



CITY OF BROOKHAVEN

TRAVEL AND MEAL EXPENDITURE POLICY

Approved by Mayor and Council: April 12, 2016

TRAVEL AND MEAL EXPENDITURE POLICIES

This section provides guidance on authorized expenditures for all departments under the authority of the City Manager. This section shall cover those costs incurred for travel and meal expenses by any City employee or board member who travels on City related business. Operating guidelines and procedures for procuring travel and meal expenses shall be issued under separate cover(s) as they do not constitute nor necessitate City Council approval.

A. APPROPRIATION

In conjunction with the annual budget process, the City Council shall authorize department appropriations for travel and meal expenses consistent with the annual adopted operating budgets. Departments shall not incur travel expenditures unless an appropriation is available, or budget amendment has been completed.

B. EXPENDITURE APPROVAL

All expenditures relating to travel and meals shall be processed consistent with this policy. Once the Finance Department receives the proper documentation from the incurring departments, the execution of payment shall occur. The Finance Department shall only process transactions for payment based upon the proper approval for the dollar amount of the expenditure, including adequate documentation received either electronically or in writing.

C. SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTED REIMBURSEMENT CLAIMS

The Department of Finance shall review expenditure documents for compliance and appropriateness with all City policies and procedures. Expenditure reimbursement requests that are not in compliance with these policies and procedures shall be returned to the originating department with Finance Department recommendations for changes (e.g., travel issues, cellular phone use). In the event the department does not agree with the Finance Department's recommendations, the City Manager shall make the final decision regarding whether to authorize the reimbursement.

D. TRAVEL EXPENSES

The City shall reimburse/pay expenses incurred by employees for travel relating to official City business. Official business shall be deemed that which has been approved prior to the expenditure being incurred on a City of Brookhaven Travel Authorization form. Travel authorization forms are required for any travel exceeding 50 miles of the employee's place of work.

1. Lodging: hotel/motel charges shall qualify for reimbursement when they exceed a 50-mile radius of the employee's place of work. All traveling personnel shall minimize the expense associated with hotel/motel costs by procuring a government rate for qualified stays. Lodging expense shall be benchmarked against the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) approved per-diem rate of reimbursement. When the GSA rate is exceeded by 20% or more, additional justification shall be required from the traveler. When traveling in the State of Georgia, all travelers must use the hotel/motel tax-exempt status form. Sales and occupancy taxes charged for lodging within the State of Georgia do not qualify as eligible reimbursable travel expenses under this policy. Per Diem rates can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>. Hotel accommodations for travel less than a 50-mile radius from Brookhaven must be approved by the employee's department head.

The City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Department Directors, and Management of the City shall be allowed hotel accommodations for travel less than a 50-mile radius from Brookhaven, based upon meeting schedules and attendance needs.

2. Transportation: approved modes of transportation include vehicle, air, rail, or taxi and public transportation. The method selected by the traveler shall be subject to the most economically feasible, taking into consideration the value of time. If a City vehicle is available, it should be used in lieu of a personal vehicle. Generally, the City will not reimburse for the use of a personal vehicle within 10 miles of an employee's official headquarters and/or residence.
 - i. Mileage: miles traveled in personal vehicles shall be reimbursed at the rate designed by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage shall be calculated using the employee's place of work as the origination point, so long as the employee reported to work prior to departing to the destination. In the event the employee does not report to work prior to traveling to the destination, mileage shall be reimbursed from the employee's origin, less their normal commute to the workplace. Expenses associated with employee's vehicles such as fuel, oil, tires, etc. (deemed normal wear and tear) shall not be subject to reimbursement and will be the responsibility of the traveler. Miles traveled in City owned vehicles shall not be subject to reimbursement to the traveler. However, expenses associated with the travel in City vehicles such as fuel, oil, tires, etc. shall be the responsibility of the City, and necessary purchases should follow normal purchasing guidelines and processes.
 - ii. Rental Cars: expenses associated with rental cars, i.e. rental expense and fuel will be paid at cost, with receipts provided. Employees shall rent mid-size or smaller vehicles, or an appropriate vehicle size based upon the number of employees needing transportation. Expenses associated with exceeding this car class will be the responsibility of the traveler. Employees should decline additional insurance coverage offered by rental car companies since the City's insurance coverage is applicable to car rentals.

