

Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual

Chapter: Training and Staff Development/Travel
Policy: Travel Expense Reimbursement

Effective Date: mm/dd/yyyy
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Policy.

The City of Crockett recognizes the need for official representation at conferences, meetings, conventions, seminars, and other functions and for participation in occasional training required or offered by the City. The City also recognizes that employees traveling for such official City business should be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary travel expenses.

The City establishes maximum limits for the reimbursement of travel expenses to help ensure consistency in the determination of what is a reasonable expense and help employees be aware of the maximum reimbursement they will receive before incurring travel expenses. A City administrator has the discretion to implement guidelines for employees reporting to him that are more restrictive than the maximum allowances established by this policy as long as the administrator provides employees notice of the greater restrictions and consistently applies the more restrictive allowances to all employees traveling for the same purpose (e.g., when budget restraints do not allow reimbursement of maximum allowances). No reimbursement will be made for costs in excess of the maximum allowances established by this policy or the more restrictive allowances established by the appropriate City administrator, whichever is applicable.

Applicability:

The maximum reimbursable travel allowances established by this policy apply to all City employees.

Definitions.

1. Duty point: The destination that a City employee travels from or to in order to conduct official City business or to receive City-authorized training. If the destination is outside the employee's designated headquarters, then the duty point is either the incorporated municipality where the destination is located or the unincorporated area within a five-mile radius of the destination.
2. Travel Expense: A meal, lodging, transportation, or incidental expense.
 - (A) Meal Expense: The cost of a meal except for any alcoholic beverages plus any tax that is based on the meal's cost.
 - (B) Lodging Expense: A charge imposed by a commercial lodging establishment (e.g., motel, hotel, or similar establishment that provides lodging to the public for pay) as consideration for providing lodging. The term does not include money paid as a donation, gratuity or tip to the establishment or to the establishment's employees.
 - (C) Incidental Expense: A mandatory insurance or service charge or applicable tax. Does not include: (1) a personal expense; (2) an expense that a person would incur regardless of whether the person is traveling on official City business; or (D) a tip or gratuity.

Procedures.

I. General Provisions.

A. Prior Approval.

All travel for which an employee is expecting reimbursement of expenses must be approved in advance by the appropriate City administrator.

B. Reimbursement vs. Per Diem or Advances.

City travel expenses are not reimbursed on a per diem basis, meaning there is no general daily allowance for lodging, meals and other incidentals for which receipts do not need to be provided. In addition, the City does not provide employees with advance payments for travel. Employees are only reimbursed for actual travel expenses incurred for meals, lodging, and transportation not to exceed the maximum allowable rates after providing the required supporting documentation in accordance with the procedures established by this policy.

C. Authorized Overnight Stays.

A City administrator may authorize an overnight stay when one of the following occurs:

1. The location/destination for the event is greater than 60 miles from the City Hall;
2. An overnight stay is required for the night prior to the commencement of the purpose of the travel in order to be present at the actual commencement of the event the following morning;
3. The overnight stay is required or advantageous because the purpose of the travel causes the employee to return to the City or his home after 7 pm; or
4. Lodging may be eligible for payment by a third party (e.g., included as part of the event costs).

II. Allowed Lodging Expenses.

Employees should request the reduced government rate or conference rate when making reservations to see if a reduced government rate is available. Most hotels will not accept a claim to a government rate after check-in. City employees are not exempt from hotel taxes and will be reimbursed for such taxes as part of their lodging expense.

- A. The City will pay only the cost of a single occupant room, unless the second occupant is also a city employee.
 - 1. If there are two or more employees staying in the room, the cost of the room should be paid by one employee and not allocated.
 - 2. If an employee shares a room with someone who is not an employee of the City or who is not traveling on City business, and the room cost is higher than the single room rate because of double occupancy, the employee must pay the difference.
 - 3. The City will not pay or reimburse the employee for additional lodging not considered a part of the business trip (i.e., extended stay for personal reasons, including mechanical failure repairs for a personal vehicle, or vacation).
- B. An employee may stay at the home of a friend or family, but there will be no payment or reimbursement for lodging.
- C. Meals ordered through room service or charged on the hotel bill will be covered if within the allowed meal expense.

III. Allowed Meal Expenses.

The maximum allowed meal expenses are equivalent to the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA's) Federal Domestic Maximum Per Diem Rates by location, which are effective at the beginning of each fiscal year (October 1) and are available by performing a search by city name or zip code on the GSA webpage:

From the www.gsa.gov home page, click on "Travel" at the top of the page, then click on "Plan a trip" under "Explore Travel," then click on "Per diem rates" to perform a search.

- A. Rates are available and vary for key cities/primary destinations and the surrounding county (e.g., Austin/Travis County, Houston/Harris County, San Antonio/Bexar County).
 - 1. If the city is not listed but the county is listed, the daily rate of the county will be used.
 - 2. The daily rate for meals is based on one of the following five totals, which includes a breakdown for the maximum allowed for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The maximum rates include meal-related tips.

Meals and Incidental Expense (M&IE) Maximum Allowed Breakdown				
M&IE Total	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental
\$68	\$16	\$19	\$28	\$5
\$74	\$18	\$20	\$31	\$5
\$80	\$20	\$22	\$33	\$5
\$86	\$22	\$23	\$36	\$5
\$92	\$23	\$26	\$38	\$5
Breakfast is only reimbursable for the morning after overnight lodging or travel.				

