



United States Department of Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Agricultural
Marketing
Service

Specialty
Crops
Program

Specialty
Crops
Inspection
Division

AIM
Administration
Series

SCI Division

Local Travel Policy

May 2024

“SCI moving forward in the 21st Century using technology, innovation, and old fashioned hard work”

Non-Discrimination Policy: In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

SCI Division Local Travel Policy
Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
GUIDE FOR ELECTRONIC USAGE	1
DEFINITIONS.....	2
PER DIEM	2
TRAVEL TIME	2
MILEAGE.....	3
Single Stop	4
Multiple Stops.....	4
MILEAGE EXAMPLES	4
Example 1 (Single Stop):	5
Example 2: (Single Stop):.....	6
Example 3 (Single Stop):.....	7
Example 4 (Multiple Stops):.....	8
Example 5 (Multiple Stops):.....	9
Example 6 (Multiple Stops):.....	10
Example 7 (Multiple Stops):.....	11
Example 8 (Single Stop):.....	12
REFERENCE LINKS	13

INTRODUCTION

This travel policy provides guidance to employees on what is considered local travel, the local commuting area and when employees are entitled to local mileage and/or per diem reimbursement. Employees may be required to go to a temporary duty point(s) as a regular part of their job or on infrequent occasions.

GUIDE FOR ELECTRONIC USAGE

The AIM system of instructional manuals is available electronically in Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) at the following intranet address:

<https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/ams/AMS-SCI/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

When accessed electronically, AIM materials have hyperlinks and hypertext (visible as underlined [blue text](#)) available to the PDF user. Clicking on a hyperlink takes the reader to a web site with information relating to the subject. Hypertext links the reader to a different page within the current manual, or a different manual, with information relating to the subject. For example, the hypertext in the Table of Contents allows a reader to go directly to the section of interest in the manual by clicking on the section title.

PDF offers a variety of tools depending on the Adobe version the reader has. The newer the version, the more tools available. PDF documents are easily searchable for content within a document or within multiple documents. To learn about the variety of PDF search options:

- Click on the “Help” tab on the top of any page in Adobe Acrobat,
- Then click on the “Adobe Acrobat Help” bar,
- Type the word “Search” in the “Search” box, and click on the “Search” button,
- A series of options will become available,
- Click on the “Access Search Features” link and follow the instructions for the type of search you are interested in.

Effective Date: May 2024

Page 2 of 13

DEFINITIONS

Local travel: Travel as a result of official business that is other than an employee's normal home-to-work commute (i.e., travel from an employee's residence to their actual duty point/official duty station), which is completed within one workday and does not require the payment of per diem.

Local commuting area: Travel as a result of official business that is performed within a 50-mile radius of an employee's official duty station.

PER DIEM

Per diem eligibility: An employee is eligible for per diem when he/she: (1) performs travel as a result of official business that is outside of the local commuting area [Note: weather-related issues may warrant an exception]; (2) incurs per diem expenses while traveling (e.g., lunch); and (3) is in a travel status for more than 12 work hours, excluding lunch.

Unless an employee meets all three conditions, he/she is not entitled to per diem. Except in unusual and/or extenuating circumstances (e.g., weather-related issues), a travel authorization must be pre-approved to authorize per diem.

If an employee is required to go on travel for official business outside of the local commuting area, there needs to be a conversation between the supervisor and the employee about the expected length of the assignment/workday, including whether an overnight stay is anticipated. If an overnight stay is expected, the applicant must be notified of the anticipated lodging and per diem charges before providing inspection service.

If an employee is on official business travel outside of the local commuting area, the employee is entitled to per diem if they work more than 12 hours, excluding a 30-minute lunch. If you know the workday is more than 12 work hours excluding lunch, we need to give the employee the choice of coming home or staying overnight unless the employee is within one hour of their residence. Either way, the employee is entitled to $\frac{3}{4}$ day per diem for that workday.

If a single applicant, we need to charge the applicant whether we charge them the $\frac{3}{4}$ day per diem or we charge them lodging and $\frac{3}{4}$ day per diem for both days. Any applicable per diem and lodging charges for multiple applicant trips should be prorated among applicants.

Also, the per diem rate utilized is based on the location of the assignment, not the employee's official duty station. For example, if an employee assigned to the St. Louis, MO sub-office is assigned to drive to Louisville, KY to perform an inspection assignment, any per diem that is warranted would be based on the Louisville per diem rate.

TRAVEL TIME

Travel within the local commuting area: No travel time is allowed except when the daily assignment includes more than one stop within the local commuting area. Travel time is allowed

Effective Date: May 2024

Page 3 of 13

between multiple stops. Travel time from home to the first stop and from the last stop to home is not allowed.

Travel outside the local commuting area: Limited to travel time in excess of the normal home-to-work and/or work-to-home commute.

GOV vs. POV

For certain Agricultural Commodity Graders (ACGs), Federal Program Managers (FPMs) and supervisors, it is cost-effective and efficient for the Division to assign a GOV for their use whether on a permanent or temporary basis.

