Travel Refresher and FAQs

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Roadmap

- Guiding Principles for Travel
- Per Diems
- Transportation
- Travel Status & Lesser of Mileage Rule
- Miscellaneous Items & Taxable Travel
- Audit Observations
- Reminders and Best Practices
- Travel Resources
- Creating an Expense Report Walkthrough
- Questions?

Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles for Travel

The Agency's Finance Office, or other appropriate authority, is responsible for determining if each travel scenario is actual, reasonable, necessary, in the best interest of the State and appropriately supported by itemized receipts or other back-up documentation.

Guiding Principles for Travel

When questions arise, the traveler and supervisor should work with the Agency's Finance Office, or other appropriate authority, to arrive at a determination. The determination should consider information in published travel guidance, including but not limited to:

- Agency travel policies;
- *OSC Travel Manual*;
- OSC *Guide to Financial Operations* (GFO); and
- OSC Travel Regulations (2 NYCRR Part 8).

Guiding Principles for Travel

We recommend agencies use the B.R.A.I.N. method to determine if the expenses are appropriate to claim for reimbursement.

- **B**EST INTEREST OF THE STATE
- **R**EASONABLE
- **A**CTUAL
- **I**TEMIZED RECEIPTS
- **N**ECESSARY

Per Diems

Per Diems

- General Rules
  - Rates are set for the month of travel and lodging location
  - Overnight per diems follow the order:
    - Dinner – Lodging – Breakfast

Per Diems

- General Rules
  - Extra meals
    - Breakfast – at least 1 hour before employee's normal start time
    - Dinner – at least 2 hours after employee's normal end time
  - When meals and/or lodging are provided as a part of a conference or event, additional reimbursement is not permitted
    - Meals include those specifically identified as breakfast or dinner

Transportation

Transportation Expenses

- Travelers should use the most efficient and cost-effective method of transportation available
  - Factors to consider:
    - Distance traveled
    - Travel time
    - Number of travelers
    - Number of locations to be visited
    - Type of transportation available
  - Documented agency policies

AC 160-S/SFS Mileage Detail Page Requirement

Online Agencies

- Travelers, or their proxies, must complete the Mileage Detail page in the Statewide Financial System (SFS) to document each leg of their trip.

- When a proxy enters an expense report into SFS, the proxy must either:

  – Attach the AC 160-S completed by the traveler to support the line-by-line mileage claims in the SFS Mileage Detail page, or

  – Use the Snapshot Review Page certification, which is where the traveler reviews, signs, and attaches the snapshot.

AC 160-S/SFS Mileage Detail Page Requirement

Bulkload Agencies

Travelers **must** complete the AC 160-S when claiming reimbursement for mileage. The agency **must** maintain a copy of the completed form.

Transportation Expenses

Rental Car

- Select the most cost-effective vehicle available.

- The compact vehicle type offers the lowest rate and should be the first option selected.

- If there is a business need for a larger vehicle, the traveler must obtain prior approval from the Agency's Finance Office.

- Documentation must be attached to the expense report supporting the need for the larger vehicle, along with the Agency Finance Office's approval.

Transportation Expenses

Rental Car - Insurance

- In lieu of an OGS centralized rental vehicle contract, travelers should acquire Collision Damage Waiver Insurance or Loss Damage Waiver Insurance and up to $1M Extended Liability Insurance coverage when renting a vehicle

- The additional cost for this insurance will be reimbursed, so long as the cost is receipted.

Transportation Expenses

Amtrak

- NYS has a single ticket fare agreement with Amtrak for NYS employees. Each one-way trip between the Albany/Rensselaer or Hudson stations and New York City's Penn Station is not to exceed $68.

- Travelers may purchase tickets at this rate using one of the following methods:
  - At an Amtrak station using an official NYS ID
  - From the authorized state travel agency (processing fee applies)

- If travel plans change, tickets are to be altered **PRIOR** to the departure of the original train (via the Amtrak mobile app, website, ticket counter, phone, or travel agent).

Transportation Expenses

Airfare

- Must use OGS contract with Southwest and American Airlines.

- Employees may only use noncontract fares when the fare saves $200 or more per round trip, and only after having obtained prior approval from their agency's Finance Office.

