Temporary Change-of-Station Policy

BRIEF

Policy Summary

A temporary change-of-station (TCOS) is a temporary assignment away from a primary (home) work location to an off-site location. A TCOS assignment involves a temporary relocation to the new work location and a subsequent return to the primary (home) location upon completion of the TCOS assignment. The employee on a TCOS must be on an assignment supporting Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's (Berkeley Lab’s) mission.

Berkeley Lab may provide TCOS assistance by reimbursing allowable expenses related to TCOS travel or temporary relocation, and/or by providing an allowance for eligible employees when it is in Berkeley Lab’s interest for an employee to accept a TCOS assignment. A TCOS at an off-site location is for a minimum of 12 months to a maximum of 36 months. Domestic assignments may not exceed 36 months. For international assignments, an employee may be on a TCOS for more than 36 months with additional approval. Employees are expected to return to their primary work location at the end of the assignment. This policy defines the types of domestic and international TCOS allowances and reimbursable expenses.

Who Should Read This Policy

- New and current employees in Career, Term, Faculty, Visiting Researcher, Postdoctoral Fellow, or Graduate Student Research Assistant (GSRA) appointments who are offered a TCOS assignment
- The following employee classifications are not eligible for TCOS assistance: Limited, Rehired Retiree, and Student Assistant.
- This policy does not apply to employees on Strategic Partnership Project assignments.
- This policy does not apply to employees on Interlocation Appointments (ILA), including Multiple Location Appointments (MLA), Interjurisdictional Employee Exchange (IJE), and Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA).
- This policy does not apply to employees who are on telecommuting agreements.

To Read the Full Policy, Go To:

The POLICY tab on this wiki page

Contact Information

For more information, contact your division's Human Resources Center.

Feedback on HR policies or procedures is welcomed. Send comments to hrpolicies@lbl.gov.

POLICY

A. Purpose

A temporary change-of-station (TCOS) is a temporary assignment away from a primary (home) work location to an off-site location. A TCOS assignment involves a temporary relocation to the new work location and a subsequent return to the primary (home) location upon completion of the TCOS assignment. The employee on a TCOS must be on an assignment supporting Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory’s (Berkeley Lab’s) mission.

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off-site location is for a minimum of 12 months to a maximum of 36 months. Domestic assignments may not exceed 36 months. For international assignments, an employee may be on a TCOS for more than 36 months with additional approval. Employees are expected to return to their primary work location at the end of the assignment. This policy defines the types of domestic and international TCOS allowances and reimbursable expenses.

B. Exceptions

Requests for TCOS assignments, allowances, and/or reimbursements that exceed what is allowed under current policy or that are not expressly addressed by current policy are considered exceptions to policy. Any request for an exception to policy that includes guidance expressly stated in the DOE Acquisition Letter AL 2013-01, Contractor Domestic Personnel Assignments, requires approval by the Laboratory Chief Human Resources and Diversity Officer (CHRO) and the DOE Head of Contracting Activity (HCA). Any other requests for an exception to policy require, at a minimum, approval by the Laboratory CHRO.

C. Persons Affected

- New and current employees in Career, Term, Faculty, Visiting Researcher, Postdoctoral Fellow, or Graduate Student Research Assistant (GSRA) appointments who are offered a TCOS assignment
- The following employee classifications are not eligible: Limited, Rehired Retiree, and Student Assistant.
- This policy does apply to employees on Strategic Partnership assignments.
- This policy does not apply to employees on Interlocation Appointments (ILA), including Multiple Location Appointments (MLA), Interjurisdictional Employee Exchange (IJE), and Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA).
- This policy does not apply to employees who are on telecommuting agreements.

D. Policy Statement

1. General. At the discretion and approval of management, Berkeley Lab may request or approve a TCOS assignment for eligible employees. Employees on a TCOS may receive temporary relocation assistance and/or eligible allowance(s).
2. Distance. To qualify for a TCOS, the new TCOS work location must be 50 miles farther than the employee's current residence is from the current work location. For example, if the employee currently has a daily commute to work of 25 miles (from the current residence to the current work location), the new work location must be 75 miles from the current residence to qualify for a TCOS.
3. Length of Assignment. A TCOS assigned to an off-site work location must be a minimum of 12 months. A domestic TCOS assignment may not exceed 36 months. International assignments may be extended beyond 36 months with additional approvals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the Assignment Is</th>
<th>Please Refer to the Applicable Policy:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 30 days but does not exceed 12 months</td>
<td>TCOS policy does not apply. The Travel Policy, Section D.2.2, Long-Term Travel (Domestic or Foreign)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 12 months but does not exceed 36 months for both domestic and international assignments</td>
<td>This TCOS policy applies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater than 36 months</td>
<td>TCOS policy does not apply. See the Relocation Assistance policy.</td>
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</table>

