

# Best Practices

TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – STATE DISASTER REIMBURSEMENT SECTION

## Introduction

The **State Mutual Aid Best Practices Guide** serves as a reference sheet with many best practices that should help increase reimbursable dollars while decreasing processing time. TDEM recommends looking through this guide and following these practices.

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## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Documentation Submission Guidelines .....	2
How to Claim Payroll Costs .....	3
Proof of Payment .....	4
Preloading the TDEM Workbook .....	5
Documentation Requests / Requests for Information (RFI) .....	8



# Documentation Requirements

TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – STATE DISASTER REIMBURSEMENT SECTION

## Submission Format

The submission format below is the recommended way to order your documentation. When submitting documentation please order it as seen below and title any saved files with the associated ID # and an appropriate title. Example: “B.1 Claimant Name” and “C.1 Claimant Name”

Documentation in section A is not required to be submitted with each request. This documentation generally stands over time and should be sent to TDEM once which will be kept on file. Please update this documentation as new versions are created for your organization.

Documentation in section B and below is required to be submitted with each request. It is understood that only documentation relevant to the claim is necessary to submit. For example, if you are not claiming rented equipment on your reimbursement claim then you do not need to provide any rented equipment documentation (Section F). For all documentation that is in your claim, please keep it ordered as listed below.

ID	Document	Included
A.1	W-9	
A.2	Direct Deposit Authorization Form	
A.3	Payroll Policy	
A.4	Mandatory Staffing Policy	
A.5	Shift Calendar	
A.6	Travel Policy	
A.7	Procurement Policy	
B.1	TDEM Workbook	
B.2	STAR	
B.3	Resource Orders (If required)	
B.4	Demobilization Orders (If Required)	
C.1	Timekeeping Document (ICS 214s, Timesheets, dispatch logs, shift sign-sheets)	
C.2	Payroll Records	
C.3	Backfill Timekeeping Document (ICS 214s, Timesheets, dispatch logs, shift sign-sheets)	
C.4	Backfill Roster	
C.5	Backfill Payroll Records	
D.1	Equipment Usage Logs (ICS 214s)	
D.2	Equipment Proof of Ownership	
E.1	Travel Policy	
E.2	Travel Invoices/Receipts	
E.3	Travel Proof of Payment	
E.4	Travel Mileage/Misc Support	
F.1	Material Invoices	
F.2	Material Proof of Payment	
G.1	Rented Equipment Invoices	
G.2	Rented Equipment Proof of Payment	
G.3	Rented Equipment Contract/Agreement	
G.4	Rented Equipment Purchase Order	
H.1	Contract Invoices	
H.2	Contract Proof of Payment	
H.3	Copy of Contract	
H.4	Purchase Orders	
H.5	Proof of Competitive Bid	



# Best Practices

## TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – STATE DISASTER REIMBURSEMENT SECTION

### How to Claim Payroll Costs

When claiming payroll costs it is recommended to double check your payroll reports / paystubs before submitting your claim. These reports should align with your reimbursement claim. A good way to double check your claim is to write down your deployment dates and compare them to your pay schedule. Gather your payroll information for all periods covered by the deployment and compare them.

Look at the example below. We can see a paystub which claims 106 hours of regular time and 230 hours of overtime for a pay period which started on 3/19/22 and ended on 4/1/22. If we compare those numbers to what was input on the reimbursement claim workbook, we can see a few interesting patterns.

### Example paystub

04/08/2022 PD END:04/01/2022

EARNINGS				DEDUCTIONS				TAXES				RECAP		
HOURS	RATE	CURRENT	YTD	CURRENT	YTD	CURRENT	YTD	CURRENT	YTD	GROSS	CURRENT	YTD		
		11,443.02	31,553.42	TTMRS	801.01	2,208.76	FEDERAL	1,570.06	1,855.06	11,443.02	31,553.42			
FIRE CB		0.00		UUHC ME	426.53	2,985.71	MEDICAR	158.86	408.08	1,728.92	2,263.14			
HRLY	106.00	25.370	2,689.22	HSSA	5.00	35.00				1,288.12	5,618.53			
OVERTI	230.00	38.060	8,753.80	DDENTAL	47.92	335.44				NET	8,425.98	23,671.75		
HOLIDAY		0.00		AAELAC	7.66	53.62								

