Environment Protection Authority

# RPAS - Procedure Guide

March 2025

# Acknowledgement of Country

The NSW Environment Protection Authority acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work, honours the ancestors and the Elders both past and present and extends that respect to all Aboriginal people.

We recognise Aboriginal peoples' spiritual and cultural connection and inherent right to protect the land, waters, skies and natural resources of NSW. This connection goes deep and has since the Dreaming.

We also acknowledge our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are an integral part of our diverse workforce and recognise the knowledge embedded forever in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodianship of Country and culture.

Aboriginal artwork by Worimi artist Gerard Black

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# Table of Contents

# RPAS Procedures Guide

## 1. Application

This document is designed to support (not replace) existing policies and awards and serve as a quick reference guide for our division by providing guidance on how to handle frequent workplace scenarios. All advice included in the guide aligns with relevant provisions and conditions. By following these procedures we aim for consistency and efficiency across the division. Please reach out to your Executive Officer or EPA HR Business Partner if clarification is required.

## 2. Approval to attend offsite events including conferences, seminars and training

- Event fee > $2500 - Executive Director (ED) approval is required to attend events where the fee is greater than $2500 per person.

- Event fee <= $2500 - For events where the fee is less than or equal to $2500, seek approval from your director, via your supervisor/manager, in writing. The director will raise with the ED if required.

- For large events and/or events that require substantial travel (e.g. external conferences, multiple EPA attendees, travel more than 2 days) a briefing note to the ED, via your director, is required.

- All overseas travel requires briefing note progressed through the EPA for ministerial approval

- Once attendance is approved, a travel request must still be entered into Expense8

## 3. Approval to present at external events (outside EPA)

- Invitations received to present at events held by external stakeholders should be directed to your branch mailbox for allocation and tracking.

- Approval to present should be sought from your supervisor/manager and director in the first instance, who will seek approval from the ED either via email or briefing note depending on the nature of the event.

- Presentations, speaking points and slides require director approval and may also require review by Corporate Affairs. Where possible, please provide slides for approval at least two weeks prior to the required lodgement date for your presentation to allow for approval times.

- Once attendance/presentation is approved, a travel request must still be entered into Expense8

## 4. Approval for travel, including for interstate travel

- Supervisor/manager approval is required for travel within NSW – via email.

- For interstate travel (excluding ACT) CEO approval is required – via Briefing Note.

- Once travel is approved, employees need to enter in Expense8 and attach the email approval – Expense8 is the new system for travel requests, all expense claims and PCard reconciliations. DivCo have put together some useful tips for when using Expense8. Please refer to appendix A for guidance on Expense 8.

- Employees should take the most cost-effective but practical option that meets your logistical needs whilst travelling for work purposes. All flights must be booked through the government approved travel system (FCM), as well as accommodation wherever possible. Please email your branch mailbox for bookings to be made on your behalf

- Employees are not permitted to pay for their own flights and claim the cost back.

  Employees are not permitted to use any type of loyalty or points systems when travelling.

## 5. Approval to publish as an EPA employee in journals, technical publications

- Approval to publish should be sought from your supervisor/manager and director in the first instance, who will seek approval from the ED either via email or briefing note depending on the nature of the publication.
- Final publication material requires director approval and may also require review by Corporate Affairs. Please provide material for approval at least two weeks prior to the required lodgement date to allow for approval times.

## 6. Use of EPA vehicles vs personal vehicles

Employees should always use an EPA or DCCEEW fleet vehicle where available. If there is none available a hire car should be booked using FCM.

- Using personal vehicle for work related travel is <u>not</u> encouraged.  The use of fleet vehicles or hire cars is prioritised.

  Employees must obtain prior approval from their supervisor/manager prior to using a private vehicle for work purposes, and then upload a copy of their Registration and Insurance on Expense8 when creating their Trip Plan for approval prior to travelling.  See knowledge article KB0033062 on How do I complete a Trip Plan in Expense8.

- Employees must not use their departmental purchase card to pay for the costs of running their private vehicle, even if approved to use a private vehicle for work purposes .