In computing the mileage rate to be paid employees when traveling for official purposes, if a GOV is available for use to an employee and they decline to use the GOV, they are only entitled to the reduced mileage rate for POV usage.

For the purpose of computing travel time, it does not matter whether an employee is using a POV or a GOV. Whether the employee is traveling within the local commuting area or outside of it, the employee must still deduct their normal home-to-work and/or work-to-home commute when determining actual time worked on a Time and Attendance report.

For time and attendance (T&A) purposes, Transaction Code (TC) 17 is Commute Use of Government Auto. TC 17 should only be used when an employee uses the GOV for a one-way commute from their official duty station/actual duty point (or another work site) to their residence and the return of the GOV to their official duty station/actual duty point the following workday (or possibly several days later upon the completion of the temporary duty assignment). TC 17 concerns an employee dropping off their POV at an office, picking up a GOV and taking it to their residence for operational efficiency and then returning the GOV to the office a day or several days later.

ACGs, FPMs and supervisors assigned a GOV on a permanent basis do not need to record TC 17 on their T&A. This is because they are engaging in round-trip travel from their residence to a work site and then returning home.

TC 17 is a taxable fringe benefit because the employee has been given a GOV for their use. If the number of one-way trips in any given month in a tax year exceeds two, all trips are taxable and must be reported on the employee's W-2. Record all trips on the T&A each pay period if it is apparent that the number of one-way trips in any given month will exceed two. If the number of trips does not exceed two in a month, do not record TC 17 on the T&A. If trips were erroneously reported on the T&A, process a corrected T&A(s) to reverse the trips reported. Trips that should have been reported in a prior pay period(s) may be reported on the current T&A or before the end of the tax year.

Per Departmental Regulation 2600-001, Taxation of Fringe Benefits, each one-way trip should be taxed at a valuation of \$1.50. In other words, the employee's taxable income includes \$1.50 multiplied by the number of one-way trips during the calendar year; again, two one-way trips per month are non-taxable.

MILEAGE

An employee is entitled to mileage reimbursement in the following situations:

Single Stop

- When a daily assignment is limited to one stop within the local commuting area, only mileage over the normal home-to-work commute is compensable.
- When a daily assignment is limited to one stop outside the local commuting area, all mileage is compensable.

Multiple Stops

When a daily assignment involves more than one stop within the local commuting area and:

- The travel begins or ends at the actual duty point/official duty station, the mileage between the actual duty point/official duty station and the employee's residence is not compensable.
- The first duty point is a temporary duty point within the local commuting area, reimbursement for miles driven from the employee's residence to the first duty point, less the normal one-way commute, is compensable.
- The first duty point is a temporary duty point outside the local commuting area, reimbursement for miles driven from the employee's residence to the first duty point is compensable.
- The last duty point is a temporary duty point within the local commuting area, reimbursement for miles driven from the last duty point to the employee's residence, less the normal one-way commute, is compensable.
- The last duty point is a temporary duty point outside the local commuting area, reimbursement for miles from the last duty point to the employee's residence is compensable.

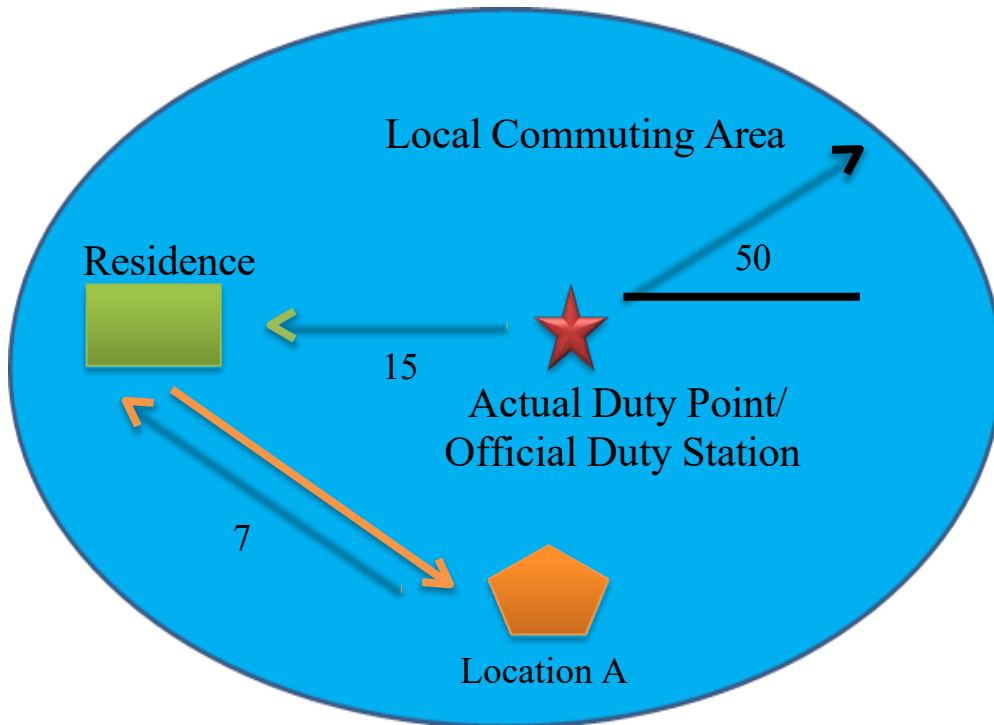
Note: If an employee is approved to use a different form of transportation to get to and from the temporary duty point than they normally use to commute to the official duty station, the employee may be reimbursed the full cost of the trip as long as the employee uses a reasonable alternative (e.g., this could be a subway fare if the employee normally drives their POV to their official duty station, but they take the subway to the temporary duty point instead). Claims for mileage-only reimbursement should be submitted via an [OF-1164](#), Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business.

