

# MEMORANDUM

# State of Alaska

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities  
Office of the Commissioner

**TO:** Alaska DOT&PF Leadership Team

**DATE:** May 24, 2025



**FROM:** Ryan Anderson, P.E.  
Commissioner

**SUBJECT:** FY2026 Travel Planning,  
approval and Waiver –  
Guidance

## Purpose

This memo outlines the criteria for planning FY2026 travel for the Leadership Team in alignment with Administrative Order No. 358 and recent guidance from the Governor's Office. All travel must reflect fiscal restraint while enabling essential state operations and advancing the Governor's strategic initiatives.

Out-of-state travel should be limited to trips that protect public safety or meet other essential responsibilities of the State. All out-of-state travel will require a travel waiver, even if included in the approved FY2026 Travel Plan. In State and Out of State travel that was previously approved, requires re-approval based on Administrative Order No. 358 criteria. The guidance below is for in-state and out-of-state travel.

We acknowledge that predicting travel needs in advance is difficult, especially given the Department's operational realities. This framework is intended to support defensible, adaptable planning and approvals.

## Trip Justification Categories

Each proposed trip should align with the Governor's definition of essential business, and be assigned one of the following Justification Categories:

- **Mandated Travel** – Required by federal or state law, regulation, or agreement (e.g., NEPA, FAA inspections, legislative testimony, tribal consultation)
- **Physical Presence Required** – Travel where work cannot be completed remotely and requires in-person engagement
- **Health, Safety, or Emergency Response** – Supports emergency operations, public safety issues, or environmental hazards
- **Governor's Strategic Priorities** – Directly supports high-level priorities including rural access, economic development, or federal funding leverage
- **Not Reasonably Deferrable or Substitutable** – Time-sensitive engagements critical to project momentum or funding, with no practical virtual alternative

All proposed travel should be clearly matched to one or more of these essential business definitions.

### **Trip Purpose Guidance**

Travel planning documents, approvals, and waivers should include a brief statement describing the purpose of the trip—specifically, what the traveler will be doing and why their physical presence is required. The purpose should:

- Begin with a clear action verb (e.g., "meet with," "inspect," "testify," "coordinate," "consult")
- Align with the essential business justification selected
- Be specific enough to demonstrate why the travel is necessary and could not be completed virtually

Examples:

- "Meet with tribal council to complete Section 106 consultation for airport project."
- "Testify in person before Senate Transportation Committee on capital budget request."
- "Conduct on-site inspection of ferry terminal construction to verify contractor compliance."
- "Participate in MARAD engagement session on port infrastructure funding opportunities."

Avoid general phrases like "attend meeting" or "conference" without context. A clear and compelling purpose helps to ensure that travel meets AO 358 requirements.

### **Delegation and Virtual Participation Strategy**

To support agency-wide travel guidance and ensure effective use of department resources:

- **Delegate strategically:** Assess the purpose and value of each trip, and delegate participation to senior or directly involved staff when appropriate.
- **Right-size attendance:** Limit the number of travelers to those essential to the objective, avoiding overrepresentation at events.
- **Leverage alternatives:** Encourage virtual participation where it can achieve the intended outcome, particularly for information-gathering or coordination-focused engagements.
- **Share outcomes:** Ensure information from attended events is shared internally to maximize benefit across teams and regions.

Please use this guidance as we travel over the coming year.

Let's continue to lead by example, delivering high-quality results while understanding the State's fiscal responsibility.