  

LEAVE AVAILABLE	
VACATION	49.28
SICK	69.30

  

DIRECT DEPOSIT	
CHECKING	8,425.98

### Example workbook

Hours Worked					Cost		
Regular	Overtime	Overtime @ Reg	Step Up	Hours Left to Allocate	Time Cost	Benefit Cost	Total Cost
390.00	143.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$ 24,952.95	\$ 10,709.25	\$ 35,662.20
0.00	24.00	0.00	0.00	N/A	\$ 20,427.04	\$ 8,819.83	\$ 29,246.87
93.50	230.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$ 11,125.90	\$ 3,033.66	\$ 14,159.56

- Overtime perfectly aligns – 230 hours were paid out on the paystub for this period and 230 hours were claimed on the workbook. This is common with portal-to-portal labor when a deployment happens at the start of a pay period and continues through the end of the pay period. It is important to note that **your overtime claimed on your reimbursement should never exceed how much was paid on the paystub or payroll report.**
- Regular Hourly Pay does not align – 106 hours are shown on the paystub but only 93.50 hours were claimed. This is because the first 12.5 hours claimed happened on the first day after the pay period started, but the deployment had not yet happened. Hours will not always perfectly align and that is okay. Always think through which hours apply to the deployment. **But remember, any hours claimed for a pay type should never exceed**



## Best Practices

### TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – STATE DISASTER REIMBURSEMENT SECTION

**how much was actually paid on the paystub or payroll report.**

If you perform this quick comparison you will likely catch any mistakes and greatly increase the speed at which you are reimbursed. Discrepancies in payroll is a common item that causes delays for the review team and often results in RFIs that can result in weeks passing before adjustments can be fully reconciled.

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## Proof of Payment

Proof of payment can be a confusing term which is broadly interpreted in different ways. For the purposes of TDEM Mutual Aid we will breakdown what proof of payment means for the various types of costs. Below is a general definition for proof of payment.

**Definition:** Proof of payment is a payment confirmation that comes from a third-party source, most commonly a bank or financial institution. Exceptions include State Governments where the third-party source may be the comptroller or intermediary which is separated by internal controls.

Please review the cost types below and what the expected proof of payment is:

Force Account Labor – Proof of payment for force account labor (internal employees) is a payroll register or paystub.

Force Account Equipment – Proof of payment is not applicable to force account equipment (internal equipment), cost is determined and substantiated by vehicle logs/activity logs with the appropriate usage rate per local/state/federal policy.

Travel Costs – Proof of payment should be provided in the form of a jurisdiction credit card statement, bank statement, cancelled check, or proof of reimbursement to an employee (If purchases were made on an employee personal credit card).

Material / Contract / Rental Costs – Proof of payment should be provided in the form of a jurisdiction credit card statement, bank statement or cancelled check, or proof of reimbursement to an employee (If purchases were made on an employee personal credit card).

**Additional Consideration:** It is also important to keep in mind that proof of payment needs to be directly traceable to individual transactions. If you have multiple transactions within a single bulk payment, a payment breakdown is required. For example, TDEM requests proof of payment for an example invoice 11111 for \$5,000.00. You provide a cancelled check for \$12,500.00. Because these amounts do not directly tie, you should provide a check detail which lists each invoice included on that payment and how much each payment was for.

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# Best Practices

## TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – STATE DISASTER REIMBURSEMENT SECTION

### Preloading the TDEM Workbook

One benefit to the new TDEM workbook is that it can be pre-loaded with information that allows for it to be filled in more quickly after the initial data entry. To preload a workbook, perform the following steps.

1. Save a copy of the State Mutual Aid Reimbursement Form and label it as a template.
2. Open the file and fill in all the appropriate contact information

**Step 2: Contact Information**  
Instructions  
Fill in your contact information below.

**Primary Point of Contact**  
The Primary Point of Contact can be anyone from an Administrative Assistant to the department's Chief. This is the person who filled out the paperwork and can answer specific questions about the packet.