a. All Assignments Greater Than One Year with a Field Work Proposal
   i. All assignments greater than one year must be explicitly identified in the Field Work Proposal (FWP).
   ii. FWPs must include the following for each assignee:
        1. Description of and reason for the assignment
        2. Initial start date and projected end date
        3. An estimated cost to be incurred for the assignment, including costs incurred to date as a separate element of cost

b. International Assignments Greater Than Three Years — Work Authorization Requirements. Work authorizations must include explicit approval for all international assignments expected to exceed three years.

4. Justification for Assignment. All TCOS assignments require a business justification specific to the assignment approved by Berkeley Lab management. The justification must contain the following elements:
   a. Employee(s) name, job title, employee class, and division.
   b. Anticipated length of TCOS (regardless of current funding levels on Contract 31), including estimated start and end dates
   c. Description and purpose of assignment
   d. Relevance to Berkeley Lab's programmatic goals and benefit to the Laboratory: if applicable, benefit to host organization
   e. Programmatic impact that may result from the employee's absence from the primary (home) location
   f. TCOS Costs
      i. Temporary Relocation Assistance. Identify temporary relocation assistance benefits to be provided to the employee.
      ii. Recurring Costs (If Applicable). Identify recurring costs and dislocation allowance(s) to be provided. Only employees on an International TCOS assignment are eligible for dislocation allowance. Go here to download the TCOS Dislocation Assistance Form.
Working with the Office of Institutional Assurance and Integrity (OIAI), identify any potential organizational or personal conflicts of interest and possible mitigations, and submit them to OIAI for review and approval. Contact OIAI for information at coi@lbl.gov.

5. Approval. TCOS requires approval from the Laboratory Director (or designee). No commitment, verbal or written, to a requester or to an employee shall be made and no costs shall be incurred without the approval of the Laboratory Director (or designee).

6. Temporary Relocation. The Laboratory offers a TCOS temporary relocation assistance program for costs related to the travel and temporary relocation costs of a TCOS. TCOS temporary relocation benefits are available before the effective date of the location change or when it is determined that an extended travel assignment will exceed 12 months. The current program allows flexibility for managers to determine benefits to be provided within program and project budgets. Go here for the list of allowances and reimbursable expenses that may be made available to employees.

   a. Dependents' Eligibility
      i. Certain TCOS relocation benefits are available to employees and their dependents. When dependents are relocating with the employee, this definition will apply: "The employee's spouse/domestic partner and family member(s) who reside with the employee at the time of acceptance of a job offer or realignment to a new work location, and who will reside with the employee at the destination location."
      ii. Meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) are not available to the spouse/domestic partner and family members as part of the housing assistance benefit, with the exception of the house-hunting trips (spouse/domestic partner only) and temporary lodging (family).
      iii. If Berkeley Lab employs both the employee and spouse/domestic partner, only one set of coordinated TCOS assistance benefits will apply.

   b. Program Counseling, Payments, and Reimbursement. The Laboratory's temporary relocation program is managed through a third-party vendor. Employees must consult with the third-party vendor regarding temporary relocation and reimbursable costs prior to committing any relocation expenditures.

   c. TCOS Temporary Relocation Expenses. Temporary relocation expenses and allowances will be detailed in the TCOS Agreement Letter Template with Repayment Agreement Statement. Available TCOS temporary relocation expenses include travel to the new work location, movement of certain personal belongings, and other costs incidental to the temporary relocation. See the TCOS Supplemental Document for the list of temporary relocation options that may be made available to employees for both domestic and international TCOS.

      i. Costs related to temporary relocation are to be incurred no later than 120 calendar days from the employee's effective date of the assignment at the new work location. Berkeley Lab will process payments related to appropriate relocation expenses by using the following methods:
         1. Pay service providers directly for the relocation assistance that an employee receives.
         2. Reimburse employees for eligible and pre-approved expenses that they have previously paid.
         3. Provide a lump-sum allowance for certain allowable categories of relocation expenses.
      ii. Eligible expense reimbursements must be submitted through the third-party vendor's website. Original receipts should be provided to the third-party vendor within 30 calendar days of incurring the expense. It is important to remember that:
         1. Temporary relocation expenses must be separate and distinct from business expenses. During the period in which relocation expenses are incurred, regular business travel must be reported separately from relocation expenses.
         2. If an employee must take regular business travel during the relocation phase of their TCOS, a separate travel authorization must be processed in accordance with the Travel Policy. Extended travel will not be authorized while an employee is on a TCOS assignment.
      iii. The employee cannot use the Berkeley Lab credit card or other Berkeley Lab funds for relocation expenses.

      iv. Credit card statements cannot be used in lieu of receipts.