  - Other exceptions include emergency or contract flights that require the traveler to incur unnecessary overnight lodging costs

Travel Status & Lesser of Mileage Rule

Determining Travel Status

- Employees must be 35 miles or more from both their home AND their official station

- Official Station:

  - Usual work location

  - Designated by the agency, in the best interest of the State

  - Generally, cannot be reimbursed for travel between home and official station (i.e., commuting mileage)

Travel in Proximity of Official Station or Home

- Reimbursement of transportation expenses is allowed between:
  - Home and an alternate work location
  - Official station and an alternate work location
  - Alternate work locations
- Lesser of Mileage Rule
  - Reimbursement using the lesser of the mileage between the employee's:
    - home and the alternate work location, or
    - official station and the alternate work location

Proximity Travel Example

Proximity Travel Example

Part of Trip	Miles Reimbursed
Home to Official Station	0 – This is never reimbursed.
Official Station to Alt 1	30 Miles
Alt 1 to Alt 2	50 Miles
Alt 2 to Official Station	15 miles
Official Station to Home	0 – This is never reimbursed.
Total Claimable Miles:	**95 Miles**

- All travel takes place within 35 miles of the Official Station, so this is considered Proximity Travel.

- Travel between home and official station is never reimbursed.

- Mileage between Official Station and Alternate Work Locations can be claimed.