Name:  Daytime Number:   
Title:  Alternate Number:   
Email:  Fax Number:

**Alternate Contact**

Name:  Daytime Number:   
Title:  Alternate Number:   
Email:  Fax Number:

**Chief**

Name:  Daytime Number:   
Title:  Alternate Number:   
Email:  Fax Number:

**Financial Officer**

Name:  Daytime Number:   
Title:  Alternate Number:   
Email:  Fax Number:

**Emergency Management Coordinator**

Name:  Daytime Number:   
Title:  Alternate Number:   
Email:  Fax Number:

3. In step 3: Reimbursement Cost Types, select “Yes” for Force Account labor. Then proceed to Step 4: Payroll Information and fill in all information as normal until you reach the **Personnel Information** section. At this point you may need to save two versions of the workbook – a portal to portal version and a non-portal to portal version.

If you are claiming portal to portal ONLY (Does not apply to backfill) and there were no pay increases during the deployment, follow the instructions in section a - “Portal-to-Portal”. Otherwise, please follow the instructions in section b “Non-Portal-to-Portal”.

**Note:** There are two labor tabs inside of this workbook. It selects the appropriate tab based upon your answers in the Personnel Information. Portal to Portal requires some more specific selections and will only allow you to save a workbook pre-loaded with a single set of pay rates for each employee. Meaning each time employees have a change in pay rate, you will need to create a new workbook. Non-portal to portal is a bit more flexible and allows you to enter in multiple pay rates for each employee designated by a time period. Meaning you can go back and update the rates without needing to start over from scratch.

#### a. Portal to Portal

- i. “Are you requesting reimbursement for portal-to-portal compensation? – Select ‘Yes’
- ii. “Are you requesting reimbursement for any deployed members that are not portal to portal? – Select ‘No’



## Best Practices

### TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – STATE DISASTER REIMBURSEMENT SECTION

- iii. “Did any employees receive a pay increase or decrease during deployment?” – Select ‘No’ (If this is yes then this workbook will change into a non-portal to portal format to incorporate the pay increase during the deployment)
- iv. “Were there any increases/decreases to the fringe rates during deployment?” – Select ‘No’ (If this is yes then this workbook will change into a non-portal to portal format to incorporate the pay increase during the deployment)
- v. Fill out the remaining questions as normal
- vi. Save this workbook as a Portal-to-Portal Template

If you are not claiming Portal-to-Portal, please make the following selections:

#### b. Non-Portal to Portal

- i. “Are you requesting reimbursement for portal-to-portal compensation?” – Select ‘No’
- ii. “Did any employees receive a pay increase or decrease during deployment?” – Select ‘Yes’ regardless of its true or not
- iii. “Were there any increases/decreases to the fringe rates during deployment?” – Select ‘Yes’ regardless of if its true or not (Unless you are not claiming fringe at all, then you can ignore this since you selected ‘No’ to fringe benefits)
- iv. Fill out the remaining questions as normal
- v. Save this workbook as a non-portal to portal template

\*Selecting yes for the change in pay rates and fringe is important because it allows you to come back in the future and add in new pay and fringe rates for employees when they change. This is why you are filling in the Rate Start and End Date columns. If you do not know the end date that is okay. I’d recommend setting it to a year in the future and you can adjust it back to the actual end date when the rate changes.

4. Click on the “Personnel Information”, “Hourly Rates” and “Fringe Benefit Worksheet” buttons and fill in your department’s information. Only complete standard information which will remain the same between deployments. In the “Personnel Information” tab this should be Name, Job Title, Employment Status. For “Hourly Rates” you should be able to fill in all columns.

Example of pre-loaded “Personnel Information” Tab

General Personnel Information						Deployment							
#	Name	Shift Name	Job Title	Employment Status	Labor Type	Start Date	End Date	Start Time	End Time	Pre-Deployment (2 hr max)	Post-Deployment (2 hr max)	Rest Time	Total Hours to Allocate
Example	Jane Smith	A	Lieutenant	Exempt	Backfill								
Example	David Johnson	B	Lieutenant	Non-Exempt	Deployed	08/25/20	09/15/20	17:00	19:00	2.00	1.50	24.00	533.50
1	Teddy Winter		Captain	Non-Exempt									
2	Sky Finch		Lieutenant	Non-Exempt									
3	Thea Gutierrez		Firefighter	Non-Exempt									
4	Faisal Gamble		Firefighter	Non-Exempt									
5	Kien Samuels		Firefighter	Non-Exempt									
6	Lara Hernandez		Lieutenant	Non-Exempt									
7	Cooper Middleton		Firefighter	Non-Exempt									



