

 Travel Policy – City Official	Citywide Policy Manual
	Attachments: N/A
Effective Date: November 27, 2018	Responsible Department: Administrative Services
Related Policies & Notes: N/A	

PURPOSE

This travel policy is to establish guidelines for City Officials on authorization of travel and reimbursement or advanced payment of travel and miscellaneous expenses. City Officials shall be reimbursed or paid in advance for travel expenses according to the schedules, terms and conditions authorized below. This policy is established in accordance with California Government Code Sections 53232.2 and 53232.3.

Authorized Expenses Related to Travel

The City Council and their commission and committee members can receive reimbursements or advances toward actual and necessary expenses incurred by participating in the following activities or events:

- Communicating with representatives of regional, state and national government on City adopted policy positions;
- Attending seminars, conferences, and training to improve skill and information levels;
- Participating in regional, state, and national organizations whose activities affect the City’s interests (such as League of California Cities);

Unauthorized Expenses Related to Travel

The City will not reimburse or provide advance payment toward expenses including, but not limited to:

- The personal portion of any trip;
- Family expenses, when accompanying City Official on City-related business, as well as child or pet-related expenses;
- Entertainment expenses, including theatre, shows, movies, sporting events, golf, spa treatments, etc.
- Meals and entertainment paid on behalf of third parties outside of the City;
- Alcoholic beverages, either as a portion of a meal expense or as a separate charge;

- Non-mileage personal automobile expenses including repairs, insurance, gasoline, traffic citations; and
- Personal losses incurred while on City business.
- Any additional costs related to the extension of travel beyond what is required for business-related purposes (except due to travel restrictions caused by inclement weather).

All other expenditures or exceptions require prior approval by the City Council. Expenses for international travel also require prior City Council approval.

Budgetary Limitations

Reimbursement or advancement of expenses shall not exceed budgetary limitations. Changes in appropriations will be done through the budget process.

Reimbursement and Advance Schedule

This schedule is written with the intent that the City Councilmember, commissioner, or committee member will make every effort to find the lowest possible cost to the City for traveling on City business. For example, if paying for parking at the airport is less expensive than paying for a taxi or airport shuttle, then the official should drive their car and park at the airport; or if the cost of renting a car is lower than taking taxis at the out-of-town location, then a car should be rented; or air reservations should be booked in advance to obtain discounted fares. The following procedures apply whether the expense is being paid through a reimbursement or a direct advance.

The City will pay only the costs for the most direct route necessary to accomplish the purpose of travel. Travelers shall comply with the following guidelines:

- Costs incurred from personal travel will not be reimbursed.
- Extension of the trip to cover a weekend stay to obtain a lower airfare does not entitle the City Official to be reimbursed for the extra day's hotel costs or meal expenses.
- Upgrades of any kind shall not be reimbursed, such as early boarding or seat upgrades.
- Travelers who use personal frequent flyer miles for City business shall not be reimbursed for the value of the tickets. Travelers may use City travel to qualify for frequent flyer credits, but the selection of an airline for a given trip shall not be made for the purpose of accumulating such credits.
- City Officials who purchase tickets with a personal credit card will be reimbursed with a valid receipt.

- If a trip is cancelled and the City Official receives credit for the value of the airfare, this credit is to be used for future business travel. If the credit is used for personal travel, the City Official will reimburse the City for that amount.
- City Officials will be reimbursed for one carry-on bag or one checked bag only.

Ground Transportation

Travelers are strongly encouraged to choose the lowest cost for ground transportation taking into consideration reasonable travel time and other related cost factors such as parking. Carpooling is encouraged for all group travel.

a) Private Vehicle

When a traveler elects to travel by private vehicle rather than flying, the traveler will be reimbursed for the least expensive mode of transportation. Travelers shall provide a comparison showing total travel costs for airfare versus total all-in cost of driving. The traveler will be reimbursed at the city's mileage reimbursement rate, except in no case shall it exceed the price of coach airfare for the same trip. Also, the following conditions apply:

- The City will reimburse the City Official the lesser of the mileage rate to and from the site, or the amount that the airline coach fare would have been.
- The City will reimburse the City Official based upon the number of miles between the travel destination and either the City Official's designated work location or residence, whichever is the shortest distance.
- The City will pay all expenses, such as bridge tolls and parking fees, incurred as the result of a City Official's authorized use of a vehicle while traveling on City business.
- To drive a privately owned vehicle on City business, the City Official must possess a valid California driver's license. A driver of a privately owned vehicle must also carry adequate liability insurance coverage, and be responsible for any damage, service, or repair to the car occurring on the trip, as these costs are included in the City's per mile cost reimbursement.

b) Train or Bus

There are many destinations where the use of a train or bus is efficient and practical. It is highly encouraged to use the bus or train for transportation to and from local meetings, trainings and/or conferences if possible. These include but are not limited to; the use of CalTrain, Amtrak and Greyhound. Receipts for bus or train tickets are required for reimbursement. Tickets should be purchased at the lowest available business/economy rate. Cost of fare should not exceed the cost of the lowest commercial airfare.

c) Supplementary Transportation

If transportation is needed within the destination city, or from the City Official's home to/from airport, the use of hotel courtesy buses, local shuttle services, or public transportation are preferred. Taxis or Transportation Network Company (TNC) services, such as Uber or Lyft and other ride-sharing service fares are allowable when public transit is unavailable, unsafe, or impractical. Receipts are required for payment or reimbursement on all transportation costs, including tip not to exceed 20%.

d) Rental Cars

Rental cars are only permitted when no other transportation is available between airports and meeting locations, or when alternative transportation such as shuttles, public transportation, taxis, or TNC ride-share services, are more expensive during the stay at the destination. All rental car requests will have prior approval by the City Council. The following conditions apply:

- Traveler will refuel the car to avoid refueling charges. If a rental car is required, compact car models are recommended, unless an upgrade is provided at no additional cost to the City.
- Additional rental car options are not eligible for reimbursement: Car insurance, GPS devices, pre-paid gas.

