



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

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Jurisdiction: City Council

EMPLOYEE & PUBLIC OFFICIAL TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT & TRAVEL REGULATION

I PURPOSE

This regulation shall establish standards for the documentation, approval and payment of cash advances and reimbursements of expenses incurred during travel for meals, room, and travel by employees, elected officials and other persons who conduct City business; with the understanding that any such standards shall balance the City's fiduciary responsibility of managing public funds with the recognition of the need to provide transportation, lodging, and meals to employees and public officials as they travel to pursue City business.

II POLICY

The City of Capitola recognizes that from time to time employees and Public Officials must travel to conduct the City's business. It is the policy of the City of Capitola to recognize this inconvenience by appropriately reimbursing or compensating those individuals as detailed below. In no case shall anyone be compensated under this policy beyond the direct cost of the meals, board, or travel that complies with this policy, nor shall anyone contrive to conduct City business or to create the illusion of City business to enjoy the benefits of this policy. Compensation for travel shall only be provided to those who comply with the procedures and criteria of this policy.

For the purposes of this policy Public Official means any elected official or volunteer working for the interests of the City of Capitola. This definition includes Council Members, Commissioners, committee members, regular authorized volunteers.

III PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

Administration:

It shall be the responsibility of the City Manager to administer these procedures. The Finance Director shall assist the City Manager in the administration of this regulation, and the dissemination and review of forms, receipts, documentation, and other information necessary to process and audit claims.

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Expense Authorization:

By necessity, Public Officials and employees must sometimes attend meetings, conferences, enroll in training seminars, and perform other official functions away from their normal place of work. It is the responsibility of the City Manager, the City Manager's designee, or the Mayor in the case of the City Manager to approve travel claims and related expenses prior to registration and/or out-of-area travel and to authorize cash advances and/or reimbursement for the costs incurred.

Department heads are authorized to approve travel expense reimbursement for meetings, training, and similar events for staff, boards and commissions under their responsibility which do not exceed their budget appropriations. The City Manager or the City Manager's designee can approve such requests from Council Members and Department heads which do not exceed the budget appropriation.

Reimbursement:

Public Officials and employees authorized to travel on official City business shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred for mileage, transportation, lodging, and meals in addition to any regular compensation to which they are entitled; provided, however, that the maximum amount(s) that shall be reimbursed are as follows:

Transportation: The most economical mode and class of transportation reasonably consistent with scheduling needs and cargo space requirements must be used, using the most direct and time-efficient route. Government and group rates must be used when available.

- a) City Pool Vehicle – Preferred method of driving
- b) Private Conveyance – See **Private Conveyance** section.
- c) Airplane Travel – Actual cost of coach fare.
- d) Carrier Services – actual costs for taxis, ride sharing, buses, public carriers, or car rental.
- e) Vehicle Parking – actual cost.

Payment for service received (tips) in conjunction with travel such as taxi or shuttle service is recognized as a legitimate and reasonable expense and can be included in addition to the amounts herein but shall not exceed eighteen percent (18%) of the price of the travel service.

Lodging: Lodging expenses will be reimbursed or paid for when travel on official City business reasonably requires an overnight stay. Public Officials and employees should use the available Government Services Administration (GSA) government rate and book the hotel with that rate if available.

If due to market conditions or availability, costs for acceptable accommodations exceed GSA rates for the destination, department head approval is required prior to travel. When the individual travels to attend a conference, seminar, or similar event, the maximum allowable reimbursement shall be the conference facility group room rate plus applicable taxes.

Meals: Meals will only be reimbursed for official travel requiring an overnight stay. Exceptions include Police Officers attending Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) will be

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reimbursed at the P.O.S.T. rate. Exceptions also include attendance at an official standing meeting that has city wide or jurisdictional impact. Examples include AMBAG, League of California Cities, or a City Selection Committee meetings, etc.

The City will reimburse the individual for up to the current GSA Federal Meals & Incidentals Per Diem for the destination and up to 75% of that rate for First and Last Day of Travel. Itemized receipts must be provided for all meals. If more than one employee meal is paid for, employee names must be included.

Current GSA Per Diem Rates can be found at:

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

It is the responsibility of the Public Official or employee traveling for City business to know GSA rates for the location.

Payment for service received (tips) in conjunction with meals is recognized as a legitimate and reasonable expense and can be added to the above amounts but shall not exceed fifteen percent (18%) of the price of the meal.

Alcoholic beverages and products containing cannabis are never an eligible expense.

Private Conveyance:

Employees using private means of conveyance such as their personal vehicle for authorized travel on official City business shall be reimbursed at the then-current IRS mileage rate. For travel mileage outside the San Francisco Bay Area to a location where air travel is reasonably convenient, the amount reimbursed shall not exceed the lowest coach airfare on a scheduled commercial air carrier as determined by the City. Vehicle odometer readings should substantiate vehicle mileage. If odometer readings are not available, internet map services such as Google Maps can be used. Mileage shall be measured from Capitola City Hall or the Public Officials home address, whichever is less. If the Public Official or employee is required to be at City Hall prior to leaving the City Hall address shall be used to measure miles. When a personal conveyance is used to carpool employees, City Hall address shall be used. Parking costs and bridge and road tolls are reimbursable expenses.

Advance of Money:

The City's preference is to reimburse traveler's actual and necessary costs after travel has occurred through receipts, rather than provide travelers funds in advance of travel or expense. However, the City will, on a case-by-case basis, provide travel advances upon request by the traveler and approval of the Department Head. A written claim for cash advance shall be submitted to the Finance Director sufficiently early for the Finance Department to include the advance with regular check processing immediately prior to when the Public Official or employee must leave. Advances cannot be made out of petty cash. Cash advances for travel and meal requests will be allowed only if adequate appropriations exist in the appropriate budget, and if the request has been signed by the department head and/or City Manager.

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Individuals who accept cash advances shall, within ten (10) working days after his or her return from such trip, file with the Finance Director an itemized expense accounting together with proper receipts or other documentation and shall pay to the City any unexpended balance of the advance.

Claims for All Expenses:

No travel costs shall be reimbursed unless the claiming individual prepares and signs an itemized accounting of such expenses on the City of Capitola - Statement of Expense form which shall have entered thereon and/or attached thereto, the following:

- a. Date of departure at commencement of travel, and date of return upon completion of travel.
- b. Date of arrival at and departure from each city or location at which City business was performed.
- c. Receipts for all expenditures for lodging, meals, and all other expenditures, in sufficient detail so as to establish the allowability of each element of the expense claimed. If a receipt is not available for an expense, a memorandum from the individual attesting to the exact expense may be approved by the City Manager
- d. If unusual or unanticipated circumstances arise, the City Manager, or the Mayor in the case of the City Manager, can approve exceptions to this policy.

Unallowable Expenses:

Unauthorized expenditures, which shall never be reimbursed, include but are not limited to:

1. Alcoholic beverages or any products containing cannabis
2. Expenses of a spouse or other companion
3. Personal entertainment
4. Theft, loss, or damage to personal property
5. Barber, beauty, tailor, laundry & other similar personal services
6. Airline or other trip insurance
7. Personal postage, telephone calls, or reading materials
8. Personal portion of any trip (i.e. extending stay)

Reports to City Council

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Members of the City Council or any other public official subject to this policy shall provide a brief report on meetings attended at the expense of the local agency at the next regular meeting of the legislative body (Council, Planning Commission, etc.). Cal. Gov't Code Sect.53232.3(d). This report can either be written or oral.

Jamie Goldstein
City Manager