Home

Alt 2

Leg 3: 15mi

Official Station

Leg 1: 30mi

Leg 2: 50mi

Alt 1

Proximity Travel Example 2

Leg 3: 30mi

Leg 1: 40mi

Official Station

Home

Alt. 1

Leg 2: 25mi
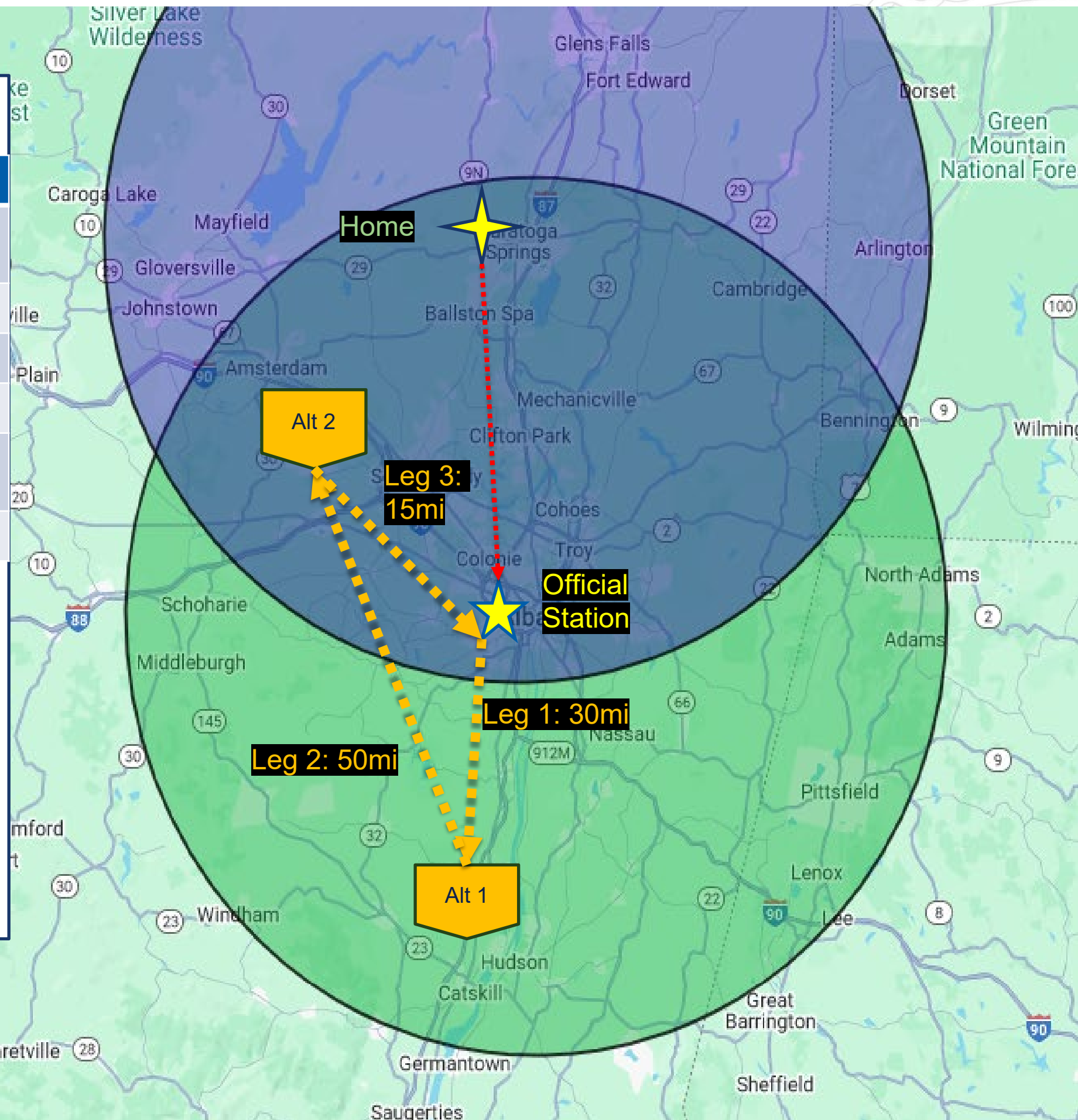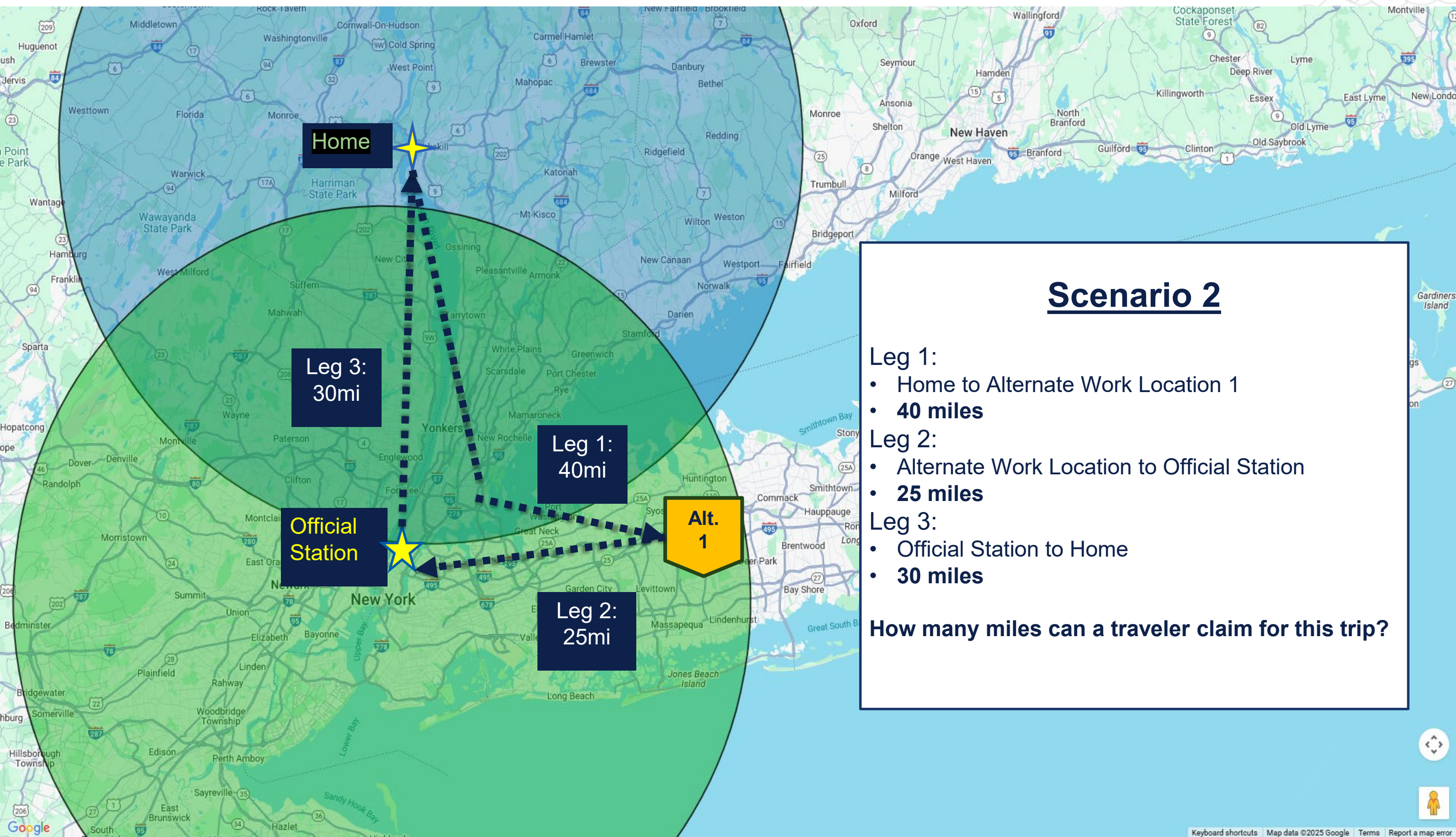
Scenario 2

