

Must we pay for travel time between home and airport and between airport and hotel?

Q. Is an employer required to pay an employee for time spent traveling from home to the airport (and vice versa, from airport to home on the return trip), and for travel time from the airport to a hotel (and vice versa)?

A. If the travel time from an employee's home to the airport is the same or substantially similar to the time he or she would commute to his or her usual reporting place on a regular business day, then travel time does not begin until the employee reaches the airport.

If, however, the trip to the airport took substantially more time than the usual commute, he or she must be paid for the extra time spent in transit. For example, if an employee usually commutes 20 minutes to work but the airport is a two-hour drive from home, he would be paid for 100 minutes of travel time for his drive to the airport (2 hours less 20 minutes).

As for travel between the airport and a hotel, according to the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, "the employee must be paid for all hours spent between the time he arrives at the airport and the time he arrives at his hotel." This includes time traveling in a bus, tax, car, etc. in the out-of-town location to the place of lodging.