

Chapter 11: TRAVEL AND TRAINING

11.1 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to employees of the City, members of the City Council, and members of the Boards and Commissions traveling within and outside of Marshall specifically to conduct City business.

11.2 EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The City promotes employee, City Council member, and board and commission member development as an essential, ongoing function needed to maintain and improve cost effective quality service to residents. The purposes for development are to ensure that employees, Council members and board and commission members develop and maintain the knowledge and skills necessary for effective job performance and to provide employees with an opportunity for job enrichment and mobility.

11.3 POLICY

An expense incurred by a City employee, City Council member, Board member, or Commission member during a City business trip will be reimbursed if all of the following requirements are met:

1. the item is a reasonable and necessary expense related to the performance of official work activities while traveling on City business; and
2. the primary purpose of the expenditure is to facilitate a public or government interest for which the City is responsible, rather than a private or personal interest; and
3. the traveler has been granted advance approval; and
4. the traveler provides adequate documentation of the expense and obtains the approval of an authorized signatory on the required forms; and
5. the traveler has not and will not receive reimbursement for the claimed expense from any other source.

11.4 AUTHORIZATION FOR IN AND OUT OF STATE TRAVEL

Employee travel for operational, training, professional development, or other business-related purposes must be pre-approved by the Division Director and City Administrator. City Council approval is required for travel requiring airfare or non-budgeted out of state travel. Attendance at training or conferences out of state may be approved only if the training or conference is not available locally. Authorization must be granted prior to incurring the actual expenses.

11.5 TRAVEL ADVANCES

Employees may request lodging reimbursement when expenses are estimated to exceed \$200. The employee shall request approval through the expense reimbursement process expressly stating that it is an "Advance Request." The employee must make such request at least three (3) weeks in advance of the first date of the travel. No other types of expense advancements are allowed.

Lodging receipts, where required, shall be provided to the City within five (5) business days following a return to work from travel status. If the amount advanced to the employee exceeds the actual expenses listed on the receipts, the employee shall return the amount due to the City within five (5) business days following notice to the employee of the excess amount. Failure to provide the receipts and, if applicable, reimbursement of an excess amount, to the City within these timelines shall result in a permanent loss of privileges to request future travel advances under this provision and may result in disciplinary action.

11.6 REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The City may reimburse travel costs on a per diem basis up to a maximum allowable rate, or on an actual cost incurred basis, as described in this policy. The City will require appropriate documentation and/or receipts for any expense reimbursement requested under this policy. When an employee reimbursement is necessary, the reimbursement will be handled by the Finance Department after required forms are submitted. The request for reimbursement should include the following information:

- 1) Date
- 2) Place
- 3) Meeting attended, attach registration information and agenda. If no formal agenda is available, the traveler will prepare a memo noting the purpose of the meeting, location, date(s), time(s), and any other pertinent information for the respective division director or City Administrator to sign.
- 4) Specific reason for attendance

- 5) Receipt:
- a. a cash register print-out receipt which indicates the date, time, vendor name and amount of the purchase; or
 - b. a dining check stub which indicates the vendor name and amount of the purchase and is accompanied by a cash register, itemized print-out receipt; or
 - c. a copy of a hotel bill or similar bill, which lists the vendor name and the service(s), purchased.

An expense claim signed by the employee, with all required receipts attached, is to be reviewed by the Division Director, who shall determine if the expense reimbursement is warranted. If so, the Division Director shall endorse the expense claim and forward it to the City Administrator. No reimbursement shall be made by the City unless approved by the Division Director and City Administrator. No reimbursements will be made for any submission of expenses after 90 days following an employee's voluntary or involuntary termination of employment.

