

City of Pahokee



TRAVEL POLICY

June 2013

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the employees and elected officials of the City of Pahokee who are authorized to incur travel costs at the City's expense. Through the use of this policy, the employee traveling should have a clear understanding of eligible expenses before the trip begins to avoid any unnecessary personal expenses or costs to the City. By providing this uniform standard, reimbursement for travel will be fair to the employees and will promote proper use of public funds.

DEFINITIONS:

1. Business Travel - Travel that is necessary for an employee to complete an assigned task or carry out his/her assigned responsibilities that serves a clearly identified public purpose. Examples include serving on a professional or technical board, a speaking engagement, and all other business travel that serves a clearly identified public purpose. For a trip to be classified in the Business Travel category, there generally is no registration fee.
2. Certification or Training Travel- Travel related to essential technical training required to perform in the job classification. For a trip to be classified in this category, the course must result in a certificate, course credit, CPE, CLE, and CEU for satisfaction of in-service training.
3. Overnight Travel (Class A or B as defined in FS112.061): Travel that requires the traveler to be away from the official headquarters for one or more nights. Overnight travel requires the Department Director/Head & City Manager's approval in advance.
4. Day Travel (Class C as defined in FS112.061): Travel that does not require the traveler to stay overnight. Day travel requires approval at the department level only.
5. Official Headquarters: Place of work where individual's office is located.
6. Traveler: A City official, employee or other authorized representative on official City business.

BUDGET PROVISION:

At the time of budget submission, a copy of the detailed travel plans for the year should be submitted to the Finance Department, including conference names, location, dates, and number of staff attending each. No Traveler will be authorized to attend any convention, conference, or training program at City expense, unless funding is available in the budget. The Director/Department head shall be accountable for monitoring the budget to ensure sufficient funds are available. If the trip was not anticipated, written justification must be provided to the City Manager for approval. Budget transfer guidelines must be followed and completed at least two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled trip.

TRAVEL PROCEDURES:

1. The employee should properly plan in advance for his/her trip since last minute arrangements and changes are costly. The employee must complete the Travel Request form. The Travel Request must be completed for each trip (local vicinities, within the state, out of state) an employee makes. This form is designed to show the estimated cost of the trip.
2. All necessary backup (e.g. registration forms, training brochures, conference schedule, or other documentation) must be attached to the Travel Request form.
3. The Travel Request form, along with the Request for Payment form and backup documentation, is sent to the Finance Department for review and approval. The employee will then have their Department Director/Department Head review and approve the travel request. The City Manager must approve all travel requests for Department Directors/Heads. Please provide a copy of seminar registration and schedule, if appropriate. It is the Department Director's responsibility to ensure that the budget expenditure account to be charged is filled in correctly.
4. The Travel Request must be approved prior to paying any registrations fees or making any hotel, airline, or car rental reservations.
5. It takes approximately eight working days to process request and issue payment. Employees traveling need to plan the submission of Travel Request forms accordingly. It is the employee's responsibility to provide enough lead-time to take advantage of any early discounts available.
6. Upon completion of the trip, a Travel Log is completed. The Travel Log identifies all the expenses the employee incurred on the trip. Original receipts must be attached to the Travel Log. Submit Travel Log to Finance Department within 10 days of completion of travel.
7. The Travel Log is reviewed by Finance for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with travel policies. The Travel Log is then compared to the Travel Request to determine if a refund is due to the City or the employee.
 - If a refund is due to the employee, a Request for Direct Payment form should be attached to the Travel Log. If a refund is due to the City, the employee sends the required payment along with the Travel Log, within five (5) business days of returning.

If you have any questions on completing any part of the forms, please contact the Finance Department for assistance.

TRAVEL POLICIES:

Occasional travel by employees is considered necessary and useful to conduct City of Pahokee business. Attendance at selected professional association meetings and training courses provides a benefit to taxpayers through an increased awareness of technical and administrative developments. It is the responsibility of the attendee for any training class to provide notice of successful course completion to the HR Department.

TRANSPORTATION:

1. Travel by air is authorized at the economy or coach rate. All air travel must be by a usually traveled route. In case an employee travels by an indirect route for his/her own convenience, any extra costs shall be the employee's responsibility.

2. If a City vehicle is provided, keep all receipts for fuel, oil, or repairs while on the road. When possible, please fuel the City vehicle at the City fuel depot prior to travel.
3. If travel is by personal vehicle, the current mileage rate for business miles driven using a personal vehicle by the usually traveled route is 55.5 cents per mile or the federally approved mileage rate. This rate is to cover all costs of operation and ownership. If your personal vehicle needs repairs or fluids during the trip, they will not be reimbursed as a separate cost. Mileage will be substantiated by "MapQuest" or another acceptable guideline and will be based upon the closest starting point to destination either your home or office headquarters.
4. When two or more employees from the same department will be traveling on the same trip, the Department Director has authority to designate which employee will receive the mileage reimbursement. In unusual circumstances, more than one vehicle may be required when consideration is given to the number of employees traveling, the length of stay, and the amount of baggage required.
 - If an employee is not designated to receive mileage reimbursement, he/she may still drive a personal vehicle at his/her own expense.
5. Parking fees, tolls, and taxi fares are eligible expenses. Obtain receipts for submittal with the travel log.