Leg 1:
- Home to Alternate Work Location 1
- **40 miles**

Leg 2:
- Alternate Work Location to Official Station
- **25 miles**

Leg 3:
- Official Station to Home
- **30 miles**

How many miles can a traveler claim for this trip?

Proximity Travel Example 2 Explained
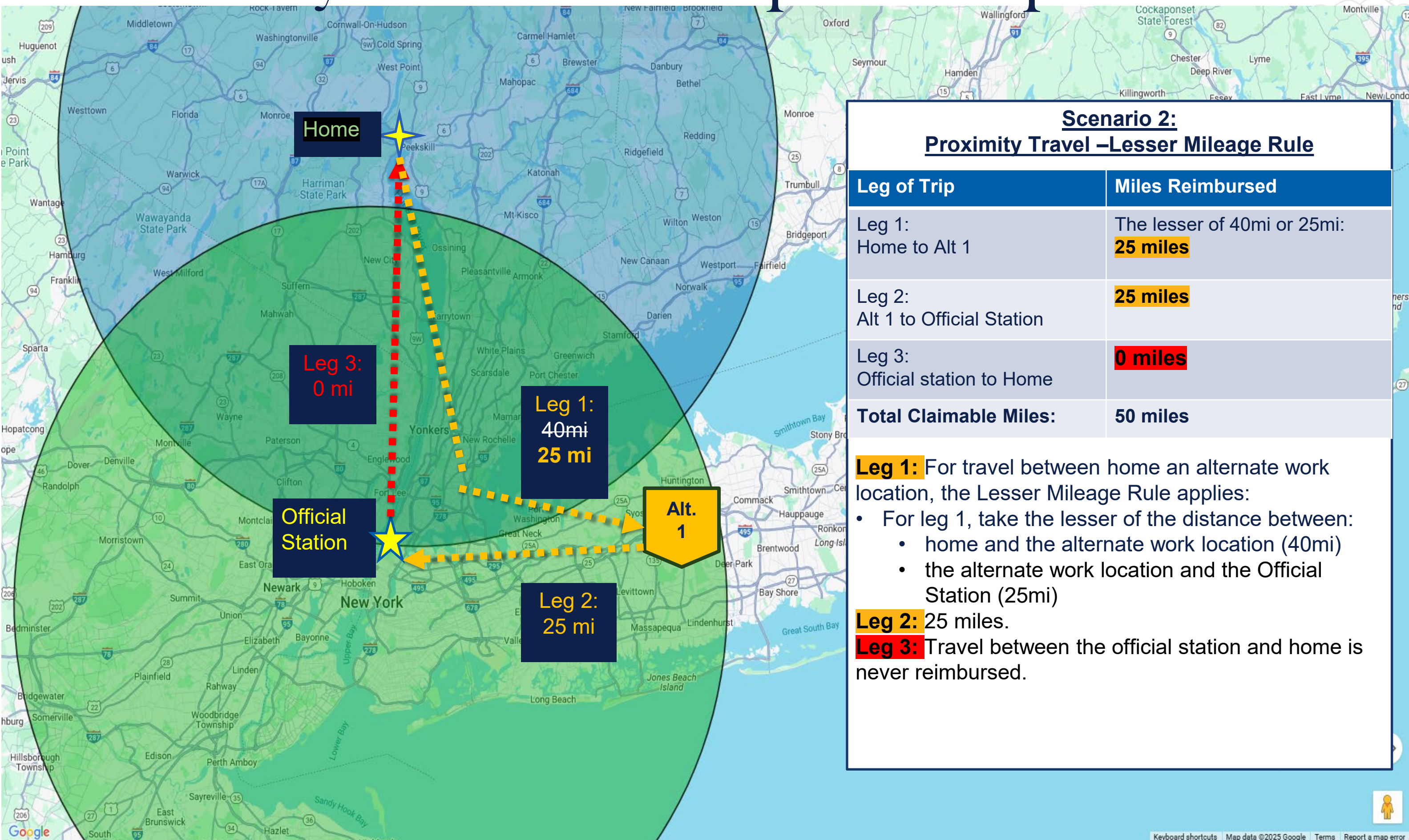
Scenario 2:
Proximity Travel –Lesser Mileage Rule