## 7. Reporting all workplace incidents

- All hazards, near misses and injury/illness shall be reported in the CAMMS incident management system as soon as it is safe to do so within **24 hours**.  An incident can be reported on an employee's behalf by a supervisor, manager or colleague.
- The EPA use CAMMS which is the departments WHS (Workplace Health & Safety) <u>Incident Management System</u> which is used to
  - **Report near-misses, injuries/illness, or hazards**
  - <u>**report injuries/illness**</u> include physical or psychological injury or illness caused by an incident.
     - a hazard refers to a situation or thing that has the potential to harm a person.
  - <u>**report hazards**</u> at work may include noisy machinery, a moving forklift, chemicals, electricity, working at heights, a repetitive job in the workplace.
  - undertake investigations and risk analysis of events
  - report COVID-19 infections at an EPA workplace
  - record safety interactions such as observations, conversations, or suggestions
  - record workplace inspections and
  - document Take 5 risk assessments

## 8. Addressing incidents, issues or risks that are observed

If an employee observes an actual or likely pollution incident that presents an immediate threat to human health or property, such as toxic fumes or a large chemical spill, they should call 000 to report it to emergency services.

- As is the case for members of the public, EPA employees can report pollution or perceived operational matters via <u>Environment Line</u>. Depending on the situation and considering WHS, the employee may take notes and photographs before contacting Environment Line to make the report. If an urgent operational issue is observed, employees can ask that the incident be directed to the Day Duty Supervisor for the relevant zone or the After-Hours Officer, who will review and respond appropriately to the matter.

- Employees should not undertake operational action in the field, whether the incident is observed inside or outside of work hours, unless as part of a planned and approved operational activity, or if instructed to be on duty and take action by the Day Duty Supervisor or After-Hours-Officer.

## 9. Core hours, bandwidth hours and overtime

Core hours 10am-3pm – Employees should work between the hours of 10am and 3pm and take a minimum 30-minute lunch break. Bandwidth hours are 7.30am to 6pm.

- Approval to work overtime (hours worked outside of bandwidth that are paid or that accrue time in lieu)must be pre-approved by the supervisor/manager.

- Employees should have a conversation with their supervisor/manager if they need to work outside of the core or bandwidth hours as this may have work health & safety implications.

- Link to the **Guide for Flex time**

## 10. Leave

Employees have access to a number of different leave types to support them to manage their work/life balance.

- Recreation leave

    o   Recreation leave is to be taken for a minimum period of a quarter day, and in multiples of a quarter day

- Our Award states that employees are required to take at least 2 consecutive week of recreation leave every 12 months, except in special circumstances.  Employees are encouraged to discuss their leave plans with their supervisor/manager.

- Employees are to ensure that all reasonable attempts are taken to ensure accrued recreation leave balances are kept to a maximum of 6 weeks (30 days) or less. Employees with recreation leave balances that exceed this will be asked to complete a leave plan to reduce their leave.

- Sick leave – employees should use their sick leave when they are unable to undertake their work due to injury or illness and:

    o   Inform their supervisor/manager that they are unable work due to illness and injury. They must inform their supervisor/manager as close to their usual starting time as possible.

    o   Indicate the nature of illness or injury and the estimated duration of the absence.

    o   Provide evidence of illness if taking more than 2 consecutive days of sick leave

- If employees take a total of more than 5 days in the calendar year of sick leave without evidence the organisation can request that a medical certificate be supplied for every sick leave occurrence for the remainder of the calendar year.  Supervisors/managers will discuss with employees should a medical certificate be required for future sick leave absences.