11.7 MEAL REIMBURSEMENT IN LOCAL TRAVEL STATUS

Employees in local travel status will be reimbursed for the actual cost for meals or the maximum reimbursement rate, whichever is less, according to the schedule provided in Appendix A and upon submission of a receipt for the actual cost of meals including tax and a gratuity of no greater than 15% of the cost of the meal. Reimbursement for meals will be allowed only where the employee is attending a seminar or conference as a representative of the City for a specific purpose, or where the employee's attendance will directly benefit the City. No reimbursement will be allowed for meetings which are of a social nature. Employees should schedule meetings outside of meal periods whenever possible. If not possible, the employee's reimbursement amount will not exceed the maximum allowable rates for local travel.

11.8 MEAL EXPENSES

Employees traveling outside of Marshall in an approved travel status will receive payment on a per diem (maximum daily rate) basis for meals as provided in Appendix B. The per diem amount is a daily allowance for meal expenses in lieu of reimbursement for actual expenses. The per diem amount covers meal expenses, taxes, and related gratuity.

Eligibility for reimbursement of meal expenses is as follows:

- To be eligible for breakfast, the traveler must be in travel status at 6:00 AM or before.
- To be eligible for lunch, the traveler must be in travel status between the entire period of time from 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM.
- To be eligible for dinner, the traveler must be in travel status until 8:00 PM.

When meals are furnished to travelers as part of conference/training fees paid by the City, the corresponding meal rate will be deducted from the total per diem rate for that day. If actual expenses exceed the applicable per diem rates, the excess amount is a personal expense of the traveler. If actual expenses are less than the per diem rate, the traveler is not required to refund the difference to the City.

Receipts are not required for eligible meal per diem allowances.

11.9 LODGING EXPENSES

Employees traveling outside of Marshall in an approved travel status will be reimbursed for the actual cost of lodging, up to the maximum reimbursement rate as provided in Appendix B. The reimbursement amount, up to the maximum reimbursement rate, excludes lodging taxes.

Lodging reimbursement will not be approved for lodging in the event the traveling employee could arrive at the destination on time by leaving Marshall by 6:30AM nor will reimbursement be approved if the employee could return to Marshall by 10:30PM. No reimbursement will be approved for lodging in the event the traveling employee elects to drive a personal vehicle in lieu of City recommended air travel. Any expenses incurred as a result of additional time required to reach such destination shall be incurred by the employee.

In the event that lodging cannot be secured within the maximum reimbursement rate as provided in Appendix B, the employee may be reimbursed for actual lodging costs, provided adequate substantiation

and pre-approval of the Division Director and City Administrator. Prior to incurring expenses, the traveler may submit for reimbursement of additional lodging expenses when:

- The traveler provides a minimum of three (3) quotes from alternative lodging options within a 10-mile radius of the meeting location; and
- There is no option of reasonable lodging accommodation within the maximum reimbursement rate.
- If there are fewer than three (3) lodging options available within the 10-mile radius of the meeting location, the traveler will provide as many quotes as are available.
- The traveler will receive payment/reimbursement for lodging expenses for the lowest reasonable option; regardless of the lodging option selected. Additional costs will be at the traveler's expense.

When a conference and associated lodging are co-located, the City Administrator may approve an exception to the maximum reimbursement rate for lodging.

For reimbursement of lodging expenses and taxes, an itemized bill from the vendor must be submitted. Proof of any required approvals must be provided.

11.10 MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

"Miscellaneous expenses" means City business travel costs other than meals, airfare, registration fees, and lodging charges. Miscellaneous expenses include, but are not limited to, items such as parking fees, taxi fare, internet access charges, fax charges, and business telephone charges. Some miscellaneous expenses incurred during business travel may not be eligible for City reimbursement due to not meeting all of the reimbursement requirements. The respective division director will decide reasonable and reimbursable miscellaneous expenses. If an employee uses a laptop to access work materials such as email, the employee should ask the hotel/motel about Internet costs prior to travel. Pre-approval is required for Internet access charges and the Division Director should establish a maximum dollar amount allowable.

For reimbursement of miscellaneous expenses, an itemized bill/receipt from the vendor must be submitted. Proof of any required approvals must be provided.