Leg of Trip	Miles Reimbursed
Leg 1: Home to Alt 1	The lesser of 40mi or 25mi: **25 miles**
Leg 2: Alt 1 to Official Station	**25 miles**
Leg 3: Official station to Home	**0 miles**
Total Claimable Miles:	**50 miles**

Leg 1: For travel between home an alternate work location, the Lesser Mileage Rule applies:
- For leg 1, take the lesser of the distance between:
  - home and the alternate work location (40mi)
  - the alternate work location and the Official Station (25mi)

Leg 2: 25 miles.
Leg 3: Travel between the official station and home is never reimbursed.

Map labels: Home, Leg 3: 0 mi, Official Station, Leg 1: 40mi 25 mi, Alt. 1, Leg 2: 25 mi

Proximity Travel Example 3

Scenario 3

Leg 1:
- Home to Alternate Work Location 1
- **15 miles**

Leg 2:
- Alternate Work Location 1 to Alt 2
- **25 miles**

Leg 3:
- Alt 2 to Alt 3
- **40 miles**

Leg 4:
- Alt 3 to Home
- **25 miles**

How many miles can a traveler claim for this trip?

Hint: The distance from Alt 1 to the OS is 10 miles, and the distance from Alt 3 to OS is 50 miles.
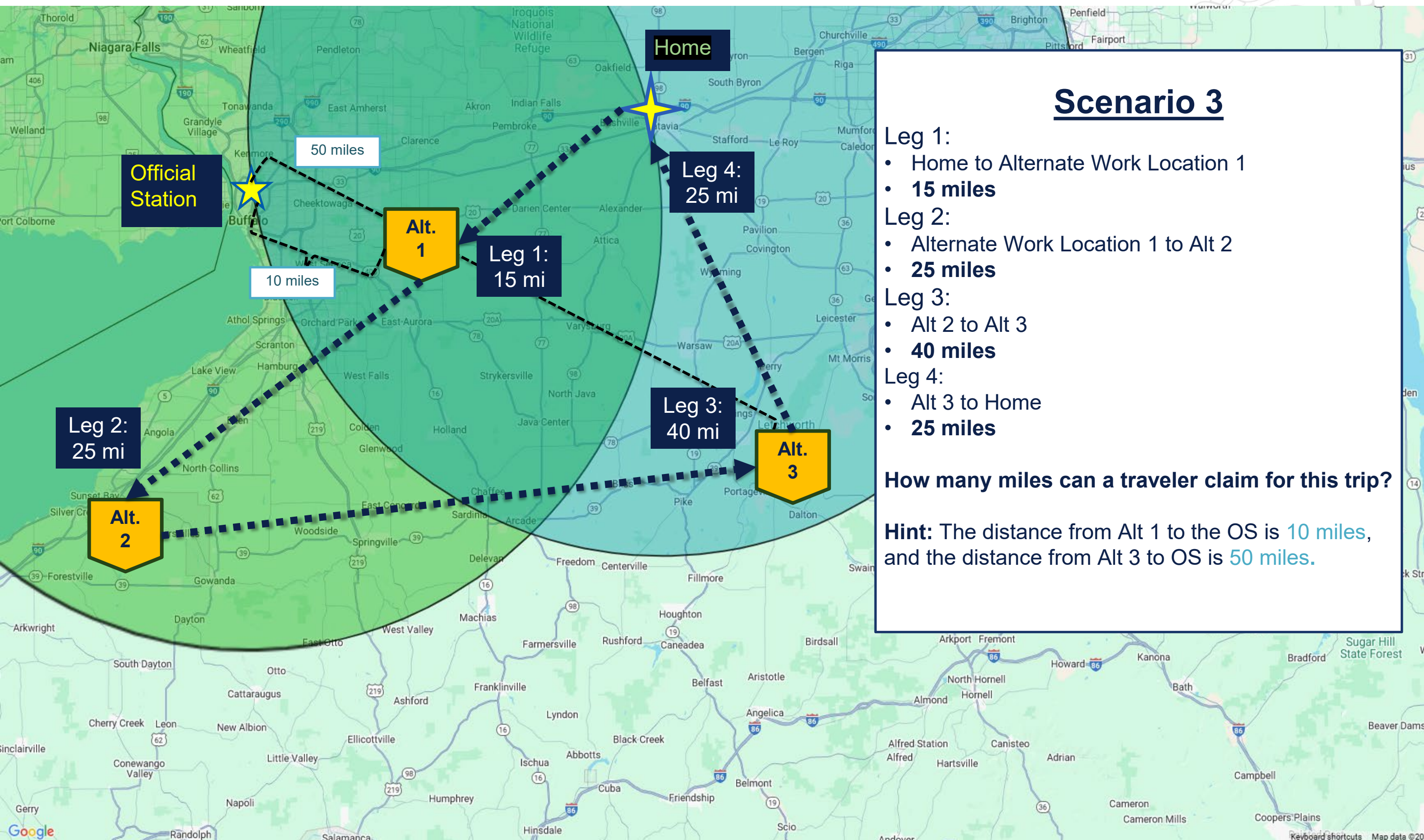
Proximity Travel Example 3 Explained

Scenario 3:
Proximity Travel –Lesser Mileage Rule

Leg of Trip	Miles Reimbursed
Leg 1: Home to Alt 1	The lesser of 10mi or 15mi: **10 miles**
Leg 2: Alt 1 to Alt 2	**25 miles**
Leg 3: Alt 2 to Alt 3	**40 miles**
Leg 4: Alt 3 to Home	The lesser of 50 mi or 25 mi: **25 miles**
Total Claimable Miles:	**100 miles**

Leg 1: For travel between home an alternate work location, the Lesser Mileage Rule applies:
- For leg 1, take the lesser of the distance between:
  - home and the alternate work location (15 mi)
  - the alternate work location and the Official Station (10mi)
- Similarly, leg 4 is between an alternate location and home, so again, take the lesser of the distance between Alt 3 and Home, and Alt 3 and Official Station (25 miles).

Map labels:
- Home
- Official Station
- Leg 1: 15 mi
- Leg 4: 25 mi
- 50 miles (Leg 4)
- 10 miles (Leg 1)
- Alt. 1
- Alt. 2
- Alt. 3
- Leg 2: 25 mi
- Leg 3: 40 mi

Miscellaneous Items & Taxable Travel

Miscellaneous Items

- Travel expenses should follow B.R.A.I.N.
  - **B**EST INTEREST OF THE STATE
  - **R**EASONABLE
  - **A**CTUAL
  - **I**TEMIZED RECEIPTS
  - **N**ECESSARY
- Agency Discretion
  - Agency discretion does **not** allow a **broader** interpretation of the current rules and guidelines

Taxable Travel

Examples of taxable travel include:

- Meal per diem amounts paid in excess of the rates allowed by the federal government

- Meal allowances paid for day trips

- Mileage reimbursements in excess of the maximum federal rates

- Improper designations of employee's official stations

Audit Observations

Audit Observations

- Unreconciled travel card transactions

- Duplicate reimbursements

- Mileage and fuel charges being claimed for personal vehicle use

- Missing or incorrect travel dates

- Incorrect mileage claimed or incomplete addresses

Audit Observations

- Mileage calculator/cost-analysis not completed
- Incorrect per diems
- Missing or incomplete justifications for exceeding per diems
- Incorrect expense types selected
- Incorrect or no documentation attached
- If there is an exemption, the Agency must document the business purpose for it

