



# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Railroad Neutrals

**FROM:** Roland Watkins *Roland Watkins*  
Director, Office of Arbitration Services

**DATE:** September 29, 2008

**RE:** Requirements for Reimbursement for Travel and Authorization of Days

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Pursuant to its fiscal authority under the Railway Labor Act, the National Mediation Board (NMB) will exercise its discretion to prioritize funding for the granting of days to work and any travel reimbursement that meet certain conditions. This prioritization is established in order to help ensure that there is an efficient use of the limited taxpayers' monies available. The following policy is effective immediately and will remain in effect until further notice.

In the granting of reimbursement for travel, priority shall generally be given to travel related to those cases which were pending at the NMB as of October 1, 2007. For this reason, it is important for the arbitrator to inform the NMB of the cases scheduled for hearing. All arbitrators requesting travel reimbursement must provide to Carol Conrad at [arb@nmb.gov](mailto:arb@nmb.gov), the NRAB and/or board number and the case number(s). This condition does not apply if the parties are traveling to the arbitrator.

The NMB will generally give priority in the authorization of payment for days to hear cases and write decisions based on the length of time that cases have been pending with the NMB. Top priority will be given to those cases which have been pending with the NMB for more than five (5) years. Next, the NMB will consider requests for payment for days covering cases pending at the NMB as of October 1, 2007. In order for the NMB to determine this, you must list on NMB Form 6 under the section titled "Official Travel Authorization and Caseload," the NRAB case number(s) and/or the board and case number(s). Priority shall also be given to the authorization of compensation to boards in which the NMB is compensating the arbitrators per case.

Priority in the authorizing of days for hearings will generally be given to arbitrators who use NMB web-based video conferencing. Arbitrators are encouraged to use NMB web-based video conferencing for hearing cases. Please contact Carol Conrad for the correct procedure to request video conferencing. The telephone number is 202-692-5055.

The NMB will train you on the use of web-based video conferencing. This training as well as the actual conferences will be handled by Donald West, the web-video coordinator. Ms. Conrad will have Mr. West contact you once you have indicated your desire. The NMB will loan the arbitrator and parties a camera, if not already available.

The above does not apply to parties pay boards.