3. When neither the city nor county is listed, the maximum daily rate is \$68 total per day for meals, with the breakdown for each meal being the same as indicated above for cities having a \$68 total daily allowance.
- B. On the day of departure going to or returning from an overnight travel duty point or when travel is not overnight travel, the maximum allowed for each meal is the same as for overnight travel. However, the number of reimbursable meals will be dependent upon the time of departure from the duty point and the time of arrival/return to the duty point as indicated below:
1. Departure from duty point before 11 am and arrival/return to duty point after 5 pm: Allowable expenses for lunch and dinner per diem will be reimbursed.
 2. Departure from duty point before 11am and arrival/return to duty point after 1 pm but before 5 pm: Allowable expenses for lunch will be reimbursed.
 3. Departure at 1:00 pm or later and return after 5 pm: Allowable expenses for dinner will be reimbursed.
- C. Where meals are provided at conferences and included in the registration fees, reimbursements should not be requested except when limitations of an individual cannot be accommodated by the conference organizers, or when the exception is approved by the appropriate City administrator for business purposes.
- IV. Allowed Personal Vehicle Travel Expenses.
- An employee may use a personal vehicle for travel when no feasible City vehicles are available for use and the appropriate City administrator authorizes the employee to use a personal vehicle.
- A. Coordinating Use of Personal Vehicles for Two or More Employees.
- City employees authorized to travel on the same dates with the same itinerary must coordinate when traveling by personal vehicle to the same duty point. In such a situation, the City allows full mileage for one vehicle for every four City employees. If more than one City employee is claiming the same personal vehicle mileage, one of the

employees must provide an explanation for the itinerary difference (e.g., employee is required to transport equipment and supplies to the duty point and does not have room for passengers, employee has City official business elsewhere after the common event).

B. Automobile Mileage Rate.

Automobile mileage rates when an employee is authorized to use a personal vehicle are equivalent to standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service (currently 67 cents per mile – Jan. 1 – Dec 31, 2024).

C. Determination of Mileage between Duty Points.

The determination of mileage is based on an online mapping service (e.g., Google Maps) with mileage rounded up to the next whole mile.

1. The point-to-point mileage may not exceed the number of miles on the most cost-effective route between the employee's starting point and ending points.
2. The shortest route between points is presumed to be the most cost-effective route; however, consideration is given for reimbursements of a longer route due to the employee's time savings, resulting productivity improvements, and safety factors.
3. Mileage incurred due to getting lost, inaccurate directions, traffic, or road construction is not included in the reimbursement calculation unless the road construction or a road closure for another reason results in a detour.

D. Mileage between Lodging and Restaurants or Lodging and Duty Point.

Actual mileage between the place of lodging and restaurants and lodging and duty points while on overnight trips may be reimbursed up to a maximum of 5 miles for a one-way trip. An exception is available for mileage reimbursement between lodging and duty point if a justification statement is included on the travel claim (e.g., unable to obtain lodging at government rate within five miles of duty point or unable to obtain lodging within five miles of duty point due to safety factor).

E. Daily Returns to Headquarters versus Staying Out of Town.

Employees may choose to return to headquarters daily rather than stay out of town at City expense. However, the reimbursement for transportation to return to headquarters cannot exceed the reimbursement for lodging and meals the traveler would have received had he remained at the out-of-town duty point.

V. Parking Fees and Toll Charges.

Actual parking fees and toll charges incurred while on official City business are allowable additional expenses. If no receipt for parking is provided, the employee must submit a signed and dated declaration of the expense.

VI. Non-Allowable Expenses.

The cost of alcoholic beverages, laundry/dry cleaning, shoe-shining, haircuts, in-room movies, tours, personal entertainment, limousines or ride-share services, and spouse or other family expenses are specifically excluded from reimbursement.

VII. Reimbursement of Travel Expenses.

A. Submission of PERS-12.02A, Travel Expense Reimbursement Request Form.

Within 15 calendar days after the conclusion of a trip, a City employee must complete a PERS-12.02A form, attach the required corresponding receipts and supporting documentation, and provide the form with attachments to the City Secretary to receive reimbursement of allowable expenses. If more than one employee attended the same event, each employee will complete his own PERS-12.02A form.

B. Meals Receipts.

The meal receipt must be a detailed receipt showing all specific items purchased and the amount of the tip/gratuity. The amount requested on the PERS-12.02.A form should equal the lesser of the total of the meal receipt minus any costs for alcoholic beverages or the maximum reimbursable amount allowed. The receipt must include the name of the restaurant, the date of the meal, and method of payment.

C. Lodging Receipt Requirements.

1. The lodging receipt or other supporting documentation may be an electronic version delivered through the internet or electronic mail or copy of the documentation as long as the following required information is included:
 - a. The receipt must be issued by the commercial lodging establishment or its central reservation office or by the travel agency used to reserve the lodging; and
 - b. The receipt must include the name and address of the commercial lodging establishment, the name of the employee, the single room rate, a daily itemization of the lodging charges, and proof of payment.
2. If a lodging receipt is unavailable, then the supporting documentation must include the canceled check or credit card slip used to pay the lodging expense, the credit card billing the lodging charges appear on, or a copy of the check, slip or billing. If the original or a copy of a canceled check, credit card slip or credit card billing is included in the supporting documentation, then the name and address of the establishment, the name of the employee, the single room rate and a daily itemization of the lodging charges must be included in that documentation.

3. If the individual listed on a lodging receipt is not the City employee requesting reimbursement, the supporting documentation must include proof that the employee paid the lodging expenses for which he is claiming reimbursement. The proof may be in the form of a credit card slip, a credit card billing, a canceled check or a receipt from the individual. If the slip, billing, check or receipt is unavailable, then a copy may be submitted.

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