

RF Purchasing Short-Term Lodging Rental Booking Process Guidance Document

Purpose

This guidance explains the process of booking short-term lodging rental properties using a P-Card. It covers all aspects of the process that must be completed as part of every booking request.

Scope of This Process

This process applies only to short-term lodging rentals, including Airbnb, Vrbo, and similar property types.

- It does NOT include hotel bookings
- It does NOT include any other type of travel expense

Hotel bookings and other travel expenses remain unallowable on P-Cards and must continue to be processed through the existing, standard travel channels.

Lodging Per Diem & Cost Limits

The federal lodging per diem for the location where the rental property is located applies to short-term rentals, exactly as it does for hotel stays. This includes [domestic](#) and [international](#) lodging.

If the cost of lodging exceeds the applicable per diem, an Over the Max Request form must be completed and submitted as part of the booking request.

P-Card Transaction Limits

Most P-Cards carry a standard transaction limit of \$2,500. If the total booking cost of a short-term lodging rental exceeds your card's transaction limit:

1. Submit your request through the standard approval process, as usual
2. If the request is approved, RF Procurement will temporarily increase your P-Card limit

You do not need to take any additional action beyond the standard approval process — the temporary limit increase is handled on the back end once approval is confirmed.

Booking Request Process

Every short-term lodging rental purchase must be approved by the ORP Operations Manager (OM) before booking. Follow these steps:

1. Complete the RF Purchasing Short-Term Lodging Rental Booking Request Form in full, including traveler information, dates, purpose of travel, lodging location and type, per diem, and total cost
2. Complete the Waiver of Liability section within the same form first (see table below for who should sign)
3. If the total cost exceeds the federal lodging per diem, attach a completed Over the Max Request form
4. Send the completed form (and Over the Max Request form, if applicable) to RFprocurement@esf.edu for ORP Operations Manager review and approval
5. Do not book the lodging until approval has been received from the ORP Operations Manager

Waiver of Liability — Who Should Sign

The Waiver of Liability is built into the RF Purchasing Short-Term Lodging Rental Booking Request Form and must be completed as part of every booking request.

- **Default rule:** Under the new process, the lead traveler assumes liability for any property damages, and the lead traveler completes the waiver within the form. Liability for damage due to work-related incidents/activities will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis
- **PI as the liable party:** A Principal Investigator (PI) may choose to accept liability instead of the lead traveler and sign the waiver in their place — regardless of whether the PI is traveling
- **Sharing liability:** If a PI accepts liability, the RF strongly recommends that the lead traveler also completes a Waiver of Liability for Additional Travelers, to share liability. This remains at the PI's discretion and is not required
- **Additional travelers:** the Waiver of Liability for Additional Travelers should only be completed when more than one person is sharing liability for the property — it is not required for every booking

Scenario	Who signs the Waiver	Notes
Default — no other arrangement made	Lead traveler	Standard process. Lead traveler assumes liability for property damage
PI agrees to accept liability	PI (in place of the lead traveler)	Acceptable regardless of whether the PI is traveling or not
Multiple travelers sharing liability	Lead traveler (main waiver) + each additional traveler (Additional Traveler waiver)	Only needed when more than one person is sharing liability
PI accepts liability, but lead traveler still wants to share it	PI (main waiver) + lead traveler (Additional Traveler waiver, recommended)	Recommended by RF to share liability, but remains at the PI's discretion

Important Note on Liability with the Rental Provider

Please be aware:

While the RF will accept a PI as the liable party for internal purposes, the short-term rental provider (e.g., Airbnb, Vrbo) may still hold the occupant responsible for damages — unless the booking itself was made in the PI's name.

Travelers and PIs should discuss this in advance and be prepared to address any discrepancy between who is liable to the RF and who the rental provider considers responsible, should an issue arise.

Tax-Exempt Status

The RF is a tax-exempt institution and does not pay tax on lodging in New York State. Florida, Kentucky, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Texas also honor this tax-exempt status for lodging. For bookings in these states, travelers must liaise directly with the short-term rental provider at the time of booking to ensure tax can be removed. Contact RFprocurement@esf.edu for the most current tax-exemption certificates.

Quick Reference Checklist

1. Confirm the booking is a short-term lodging rental (Airbnb, Vrbo, or similar) — not a hotel
2. Check the federal lodging per diem for the rental location
3. Complete an Over the Max Request form if the cost exceeds the per diem
4. Complete the RF Purchasing Short-Term Lodging Rental Booking Request Form in full
5. Complete the Waiver of Liability within the form (lead traveler, or PI if accepting liability)
6. Complete the Additional Traveler waiver only if more than one person is sharing liability
7. If in a tax-exempt state, confirm with the provider that tax can be excluded
8. Send the completed form(s) to RFprocurement@esf.edu and wait for ORP Operations Manager approval before booking
9. If the cost exceeds your P-Card transaction limit, follow the standard approval process — RF will temporarily raise the limit if approved