MILEAGE EXAMPLES

In the following examples, the employee's normal commute – residence to actual duty point/official duty station and back to residence – is 15 miles each way.

Example 1 (Single Stop):

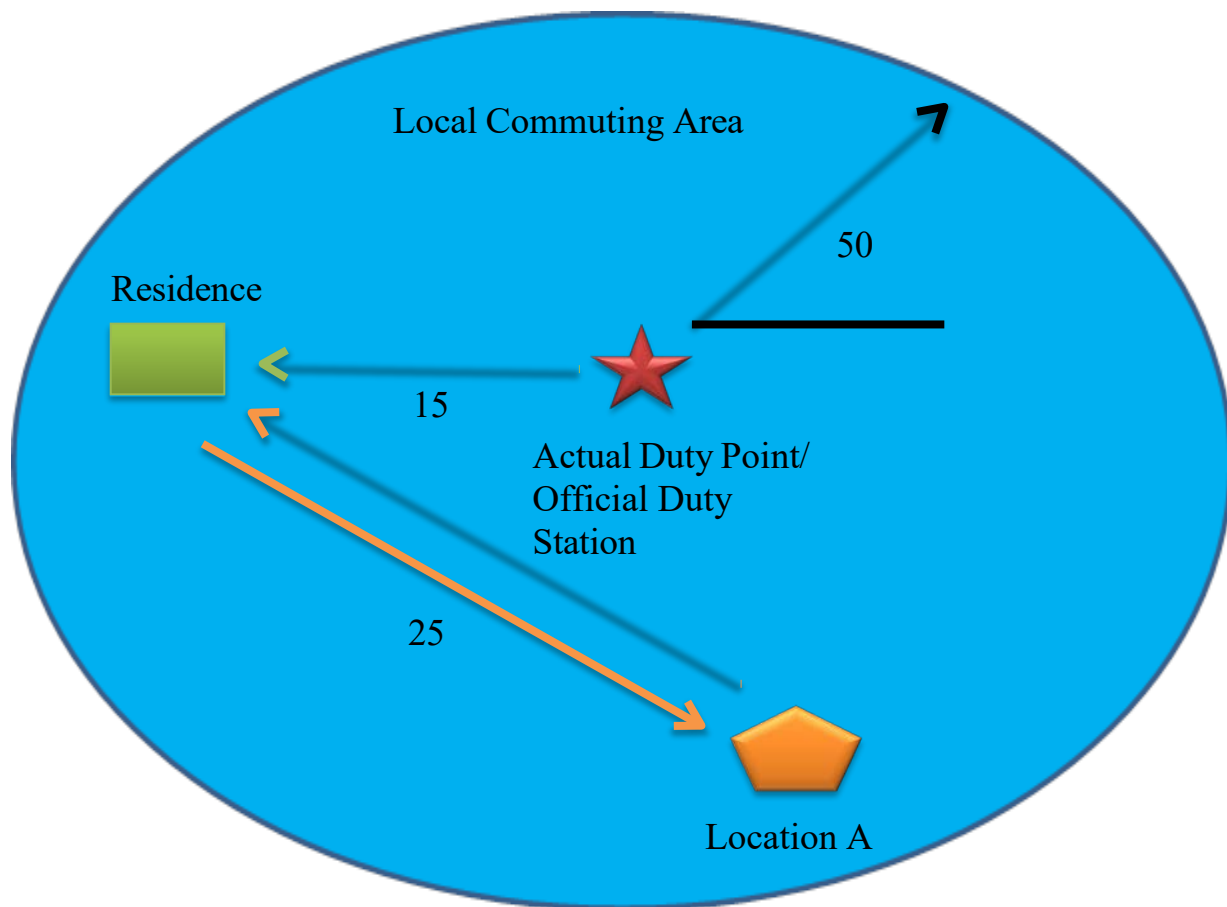
Employee travels from their residence to Temporary Duty location “A” (other than Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station) within the local commuting area and back to their residence. If the mileage is less than the normal commute, then the mileage is not compensable. The employee is not entitled to mileage reimbursement in this example.



