Purpose
To establish the requirements under which an employee of the Utah Department of Transportation (Department) will be issued an advance when traveling on State business.

Policy
Effective July 1, 2004, State Finance policy FIACCT 10-02.01, Travel Advances, has been modified to clarify the allowable advance amounts for lodging and to increase state credit card usage by travelers.

The new restrictions are considerably different than previously established at the Department. The following rules apply:

1. Employees who travel three or more times a year will be issued a travel credit card.
2. Employees with State issued credit cards will no longer qualify for cash advances.
3. Employees who travel fewer than three times in a year on State business will not be required to have a State issued credit card. These employees will qualify for cash advances.
4. Only 90 percent of all anticipated costs are to be advanced. The 90 percent rule previously applied only to anticipated meals and incidental costs now include lodging cost.
5. An agency Director or his designee may issue a written exception to item #1 above.
6. No cash advance is allowed for car rental on a State trip. Car rental companies will not accept cash deposits or payments.

Department policy encourages the use of the travel card. Some employees may elect not to apply for the card for personal reasons. According to item #5 above, Department management will issue a written exception that will apply to employees who are on Department payroll as of July 1, 2004 and who request an exemption to not apply for a travel card from their Region or Group Leader. This letter of exception will be sent to State Finance and maintained in Department administrative offices where it will be available as a reference during audits.
Future exceptions will be considered on an individual basis for employees with hire dates after July 1, 2004. Written request for exemption will be submitted for consideration to the Department Deputy Director.

Background
Effective July 1, 2004, Department of Administrative Services through State Finance issued an amendment to FIACCT 10-02.01, Travel – Advances, relating to the issuance of travel advances to State employees. The revised policy states that an employee traveling three or more times a year is not eligible for a cash advance although the State credit card is not mandatory. These changes affect all State travelers.

State Finance cites several reasons for the changes:

1. Industry practice for hotels/motels and restaurants has changed. Hotels/motels require a corporate credit card to secure a room deposit. Restaurants accept credit cards.

2. Checking accounts have been established for agency advance funds. This necessitates administrative oversight and clerical responsibilities to continually replenish and reconcile the accounts.

3. Finance audits have identified some employees receiving advances for lodging costs and then paying for their rooms with either the State card or their own personal credit card.

Definitions
State or corporate credit card: A card issued by the State of Utah under agreement with a major credit card company. The card is intended for use whenever a State employee travels in or out of state.

Letter of exception: A written statement issued by an agency director to clearly state the circumstances under which a certain policy may not apply to one employee or an entire group of employees.

Finance audits: The process performed by State Finance after travel vouchers are prepared and entered on the financial system. This ensures that State policies and procedures are enforced at the agencies.