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*Helping People  
Help the Land*

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**Transmitted via Email**

September 26, 2006

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 360-6-46

**SUBJECT: PER-NRCS EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATION IN OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS**

Purpose. To provide guidance and clarification of policy for employees attending or participating in activities, training, meetings, conferences other than official NRCS meetings.

Expiration date. September 30, 2007.

Effectively immediately, the following will define the procedure for approval of employees requesting participation in outside organization events, but more importantly it establishes the criteria for determining: (1) the approved amount/cost, on a percentage basis, of time and travel claimed at government expense; and (2) the disapproval of time spent while traveling as travel or other compensatory time and/or credit leave.

Employees desiring to attend any outside organization meeting must submit to their supervisor, for approval, a Request for Travel Authorization, Form MN-FNM-001. This form must be accompanied by a Special Training Request form, MN-PER-025, including the registration form and agenda, for the event or activity for which the employee is requesting to participate. The request must also have a written justification for the employees' participation including the advantage to the government by their attendance (Forms MN-FNM-001 and MN-PER-025 provide space for justification). Requests approved by the supervisor will be forwarded through the SAO for final approval by the STC.

If approved by the STC, the STC will then determine the time and cost limits for those approved to attend. The following criteria will be used for determining eligibility for attendance and allowable time and travel expense. Exceptions may be granted **ONLY** by the STC on a case-by-case basis in unusual situations.

A. 100% - Approved to attend on Official Time and Expense

1. Outside Organization National Officer
2. Outside Organization Regional Officer or Representative
3. Training or Conference Presenter

4. Member of Chief's Staff (STC)
  5. As directed by the STC to attend (e.g. holding a NRCS Career Fair/Job Fair/Poster Presentation)
- B. Official Time and Expense Not to Exceed (NTE) 100% (Cost-effective limit will be set for each meeting by STC)
1. Direct and substantial job related training and supervisor approval on the Individual Development Plan (IDP)
  2. Active committee member of the outside organization
  3. Meaningful role on the outside organization agenda (e.g., session, chair, facilitator, recorder)
  4. Minnesota State Chapter President or State Representative of the outside organization
- C. Time Only, Own Expense (100% Employee)

All others requesting attendance not covered in A and B above

**NRCS encourages selective attendance and participation by employees in career-related activities, professional organizations and training conference or courses that enhance career development and professionalism. However, unless specifically authorized by the STC, NRCS does not require employees to attend Outside Organization Meetings. Time spent traveling to and from outside organization meeting is not considered hours of work for overtime, travel or other compensatory time or accrual of credit leave.**

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WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

Attachment

DIST: MN-AE