Parking Fees

Actual costs for parking will be reimbursed when supported by itemized receipts and approval to use a personal vehicle or rental car is obtained in advance. City Officials should use the lowest cost option for parking within a reasonable distance from the destination.

If a personal vehicle is left at the airport for more than one day, parking will be reimbursed per day based on long-term parking rates.

Lodging

Hotel or lodging expenses will be reimbursed or paid in advance if the lodging and event occur outside the local area. The use of hotels is restricted to cities located beyond 50 miles (one-way) from the City offices or the City Official's residence, whichever is shortest. If travel time would exceed one hour within a 50 mile range, an exception may be granted by the City Council. City Officials shall seek lodging options that provide convenience to the City Official, at the lowest possible cost. The following guidelines apply:

- City Officials shall stay at a conference hotel at the negotiated conference rate. If the conference group rate is not available, the traveler shall select single occupancy, standard, non-deluxe accommodations and should stay at hotels offering economical lodging rates.
- Lodging expenses related to person(s) who are accompanying the City Official, but who themselves are not on City business will not be reimbursed. In this instance, for example, the difference between single and multiple occupancy rates for a room will not be reimbursed.
- Non-mandatory hotel related fees (i.e. optional resort fees/health club fees) shall not be reimbursed, unless such fees are charged without an option to waive)
- The city shall not reimburse any cost related to the extension of a hotel stay beyond the time necessary to complete the event.
- Hotels often provide exemptions from the transient occupancy tax for government officials. City Officials should request exemption from the transient occupancy tax if applicable.

Internet

City Officials will be reimbursed for Internet access connection and/or usage fees up to \$15.00 per day while traveling, if no free internet access is available and internet access is necessary for City business. Other charges on the hotel bill, including pay-TV movies, laundry, or charges for additional guests are not reimbursable.

Meals

a) Per Diem Rates for Meals and Incidentals

The City will pay for a City Official's meals during business travel, including tax and tips at the IRS approved rates published by the US General Services Administration (GSA Per Diem Rates). The GSA Per Diem Rates vary depending on the specific locality where the expenses are incurred. The current effective domestic per diem rates can be accessed from GSA's website at the following links:

GSA Per Diem Rates

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

Meals and Incidental Expenses Breakdown

<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates/meals-and-incidentals-expenses-breakdown>

- City Officials are eligible for 75% of the established per diem rate for the destination for the first and last travel days regardless of the time of day of their departure and return.
- The per diem rate shall be adjusted for meals provided to the City Official as part of conference registration or other hosted events.
- Meal expenses exceeding the per diem schedule above shall be paid by the City Official.
- The per diem rate will be applied on a meal-by-meal basis and will not be aggregated to a daily amount.
- Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.
- Receipts are not required.

The actual cost of a meal can be claimed, within a standard of reasonableness, but receipts must be kept and submitted for the expense incurred. Reimbursement will be provided for reasonable meal costs, including tip not to exceed 20%. Itemized reimbursement claims are subject to a maximum of the established per diem rate for the area the expenses were incurred in.

b) One-Day Trip (Less than 24 Hours)

When City Officials are attending a conference or other organized educational activity, they shall be reimbursed for meals not provided by the activity, on a per diem rate.

c) As Part of a Conference

City Officials must submit a conference program or agenda that outlines whether meals are provided or not. Meal reimbursements may not be claimed if provided by the conference or educational activity.

REPORTING TRAVEL EXPENSES

Within 30 days of incurring any expenses in the performance of official duties, City Officials shall report such expenses to the Administrative Services Department. All expenses should be reported on the City's "Expense Reimbursement Form."

a) Receipts

If a City Official elects to itemize and forego the per diem rate, receipts of all reimbursable expenses incurred must be maintained and submitted. These include meals, transportation, lodging, parking fees, registration fees, and any other actual and necessary expenses.

- Lost receipts – If for any reason a City Official is unable to provide a receipt for an expense, a lost receipt memo can be filled out. A copy of the expense shown on a bank statement must be submitted for backup. If a City Official uses cash for an expense but is unable to provide a receipt, the city will not reimburse the City Official for that expense.

DIRECT CASH ADVANCE POLICY

From time to time, it may be necessary for a City Official to request a direct cash advance to cover anticipated expenses while traveling or doing business on the City’s behalf. Such request for an advance should be submitted to the Finance division no less than fourteen days prior to the need for the advance with the following information: 1) Purpose of the expenditure; 2) The anticipated amount of the expenditure (for example, hotel rates, meal costs, and transportation expenses); and 3) The dates of the expenditure. Direct cash advances shall be approved by the Director of Administrative Services, or designee. An accounting of expenses and return of any unused advance must be reported to the City within 30 calendar days of the City Official’s return on the expense report.

City Manager’s signature: Way Chen
Date: NOVEMBER 27, 2018

Revisions: