

# **BUSINESS TRIPS: RULES BUSINESS PEOPLE ON THE ROAD SHOULD KNOW**



There are certain jobs that go hand in hand with business trips. Sales representatives, CEOs and field workers absolutely need to travel to do their jobs. But there are also many other workers who are required to go on business trips on behalf of their employers in disregard of whatever may stand in their contracts. Explore several useful tips for European businessmen on the road.

The only basic requirement is that the extent of travel is within reason. However, employees should not reject going on the business trip without adequate consideration – if the employee is in any labor law related way obliged to make that trip, their employer may consider a dismissal without notice after a disciplinary warning letter.

## **The Boss Owns the Frequent Flyer Miles**

Those who have to travel large distances for their work and often fly, usually also participate in some kind of a bonus program. This is reasonable and useful – for their employer. The rule is that any frequent flyer miles earned on the job belong to the employer, since the person who ordered and paid for the flight should be on the receiving end of special airline benefits. However, distribution of bonus miles or points may also be regulated by job contracts. This “obligation to surrender” also applies to all other external benefits that employees receive on the job.

## **Compensations for Delayed Flights Are Due to Employees**

Business trips are usually scheduled to the most minute of details and tend to be nerve-wracking as a result. Once delays enter the picture, employees on the road get rightfully nervous and often have to come up with a plan B. The Flight Delay Compensation Regulation which is valid throughout the entire European Union, states that passengers are entitled to receive compensation if they arrive at their destination more than three hours later than planned due to a delay or cancellation caused by the airline.

“Only few business travelers know that they are entitled to compensations of up to 600 Euros, not their employers; even if the trip was paid for by the company,” explained Jonas Swarzenski, head of the rights department at Flightright. „This also counts for all state officials on business trips.”

## **No Work-related Accidents during Leisure Time**

If you are already out there for your boss, it is only natural to enjoy the foreign place you are in once the job is done. But take care: If you are involved in a mugging or accident while you are out on your own during a business trip, this does not necessarily qualify for a work-related accident. Your social accident insurance won't be activated only because you're traveling for your job. The rule around European countries is that work related insurance does not apply to personal matters outside of work-related activities.

## **Saving Taxes: Private Calls on Business Trips**

Most employees use their phone on business trips. It is not only necessary to consult with colleagues, partners and employers, but private calls can hardly wait either. It is good to know that

phone bills are tax-deductible as income-related expenses, once the business-related trip takes longer than a week. Private matters at home can only be regulated from afar by causing costs which exceed the regular human needs

### **Driving with Your Own Car: The Employer Pays for Accidents**

If the employees use their own car for business-related activities and get involved in an accident on the way, they can demand damage compensation from the employer. However, the respective driver needs to be approved by the employer in advance and the accident needs to be caused by minimal negligence at best.

### **Travelling Time Does Not Always Equal Working Time**

Not every employee is lucky enough to receive full compensation for the time spent on business trips. For instance, in Germany, with reference to the existing labor agreement, the Federal Labor Court rejected the lawsuit of a state official, who demanded compensation for the time spent travelling to external meetings in the form of overtime hours.

However, a business trip does not have to be appraised as working time, if the employee is free to spend the time during arrival and departure as they please. Only when the employees are not able to organize this active travelling time themselves and e.g. have to prepare for the upcoming meeting on the way, this time qualifies as working time. On the other hand, employers are required to at least pay their employees for their average work day - even if the actual time spent working on the business trip does not meet the average hours.

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