   7. Recurring Expenses and Allowances. Employees on an approved TCOS may be eligible for monthly allowances and reimbursement of other allowable expenses during the course of the TCOS assignment. TCOS allowances and reimbursable expenses are available before the effective date of the location change or when it is determined that an extended travel assignment will exceed 12 months. The current program allows flexibility for managers to determine costs within program and project budgets. See the TCOS Supplemental Document and the TCOS Dislocation Allowance Worksheet.

      a. Recurring Expenses. Available for Domestic and International TCOS assignments and will be detailed in the TCOS Agreement Letter Template with Repayment Agreement Statement. Download the TCOS Supplemental document for the list of recurring expenses that may be made available to employees.

      b. Dislocation Allowance. Available for International TCOS assignments only and will be detailed in the TCOS Agreement Letter Template with Repayment Agreement Statement. Dislocation allowances will cease if the TCOS becomes a permanent relocation. Go here for the list of expense allowances that may be made available to employees on an International TCOS assignment.

      c. Note: Employees who require business travel to their home location but no longer maintain a primary residence or are renting out the primary residence will be reimbursed for lodging and M&IE in accordance with the Travel Policy. Otherwise, the employee is expected to stay in his/her primary residence and lodging, and M&IE will not be covered.

   8. Tax Implications. Most relocation and dislocation allowance payments made to an employee or on behalf of the employee that are directly related to a TCOS are considered taxable income. More information on tax implications can be found in the Implementing Documents.

   9. Health & Welfare Benefits. A TCOS is considered a qualifying event and allows employees to modify their health insurance within 30 calendar days of their move. Employees should contact the Benefits Office before they move to their new location. This applies when employees move to their temporary duty station and upon their return to their primary (home) location.

   10. Foreign Assignments. All international TCOS assignments are subject to the Laboratory's foreign travel authorization process, as described in the Laboratory Travel Policy.

   11. TCOS Agreement
      a. Once a TCOS assignment is approved by the Laboratory Director (or designee) and TCOS expenses have been determined, a TCOS Agreement must be executed by the division and the employee. The TCOS agreement is a memorandum of
understanding that details the TCOS assignment and costs associated with the TCOS, and includes a repayment agreement statement. The TCOS Agreement will be coordinated through the division's HR contact.

b. The repayment agreement statement states that employees who decide to return to their original work location before the end of their TCOS assignment or who voluntarily terminate employment prior to completing their temporary assignment must refund Berkeley Lab the full amount of the travel and temporary relocation costs.

12. **Extension of Assignment.** Extension of a TCOS assignment must be approved in advance of the date detailed in the TCOS Agreement to the employee. The justification must be reviewed and updated. Recurring expenses and allowances, travel reimbursements, and per diem will not be paid out unless an authorized extension is processed prior to the TCOS assignment end date. A domestic TCOS assignment may not exceed a total of 36 months. International assignments may be extended beyond 36 months with additional approvals.

13. **Completion of Assignment.** Due to the temporary nature of the TCOS, the employee and accompanying dependents will return directly to their primary (home) location at the completion of the assignment. As stated in Section D.6, **Temporary Relocation**, of this policy, the Laboratory offers TCOS relocation assistance for costs to return the employee and dependents to the primary location.
   a. Available TCOS relocation expenses at the completion of the assignment include travel to the primary location, movement of certain personal belongings, and other costs incidental to the return home. The terms and conditions of the return are defined in the TCOS Agreement, executed prior to the start of the assignment. See **Implementing Documents** for the list of relocation options that may be made available to employees for their return from either domestic or international TCOS.
   b. TCOS recurring expenses and allowances will cease upon the employee's return to his or her primary (home) work location.

14. **Separation of Employment**
   a. **Voluntary Separation**
      i. If an employee voluntarily resigns from Berkeley Lab during the TCOS assignment, eligibility for temporary relocation benefits, recurring expenses, and/or dislocation allowances will cease immediately, and all relocation benefits that are under way will be concluded. Any eligible relocation benefits that have not been utilized or received by the employee as of the termination date will be forfeited. Also see Section D.11.b, above.
      ii. If an employee retires from Berkeley Lab upon completion of the TCOS assignment and meets the eligibility requirements, the employee may be returned to the primary (home) work location in accordance with Section D.13, **Completion of Assignment**, above.
   b. **Involuntary Separation**
      i. Employees laid off or affected by a Reduction-in-Force will be returned to the primary (home) work location in accordance with Section D.13, **Completion of Assignment**, above.
      ii. Employees who are dismissed for cause may, at the discretion of Laboratory management, have their relocation benefits and/or dislocation allowances discontinued immediately, and all their relocation benefits concluded.

