



City of Topeka Policy

Travel

TRAVEL POLICY

Purpose: To establish a policy on travel and authorized travel reimbursements.

Applicability: To all city employees.

Effective Date: October 31, 2006

1. PURPOSE

- A. City Code Section 2-118 sets out the general provisions for travel reimbursements for City employees. This policy presents more specific details on procedures to be followed by employees. This policy replaces all previously issued travel policies, including those previously used by individual departments within the City.
- B. Employees must exercise reasonable judgment to travel at the lowest reasonable cost to the City. This includes scheduling travel at the lowest net cost to the City, such as group travel by automobile, picking a conference with the closest destination, and other common sense decisions.

2. GUIDELINES

- A. Approval
Employees must obtain approval from their Department Head or designee prior to any travel that requires reimbursement. If an employee uses a City vehicle for an out-of-town delivery or pick-up and has no other reimbursable expenses, completion of a *Request for Travel Authorization and/or Advance or Reimbursement* form (hereinafter referred to as "Form") is not necessary. Department Heads must have the City Manager's approval for travel other than day trips.
- B. Form for Use by City Employee
The Form serves as the originating and only source document for travel authorization, travel advances, and travel reimbursements.
- C. Travel Authorization
The Estimated Column on the Form serves as an agreement to the cost of the trip and must be approved in advance of travel. It is recognized that actual costs may be somewhat different and will be allowed with the Department Head or designee's approval.



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1. Payments that can reasonably be directly billed or charged to the City should be so billed or charged. Departments are encouraged to arrange direct payments for items such as registrations, lodging, and airfares.
2. Once the Estimated Cost portion is complete, the Form must be submitted to the Department Head or designee for approval with information about any "before and advance" trip expenses (conference registration, airlines, meals, hotel reservations). It is not necessary to submit the Form to Financial Services at this time, unless an advance is requested.

D. Advances

1. Advances are not available for Single Day Travel. The Department Head or designee must approve advances for multiple day travel. The advance travel request must be a minimum of \$78.00.
2. Advances are limited to the meal *per diem* total and estimated hotel/motel costs, and cannot exceed estimated travel costs authorized.
3. When an employee's meal *per diem* and/or hotel/motel advance is approved by the Department Head or designee, the completed Form will be used by Financial Services to process the advance. The travel advance check will be available for pick-up on Fridays. Financial Services must receive travel advance requests by 5:00 p.m. the previous Monday.

E. Travel Completion

1. The Actual Cost column of the Form will be completed after the employee returns and is used for any travel reimbursement requests. **All costs** and travel times of the trip should be included on the Form, including costs that have already been paid by the City, for which the employee is not seeking reimbursement.
2. No travel reimbursements will be processed without the completion of this Form. Receipts for all expenses must be attached, excluding meal receipts.
3. Travel Forms must be completed within ten (10) days of travel completion.



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4. No travel advance or reimbursement will be paid to employees who have not completed travel Forms from previous trips.
5. Department Head or designee's approval is required prior to any expenditure of funds.

F. Standard Mileage Rates

Mileage reimbursement will be calculated based upon the current rates issued by the Internal Revenue Service; staff in the Financial Services Department updates this rate periodically on the Form. A City vehicle should be used whenever feasible and is strongly encouraged for day travel. Employees should check with Fleet Services on the availability of a City vehicle. The Department Head or designee must approve the use of a privately owned vehicle in advance. Employees are required to file a copy of a valid driver's license and proof of vehicle liability insurance with the Department Head or designee before use of a privately owned or City vehicle will be approved.

G. Special Conditions

1. If an employee is traveling as an officer or board member or a presenter to a particular organization, and the organization is paying part or all of the travel, the employee will not be allowed a duplicate travel reimbursement from the City of Topeka. Any expenses covered by the organization will be deducted from expenses requested by the employee.
2. Additional weekend stay can be reimbursed only if the savings are warranted from Saturday stay-over deals (e.g., airfare), and only with advance approval from the Department Head or designee.

H. Reimbursable Expenses

Any item or expense not listed in this policy must be noted and approved by the Department Head or designee prior to travel for inclusion.

3. OVERNIGHT/EXTENDED STAY

A. The following expenses are reimbursable:

1. Airfare or other public transportation costs. Tickets should be the least expensive available (e.g., coach class on an airline).
2. Roundtrip mileage to airport. Roundtrip mileage to KCI will be limited to 150 miles.



