

**CITY OF BEAUMONT  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Policy Number: 6.1

Subject: Travel & Training

Effective Date: 09/28/2017

Approved by: Kyle Hayes | 05/01/2021  
City Manager | Date

Todd Simoneaux | 05/01/2021  
Chief Financial Officer | Date

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish acceptable guidelines and procedures for the payment of travel expenses incurred by city employees or council members, who in the performance of their duties are traveling outside the city. This policy will apply to all travel regardless of the source of funds. The term "employee" is interchangeable with the term "council member" for this policy only. The term "advance" is defined as a check made out in the name of an employee rather than in the name of a vendor.

II. REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES

Subject to the requirements and guidelines of this policy, all reasonable, necessary, and ordinary expenses incurred in travel are reimbursable.

A. Transportation - The mode of transportation is left to the judgment of the department director or council members, who will give due consideration to the time involved, safety, convenience, and cost of such transportation.

1. Air Transportation - Coach class accommodations must be utilized unless circumstances dictate otherwise. When arranging air travel, departments may want to avoid fare restrictions that limit flexibility. However, if there are little likelihoods that travel arrangements will change, airfare should be booked as early as possible, and all discounts should be pursued. Air Transportation requires an advanced purchase to ensure cheaper rates. Once approved by Finance, the employee has several options on how to pay for this cost. If the employee wishes to secure payment with personal funds, he or she can be reimbursed immediately by submitting a check request along with the proper receipt to the Finance Department. Alternatively, the employee can wait for reimbursement by claiming this expense on the Travel Expense Report along with all of the other trip costs. Another option of payment is to have a travel agency hold the reservation until payment is received. Upon approval by the Finance Department, this payment can be

purchased on a P.O. when the agency submits an invoice. No advance for this cost is permitted. When required, the City will reimburse the amount associated with checking two (2) pieces of luggage on a flight.

Each Department shall be responsible for reviewing all air travel requests to ensure that they are cost effective when compared to air travel available out of Jefferson County. This comparison shall include the cost of airline tickets, baggage fees, parking, and the cost to travel to and from the airport on both legs of the trip. When comparison reveals that flying from Jefferson County is more cost effective than flying outside of Jefferson County, the employee should utilize the cheaper of the two options unless there is good justification to do otherwise. Moreover, whenever an employee travels a distance that is in excess of 250 miles, the Department should compare those travel costs against air travel options available in Jefferson County.

2. Personal Vehicle - Should an employee use their personal vehicle, that employee will be reimbursed at the City's standard mileage allowance (current IRS rates) for actual mileage, up to the cost of a round trip coach airfare. If the employee departs directly from home, mileage will be determined to be the lessor of miles between the employee's home and the travel destination or the miles between the office and the travel destination. When more than one department employee is traveling for the same purpose, car-pooling is required unless such will cause undue hardship or time scheduling conflicts to occur. If an employee receives an auto allowance and the actual miles driven is less than 75, no reimbursement for mileage will be given to the employee. If the actual miles driven exceed 75, the employee will be reimbursed at the City's standard mileage allowance (current IRS rate) for the total amount of miles driven. Once approved, this cost can be advanced to the employee or reimbursed to the employee with the submission of the Travel Expense Report. When estimating the miles for the purpose of receiving an advance, please attach a printout of the estimated mileage by using MapQuest, Google Maps or something similar.
3. City Vehicles - Where a department is assigned a City vehicle and more than one department employee is traveling for the same purpose, use of a City vehicle is required unless such will cause undue hardship or time scheduling conflicts to occur. A City-furnished vehicle should be used whenever it is reasonably available and a car is required for official travel. However, City vehicles cannot be used for travel outside of the state of Texas. As a consequence, employees are prohibited from traveling to the neighboring state of Louisiana via City vehicle without prior authorization. Employees will be reimbursed for gasoline and emergency repairs which are purchased during travel if these purchases are supported by receipts which show the date, time and location of the purchase. Once approved, estimated gas costs can be advanced to the employee or reimbursed with the

submission of the Travel Expense Report. In either case, receipts will be required when the Travel Expense Report is submitted.