    - **Do I use sick leave to attend a routine, planned regular medical appointment (e.g. optometrist, dentist etc)?**
    *No, this should be flex or rec leave.  Medical appointments and elective surgeries that are pre-arranged can only be covered by sick leave if an employee is not able to work because of a personal illness or injury. It will depend on each individual circumstance.*

    - **Do I use sick leave to take a person in your care (child, parent etc) or partner to attend any of the above appointments.**
    *Personal carer's leave can be taken if you are required to care for and/or support a family member or relative. Should your circumstances not meet the criteria for caring for a family member under Family and Community Services (FACS) leave, personal carer's leave can be utilised. The leave will be deducted from your sick leave balance.*

    *You may be required to provide evidence to establish the illness of the person concerned.*

## 11. Procurement

If employees need to undertake a procurement activity via the procurement system (One Procure) they need to contact the Executive Officer.  For purchases that require a purchase order, please email your branch mailbox

- Consumables and postage purchases: If employees require consumables or postage please email their branch mailbox and DivCo will coordinate on their behalf. Where possible electronic options for dispatch should be considered.  DivCo are able to make some purchases on corporate purchase cards

- Keyboard, Mouse and Headset replacements: employees should email the branch mailbox and DivCo will coordinate this. NOTE: equipment for working from home is the responsibility of the employee and at their cost..

## 12. End of Trip Facilities

End of trip facilities and showers etc are available at 6PSQ. Push bikes, foldable bikes, e-bikes, scooters, and e-scooters must be stored in these facilities..   Other offices also have similar facilities – please check with the EPA Facilities Security & Fleet team for more information.

## 13. Site Inspections / Field Visit

- Where possible, site inspections and field visits should be undertaken with two or more EPA employees (the additional employee may be from another EPA division). This can be determined based on the risk of the inspection.
- The supervisor/manager must be notified as early as possible if an employee cannot conduct a site inspection or field visit on the date expected
- EPA employees must review the relevant Job Safety Analysis and undertaken Take 5 before commencing the site inspections or field visit
- EPA employees must ensure they have appropriate PPE for site inspections or field visits.  Contact the DivCo team if access to the Ambassador portal is required
- EPA employees must follow all safety requirements and safety instructions from site managers or occupiers

## 14. Meetings

- There should be at least two EPA employees in attendance at external stakeholder meetings, unless approved by the supervisor/manager.
- Contemporaneous meeting notes (including date/time, attendees, agreed actions) must been recorded in writing and stored in CM 10

# Appendices

## Appendix A - Guidance: Navigating Expense 8

**Expense8** is the new system for travel requests, all expense claims and PCard reconciliation. DivCo have put together some useful tips for when using Expense8.

There are 3 ways to claim travel & other expenses using Expense8:
1. Trip plan (travel allowance) – you will get paid an allowance to cover meals and incidentals. Note: this will not be paid prior to your travel
2. Expense Reimbursement – claim out of pocket actual expenses
3. PCard – use a corporate credit card for expenses

Note: We are seeking further advice on how to claim subsistence.

### Travel requests
- **Submit a *Trip Plan* through Expense8 to build the estimate cost of a trip and get approval to travel.**
  - Click 'New Trip' to start a new Trip Plan.
  - Keep the travel cost centre (default cc) populated and add the WBS: **O-0013373.01 - RPS_ED Office Regulatory Practice & Serv** (do not use WBS statistical) this will flag as going to the Executive Officer. If your travel is linked to an externally funded program please check with DivCo to ensure your WBS is correct.
  - If you use a cost centre only as this trip will be rejected, you will need to start the claim again as edits options to add a WBS will be locked.
- **Itinerary and allowances tab**
  - Build your travel itinerary by adding flights, accommodation and car usage as needed.
  - For Fleet Cars, enter value $0.01 (1 cent).
  - If there are no fleet cars or hire cars available through FCM and you are required to use a personal vehicle – you must attach your car registration and car insurance documents and as well as approval from your manager.
- **Submit your Trip Plan**
  - Ensure you have uploaded evidence of approval to your trip plan in Expense8 (email or BN)
- **Review the trip when the travel has concluded**
  - After returning from travel, staff need to edit their Trip Plan to correct and *finalise the trip*
  - At this stage you should review your trip and edit your actual expenses. Staff need to go back to the *allowance tab* to correct the allowances based on the trip.

