

DIVISION 3. TRAVEL

Sec. 2-240. In general.

- (a) *Objective.* To govern expenses incurred by city employees who travel out of the city on authorized city business.
- (b) *Responsible agency.* Department heads are responsible for managing the travel budget for their department and for ensuring travel expenditures are proper and in compliance with this policy. The finance department is responsible for auditing travel expenditures and expense reports.
- (c) *Travel Destination.* All employees should pursue trainings and conferences in-state whenever available. The city manager must approve all out-of-state travel.
- (d) *Travel authorization.* All employees, including department heads, charter officers, and elected officials, must complete and submit a travel authorization form for approval before any funds are committed or travel occurs. When used in this division, "travel authorization" shall refer to:
 - (1) when an employee, receiving approval from a department head;
 - (2) when a department head, receiving approval from the city manager;
 - (3) when a charter officer, the travel is within the approved budget with the travel authorization form approved by the Finance Director; or
 - (4) when an elected official, the travel is within the approved budget with the travel authorization form approved by the City Clerk.

Sec. 2-241. Prepaid travel expenses.

- (a) *Purchasing card.* With travel authorization a purchasing card may be used for primary travel expenses such as airfare, lodging, rental car and conference/seminar registration. The purchasing card is a safe and direct way to pay for travel related expenses. Meals and Incidentals shall not be charged to the purchasing card.
- (b) *Expense report.* Upon completing the travel, an exact description of the expenses incurred must be identified on a "travel and expense report" with a previously approved travel authorization form for reimbursement to the traveler. (Ord. No. 2012-02, § 2, 1-24-12)

Sec. 2-242. Expenses approved for reimbursement.

Following is a list intended as a general guide for reimbursement. It is not necessarily all-inclusive; discretion remains with the City Manager or his designee, in approving travel expenses for unusual circumstances.

When traveling on behalf of the city, it is expected that services and accommodations appropriate for the business to be conducted will be utilized, with the exercise of good judgment in distinguishing between comfort and extravagance.

- (1) *Transportation.* City vehicles should be used as much as possible. Needed reservations should be made as far in advance as possible to obtain the lowest cost. Return flight costs may be significantly lower if the individual stays a Saturday night. The person doing the travel authorization should weigh the difference in additional hotel and meal costs and opt for the lesser cost scenario. The following additional guidelines must be observed:
 - a. *Commercial airline.* The city will pay the cost of the airline ticket. Only "coach" flights will be authorized.
 - b. *City-owned vehicle.* The use of city-owned vehicles is encouraged for out-of-town travel. If a city vehicle is used, a purchasing card may be used for gas and other vehicle costs.
 - c. *Personal vehicle.* If a city vehicle is not available or if a personal vehicle is the most cost-effective alternative, the city will reimburse the current mileage rate authorized by the Internal Revenue Service for tax deduction purposes for mileage from the traveler's primary work location or from the traveler's residence (whichever is less) to the destination city. Any vicinity mileage necessitated as a result of conducting business activities while out of town is eligible for reimbursement.
- (2) *Local transportation at the travel destination.* When air, rail or bus transportation is used, expenses for local transportation will be allowed whenever such transportation is necessary to conduct city business. In most cases, it is assumed that ground transportation, and hotel courtesy vans will be the preferred mode of travel. In certain circumstances, ground transportation fares can be in excess of rental car rates and as such the traveler may be well advised to rent a car rather than use a ground transportation service. Where there is sufficient justification, rental cars may be reserved with travel authorization. The most economical rates available shall be used when renting a vehicle. When more than one city employee travels in a rental car, only one employee may obtain reimbursement for the vehicle rental.
- (3) *Lodging.* The cost of lodging will be reimbursed when not using a city purchasing card. While the city expects travelers to enjoy comfortable lodging, luxury/resort accommodations shall be avoided. The designated conference hotel(s) should be used or the government rate should be requested when making a hotel reservation. Most hotels will not accept claims to government rate after check-in. An original receipt must accompany the "travel and expense report."
- (4) *Meals and tips.* While in travel status, per diem rates must be used for meals and incidentals. Actual costs for meals will be reimbursed if required for business meetings. The detailed itemized receipt, an explanation of the circumstances, and prior travel authorization must be attached to the "travel and expense report." (i.e., if an employee travels to Tallahassee to discuss legislative matters with members of the state legislature over dinner, the employee pays the actual cost of the meal and is not limited to the per diem for dinner. A detailed itemized receipt must be attached to the "travel and expense report.")
 - a. The source for per diem rates is on the United States General Services Administration's website. Per diem rates are available for meals and incidentals for all locations. Employees are entitled to these per diem rates when leaving 1½ hours before the normal meal hours or returning 1½ hours after the normal meal hours. For the purpose of this policy, normal meal hours are considered 8:00 a.m. for breakfast, 12:00 noon for lunch and 5:00 p.m. for dinner. The time of departure and arrival shall be noted on the "travel and expense report." No receipts for meals and tips purchased with per diem are required.
 - b. Qualifying meals on the first and last day of travel will be reimbursed at 75 percent of the per diem rates on the United States General Services Administration's website.