4. Rental Vehicle - Rental of a vehicle is authorized when it is more practical and/or less expensive than the use of taxi cabs or other public transportation for official business. The size of the vehicle rented should be dictated by the number of staff traveling. An economy/compact car should be used when available. The cost of gasoline for the rental car is reimbursable. Receipts for gas are required and should indicate the date of purchase, location, and gallons purchased. Once approved, these costs can be advanced to the employee or reimbursed with the submission of the Travel Expense Report. In either case, receipts will be required when the Travel Expense Report is submitted.
  5. Other Transportation - The use of hotel courtesy vans or other transportation services such as Super Shuttle should be used whenever available. The use of taxi cabs is reimbursable. Once approved, these costs can be advanced to the employee or reimbursed to the employee with the submission of the Travel Expense Report. In either case, receipts will be required when the Travel Expense Report is submitted.
  6. Parking and Tolls - Actual costs of parking are reimbursable with receipts. Parking meter fees and toll charges do not require receipts, but a log showing the date, amount, and location must be submitted to receive reimbursement. Once approved, these costs can be advanced to the employee or reimbursed to the employee with the submission of the Travel Expense Report. In either case, a records log will be required when the Travel Expense Report is submitted.
- B. Hotel/Lodging - Reservations should be made at the lowest rate available. If a guest accompanies an employee, the incremental difference charged above the single occupancy rate is non-reimbursable. Once approved, this cost can be paid by a check request to the hotel or the employee can be reimbursed with the submission of the Travel Expense Report. Please include support as to the amount of the hotel cost when submitting a check request. In either case, itemized receipts will be required for the submission of the Travel Expense Report. No advance for this cost is permitted.
- Lodging provided by family/friends is non-reimbursable. Meals, groceries, or gifts for people providing lodging to City employees are non-reimbursable by the City.
- C. Meals and Incidentals (Overnight Travel) - Meals and Incidentals (personal telephone calls and tips) are reimbursable on a per diem basis. Under the per diem method, travelers will be reimbursed at the maximum Federal guideline rates per day for all meal and meal-related costs including gratuities. Those rates vary depending on the destination of travel. A matrix of the rates is published in IRS

Publication 1542, Table 4. The rates listed in this table are for a full day and will be allocated between breakfast, lunch and dinner at the following percentages: Breakfast - 20% of the daily rate, Lunch - 30% of the daily rate and Dinner - 50% of the daily rate. The time of departure from or arrival in Beaumont determines the meals eligible for reimbursement, according to the following schedule (assuming the employee is based in Beaumont):

<u>Leave from Beaumont</u>	<u>Allowed</u>
Before 7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
Before 11:00 a.m.	Lunch
Before 6:00 p.m.	Dinner

<u>Arrive in Beaumont</u>	<u>Allowed</u>
After 8:00 a.m.	Breakfast
After 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
After 7:00 p.m.	Dinner

Partial per diem will be paid if some meals are not eligible for reimbursement. Meals ineligible for reimbursement are meals included in conference or seminar registration fees paid by the City. Partial per diem (including incidentals) will be 20% of the daily rate for breakfast, 30% of the daily rate for lunch, and 50% of the daily rate for dinner. Once approved, an advance will be given for meals if requested. If no advance is requested, the meal per diem will be reimbursed with the submission of the Travel Expense Report. No receipts are required for per diem where an overnight stay is required.

Meals and Incidentals for (Day Trips - Outside City Limits) - Same rules as overnight trips apply except receipts are required for cash reimbursements. Cash reimbursements are limited to the lesser of the actual meal costs or the per diem amount for the meal. If no receipt is submitted, then the per diem applicable to the meals will be added to the employee's paycheck. No advance for the per diem is allowed for day trips.