Example 2: (Single Stop):

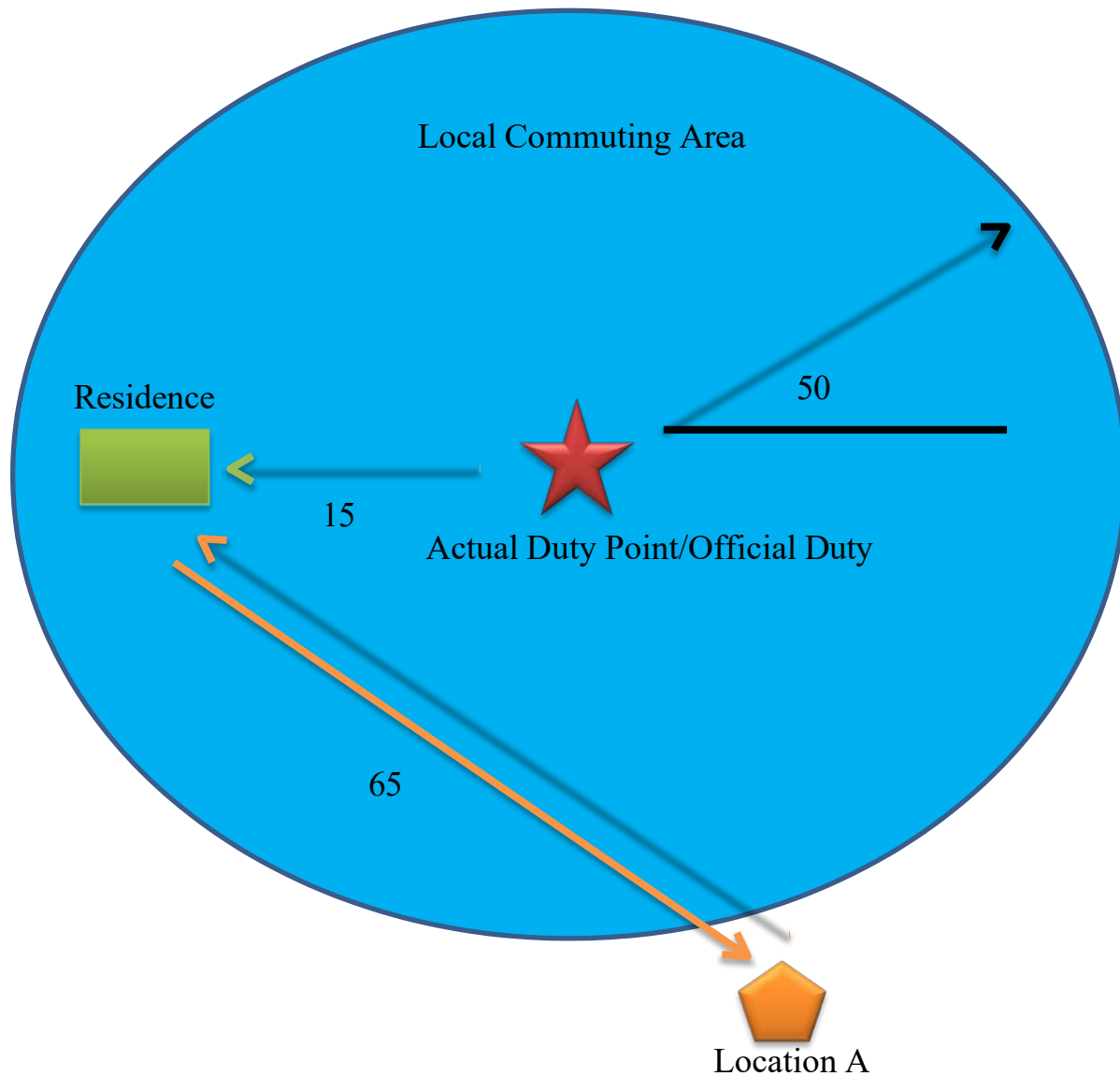
Employee travels from their residence to Temporary Duty location “A” (other than Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station) within the local commuting area and back to their residence.

- If the mileage is more than the normal commute, then only the excess/extra mileage is compensable. The employee is entitled to claim 20 miles in this example.



Example 3 (Single Stop):

Employee travels from their residence to Temporary Duty Location “A” outside the local commuting area and back to their residence. All mileage is compensable. The employee is entitled to claim 130 miles in this example.

