

Kansas Department of
Social and Rehabilitation Services
Don Jordan, Secretary

House Appropriations Committee
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SRS Travel and Fleet Management

SRS Operations
Laura Howard, Deputy Secretary



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Chairperson Schwartz and members of the committee, I am Laura Howard, Deputy Secretary of Operations for the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on our travel and fleet management operations.

SRS uses vehicles in a variety of ways. Statewide we use vehicles to transport patients, clients and children in SRS custody. We also utilize vehicles to transport equipment, deliver services and manage agency operations. Additionally, vehicles help us provide security and maintain buildings and grounds at our state hospitals. Since the Central Motor Pool has been eliminated SRS has reduced its fleet. In 2004, 548 state vehicles were assigned to SRS. With the transition away from the central motor pool, SRS took over management of these vehicles and reduced our fleet. We currently manage a fleet of 494 vehicles.

In regards to fleet administration, the main challenges SRS currently faces are those associated with managing operations and delivering the same level of services with a smaller, older fleet. These challenges have been off-set in large part by the ability to rent vehicles from Enterprise. Enterprise has the resources available to provide vehicle rental services in many of the towns where a service center or state hospital is located. We also benefit from the fact that Enterprise has the ability to bring new products and options to the market quickly. An example of this is the addition of hybrid vehicles in the Topeka area as an option to Enterprise's state contract. Also, employees have the added option of renting vehicles from Avis if there are no vehicles available at Enterprise. In all locations, SRS now has greater control in how we manage our fleet and travel expenditures.

It is SRS policy to use state vehicles for state business whenever possible. Almost all of our fleet is stationed at state hospitals or service centers. SRS manages and identifies travel options by prioritizing state vehicle usage based on function. Priority for using state vehicles goes to transporting patients, clients and children, and for conducting abuse investigations.

When state vehicles are not readily available, the decision to rent or authorize private mileage is a local one based on the following factors which are not necessarily all inclusive:

- Staff time (including overtime costs)
- The availability of rental vehicle access in the city or town
- The time sensitivity of the need. For instance, does an employee need a vehicle because they just found out they need to be in court in a few hours, or do they need a vehicle to attend a meeting scheduled for next week?
- The estimated mileage to be driven

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- The estimated time frame of usage
- The need, if any, for a specially equipped vehicle.

When a state owned or leased vehicle is not available, or if the agency determines it is in the best financial interest of the state to do so based on the factors listed above, employees are permitted (with prior supervisory approval) to use their private vehicles and receive the full private mileage reimbursement rate. When a state owned or leased vehicle is available and it is in the best financial interest of the state for the employee to utilize a state vehicle or a leased vehicle, SRS reduces reimbursement to the employee if a private vehicle is used. In these instances, if the employee decides to use their private vehicle to travel on state business, SRS policy is to reimburse the employee 65% of the Department of Administration's current private mileage reimbursement rate. SRS has developed a number of tools to assist staff and managers in securing the most efficient transportation options, including a resource guide to vehicle usage that describes which form of transportation is most cost-effective.

In conclusion, at SRS we appreciate the opportunity to manage our travel operations. We have been able to work through the challenges associated with managing a smaller, older fleet by utilizing the state's vehicle rental contract. We have exercised the additional flexibility and management responsibility we have been given to make the most effective and efficient decisions regarding employee travel.