

FAQs for Travel Restrictions Updated January 25, 2016

Items with a * were added in this revision

Who is affected?

All departments are prohibited from incurring non-essential travel costs, including air travel, ground travel, lodging, parking, tolls and/or any other miscellaneous travel expenses.

Does this new policy supersede and replace other travel approval policies? *

No. Existing travel approval requirements remain in effect.

Will blanket approvals be considered? *

Yes. Blanket travel approvals for classes of activities will be considered as long as they contain clear and convincing evidence that all affected travel is essential.

Is the restriction just on out-of-state travel?

No. This prohibition is for both in-state and out-of-state travel.

What is “non-essential travel?”

Non-essential travel consists of travel that is not essential to deliver the Department’s core mission. Examples of non-essential travel would include:

- Travel to professional development or trade association conferences—unless required to obtain continuing education credits necessary to maintain essential credentials, which cannot be obtained in Alaska or through online training.
- Multiple employees traveling for the same purpose. Travel of more than one employee from the same operational section for the same purpose will be limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the purpose of the travel.

Who will determine if travel is non-essential?

Commissioner signature will be required for all travel for their departments. This approval may not be delegated. Chief of Staff (or his designee) approval will be required for all out-of-state travel.

Is there exclusion for specific funding sources? *

While all agencies are asked to abide by the spirit of the restrictions regardless of funding source, essential travel paid for 100% by a third party, federal funds or statutorily designated program receipts (SPDR) does not fall within these restrictions.

What if out-of-state travel is mostly paid for by an organization (90%) but the state is required to pay a conference entry fee or a hotel room? Would that be allowed? No. If there is a charge to the state for hotels or conference fees, the travel is not allowed, unless it constitutes essential travel.

Can I travel out-of-state to get continuing education credits to maintain my credentials for my job?

Continuing education requests should be reviewed to ensure needs cannot be satisfied by local or online training. Travel should be authorized only if the credits cannot be obtained in state or online.

What is the threshold for maintaining existing travel?

If the trip is deemed essential or, as a guideline, if the traveler will lose less than 20% of the value of the trip because of cancellation fees.

How does this restriction impact Boards and Commissions?

Boards and Commissions that historically meet more than once per year are asked to limit travel to one meeting per year (provided that the agenda warrants a face-to-face meeting) and conduct all other meetings through telephonic or video conference. If a Board or Commission determines that this restriction will materially impact their ability to perform their core mission, they may seek a waiver from the Director of Boards and Commissions.

FAQs for Hiring Restrictions

Who is affected?

While the Governor is requesting the state's quasi-independent organizations to adopt similar restrictions, all agencies are affected except for the following conditions or agencies:

- Revenue generating and revenue collections positions, such that the failure to hire would result in a net reduction in revenue to the State of Alaska
- Positions fully paid by federally funded programs
- Range changes in flexibly-staffed positions
- Reclassifications within the same job family
- Employees delegated the authority to perform the duties of a vacant position that is assigned a higher pay range where contractual provisions or regulations provide for compensation
- Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation
- Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority
- Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission
- Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission
- Permanent Fund Corporation
- Regulatory Commission of Alaska
- Alaska Public Offices Commission
- Positions essential in protecting the life, health or safety of Alaska citizens. This includes Alaska State Troopers, corrections and probation officers, and employees that provide patient and resident series at 24-hour institutions.
- The following are considered 24 hour institutions:
 - Correctional Facilities
 - Juvenile Justice Facilities
 - Alaska Military Youth Academy
 - Pioneer Homes
 - Alaska Psychiatric Institute
 - AVTEC
 - Mt. Edgecumbe High School

What funding sources are exempt from the hiring waiver requirement? *

Other than the agencies and conditions listed above, the only funding-based exemptions to the hiring restriction are positions paid for 100% by federal funds or statutorily designated

program receipts (SDPR)(1108).

What if a position is partially federally or SDPR funded?

Only fully funded positions would be exempt. Partially federally or SPDR funded positions would be subject to the restriction.

Can waivers be granted?

A waiver may be granted if the Chief of Staff (or his designee) determines that the function is mission-critical and the function cannot be performed by reassigning other functions. Mission critical services would typically not include overhead or administrative services.

Will blanket waivers be considered? *

Yes. Blanket hiring approvals for classes of positions will be considered as long as they contain clear and convincing evidence that all affected positions are mission critical and the function(s) cannot be achieved by reassigning or reprioritizing the functions of other employees.

Do agencies need to confirm the list of positions exempt from the hiring restriction? *

Yes. A waiver is required for positions agencies believe are essential to protecting life, health or safety of Alaska citizens, and positions directly involved in revenue generating and collecting. Such requests can be by job class as long as clear and convincing evidence is presented for each job class on the listing.

Does this new waiver policy supersede and replace other hiring approval policies? *

No. Existing hiring approval requirements for exempt and partially exempt positions remain in effect.

Does the hiring restriction apply to professional services contractors? *

A waiver is not required for services entered into by exempt programs as listed above. For services not falling into one of the exemptions, a waiver is required before entering into or renewing a professional services contract for work that could be performed by state employees. The justification must make it clear why the contract skill sets are not otherwise available from state employees.

Who can grant the waivers?

Chief of Staff or his designee.

NOTE: For answers to specific recruitment and classification questions please go to the following Division of Personnel link:

<http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/fileadmin/StatewideHR/pdf/HiringFreezeFAQ.pdf>