# Best Practices

## TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – STATE DISASTER REIMBURSEMENT SECTION

Example of pre-loaded “Hourly Rates” Tab

#	Name	Pay Type	Hourly Pay Rate (w/o fringe)	Rate Start Date	Rate End Date
Example	Jane Smith	Regular	\$48.75	09/01/19	08/31/20
Example	Jane Smith	Regular	\$52.67	09/01/20	08/31/21
Example	David Johnson	OT	\$41.34	09/01/19	08/31/20
Example	David Johnson	OT	\$45.68	09/01/20	08/31/21
1	Teddy Winter	Regular	\$40.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
2	Teddy Winter	OT	\$55.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
3	Sky Finch	Regular	\$33.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
4	Sky Finch	OT	\$48.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
5	Thea Gutierrez	Regular	\$22.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
6	Thea Gutierrez	OT	\$37.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
7	Faisal Gamble	Regular	\$22.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
8	Faisal Gamble	OT	\$37.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
9	Kien Samuels	Regular	\$22.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
10	Kien Samuels	OT	\$37.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
11	Lara Hernandez	Regular	\$33.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
12	Lara Hernandez	OT	\$48.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
13	Cooper Middleton	Regular	\$22.00	09/01/20	08/31/21
14	Cooper Middleton	OT	\$37.00	09/01/20	08/31/21

Example of pre-loaded “Fringe Calculation” Tab

#	Pay Type	Fringe Start Date	Fringe End Date	Holiday	Vacation Leave	Sick Leave	Social Security	Medicare	Unemployment	Worker's Compensation	Retirement	Health Benefits	Life Insurance Benefits	Other	Total as % of Annual Salary	Notes
Example	Regular	09/01/19	08/31/20	5.00%	5.38%	4.62%	6.20%	1.45%	0.27%	0.79%	16.96%	15.89%	0.00%	0.00%	56.55%	
Example	Overtime	09/01/19	08/31/20	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6.20%	1.45%	0.27%	0.79%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.71%	
Example	Regular	09/01/20	08/31/21	5.00%	5.38%	4.62%	6.20%	1.45%	0.34%	0.83%	17.25%	16.17%	0.00%	0.00%	57.24%	Fringe Rate Increase
Example	Overtime	09/01/20	08/31/21	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6.20%	1.45%	0.34%	0.83%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	8.82%	Fringe Rate Increase
1	Regular	09/01/20	08/31/21	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	6.20%	1.45%	0.28%	0.77%	15.00%	15.00%	0.00%	0.00%	53.70%	
2	OT	09/01/20	08/31/21	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6.20%	1.45%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	7.65%	

5. One all information has been entered, save the workbook as a template.
6. When a new deployment is being documented, open the template and immediately save the workbook as a new file. Review the tabs and enter in any deployment specific information. Then continue to fill in the workbook from beginning to end as normal. You can skip over any sections you pre-loaded.



## Best Practices

TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – STATE DISASTER REIMBURSEMENT SECTION

### Documentation Requests / Requests for Information (RFI)

Document requests occur when TDEM needs additional information that it was not able to find in the original document submission. To help prevent document requests from happening, please refer to the document submission guidelines that are found earlier in this document.

If you receive a document request, there are a couple of things you can do to help make the process clearer for everyone and allow for faster processing.

1. Copy and paste the request back into your response email and directly reply to each line item. If you have relevant attached documentation, then please reference the title of the applicable documents in your response.
2. Order the response documentation / explanations in the same order they were requested
3. If you are providing a partial response, clearly identify and label the items you are responding to, and the items you are still working on.
4. If a requested item is not available, please provide an explanation and clearly identify that no documentation is being supplied for that item

Following these principles will allow TDEM to process your requests much faster and have less confusion. It is common for document requests to go back and forth between TDEM and claimant for weeks before being resolved. The goal of these principles is to reduce that back and forth.