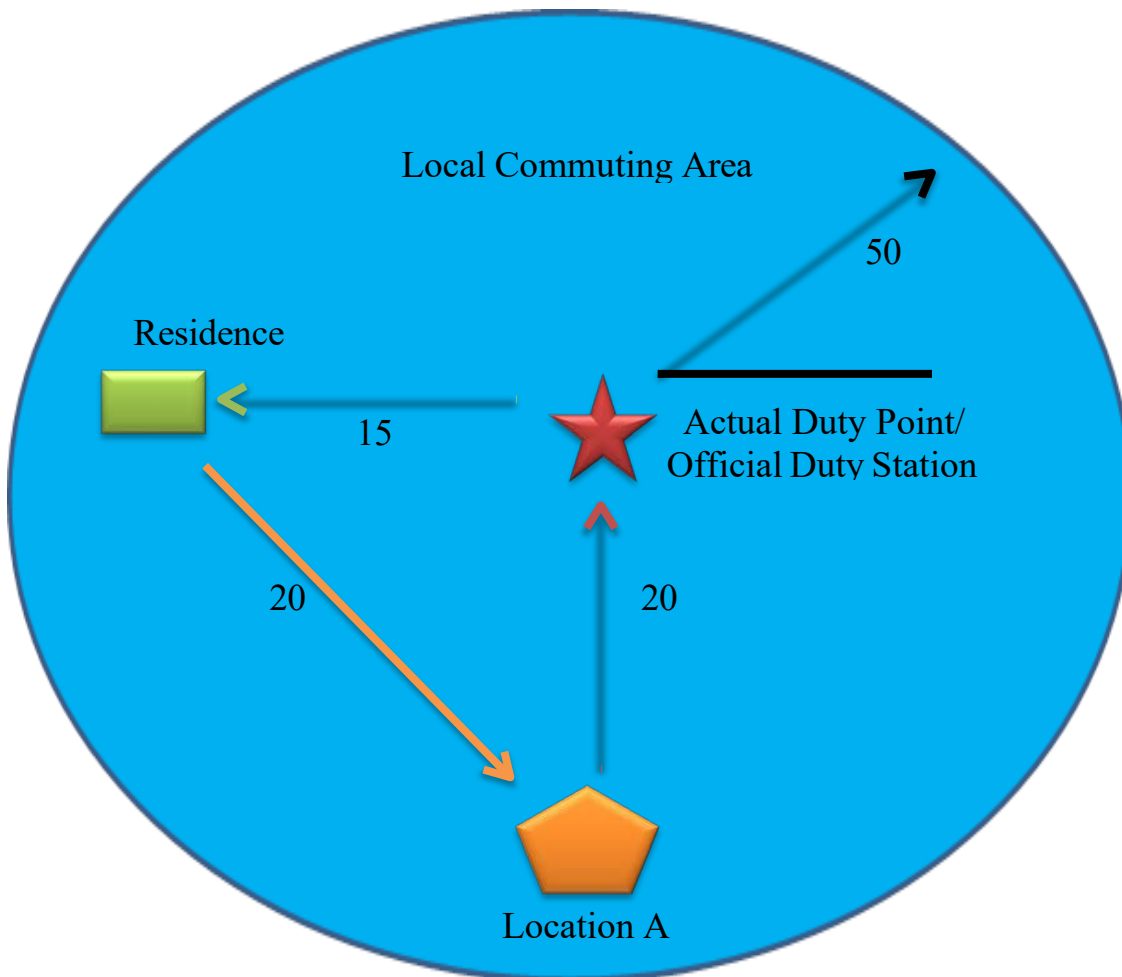


Example 4 (Multiple Stops):

Employee travels from their residence to Temporary Duty Location “A” within the local commuting area (other than Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station), then to Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station, and back to their residence.

- Mileage from employee’s residence to Temporary Duty Location” A” is actual mileage, less the normal one-way commute.
- All mileage from Temporary Duty Location “A” to Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station is compensable.
- Mileage from Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station to employee’s residence is not compensable.

The employee is entitled to claim 25 miles in this example.