LODGING:

1. Rates should be researched to identify the most reasonable cost and booked through each hotel.
2. Whenever possible, lodging should be paid in advance with a City check along with a copy of the tax-exempt certificate to avoid the charge of sales tax. If faced with these charges, alert the Finance Department so it can work with the hotel to have the charges removed from the bill.
If the City credit card is used for payment, make sure that you have a copy of the sales tax exemption certificate to avoid a sales tax charge. Present certificate upon check-in.
3. The hotel receipt should list the daily charges to the room, not just the total amount of the bill.

MEALS:

1. The City will reimburse employees for approved overnight travel up to the per diem rates **established by the U.S. General Services Administration and adjust annually** ~~the Florida Statute 112.061 or the rate set within the City's Personnel Policy Manual.~~
2. ~~Meal reimbursement will be as follows:~~
 - ~~Breakfast is covered up to \$6.00 when travel begins before 6 a.m. and extends beyond 8 a.m.~~
 - ~~Lunch is covered up to \$11.00 when travel begins before Noon and extends beyond 2 p.m.~~
 - ~~Dinner is covered up to \$19.00 when travel begins before 6 p.m. and extends beyond 8 p.m.~~

~~When travel exceeds 24 hours and requires an overnight stay away from the City, the amount for meal expenses is \$36.00 per day. No meal reimbursement shall be provided for travel within the City limits, except as authorized by the City Manager.~~

2. ~~3.~~ Travel advances will be made based on the meal allowance rates but upon return. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable. Room Service charges will not be reimbursed unless due to time of arrival from travel, restaurant service is otherwise unavailable.
3. ~~4.~~ Meals that are already covered by a registration fee or provided by another organization are not eligible for separate reimbursement. Reimbursement for breakfast will be permitted even if a continental breakfast is included in Hotel expense.

REIMBURSABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES:

Section A- Travel Outside of Palm Beach County Requiring Overnight Stay

1. Meals and Lodging: All travelers are allowed meals and lodging while away from the official headquarters for business, certification or training travel. Meal reimbursements will follow the guidelines listed on page 4.
2. Registration: This expense is typically paid in advance and a travel request for payment should be submitted to Finance.
3. Air travel fare: Air travel fares should be researched to identify the most reasonable, cost effective fare and booked through a reliable source. The final price itinerary should be attached to the travel request form.
4. Mileage: If a City vehicle is not available and an employee has to drive their private vehicle, the traveler will be reimbursed for mileage.
5. Other incidental charges: Travelers may be reimbursed for tolls and parking, if the receipts are provided.

Section B- Travel Outside of Palm Beach County Not Requiring Overnight Stay

1. Meals: Travelers will **not** be reimbursed for meals.
2. Registration: This expense is typically paid in advance and a travel request for payment should be submitted to Finance.
3. Mileage: If a City vehicle is not available and an employee has to drive their private vehicle, the traveler will be reimbursed for mileage.
4. Other incidental charges: Travelers may be reimbursed for tolls and parking, if the receipts are provided.

Section C- One Day Travel Within Palm Beach County

1. Meals and Lodging- Meal or lodging allowances will not be paid for one day travel within Palm Beach County.
2. Registration: This expense is typically paid in advance and a travel request for payment should be submitted to Finance.
3. Mileage: If a City vehicle is not available and an employee has to drive their private vehicle, the traveler will be reimbursed for mileage.
4. Other incidental charges: Travelers may be reimbursed for tolls and parking, if the receipts are provided.

Section D- Miscellaneous Provisions:

1. Under no circumstance will any non-business related expense be reimbursed by the City.
2. Personal/Incremental Costs: If an employee traveling on official City business who wishes to alter travel plans for personal reason will only be reimbursed for those expenses which are clearly business related. Employees must ensure that they identify any incremental cost and **do not include** them in the calculation of their travel expenses.

NON-REIMBURSABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES:

Non-reimbursable expenses are those generated by activities and events, which do not serve a direct public purpose to the City. Such expenses include the following:

1. Laundry/Dry Cleaning
2. Gratuities
3. Entertainment/Alcoholic Beverages
4. Room Service
5. Parking/Moving/Traffic Violations
6. Movie Rentals
7. Cribs, irons, etc.
8. Locksmith Charge
9. Vehicle Ownership Costs
10. Donations
11. Personal Phone Calls not related to business
12. Flight Insurance
13. Car repair and Maintenance (unless it's a City vehicle)
14. Locker rentals
15. Leisure Services
16. Car Wash
17. Vicinity travel to/from eating establishments, except for required business meetings
18. Fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, etc.