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- iii. Air/Rail: transportation provided by major airlines or railroads shall be paid at cost to the traveler. Travel will be limited to coach/economy classes of service. In the event the traveler chooses a class higher than coach/economy (business or first class) or to extend the trip and change departure or arrival dates, the difference of the expense shall be the responsibility of the traveler. Any reduction in the expense associated with transportation costs as a result of extended or modified travel dates for personal benefit shall not be provided back to the traveler.
 - iv. Taxi/Shuttle: expenses associated with local transportation will be deemed eligible expenses as long as receipts are provided with point-to-point explanations for this mode of transportation. Such documentation should accompany receipts.
3. Meals/incidentals: expenses associated with meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and incidentals (snacks, tips, miscellaneous) shall be administered on a Per Diem basis by city. Per Diem will be advanced to the employee prior to travel. Receipts will not be required on incidental or meal expenses. Overages of meal expenses will be the responsibility of the employee, while any savings may be retained by the employee.

Per Diem amounts will be derived from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), which can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>

4. Program/Seminar/Conference Fees: charges other than meals and incidentals mentioned above (paragraph 3) relating to the traveler's attendance to the particular event (training, conference, seminar, etc) shall be paid by the corresponding department, subject to the provisions identified for expenditures in the City's Expenditure and Purchasing Policies.
5. Telephone/Long Distance: telephone, fax, long-distance, Internet, and communication expenses (including postage) shall be reimbursed when relating to the traveler's employment. Expenses for business communication shall be limited to \$10.00 per day.
6. Laundry/Dry Cleaning: when travel is scheduled for more than five consecutive days, reimbursement for laundry and dry cleaning expenses will be allowed. Expenses shall be reimbursed or paid upon receipt. Prior approval is required before travel.

Each traveler shall pay for expenses associated with travel on a personal credit card, or procurement card with the exception of meals or incidental expenses. Travel advances for meal/incidental expenses shall be provided to the employee prior to travel by the Finance Department.

Dependents/spouses accompanying employees on official business shall not be eligible for reimbursed expenses by the City. If a dependent or spouse accompanies an employee on an authorized business trip, only those expenses that can be directly attributed to the employee will be reimbursed. Per Diem used for expenses other than those directly attributable to the employee will be allowed; however, the Per Diem amount will not be increased because of dependent/spouse travel.

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The City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Department Directors and management of the City shall be allowed to conduct official City business while on travel. The submission of expenses related to such official business will be required in order to receive reimbursement. Such items may include expenses associated with meetings or business meals outside of the scope of the purpose of travel.

Employees on official business shall follow the City's workers' compensation policies in the event of any on-the-job injury.

E. NON-TRAVEL MEALS

Expenses related to the furnishing of meals, snacks, or food should be limited to the following circumstances:

1. Meetings hosted by the City Council, City Manager, or Assistant City Manager;
2. A meeting during regularly scheduled business hours required by law or authorized by a department director which is anticipated to last more than four (4) hours and which is scheduled through normal mealtimes;
3. A business meal with someone other than another City official or employee in order to discuss a specific item of City business; and
4. Meals that are an integral part of a scheduled meeting at which the individual is required to attend.

Receipts provided for meals within this category should detail the nature of the meeting and the people who were present for discussion.

F. SUBMISSION OF EXPENSES

All expenses relating to travel shall be submitted to the Finance Department no later than ten (10) days after return from the trip. Non-travel meals shall be submitted no later than 7 days from the date of occurrence.

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