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3. Airport service (e.g. KCI Roadrunner), if employee chooses not to drive.
 4. Taxi, shuttle, or bus fare from the destination airport to the registered hotel and back, and for other necessary trips during stay.
 5. Lodging. See Section B below.
 6. Only those Conference registration expenses which are authorized by the Department Head or designee. Employees must register for early registration when possible.
 7. Meals. See Section C below.
 8. Employees will be reimbursed for airport satellite parking costs only, unless the Department Head or designee approves parking at closer, more expensive lots.
 9. Turnpike tolls. If the employee uses a personal K-Tag for turnpike travel, the City will reimburse without a receipt at the published KTA rates. Employees must provide the turnpike interchanges at beginning and destination travel locations.
 10. Rental car expenses if necessary, at the lowest possible rates, with advance Department Head or designee approval. The City requires the purchase of the additional property damage insurance provided by the rental car companies.
- B. Lodging
Reimbursement for lodging will be reasonable and customary, actual room rate for single occupancy, plus actual taxes paid. A government rate should be requested whenever possible. Employees shall, if possible, present the City's sales tax exemption certificate at registration. Employees should stay at the conference hotel when possible to avoid other transportation charges. Employees are encouraged to use a City P-Card to reserve and pay for lodging.
- C. Meals
1. Meals are expenses for breakfast, lunch, dinner and taxes on those meals, which are incurred on travel status, and are reimbursable based on *per*



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diem rates. Specifically excluded are alcoholic beverage and entertainment expenses and any expenses incurred for other persons.

- 2. Meal costs will be reimbursed by *per diem* rates only. Meal costs cannot be charged to any City issued bankcard, including the City P-card. Meals provided by the conference will not be deducted from the *per diem* rates, unless authorized by the Department Head or designee. However, if an employee selects a separate option on a registration form, and an additional charge is paid for an optional meal, then that meal *per diem* will be reduced from the meal reimbursement total. Meal *per diem* is defined as those rates published by the U.S. Government Services Administration (USGSA) (see website below) for the area to which the employee is traveling. If the city or county in which the employee is traveling is not listed, then reimbursement will be at the minimum rate listed on the USGSA website.

U.S. Government Services Administration website:

http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?programId=9704&channelId=-15943&oid=16365&contentId=17943&pageTypeId=8203&contentType=GSA_BASIC&programPage=%252Fep%252Fprogram%252FgsaBasic.jsp&P=MTT

D. Partial Day Travel

If an employee must travel a partial day either to or from their destination, the following meal allowances will be used:

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| Breakfast | If employee departs prior to 7:00 a.m. | 20% of <i>per diem</i> |
| Lunch | | 25% of <i>per diem</i> |
| Dinner | If employee returns to point of origin after 7:00 p.m. | 55% of <i>per diem</i> |

Meals for partial day travel will be reimbursed at the *per diem* rate listed above. No receipts are required. Specific travel times must be listed on the travel Form to receive reimbursement.



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E. Other

1. Employees are encouraged to use the City’s P-Card for public transportation, lodging and registration charges only. The P-Card should be used when making and confirming lodging reservations, and when paying for lodging at check-out. Employees should clearly identify themselves as a City of Topeka (governmental entity) employee and ask for the government discounted rate and sales tax exemption.

If an employee charges any meal expenses to the room, then the employee must pay for these expenses **prior to check-out** with personal funds. City issued bank cards, including the City P-Cards, shall not be used to purchase any meals or other room service amenities at the appointed place of lodging.

4. **DAY TRAVEL -- NO OVERNIGHT STAY**

A. The following expenses are reimbursable:

1. Roundtrip mileage for a privately owned vehicle, when a City vehicle is not available and when approved in advance by the Department Head or designee. Employees are encouraged to check on the availability of a City vehicle from the Fleet Services Division.
2. Turnpike tolls.
3. Only those Conference registration expenses which are authorized by the Department Head or designee. Employees must register for early registration when possible.
4. Meal reimbursement at the *per diem* rate only, not to exceed the partial day travel schedule. No receipts are required. Specific travel times must be listed on the travel Form.

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|-----------|--|------------------------|
| Breakfast | If employee departs prior to 7:00 a.m. | 20% of <i>per diem</i> |
| Lunch | | 25% of <i>per diem</i> |
| Dinner | If employee returns to point of origin after 7:00 p.m. | 55% of <i>per diem</i> |



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- B. These costs are NOT reimbursable for any City funded trip:
1. When two (2) or more employees travel in the same personal vehicle, mileage reimbursement will be paid to the employee who provides the vehicle; passengers cannot claim mileage.
 2. More than one (1) round trip to the airport.
 3. Alcoholic beverage costs.
 4. Rental car expenses, unless special Department Head or designee approval is obtained prior to travel.
 5. Extra transportation costs incurred while employee is not in actual attendance at conference, *e.g.* for sight seeing, shopping, golfing, etc.
 6. Additional costs for spouse or other non-City employees.
 7. In-room movies, personal telephone calls, or other in-room amenities at lodging.

The Department Head or designee may authorize exceptions for compelling reasons on a case-by-case basis. The reason for the exception shall be submitted in writing to the City Manager.

THIS POLICY SPECIFICALLY REPEALS AND REPLACES PRIOR CITY POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDA RELATIVE TO TRAVEL.

Approved:


Norton N. Bonaparte, Jr.
City Manager & CEO