BERKELEY LAB
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

OCFO
Office of the Chief Financial Officer

August 26, 2014

To: Berkeley Lab ALDs and Division Directors
Cc: Business Managers and Deputy Directors for Operations
From: Rachelle Jeppson, Controller and Sallie Frainier, Business & Disbursements Manager
Re: Travel Policy – Important Changes

The Berkeley Lab Travel Policy has been updated and the new version will be issued in October. There are many improvements and enhancements in the policy and we encourage all who travel on Berkeley Lab business to become familiar with the new policy. In addition, there are four key policy updates we wish to make you aware of that will impact travelers. These four areas were specifically identified for change due to the need to comply with the Berkeley Lab contract with DOE as well as federal regulations. The key areas of the greatest change are: foreign travel airfare purchases, charging practices for personal travel costs, late expense report escalation, and use of car services. Below is a summary of the new requirements.

Foreign Travel Airfare Purchases – Those individuals traveling to foreign destinations on Laboratory business, both employee and non-employee, must make airline arrangements through the Laboratory travel agency, Carlson Wagonlit Travel. **Effective 10/1, only foreign airline reservations booked through Carlson will be reimbursed.** Mandating use of Carlson allows Berkeley Lab to monitor foreign trip reservations booked through Carlson and ensure they are entered into the DOE Foreign Travel Management System (a DOE contractual requirement). This change will affect a small number of travelers since the majority of foreign trips are already booked through Carlson.

Charging Practices for Personal Travel Costs – **For airline reservations booked through the Lab travel agency, travelers will be required to provide a personal credit card for any personal airfare costs at the time of reservation**. The cost for this service is $35.00 and is the responsibility of the employee/traveler.

Late Expense Report Escalation – It has been a long standing Laboratory expectation that expense reports are due within 30 days of the completion of travel. Effective 10/1, **expense reports submitted after 90 days will be considered "late" and must be approved by the Division Business Manager or the Division Deputy of Operations prior to submission** to the Travel Office. The reason for the late submittal is required as a part of the submission. It is the intention that this policy change will bring greater Divisional awareness to the late expense report issue.

In addition, IRS regulations state that any prepaid expense, e.g., Lab paid airfare and prepaid registration fees, is presumed to be of personal economic benefit to the traveler and is subject to employment taxes if not substantiated (by expense report) within 120 days of completion of travel. **Consistent with IRS regulations, should a traveler not submit an expense report within 120 days of travel, the value of the prepayment will be taxed on the employee's next paycheck.** This adjustment cannot be reversed regardless of whether the travel expenses are later reimbursed by the Laboratory.

Use of Car Services – Sedan services may be used when they are less expensive than alternative means of transportation or when valid business reasons preclude the use of other transportation. **The reason for the use of the sedan service must be included in the comments section of expense reports.** This change is necessary since use of car services is receiving additional audit scrutiny.

These changes have been briefed to the Division Business Council, Resource Management Leadership Council and Travel Liaison Committee, and will be socialized more broadly in TABL and the Travel Newsletter. We encourage Divisions to ensure this information is widely communicated to staff through Division communication channels as well. For questions on these changes, please contact Victoria Oberholser, Travel Manager, at x6012 or VMOberholser@lbl.gov.

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