Reminders and
Best Practices

Reminders and Best Practices

- Know the State's travel rules and regulations
  - Ensure the most economical method of travel is used and charges are in the best interest of the State
- Obtain and attach prior approvals, if required
  - e.g., justification for exceeding per diems
- Periodically review employees' official stations
- Submit Expense Reports and reconcile travel card charges within 30 days

Ensure the following:

- All necessary fields in the expense report are complete and accurate
- Expense line dates are within travel event start and end dates, as applicable

Reminders and Best Practices

Ensure the following:

- Day/Extra meals correspond with employees' work schedules

- Prior approvals are documented and attached

- ALL receipts are attached (or the "no receipt" button in SFS is checked and a reason is provided)

- ALL travel card charges in SFS related to the travel event must be pulled into an expense report from the employee's wallet and listed as a travel card charge

- Certain travel card charges are offset against reimbursements

- Denied expense reports are corrected before being resubmitted

- Questions regarding expense reports are sent to your agency's finance office

Travel Resources

Travel Resources

- <u>NYS Executive Orders</u>
- State Finance Law
  - See <u>Article 7, Section 109 – Proofs Required Upon Audit by the Comptroller</u>
- New York Codes Rules and Regulations
  - See <u>2 NYCRR Part 8 – Traveling Expenses</u>
- *<u>OSC Travel Manual</u>*
- OSC *<u>Guide to Financial Operations</u>*
  - <u>Chapter XIII – Employee Travel Expense Reimbursement</u>
- <u>Other NYS Travel Information</u>
- <u>GSA Lodging and Per Diem Rates</u>
- <u>OGS Travel Contracts</u>
- <u>Travel Advisories</u>
- <u>OSC Travel Webpage</u>

Creating an Expense Report in SFS

Creating an Expense Report

Selecting the Type of Expense Report

Type of Expense Report

Wondering what's changed? SFS has added some options to make entering expense reports easier. More information can be found here. If you want to enter an expense report as you have before, select "Start with a blank Expense Report".

What type of Expense Report do you want to create today?

Day Trip >	Can I use this?
Mileage-Only >	Can I use this?
Non-Travel Expense >	Can I use this?
Pick up where I left off: Finish an Expense report draft >	
None of the above: Start with a blank Expense Report >	

How do you want to start? ✕

Select "Blank" to create a new Expense Builder draft or "Copy" to copy from a Template, prior Expense Report or Draft.

[Blank]   [Copy]   [Cancel]

Drafts and Templates

State Expenditures

Drafts and Templates	4
Not Submitted	2
Awaiting Approval	0
Returned	0
Pending Payment	0
View All	2

4 rows

	Draft ID ⇅	Draft Name ⇅	Template ID ⇅	Template Name ⇅	Profile Descr ⇅	Updated Date ⇅	Travel End Date ⇅
⌄	T000006130	Site Visit Model	MDLDAYTRIP	Day Trip Model Template	Day Trip	07/21/2025	07/17/2025
⌄	D000250959	Site Visit Model	MDLDAYTRIP	Day Trip Model Template	Day Trip	07/21/2025	07/17/2025
⌄	D000250958		MDLDAYTRIP	Day Trip Model Template	Day Trip	07/21/2025	07/21/2025
⌄	D000250957		MDLMILEAGE	Mileage-Only Model Template	Mileage-Only	07/21/2025	07/21/2025

Creating from a Report Builder

Creating from a Blank Expense Report

Expense Report General Information

Report NEXT

General Information

*Business Purpose	Agency Visit
*Description	Audit
Default Location Description	
Reference	
Agency TA ID	
B-1184	
Normal Work Hours Start	08:00 AM
Normal Work Hours End	04:00 PM
Official Station	1220 Washington Avenue/12226
Employee Home Address	Albany, NY 12205-3076
Work Location	
*Starting Location	Albany, NY 12205-3076 Select Location
ZIP/Postal	
*Destination Location	602 Surf Ave., Brooklyn, NY Select Location
ZIP/Postal	11224
Out of State	
*Travel Date From	07/10/2025
*Travel Date To	07/10/2025
*Travel Start Time	06:00 AM
*Travel End Time	07:00 PM

+ Add Expense

My Official Station	My Home Address

Address Line 1	
Address Line 2	
City	
State	NY
Postal Code	
Country	USA
Save this address to favorites	No

Adding Expenses to an Expense Report

Mileage

Mileage - Automobile - 07/10/2025

*Date	07/10/2025
*Expense Type	Mileage - Automobile
Description	

Mileage

*Miles [ ] x 0.7000

Mileage Details ?

