGE
SYSTEM

A. **Informing Applicants of Standard Travel Charge Policy.** Initially the Officer-In-Charge shall complete and send the letter attached as Exhibit B to each applicant for all sites regularly serviced by the inspection office. Subsequently, new applicants can be informed either by letter or orally of standard travel charges. Any required approval of standard charges by the Regional Director must be obtained prior to informing the applicant.

B. **Inquiries Regarding Atypical Travel Situations.** Questions about standard or prorated travel charges for atypical travel situations should be directed by the Officer-In-Charge to the Regional Director. The Regional Directors will advise the Branch Chief of unusual travel situations and recommend a charge policy. The Branch Chief will issue periodic FPB bulletins and/or revisions of this directive to ensure that travel charges are consistently and equitably billed by all market offices.

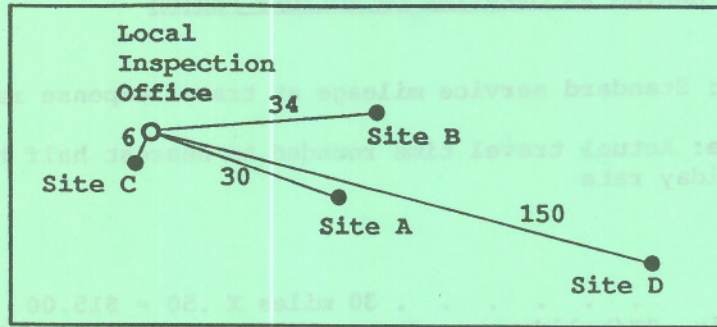


Branch Chief

Attachments

EXHIBIT A: EXAMPLES OF COMPUTING TRAVEL CHARGES FOR TRAVEL BY CAR

Standard Service Mileage (Round Trip) To Sites



EXAMPLE 1: TRAVEL DURING REGULAR HOURS

Travel Expense: Standard service mileage at travel expense rate

Site A:	. . . . .	30 miles X .50 = \$15.00
Site B:	. . . . .	34 miles X .50 = \$17.00
Site C:	. . . . .	6 miles X .50 = \$3.00
Site D:	. . . . .	150 miles X .50 = \$75.00

EXAMPLE 2: PRORATED TRAVEL TO SITE A AND SITE B

Travel Expense: Actual mileage as prorated for each site at travel expense rate

Actual mileage is 15 mi. to Site A; 8 miles to Site B; and 17 miles to local office. Grader decides to split the 8 miles between Site A and Site B equally, and have Site A pay for departure travel, and Site B for return travel.

Site A:	. . . . .	19 miles X .50 = \$9.50
Site B:	. . . . .	21 miles X .50 = \$10.50

EXAMPLE 3: TRAVEL DURING AN OVERTIME OR HOLIDAY PERIOD

Travel Expense: Standard service mileage at travel expense rate

Travel Overtime: Actual travel time rounded to nearest half hour at overtime/holiday rate

Site A 30 miles X .50 = \$15.00
40 min. OT/holiday rounds to .50 hr X \$15.50 = \$7.75

Site B 34 miles X .50 = \$17.00
50 min. OT/holiday rounds to 1 hr X \$15.50 = \$15.50

Site C 6 miles X .50 = \$3.00
10 min. OT/holiday rounds to 0 hr X 15.50 = \$0.00

Site D 150 miles X .50 = \$75.00
180 min. OT/holiday rounds to 3 hr X \$15.50 = \$46.50

EXAMPLE 4: RETURN TRAVEL DURING AN OVERTIME PERIOD

Travel Expense: Standard service mileage at travel expense rate

Travel Overtime: Actual return travel time rounded to nearest half hour at overtime rate

Site A: 30 miles X .50 = \$15.00
20 min. overtime rounds to .50 hr X \$15.50 = \$7.75

Site B: 34 miles X .50 = \$17.00
35 min. overtime rounds to .50 hr X \$15.50 = \$7.75

Site C 6 miles X .50 = \$3.00
10 min. overtime rounds to 0 hr X \$15.50 = \$0.00

Site D 150 miles X .50 = \$75.00
100 min. overtime rounds to 1.50 hr X \$15.50 = \$23.25

EXHIBIT B: GUIDE TO COMPLETING IMPLEMENTATION LETTER

Date

Trade Member Name

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

City, State and Zip

Dear Trade Member:

The USDA Fruit and Vegetable Fresh Products Branch and cooperating agencies are dedicated to providing the highest quality inspection service at a fair and equitable charge to all users. To ensure that travel charges for inspection service are consistently applied to all applicants, the Branch will institute nationwide, effective January 1, 1991, the following Standard Travel Charge System for all applicants receiving terminal market inspection service.

Under the Standard Travel Charge System, travel time and mileage for inspectors using ground transportation will be charged according to the actual number of round-trip miles between the inspection site and the local inspection office. Using this system a standard charge for travel expenses can be established for each inspection site. In this way users can determine what travel expenses, if any, will be assessed in advance of each visit by the inspection service.

Our records indicate that inspections are regularly performed for you at <inspection site address> in <City>, <State> by the <inspection office name> inspection office. This inspection site is <actual round-trip mileage> miles from the office by round-trip direct-route travel. Accordingly, <service mileage> service miles at the current rate of <travel expense rate> cents per mile will be assessed to recover travel time and mileage expenses for each visit to this inspection site, in addition to the appropriate inspection fee for the service requested.

Other travel costs, such as tolls, will be charged to recover actual expenses only when such expenses are incurred. If multiple inspections are performed during the same visit, travel charges will be divided equally among all certificates. Additionally, travel charges may be prorated under the Standard Travel Charge System whenever two or more applicants are serviced during the same trip.

It is our hope that the implementation of these procedures will provide a standardized charge system which is simple, fair, and consistent for all applicants. If you have any questions, please contact this office at <Area code & phone number> for further assistance.

Sincerely,

Officer-In-Charge
Fresh Products Branch
Fruit and Vegetable Division