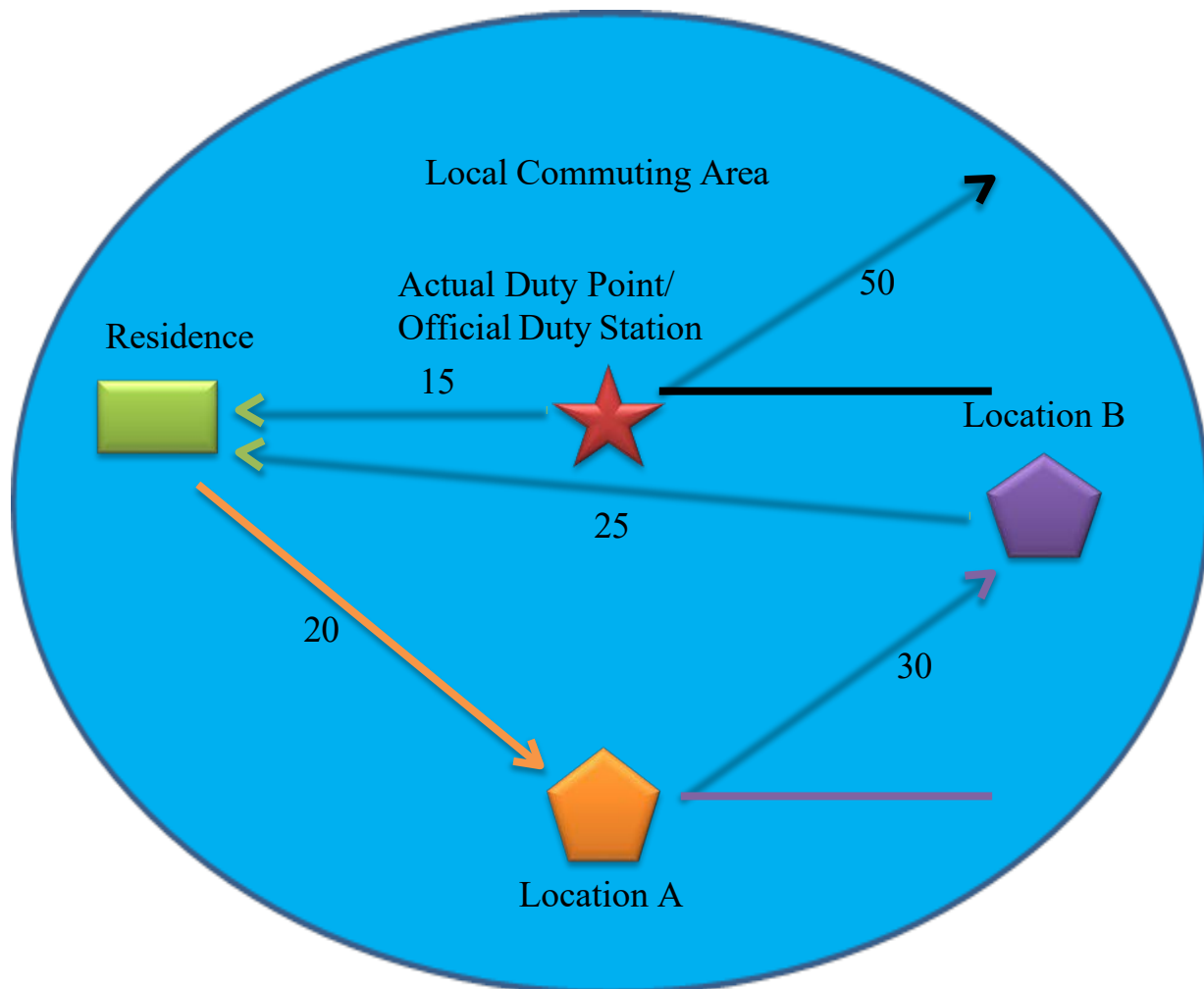


Example 5 (Multiple Stops):

Employee travels from their residence to Temporary Duty Location “A” within the local commuting area (other than Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station), then to Temporary Duty Location “B” within the local commuting area, and back to their residence.

- Mileage from employee’s residence to Temporary Duty Location “A” is actual mileage, less the normal one-way commute.
- All mileage from Temporary Duty Location “A” to location “B” is compensable.
- Mileage from Temporary Duty Location “B” to employee’s residence is actual mileage, less the normal one-way commute.

The employee is entitled to claim 45 miles in this example.