- D. Registration - Registration fees for local and out-of-town conventions, conferences and workshops are eligible expenses. These must be supported by receipts which will include the agenda or program identifying all activities that are included in the registration fee. Once approved, these fees can be paid by a check request or reimbursed to the employee with the submission of the Travel Expense Report. No advance is permitted for this fee.
  
- E. Telephone and Other Business Communications - Telephone calls, fax charges, overnight/other mail fees, etc. are reimbursable if they are for the purposes of conducting City business. The validity of these expenses must be supported by an itemized bill or receipt.

- F. Tips or Gratuities - Gratuities for meals are included in the per diem rates. Tips for incidental purposes such as bellhops, cab drivers and porters may be allowed up to a maximum of \$10 per day. Documentation is required for reimbursement. For CVB employees, an additional \$10 per day for tips is allowed only when assistance is needed to set up and/or carry booth materials. To be reimbursed for the additional tip allowance, a CVB employee must submit a written and signed log detailing the need and use of the tips.
- G. Spouse/Companion Attendance - Spouses/Companions travel at their own expense. No travel costs, whether for transportation, baggage, lodging, meals or cost of attendance to events, for spouses/companions are reimbursable by or chargeable to the City. Only City employees may travel in City vehicles, due to liability.

### III. COMPENSATION FOR TIME TRAVELED

- A. Overnight Trips - All employees (exempt and non-exempt) shall receive compensation and/or accrue compensatory time for all hours traveled regardless of their normally scheduled working hours.
- B. Day Trips - All employees (exempt and non-exempt) shall receive compensation and/or accrue compensatory time for all hours traveled regardless of their normally scheduled working hours.

### IV. ACCOUNTING FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

- A. Travel Authorization and Advances - All estimated travel and/or training costs should be properly approved before any expenses are incurred. Proper approval is achieved when a completed Travel Authorization and Advance Form (available on COBCONNECT as both Excel and PDF documents) is signed off by the employee's Department Director and the City Manager\_or the CFO or his/her designee. When possible, these completed forms should be submitted to the Finance Department at least ten (10) working days prior to departure. When submitting the Travel Authorization and Advance Form, please include all related check requests and proper support. Proper support should include registration information, conference agendas, hotel information and information relating to travel arrangements. It is very important that the Finance Department receives all information relating to the travel to help identify all costs. Conference agendas are very important to include as they give information regarding meals that are being provided. All forms that are incomplete or do not have proper support will be returned to the requesting department.

An employee may be denied a travel advance if he or she:

- \* Requests the advance less than ten (10) working days before the advance is needed;

- \* Has not submitted an expense report on previously completed travel;
- \* Has not reimbursed the City for a travel advance which exceeded the actual cost of travel that has been completed;
- \* Consistently submits the travel expense report late (more than ten (10) days after travel is completed).

If the trip is cancelled, the advance check must be returned immediately by the employee to the department. The department must void the check by clearly marking "VOID" on the check in ink and return it to the Finance Department within five (5) working days. The check should not be held for later use. If the employee has cashed the check, that employee should reimburse the City immediately cashed.

- B. Expense Reporting - Upon returning to the City, the employee must complete the Expense Report and personally sign the standard form, "Travel Expense Report" (available on the COBCONNECT as both Exel and PDF documents). The original report must be submitted to the Finance Department, along with required documentation, within ten (10) working days from the date of return.

If a refund is due the City, the employee must first submit the completed expense report to the Finance Department for review. The employee may indicate on the expense report that a payroll deduction is preferred. After a review, a copy of the expense report will be returned to the employee's department. If the employee does not utilize this option, it will be the responsibility of the employee to remit the funds to Cash Management along with a Finance Department approved copy of the expense report and return a copy of the expense report and a copy of the receipt to the Finance Department showing that the refund due to the City has been settled.

If reimbursements of funds are due to the employee, the employee must submit the completed expense report to the Finance Department. A reimbursement check should normally be issued with the next regular accounts payable check cycle.