**NOTE**: If you are using a PCard or plan to claim via an expense reimbursement (actuals) to pay for your meals and incidentals, you need to remove all meals allowance from the allowance tab on your Trip Plan.
- Once edited **submit the trip for reapproval**
- It's important to **Finalise Trip** to trigger payment for the allowance claims

**Important things to remember:**
- If you have email approval to travel from your manager and have booked your travel through DivCo and are NOT claiming any other expenses i.e. meals etc you do not have to submit a Trip Plan or process this trip thru Expense8.
- You need to **create a trip plan** before travelling and **finalise the trip** once you return. The system will allow you to enter past trips if required.

- Payment for allowances will be made to your nominated account after the trip is complete and the finalised trip is approved by WBS owner – <u>it will not be paid prior to travel.</u>

## Expense reimbursement

Each expense in Expense8 should be acquitted individually, this can be done as spends appear and does not need to be done in a report like the Concur system.

- **Select *New Expense Claim***
  - Here you can claim out of pocket work related expenses.
  - Upload receipts at the beginning of the process.
  - The *Purpose of Expense* – this should be meaningful and clear for the approver.
  - Code your expense using a WBS number. Use WBS:  **O-0013373.01** - **RPS_ED Office Regulatory Practice & Serv** (do not use WBS statistical) If your expense is linked to an externally funded program please check with DivCo to ensure your WBS is correct.
  - To search a WBS – enter '0' and the drop-down menu will appear with all options.
  - Select an *Expense Category* – add this in. Expense8 auto remembers previous ones selected.
  - Select an appropriate tax status 'inclusive' with GST or 'free' non-GST.
  - Afterwards, 'submit' is selected and the Wizard feature appears and guides you thru the next steps.
- **If you use a PCard**, you don't need to create an expense claim.
  - The spend will automatically populate in the <u>total to code/submit</u> section of Expense8 to reconcile.
  - Add the appropriate cost centre or WBS. Use WBS:  **O-0013373.01** - **RPS_ED Office Regulatory Practice & Serv** (do not use WBS statistical)
  - Enter the *Purpose of Expense* – this should be meaningful and clear for the approver.
  - Select an appropriate tax status 'inclusive' with GST or 'free' non-GST.
  - Attach any receipts by clicking on the paperclip icon.
  - Submit
- **FCM transactions**
  - FCM transactions will appear in the travellers expense8 profile and will need to be acquitted.
  - You will be able to select the appropriate categories under the Wizard
  - FCM transitions will appear in the month after you travel.
- **Claiming personal car use -** Personal vehicles should <u>only</u> be used if Fleet cars or FCM hire cars are unavailable.
  - Use Casual rate: if you elect to travel in your own car. You can claim Business rate: if you are directed to use your own car. You are required to attach your car registration and car insurance documents and as well as approval from your manager.

To view status of Expense8 transaction and see its status: go to search function > expense status > hit 'submitted' then hit 'update'

**<u>Important things to remember:</u>**
- Expense8 is used for non-travel related expense and reimbursements as well.
- Personal vehicles should <u>only</u> be used if Fleet cars or FCM hire cars are unavailable.
- Receipts are required for all expenses above $30 and encouraged for expenses below $30.
- 'Submit' and 'Acquit' buttons are the same thing

## Approvers in Expense8

- Look under Expense8 heading > click on 'Total to Authorise'
- To approve transactions – there are 2 options:
  - View expenses in carousel to see further details
  - View & approve in table format.
- At the point of approving, it is the approvers responsibility to check:
  - If the *Expense Category* is correct
  - The correct supporting documentation is attached, and the *Purpose of Expense* is what the approver is approving
  - The purpose field is what will export to MWZ & be visible against the WBS in reporting.

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# Appendix B - Guidance: Branch Mailboxes

*AWNSG – environmental.solutionsAWNFG@epa.nsw.gov.au*

*TCLR – environmental.solutionsCLR@epa.nsw.gov.au*

*IMEH – regops.IMEH@epa.nsw.gov.au*

*RPC – regulatorypractice.branch@epa.nsw.gov.au*

*PCI – EPA.complianceinvestigations@epa.nsw.gov.au*