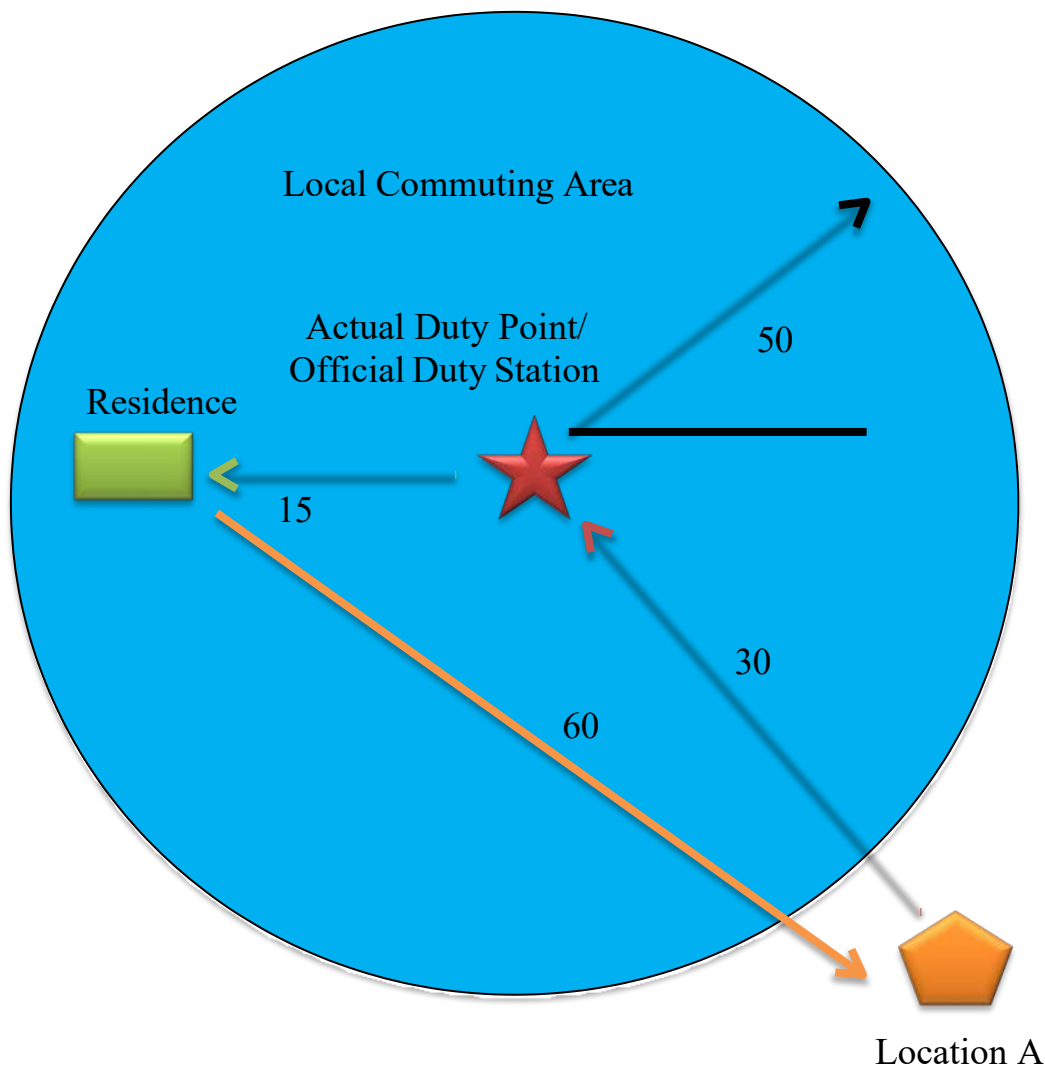


Example 6 (Multiple Stops):

Employee travels from their residence to Temporary Duty Location “A” outside the local commuting area, then to Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station, and back to their residence.

- All mileage from employee’s residence to Temporary Duty Location “A” is compensable.
- All mileage from Temporary Duty Location “A” to Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station is compensable.
- Mileage from Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station to employee’s residence is not compensable.

The employee is entitled to claim 90 miles in this example.

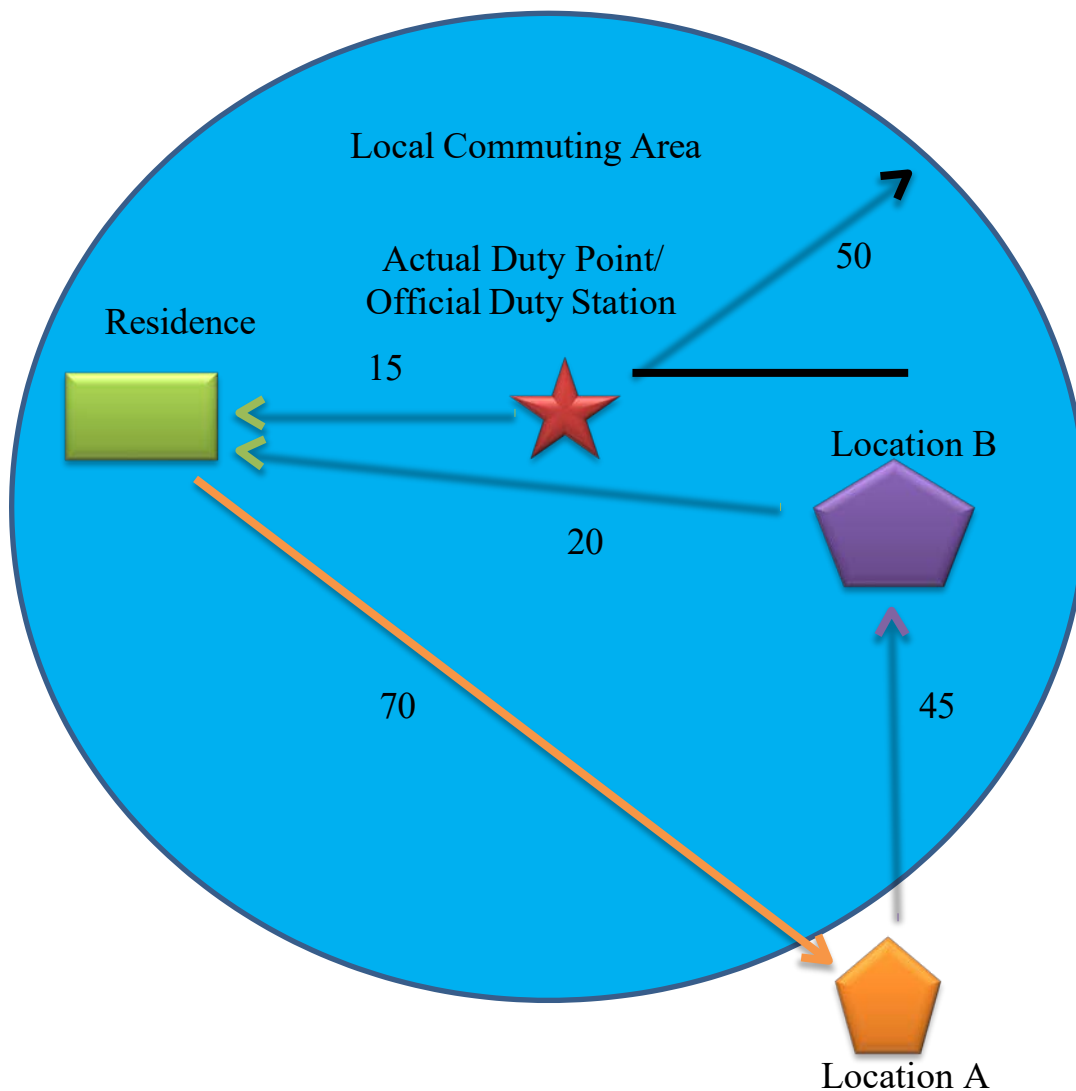


Example 7 (Multiple Stops):

Employee travels from their residence to Temporary Duty Location “A” outside the local commuting area, then to Temporary Duty Location “B” (inside the local commuting area), and then to their residence.