11.11 TRANSPORTATION METHOD AND MILEAGE EXPENSE

The traveler should choose the method of transportation that is the lowest total cost. For non-local travel, the traveler is encouraged to use a rental car, where there is a cost benefit to the City.

While on City business, the traveler will be reimbursed for mileage expenses while utilizing a personal vehicle. Mileage will be reimbursed at the standard business mileage rate for transportation expenses paid or incurred as allowed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Claims for mileage reimbursement will include date of travel, purpose, and total miles submitted on an approved form. No mileage reimbursement will be paid for commuting from an employee's personal residence to City Hall or a workstation. The IRS adopted rate will remain in effect unless modified by the Marshall City Council.

When two or more employees are attending the same seminar, convention, or meeting, carpooling shall be practiced whenever possible. Mileage will be based upon the official State Highway Map from Marshall, MN to the destination, unless there is a valid reason for additional mileage. If an employee, for his or her own convenience, travels by an indirect route or interrupts travel by the most economical route, the employee will bear any extra expense involved. Reimbursement for such travel will be for only that part of the expense as would have been necessary in order to travel.

Vehicle allowances may be provided to City employees based upon a demonstrated business need. The City Council will determine whether a demonstrated business need has been established as well as the appropriate level of vehicle allowance to be received. All vehicle allowances will be reviewed annually as part of the budget process. Criteria to be considered in evaluating business need and/or purpose include:

- The nature of the position and the duties which require the employee to be mobile;
- The extent to which the employee's position involves duties and obligations beyond the normal work hours and work location; and
- Any comparable market factors applicable to the position or like-positions.

Vehicles operated by those receiving such allowance should be appropriate for business use. As representatives of the City, those receiving a vehicle allowance are expected to maintain their vehicles and keep them in a safe and clean condition. When operating their vehicles, such employees shall observe applicable rules of the road.

Employees receiving a vehicle allowance may receive a non-taxable payment toward the vehicle allowance up to the vehicle allowance rate under Appendix A by providing documented work related miles traveled according to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rate. The schedule and documentation shall be provided by the Human Resource department. Any undocumented vehicle allowance payments will be included in the employee's taxable income. No mileage reimbursement shall be paid to employees receiving a vehicle allowance for local travel using his/her personal vehicle. Employees receiving a vehicle allowance are eligible for non-local mileage reimbursement in accordance with the IRS rate. Reference Appendix A for approved positions and allowance amounts.

11.12 COMPENSATION FOR TRAVEL AND TRAINING TIME

Employees will receive compensation during travel and/or training time in accordance with the compensation policies in Chapter 5 of this Personnel Policy Manual. While in travel status, employees will not be compensated for the time taken for meals. Non-compensable time also includes the time spent in travel status as a passenger on an airplane, bus, boat, or train outside of the regular work schedule. Where conferences include optional social activities outside of the scope of the training offered, participation by the employee is considered voluntary and therefore, non-compensable and at the employee's own expense.

11.13 NON-ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

The following are expenses including, but not limited to, those incurred by an employee that will not be reimbursed by the City:

- 1) Laundry, cleaning, or valet services (except of trips over one week duration)
- 2) Tobacco
- 3) Alcoholic Beverages
- 4) Entertainment (Movies, computer games, internet access for personal use, etc.)
- 5) Personal telephone calls
- 6) First-class travel accommodations (unless all other seats are taken)
- 7) Meals and lodging in lieu of other meals and/or lodging which are included in the registration fee
- 8) Traffic or parking tickets, fines, forfeitures or penalties
- 9) Rental vehicles except as pre-approved by the City Administrator
- 10) Supplemental car insurance purchased at the rental car agency
- 11) Expenses of a traveling companion who is not a City employee
- 12) Loss or damage to personal property
- 13) Barber, beauty parlor, shoeshine or toiletries
- 14) Personal postage.