

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
Article 19, Pay and Per Diem – 3.d. Field Per Diem  
Between  
USDA FOREST SERVICE, BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST  
and  
NFFE, IAMAW, LOCAL 927

- 1) The Bighorn National Forest (BNF) and the National Federation of Federal Employees, IAMAW (Union), otherwise referred to as “the parties”, have negotiated a reduced per diem rate for Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) for employees assigned to Temporary Duty (TDY) and agree to these provisions and terms.
- 2) A reduced per diem rate is established for Bighorn National Forest employees, while on forest assignments who subsist themselves by purchasing and preparing their own food while in official travel status. This reduced per diem rate is commonly called the “field rate.”
- 3) The field rate will apply when the government furnishes lodging quarters (at the minimum, a tent, cooking equipment and utensils, and means of preserving perishable food). If the government does not provide these items and employees are required to use their own, the employees will be reimbursed at the full per diem rate (and not the field rate) for the county in which they are working, as established by the General Services Administration. However, if the government does provide these items, but an employee chooses to use their own provisions, field rate will still apply. *NOTE: An employee may use personal equipment only when documented and approved by their supervisor, prior to use, as required by FSM 6412.11-1d.*

If employees have been approved for field rate, but elect to obtain commercial meals, they will still be reimbursed at the field rate.

- 4) The field rate for Bighorn National Forest employees working on the Bighorn National Forest will be 55% (rounded to the nearest dollar) of the current GSA-established CONUS rate for Meals and Incidentals (M&IE) allowance established in the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR). (For fiscal year 2013, the established CONUS rate is \$46.00 x 55% = \$25.30, rounded to \$25.)

However, there are some exceptions to this rate.

- a) Employees may submit and will be reimbursed for actual expenses in lieu of the field rate. Actual expenses reimbursement will not exceed 100% of the current GSA established CONUS rate for M&IE (FTR 301-11.1).
  - b) When circumstances warrant, Line Officers have the authority to approve a higher field rate on a case-by-case basis. The NFFE Local 927 President will be notified of these exceptions within 30 days. Whenever possible, the employee and the Line Officer should identify a need for higher rate per diem prior to travel.
- 5) The field rate is authorized for any remote duty lasting more than 12 hours, regardless of actual miles from an employee’s duty station. The field rate would apply only when the

unexpected or unusual circumstances precluded employee being prepared to prepare meals as specified in item 3 above.

- 6) Employees who are not provided with a means for returning to their official duty station during duty hours are entitled to field rate; however, employees who have requested government housing are NOT entitled to the field rate while staying at their established residence in government housing.
- 7) Dependent upon agreement between management and affected employee(s) and situational specifics (cost, weather conditions, or other unavoidable obstacles) on a given assignment, employee(s) will receive field per diem on their days off while employee(s) remain at same TDY location of their last day.
- 8) There may be uncommon occasions when meals are provided by the government for employees receiving field rate. Examples may include providing prepackaged food in emergency situations, or bringing in a cook or caterer. When this occurs, the appropriate amounts shall be deducted from the employee's travel voucher. Following are the deduction amounts in accordance with FTR 301-11, Appendix B:

<b>Field Rate</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	<b>Dinner</b>	<b>Incidentals</b>
\$25	\$4	\$6	\$10	\$5
\$26	\$4	\$7	\$11	\$5
\$27	\$4	\$7	\$11	\$5
\$28	\$4	\$7	\$11	\$6

- 9) The full amount for incidentals as shown above shall be paid daily to the employee regardless of how many meals are provided.
- 10) The first day of authorized travel will be 100% of the field rate, and the last day of authorized travel will be 75% of the field rate.
- 11) This agreement constitutes the complete understanding between the Parties. No other terms or conditions have been agreed to by the Parties.
- 12) The terms and conditions of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) shall be effective upon the date of signing. If either party wishes to modify its terms, written notification of a desire to reopen it must be provided to the other party. This MOU shall terminate 30 calendar days after either party notifies the other, in writing, of its desire to terminate it.



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Forest Supervisor  
Bighorn National Forest



TERRA HOUSKA  
President, NFFE Local 927