- All mileage from employee’s residence to location “A” is compensable.
- All mileage from Temporary Duty Location “A” to Temporary Duty Location “B” is compensable.
- Mileage from Temporary Duty Location “B” to employee’s residence is actual mileage, less the normal one-way commute.

The employee is entitled to claim 120 miles in this example.

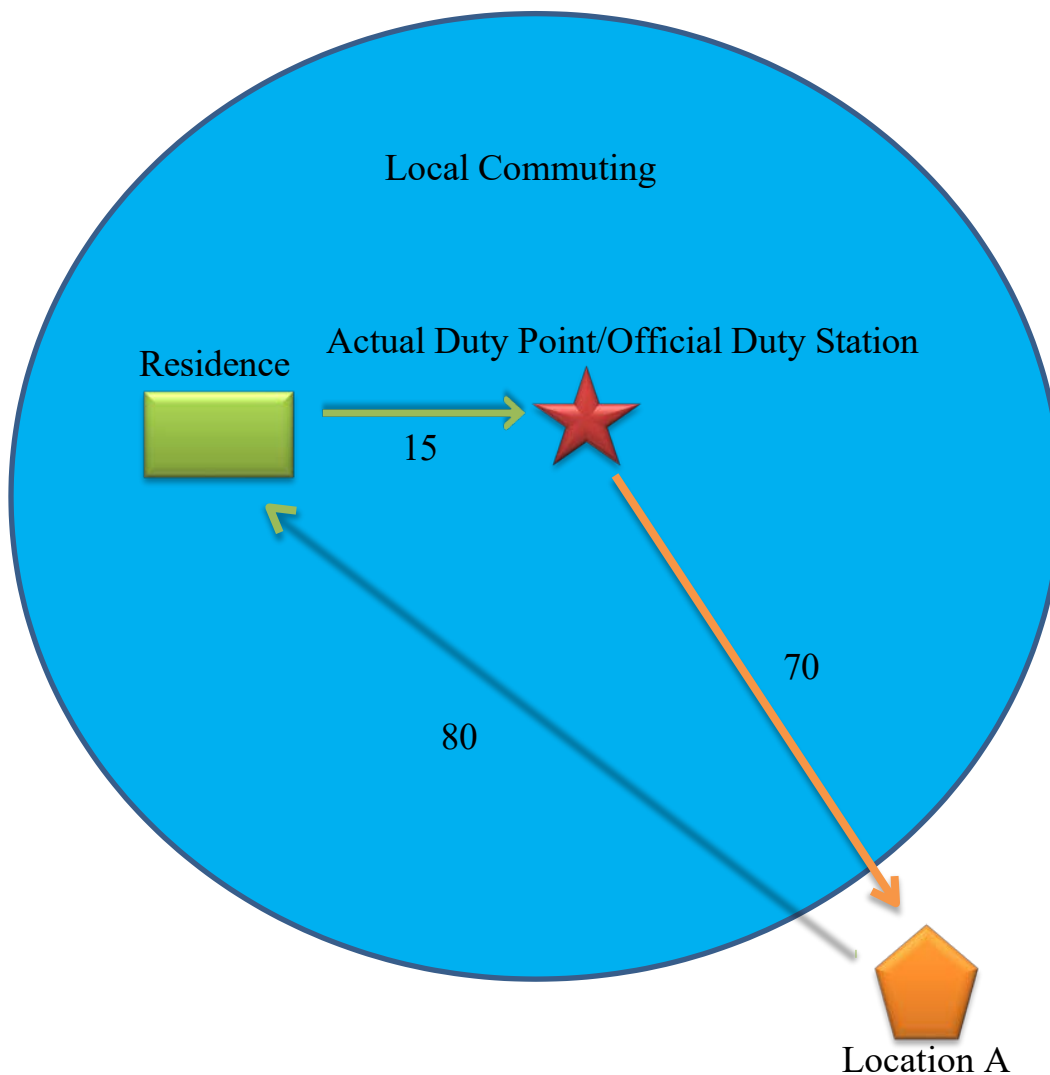


Example 8 (Single Stop):

Employee travels from their residence to Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station, then to Temporary Duty Location/Location “A” outside the local commuting area, and back to their residence.

- Mileage from employee’s residence to Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station is not compensable
- All mileage from Actual Duty Point/Official Duty Station to location “A” is compensable.
- All mileage from Temporary Duty Location “A” to residence is compensable.

The employee is entitled to claim 150 miles in this example.



Effective Date: May 2024

Page 13 of 13

REFERENCE LINKS

**Version Date
(Printed for distribution)**

- OF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business:** _____
<https://www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/OF1164-17a.pdf?forceDownload=1> address

Checked Materials have been printed from the links in this manual and included for reference.