

Exceptions to The Use of Contract Travel Services

Below are the exceptions to utilizing contracts negotiated by the State Travel Management Program (STMP). These exceptions are a citation of the [Texas Administrative Code 34 TAC §20.408](#). These exceptions apply only to the use of contract travel services and not specifically to reimbursement rates and policies as outlined in [Texttravel](#). Justifications related to reimbursement policies/guidelines must also be documented.

Exceptions to use of contract travel services. In accordance with these rules and applicable statutes, state agencies may allow their employees to use travel services other than contract travel services only if one or more of the exceptions in subsections (a) through (i) of this section apply. Nothing in this section affects or alters the authority of the comptroller regarding travel reimbursement or audit of travel transactions.

- a) **Lower Overall Cost of Travel** – The state agency may use any travel services obtained at a price lower than the contract travel service price. State agencies are encouraged to obtain lower priced travel services through the use of fourteen day or other advanced reservations programs, promotional price reductions, or any method that provides a lower overall cost of travel. When a state agency uses any travel, services obtained at a lower overall cost than the contract travel services price, the exception must be documented by the agency. The agency should document and follow a consistent cost comparison methodology.
- b) **Unavailability of Contract Travel Services** - The contract travel services are not available during the time or at the location necessary for the business purpose; or the contract travel service does not provide for the service required; or because the contractor is unable to provide the contract services due to a force majeure event.
- c) **Special Needs** - The traveler's health, safety, physical condition, or disability requires accommodations, including medical emergency or other necessary services, not available from contract travel service contractors.
- d) **Custodian of Persons** - The traveler has custody of a person pursuant to statute or court order and the traveler is required to provide a degree of security and safety that is not available from contract travel service contractors.
- e) **In Travel Status** - The traveler is in the course of travel and changes in scheduling render the use of contract travel services impractical or the appropriate travel services are not available. The traveler shall make reasonable efforts to secure rates equal to or lower than the contract travel service rates.
- f) **Group Program** - The traveler is using a group program wherein reservations were made through a required source to obtain a particular rate or service.
- g) **Emergency Response** - The traveler is responding to a public health or safety emergency situation and the use of contract travel services is not available or would result in an unacceptable delay.
- h) **Legally Required Attendance** - The traveler is required by a court, administrative tribunal, or other entity to appear at a particular time and place without sufficient notice to obtain contract travel services.
- i) **Lodging Reimbursement Exceeding General Services Administration Rates** - Except when a state employee may claim less than the maximum meal reimbursement rate for a duty point and use the amount of the reduction to increase the maximum lodging reimbursement rate for the duty point, if a state agency reimburses lodging at a rate exceeding the maximum set in the regulations issued by the United States General Services Administration for a particular location, the agency must document its determination that local conditions necessitate the higher rate for that location.