Payment Details

*Amount 0.00

Additional Information

📎 Attach Receipt (Required)

🗃 Accounting

*Date	07/11/2025
*Expense Type	Mileage - Automobile
Description	Split# 1C

Mileage

*Miles 1.50 x 0.7000

Mileage Details ?

Payment Details

*Amount 1.05

Additional Information

📎 Attach Receipt

🗃 Accounting

1	Detailed Mileage Visited
2	Review Not Started

Step 1 of 2: Detailed Mileage

Enter the information below related to your expense and then click Next. This information will be used to create a line on your expense report for the remaining amount of this expense.

🔵 Mileage Total 2.10

[+] [Edit] [Upload Mileage] Mileage Template   File uploaded [ ]

Date ↑↓	Expense Type ↑↓	*Start Location	*End Location	Actual Mileage ↑↓	Mileage Claimed ↑↓	Standard Distance Rate ↑↓	Amount ↑↓
07/10/2025	Mileage - Automobile	110 State Street, Albany, NY 12236	525 East St., Rennselaer, NY 12144	1.50	1.50	0.7000	1.05
07/11/2025	Mileage - Automobile	525 East St., Rennselaer, NY 12144	110 State Street, Albany, NY 12236	1.50	1.50	0.7000	1.05

1	Detailed Mileage Visited
2	Review Visited

Step 2 of 2: Review

Total Charge Summary	Total Expense
Mileage - Automobile	2.10
Total	2.10

Adding a Travel Card Charge

Meal Per Diems & Due to State

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Review & Submit

Audit

Expense Report Summary

Total (16 Items)	628.30 USD
Employee Credits	245.40 USD
Prepaid Expenses	444.82 USD
Due to Employee	183.48 USD

Additional Information

📊 View Analytics	›
📋 Notes	›
🖨 View Printable Report	›

[General Information] [Expense Entry] [**Submit**]

Last Saved 05/05/2020 1:43PM

Approval Status

Report ID 0001438781   Pending

Total (14 Items)

[+] Add   [🗑] Delete   [▼] Filter   [...] More

▼ **Wednesday, February 06, 2019**

Taxi / Car Service	50.38 VISA
Recpted Lodging	226.00 VISA
Mileage - Automobile Split# 1C	8.70
Parking Fees	20.00
PDiem-Ovrngt Extra Dinner	49.00

▼ **Tuesday, February 05, 2019**

Return To State Charges Dinner	42.72 VISA
PDiem-Ovrngt Meals	61.00
Taxi / Car Service	25.00

▼ **Monday, February 04, 2019**

Return To State Charges Dinner	19.20 VISA
Taxi / Car Service	9.32 VISA
Mileage - Automobile Split# 0P	8.70
PDiem-Ovrngt Meals	61.00
PDiem-Ovrngt Extra Brkfst	12.00

▼ **Thursday, January 31, 2019**

Train Tickets	97.20 VISA

Expense Report Summary

🏠 🔍 ⋮ 🧭

Report ID 0001438781   Total Expenses 628.30   N0   01

Expand All   Collapse All   [Print]   [Personalize]

▸ Header Information
▸ Risks and Exceptions (2)
▸ Summary
▸ Line Details (14)
▸ Mileage (2)
▸ Related Travel and Expenses
▸ Attachments (8)
▸ Notes and Comments (0)
▸ Approval History

Questions?

Questions

- Thank you for submitting questions in advance.
- Future questions should be directed to your agency's finance office. If you require additional assistance, please contact:

    ## travel@osc.ny.gov

Q&A

Thank you for submitting questions in advance.
Please also feel free to email: travel@osc.ny.gov