

City of Arcata Travel Policy

Administrative Policies and Procedures

Subject:	Travel
Effective Date:	July 1, 2007
Originating Department:	Finance

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the City's expectations of its City officials, employees and volunteers who are required to travel in connection with their work responsibilities; to establish responsibilities and guidelines governing travel by City officials, employees and volunteers; to provide adequate controls over travel expenditures and maintain accountability while allowing for flexibility; and to provide an efficient process for approval of travel expenditures.

II. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will be used:

- 2.1. "Travel" - any trip taken by a City official, employee or volunteer in the course of performing their duties, including trips to conferences, seminars, meetings and workshops.
- 2.2. "Employee" - any person representing the City in an official capacity, including employees, council members or volunteers.
- 2.3. "Local Travel" - travel within a radius of fifty miles from the employee's regular work site, one way, for a one day session or multiple day sessions.
- 2.4. "Out of town travel" - any travel, including out of state, that requires subsistence or actual living expenses.
- 2.5. "Mileage Allowance" - Reimbursement paid to the employee for the use of his/her personal vehicle during travel or official City business. The reimbursement rate will be the current rate established by the Internal Revenue Service.
- 2.6. "Personal Automobile" - any 4-wheeled vehicle that is manufactured primarily for use on public streets, roads, and highways pursuant to Section 280F(d)(5)(A) of the IRS Code that is owned, rented or borrowed by the employee.

III. GENERAL

It is the policy of the City of Arcata to:

- 3.1 Assure that City employees and officials adhere to procedures when arranging for travel, lodging, meals and other expenses and that they are paid for reasonable expenses incurred for travel, conferences, meetings and meals as a result of conducting authorized City business.
- 3.2 Allow employees to travel to conferences, seminars, meetings and workshops when it is anticipated that the City will derive a benefit from training and information received in such events or when training is mandated by law.
- 3.3 Ensure that the City travel expenditures comply with budgetary guidelines.
- 3.4 Provide a thorough audit trail for expenditures.
- 3.5 This policy does not claim to have addressed all contingencies and conditions. Expenses not specifically addressed in this policy will be paid by the City provided that the Department Head and City Manager determine that the expenses are reasonable and necessary.

IV. AUTHORIZATION

- 4.1 All City employees and officials must obtain approval from an authorized person **in advance** of travel on City business for which an employee wishes to be reimbursed. The City's Travel Authorization Form (Attachment I) must be used to obtain and document approval of each trip prior to travel, and approve and document expenses and reimbursements associated with travel after each trip.
- 4.2 Approval of request to use a privately owned vehicle as a means of travel must be obtained from the Department Head and City Manager at the time the City's Travel Authorization Form is submitted for approval.
- 4.3 An individual may not approve his or her own travel or approve his or her own travel documentation.

V. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 Travel arrangements shall be made as far in advance as possible to obtain the best possible fares and rates. If travel arrangement must be cancelled for any reason, the person who made the arrangements shall cancel them in sufficient time to prevent the City from incurring unnecessary costs.

- 5.2 Travel advances may be obtained before each trip. Typical advances would include amounts for meal expenses, transportation costs, and other incidental miscellaneous expenses. Any unused amount of travel advance shall be returned to the City. Non-allowable expenses shall be deducted from any reimbursement due the employee for out-of-pocket expenses.
- 5.2.1 No advances will be made for airfare costs or lodging. Airfare costs should be paid in advance by the City, and lodging costs typically will be paid using a City issued credit card.
- 5.2.2 If a credit card has not been issued to the employee or the purchasing limits are not adequate to cover lodging costs, credit cards may be checked out of the Finance Department for use on authorized travel.

VI. TRANSPORTATION

- 6.1 Travelers shall use whatever mode of transportation is the most logical and least expensive. Consideration should be given to distance, time and total cost to the City. Transportation costs include, but are not limited to airplane, train, bus and taxi fares, bridge tolls, parking and car rental. Employees should generally take the most direct and commonly traveled routes. Other routes may be authorized when official business requires their use.
- 6.2 City of Arcata pool vehicles may be used for travel, if available and more economical than other modes of transportation. For local travel, a gas card is provided in the car to use for refueling. However, if refueling is necessary for long distance travel, gas credit cards may be checked out of the Finance Department or other City-issued credit cards may be used for any gasoline purchases. The purchase should be recorded on the pool car log sheets.
- 6.3 Airline transportation to and from a conference, seminar and/or meeting will be paid directly by the City. The employee shall utilize the pre-approved travel agent of the City when making airline reservations if the destination is included on the California Intra-City Pairs as identified by the State Department of General Services (Attachment II). The City's pre-approved travel agent is Global Travel (www.globaltrav.com). See Attachment III for instructions on using this agency's services. If the destination is not listed on the California Intra-City Pairs, it may be more economical to arrange airline transportation using one of the discount internet sites, i.e. www.expedia.com, www.travelocity.com, www.orbitz.com, etc.

- 6.3.1 When a commercial air carrier is used, a traveler will be reimbursed for mileage to and from the airport and the actual cost of airport parking. If two or more travelers share transportation to and from the airport, reimbursement shall be made to the person driving his/her vehicle. If a van/shuttle is used, the traveler shall be reimbursed for the actual cost.
- 6.3.2 Under no circumstances shall an employee pilot or be a passenger in a private airplane as a means of transportation to or from a conference, seminar and/or meeting.
- 6.4 Personal automobiles may be used in lieu of City provided pool car or air travel when approved **in advance** by the Department Head or City Manager. Reimbursement will be at the mileage allowance established by the IRS. Reimbursement for private car mileage shall not exceed the cost of “coach class” airfare, plus savings in transportation costs to and from the airport, airport parking, and transportation costs to the destination. Exception to the maximum reimbursement, as stated above, may be authorized when air service is not available or reasonably convenient to the point of destination.
- 6.5 Rental vehicles at City expense may only be obtained when other modes of transportation are not available, too costly, or impractical. A rental requires the prior approval of the Department Head and City Manager. Only intermediate size vehicles, or vehicles with an equivalent rental rate, will be authorized. If two or more persons are attending the same meeting or conference, and a vehicle is needed for City business, only one vehicle may be rented at City expense. Car rental insurance should be purchased from the rental agency. As a precaution against paying for preexisting damage, carefully examine the condition of the rental vehicle before leaving the lot, and immediately report any damages to the car rental office.
- 6.6 Public Transit and Carpooling – City employees are encouraged to make optimum use of available public transit services and carpooling.

VII. LODGING

- 7.1 The cost of lodging accommodations for approved conferences, seminars or meetings will be paid by the City or reimbursed to the employee as outlined in the following sections.
- 7.2 Hotel and motel charges shall be based on single occupancy rates. The accommodations used should be economical, but practical. For example, it is preferable to stay at the hotel recommended by the conference, even if that hotel may be slightly more expensive than others in the area. In instances where conference hotels are filled, the employee should attempt to secure comparable rates at the nearest hotel. Under no circumstances should lodging expenses exceed the conference hotel rate.

- 7.3 The City will not reimburse employees for lodging expenses incurred by family members when an employee's family accompanies him/her, or for any additional guests in the same room.
- 7.4 The City will pay lodging expenses for the City employees during business travel requiring one or more overnight stays. The City will pay for lodging for the evening preceding or subsequent to a meeting or business event when the employee would have to travel at unreasonably early or late hours to reach his/her destination

VIII. MEALS

- 8.1 The City will pay for an employees meals during business travel, including tax and tips at the per diem meal rates established by the IRS for the area in which travel occurs (Attachment IV). Employees will have the flexibility on how much is spent for each meal as long as the total claim for the day does not exceed the per diem allowance for meals established by the IRS. Receipts are not required.
- 8.2 However, if meals are provided in the conference, the following amounts will be deducted from the total per diem allowance: \$10 for breakfast, \$15 for lunch, \$25 for dinner.

IX. TELEPHONE CALLS

- 9.1 The City will pay for all business telephone calls made by a City employee while traveling on business. The City will pay for personal telephone calls up to \$5.00 per day for authorized overnight business travel within California and \$10.00 per day for all other authorized business travel.
- 9.2 Department supplied prepaid telephone cards may be used while on City business.
- 9.3 For those employees who use their personal cell phone during travel on City business, the City will reimburse the cost of all business related telephone calls, and personal telephone calls up to the limits identified above. Employees must provide adequate supporting documentation in order to be reimbursed.

X. WHAT'S NOT COVERED

- 10.1 Personal expenses will not be paid by the City. Personal items include in-room movies, spas and gyms, optional quasi-social functions or events in connection with a conference, laundry or dry-cleaning, miscellaneous sundries, or other items of a personal nature.

10.2 Alcoholic beverage costs are not reimbursable.

10.3 Personal travel shall not be mixed with business travel if it will cost the City anything in dollars or lost time or if it will harm the City's interest in any way. The City will not pay for any expenses of a spouse or other person who accompanies an employee on business travel.

XI. POLICY VIOLATIONS

Employees who violate the travel guidelines and rules outlined in this policy are subject to disciplinary action per Chapter XI of the City's Personnel Rules and Regulations.



TRAVEL/TRAINING AUTHORIZATION FORM
 (Two copies of this form are needed for Accounts Payable)

Employee name: _____ Account number: _____

Name of event: _____

Location of event: _____ Date of event: _____

Issue Check payable to:	Purpose:	Date Needed:	Amount:
	Advance		
	Registration		
	Lodging		
	Travel		
	Other		

Other Items:	
	Advance Needed
	City Car Needed
	City Credit Card Needed
	Gasoline Credit Card (Only when using a City Car)
	Personal Car to be Used (City Manager Approval Required)

Department Head Authorization: _____ Date: _____
 (For attendance of event)

Retain all receipts and attach to form

Expense Category	Estimated Cost	Actual Cost		
		Paid with Cash	Paid with Credit Card	Total Cost
Transportation				
Lodging				
Meals				
Registration				
Other				
Total				
	Less Advance			
	Refund to Employee from City			
	Due to City from Employee			

Department Head Approval of Expenses: _____ Date: _____

Travel/Training Policies

All travel/training expenditures must be processed on the Travel/Training Authorization Form. Employee makes a copy of the form before submitting it to the department manager. The original form is submitted to the department manager for authorization and is kept by the department secretary. The department secretary submits a completed and authorized copy of the travel form to the Finance Department Accounts Payable Clerk for processing.

Upon returning from a trip, employee must, within five working days, submit receipts for all expenses and credit cards to the department secretary, unless it is a P.O.S.T. (Peace Officers Standards and Training) reimbursed trip. The department secretary will complete the "Actual" column on the original Travel/Training Authorization Form along with supporting documentation to the Finance Department Accounts Payable Clerk. If money is due to City from employee, a check must accompany the paperwork.

Prior to employee using his/her personal vehicle, employee must complete the "Certification" of the form below and submit to for approval.

If a personal vehicle is used the City will reimburse employee at a rate which is the same as the current year's IRS standard mileage allowance rate, unless it is a P.O.S.T. reimbursed trip, which is payable at the P.O.S.T. rate.

CERTIFICATION

In accordance with City policy, approval is requested to use a privately owned automobile to attend the conference noted on the previous side. I hereby certify that whenever I drive a privately owned vehicle on City business, the vehicle shall always be:

1. Covered by liability insurance for the minimum amount prescribed by the City of Arcata in the amount of \$100,000 to \$300,000 bodily injury and \$100,000 property, or the combined single limits of \$300,000;
2. Adequate for the work to be performed;
3. Equipped with seat belts;
4. To the best of my knowledge, in safe mechanical condition.

I further certify that, while using a privately owned vehicle on official City business, all accidents will be reported within 24 hours.

Name of Insurance Company: _____ Policy Number: _____

Policy Expiration Date: _____ Driver's License Number: _____

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

RECOMMENDATION

Use of a privately owned vehicle for the Travel/Training noted on the reverse side is recommended:

Department Head Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPROVAL

Employee request to use privately owned vehicle for this Travel/Training is _____ Approved _____ Denied

City Manager Signature: _____ Date: _____