- c. There will be no reimbursement for meals that are included in conference registration costs or are otherwise provided at no cost to the traveler. However, a continental breakfast does not constitute a meal under this provision. A copy of the event brochure/itinerary must be provided with the "travel and expense report."
 - d. Fees and tips, not to exceed 20 percent, for services such as ground transportation drivers, meals (only when actual costs are paid in accordance herein), and luggage handlers will be reimbursed.
 - e. Costs of alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable and must not be charged to the purchasing card.
 - f. Meals associated with day trips (no overnight stay) are not reimbursable.
- (5) *Registration fees.* All registration fees should be paid in advance with the city purchasing card. A receipt and copy of the event brochure must be provided with the "travel and expense report."
- (6) *Personal and entertainment expenses.* The city will not reimburse personal expenses, including movies, health club charges, personal use of the business center, laundry or dry-cleaning charges, as well as any personal entertainment expense.
- (7) *Spouses and guests.* The city will not reimburse an employee for any travel related expenses of his or her spouse or guest unless that spouse or guest is traveling on behalf of the city for a business-related purpose. In the event that the spouse or guest is conducting business on behalf of the city, they should submit their own "travel and expense report." These special circumstances require prior approval by the City Manager.
- (8) *Other expenses.* Tolls, parking, and other trip related expenses may be reimbursed, provided the traveler provides documentation and a valid reason for the expense.

(Ord. No. 2012-02, § 2, 1-24-12)

Sec. 2-243. Submission requirements.

The completed, authorized "travel and expense report" supported by all necessary documentation should be submitted to the individual who approved the travel authorization within ten working days of completion of travel. The review and approval of travel expense should be completed within five working days of receipt. When review and approval are complete, travel documentation should be forwarded to the finance department. Reimbursement for travel will be paid every other week, coinciding with accounts payable. If a payment request supported by appropriate documentation is received in finance no later than 4:00 p.m. on the Friday before the scheduled accounts payable check run, reimbursement may be expected on the following Friday.

- (1) *Required documentation.* The purpose of required documentation is to provide evidence to anyone who reviews the travel transaction that public funds were expended in compliance with this policy. The standard for sufficient documentation is that anyone who reviews the transaction can review the accompanying documentation and see that all funds were expended in accordance with policy.
- (2) *Forms.* An approved "travel and expense report" and a copy of the conference brochure/itinerary, if applicable, must support each trip.
- (3) *Receipts.* Detailed itemized receipts are the most accurate and thorough documentation as they clearly list the amount and nature of each expense. Detailed itemized receipts, including

purchasing card receipts, must be attached to the "travel and expense report," summary receipts are not acceptable.

- a. If a detailed receipt is not obtained and included as part of the documentation accompanying the expense report, the report will be returned to the employee's department head as incomplete.
- b. All receipts must be attached to the "travel and expense report." Separate reports must be submitted for each individual traveling.
- c. If receipts are lost or stolen, the traveler should contact the individual who approved the travel authorization, who will coordinate with the Finance Director for resolution.

(Ord. No. 2012-02, § 2, 1-24-12)

Secs. 2-244—2-250. Reserved.