### E. Roles and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chief Human Resources and Diversity Officer (CHRO)</td>
<td>Has the functional responsibility for this policy and overall administration of the TCOS program</td>
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</table>
| Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) | • Serves as a resource for cost-allowability considerations related to the TCOS program  
• Processes payments to the employee or vendors based on information provided by the third-party vendor |
| Employees                                  | Have the responsibility to adhere to the provisions of this policy and its implementing procedures |
| HR Department                              | Has the responsibility to advise management and employees on how to comply with this policy |
| Managers and supervisors                  | Have the responsibility to adhere to the provisions of this policy |
| Third-party relocation vendor              | • Provides general advice to prospective employees of eligible relocation expenses during the offer process  
• Assists and counsels relocating employees on the elements of the relocation program  
• Processes requests for relocation payments and reimbursement  
• Advises Berkeley Lab on allowable, reimbursable relocation costs |

### F. Definitions/Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>Temporary Change-of-Station (TCOS)</td>
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Reasonable commute distance

A reasonable commute distance is 50 miles or less from the employee’s primary work location. To qualify for Temporary Change-of-Station, the new official duty station must be at least 50 miles farther from the employee’s current residence than the primary (home) work location is from the same residence. For example, if the old official station is three miles from the current residence, the new official station must be at least 53 miles from that same residence.

Conflict-of-interest

A conflict-of-interest is a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgment or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest. A personal conflict-of-interest generally involves the financial interests of the employee, or his or her near relatives. An organizational conflict-of-interest is one in which prior knowledge or work may provide an unfair competitive advantage.

Dependents

The term "dependents" refers to the employee’s spouse/domestic partner and family member(s) who reside with the employee at the time of acceptance of a job offer or reassignment to a new work location, and who will reside with the employee at the destination location.

Field Work Proposal (FWP)

Proposal forms frequently used in responding to a DOE request for proposal (RFP)

G. Recordkeeping Requirements

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<tr>
<td>Budget Office</td>
<td>Maintains FWP documents</td>
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<td>Controller’s Office</td>
<td>Maintains documentation to support payments made through the Accounts Payable and Payroll payment processes</td>
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<tr>
<td>HR Department</td>
<td>• Maintains information regarding TCOS agreements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Maintains the Laboratory Director’s delegation of authority</td>
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H. Implementing Documents

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<th>Document Title</th>
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<td>TCOS Supplemental Document</td>
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I. Contact Information

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Feedback on HR policies or procedures is welcomed. Send comments to hrpolicies@lbl.gov.

J. Revision History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Revision</th>
<th>By whom</th>
<th>Revision Description</th>
<th>Section(s) affected</th>
<th>Change Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/2/2012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>M. Bello</td>
<td>Rewrite for wiki</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Minor</td>
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M. Bello

Divided Relocation and Change-of-Station policies into two separate policies and renamed them Relocation Assistance and Change-of-Station.

Change-of-Station assigned its own policy number 02.04.005.00. Added this note: “This policy is under review for revision. New employees should read the Relocation Assistance policy. Current employees should read this policy.”

9/13/2013 N/A. Draft for employee comment.

M. Bello

Rewrite policy to define the Lab’s revised TCOS program.

2/22/2016 3 L. Westphal

Rewrite policy to define the Lab’s revised TCOS program.

Source Requirements Documents

- DOE Contract No. DE-AC02-05CH11231, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 31.205-35, Relocation Costs
- DOE Contract No. DE-AC02-05CH11231, Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) 31.205-46, Travel Costs
- DOE Contract No. DE-AC02-05CH11231, Mod No. M046, Section J, Appendix A, Advanced Understandings on Human Resources

Other Driving Requirements

- Travel Policy, Berkeley Lab Requirements and Policies Manual
- Interlocation Appointments (ILAs) – Financial Management, Berkeley Lab Requirements and Policies Manual

Other References

- Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) 302, Relocation Allowances
- Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) 302, Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel Allowances
- Department of State, Spendable Income
- Department of State, Allowance Rates, [Allowances by Location](http://aoprals.state.gov/Web920/location.asp?menu_id=95)

Implementing Documents

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