

# Relocation Travel FAQs

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## Travel/Moving FAQs

### **When may I begin making travel and moving arrangements?**

No arrangements should be made prior to receiving a written offer of employment from Human Resources (HR) Division. The written offer letter is the official offer. The offer of employment must be accepted in writing (a signature on the offer letter) and returned to the Laboratory before making any travel or moving arrangements.

### **How will I receive the relocation information?**

The relocation processors receive notification from HR when an offer has been made. You should receive an email within 5 business days that will provide you with the contact information for the relocation processors, the applicable relocation policy, an information packet to assist you with your move and also a relocation agreement that will need to be signed and returned to the relocation processor.

### **When should I contact a moving company?**

Once you have signed and returned the offer letter and the relocation agreement, you can begin making arrangements for shipping your household goods.

### **Can I use a carrier other than those listed in the information packet?**

If you choose to use another carrier other than those provided in the packet, you will have to pay for the shipment and file for reimbursement. Only those carriers listed have the authority to bill the Laboratory directly for the cost of the shipment. The cost charged to you will be compared to the cost that would have been charged to the Laboratory by the approved carriers and the lesser of the two is what will be reimbursed to you.

## Relocation Reimbursement FAQs

### **How will I be reimbursed?**

When you arrive at LANL and have received your badge, you may submit receipts in PDF format to [relocation@lanl.gov](mailto:relocation@lanl.gov) along with your Z number, hire date and a timeline of expenses.

### **How long will it take for me to be reimbursed?**

A relocation processor will complete the worksheets with expenses and send them to you for signature. The information is submitted to payroll for reimbursement on the interim pay date following the completion of forms. You must complete a full payroll cycle before payment can be made as an interim payment.

**Why is the payment issued by the Payroll department?**

Relocation reimbursements are considered taxable income by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These costs must also be reported on your W-2 for tax purposes. In order for the taxes to be properly withheld and reported, the Payroll department must make the payment.

**Why do I have to pay taxes on expenses I have already been taxed on?**

The taxes charged to you by hotels, airlines, rental car companies, etc. are sales taxes. The taxes that are withheld from your reimbursement are not. The IRS requires this tax be withheld.

**How do I account for those taxes at the end of the year?**

You will need to contact a tax professional for assistance with your tax return. Refer to [IRS Publication 521, Moving Expenses](#).

**How long do I have to submit my expenses for reimbursement?**

All expenses must be submitted to the Travel department within 6 months of the day they were incurred.

**Who is considered an eligible family member?**

A spouse and children who continue to live with you are eligible family members. New Mexico law does not recognize registered domestic partners, they are not considered an eligible family member. A fiancée is also not considered an eligible family member.

**How is the number of travel days determined?**

When you fly, the maximum time allowed for reimbursement is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a day. When you are driving, the maximum time allowed is based on the Rand McNally mileage guide from your previous location to Los Alamos, divided by 400 miles per day. Example: Mileage is 1600 miles from the previous location to Los Alamos, so the mileage divided by 400 miles per day would be 4 days. That would be the maximum time allowed for travel between the two locations.

**How is the meal rate determined while I am en route?**

The meal rate each day is determined by the lodging location. Both the meal and lodging rates are based on the rate established by US General Services Administration (GSA). Those rates can be found at the [GSA Per Diem Rates](#) page.

**Will I be reimbursed for transporting my pets?**

Costs for transporting pets are included in the residence relocation allowance. They are not reimbursed as a separate item.

**What meal and lodging rate is used for settling in?**

The GSA rate for Los Alamos is the maximum allowed for settling in reimbursement. If you choose to stay in Santa Fe or other surrounding areas, your lodging rate must be below the Los Alamos rate for full reimbursement.

**Can I receive an advance to pay for my relocation expenses?**

Because relocation reimbursement is considered taxable income, advance payment of expenses cannot be made. You must be on the LANL payroll before relocation costs can be reimbursed.

**Home Sale/Purchase FAQs – (Applies to eligible Regular hires only.)**

**When can I place my house on the market?**

As soon as you have signed your offer letter and returned it to your HR generalist, you may place your house on the market.

**Do I have to wait for my house to sell before I purchase a new home?**

No. You can purchase a new home and receive reimbursement of the appropriate costs prior to selling your prior residence.

**Can I claim duplicate homeowner costs while I am in a hotel?**

No. You must complete your settling in period before submitting expenses for duplicate homeowner reimbursement.

**I have a buyer for my home, but the buyer is asking for me to pay their closing costs. Are the buyers closing costs reimbursable?**

No. Closing costs that are paid by the seller that are customarily paid by the buyer are not reimbursable. Only those costs that are required by law to be paid by the seller are reimbursable.