

Indiana University Office of Procurement Services

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

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| SOP NO: | SOP-TVL-05 |
| SUBJECT: | Use of mobile devices and Internet access during international business travel |
| SOURCE: | University Procurement Services |
| ORIGINAL DATE OF ISSUE: | 02/28/2022 |
| DATE OF LAST REVISION: | 5/10/2022 |
| DISCLAIMER: | The information provided in this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is designed to provide helpful information on this procedure. Travel Management Services reserves the right to determine on a case by case basis if a SOP should be adjusted for a particular situation. This SOP is not intended to cover each and every situation, nor can it anticipate specific circumstances. |
| RATIONALE: | <p>Mobile devices and Internet access have become commonplace, are readily available, and are convenient to use for university business. While necessary, such use during employee international business travel can be expensive. Cost-effective decisions about how to manage mobile device use should be made prior to the trip.</p> <p>The university will reimburse mobile device and internet access charges during international travel through the standard Travel reimbursement process so long as such charges are for short-term services associated with the period of the trip. The University will reimburse employees for roaming charges, when it is the most economical decision. Employees should consult with their service provider prior to travel and add the international plan or feature that will best meet business need at a reasonable price. Roaming charges are usually significantly more expensive than upgrading/adding onto an existing plan.</p> <p>International travelers are advised to follow the UITS Global traveler IT checklist.</p> <p>This is an overview of plan options as of 2022 and may not be all encompassing.</p> |
| PROCEDURES: | <p>Best practice includes thinking about the frequency and duration of international travel, as well as the business need for mobile phone features. Roaming charges are relatively expensive in comparison to purchasing a temporary pass or upgrading a phone plan. Please remember, IU will only reimburse roaming charges when it is the most economical decision. A cost comparison to an upgraded/add on charge may be required to substantiate the expense. Within the Chrome River expense reporting, using the telecommunication expense tile and providing a simple business need statement can allow for Travel Management to approve reimbursements. When the expense is less than \$75, Travel does not require a receipt. Once the department has approved the “telecommunication-other” expense, as long as the appropriate business purpose is present, “international phone plan was needed and purchased for the trip,” Travel Management will be able to approve the reimbursement. It is critical to get into contact with your mobile device service provider to understand the plan being purchased. Travelers should make certain to include the expense on their Trip Authorization, and make sure their Trip Authorization has been approved prior to purchasing an international plan that will be reimbursed.</p> <p>Option 1</p> |

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| | <p>Business need may be met by using WiFi services within the hotel. If this can be achieved, WiFi services can be reimbursed when present on a hotel folio. To use this method, the WiFi expenses would be subtracted off the Lodging expense tile, and the WiFi charges would be claimed for reimbursement under the Telecom expense tile, then the “Internet/ WiFi” expense tile. The traveler should enable Wi-Fi and quit applications on all devices. Once in-country, go into settings menu, enable Wi-Fi, disable data roaming, and quit all applications running in the background to avoid excessive data charges.</p> <p>Option 2 Some mobile phone carriers offer purchase of international day passes up to a maximum number of days per billing cycle (AT&T and Verizon in 2022; Straight Talk Global International Card). The day passes give the traveler a certain amount of talk, text, and data in ~180 – 210 countries. Some carriers also offer an international day pass that supports higher data speeds while traveling (T-Mobile in 2022). An advantage of day passes is that the traveler does not need to remember to remove an ongoing service from the plan once back into the United States. The cost of international day passes for business use of a mobile device during travel can be reimbursed on a Chrome River travel expense report by using the Telecom expense tile, then the “Other-Telecom” expense tile.</p> <p>Option 3 Some mobile phone carriers offer international add-on plans on an enrollment basis billed monthly at the end of the month (Verizon in 2022, AT&T Passport previously). The incremental cost of adding the international plan for the month in which the travel occurred can be reimbursed on a Chrome River travel expense report by using the Telecom expense tile, then the “Other-Telecom” expense tile. The traveler should remember to deactivate global features upon return, as the cost of an ongoing monthly expense not associated with a trip will not be reimbursed.</p> <p>Option 4 Some mobile phone carriers offer enrollment in a higher-level plan that provides ongoing affordable service while traveling internationally (T-Mobile Magenta and Google Fi Unlimited Plus in 2022). While the total monthly charges for enrollment in such a plan is not reimbursable on an ongoing basis, the department may choose to reimburse the differential between the higher-level plan and the carrier’s U.S. basic plan for the month of travel (especially if this differential is below the university’s \$75 travel documentation threshold).</p> <p>Option 5 Travelers with repeated business travel to a single destination may find it cost effective to purchase a pay-as-you-go local phone, or purchase a local SIM card for use in an unlocked phone. Purchase of such a device or card itself is not a reimbursable travel expense. Such items may be acquired via BUY.IU purchase order provided the item’s primary use is for a bona fide business purpose. Reasonable daily or monthly business related phone plan expenses for a local may be reimbursed on the Chrome River expense report, Telecom expense tile, similar to if it were a U.S. phone in options 2-4 above.</p> |
| DEFINITIONS: | |
| CROSS REFERENCE: | |

Suggest researching "Best international phone plans 2022"

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/utilities/best-international-cell-phone-plans>

<https://thepointsguy.com/guide/best-international-phone-plans/>

<https://www.tomsguide.com/us/wireless-carriers-international-travel-plans,review-4327.html>