



Can I claim tax-free 'per diems' for business travel ?

If you are an employee who is often 'on the road' for work, you could be eligible to receive a **daily allowance** or so-called '**per diem**' from your employer. This allowance is essentially a reimbursement of meal costs, but can also cover additional expenses such as refreshments, parking, toilet, etc. It is a **substitute** for using an **actual expense reimbursement method**. Instead of your employer paying you back the exact amount you spent on each trip, he just pays you a **fixed per diem rate**.

In principle, a per diem is a **tax-free reimbursement** for you, while it remains a 100% tax-deductible expense for the employer. You must, however, always be able to justify the amount of per diems claimed, for example, by keeping track of your number of business trips, when exactly you travelled, to where and for how long.

There are some strict conditions for this allowance in order to be tax-free: (i) the maximum allowance is **€ 17.06 per day** (unchanged since 1.10.2018); (ii) you should be away from the office for **at least six hours**; (iii) only a **maximum of 16 per diems** can be granted per month; (iv) and there is a maximum of **40 trips to the same location** per year.

If you are away from the office **for 40 days or more** in one calendar year, for instance to visit the same client or customer, this location will be considered as a **fixed place of employment**. In that case, you may not claim a tax-free per diem for the days you spent at this same location.

If your domestic business trip also includes an overnight stay at a hotel, you are entitled to an additional allowance of **€ 128.01 per night** (unchanged since 1.10.2018). For **business trips abroad** there is a similar per-diem system in place, but the **amounts are country-specific** and also depend on the duration of your stay abroad.

If you are 'on the road' in Belgium almost daily, you can apply for a **fixed monthly allowance** instead, for which you are not required to demonstrate that you have been away for at least 6 hours. The total allowance may not exceed **€ 272.96 per month** (or € 17.06 × 16 days).

The **daily allowance** should not be confused with **meal vouchers**. The monthly meal voucher is a tax-free benefit in kind the employee receives to increase his purchasing power. The **per diem**, on the other hand, is an allowance to reimburse work-related expenses to the employee.

An **important consideration** is that not only employees, but **also (self-employed) company directors** can receive tax-free per diems from their own (management) company under the same conditions. If you forgot to claim these during the year, it is always **possible to request this retroactively** before your company's annual accounts are finalized.

We can check if you meet the **per diem requirements** and assist you with the relevant **formalities**.