

TITLE: TRAVEL POLICY

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 27, 2018

REVISED EFFECTIVE DATE: January 7, 2021; April 15, 2024

1.0 GENERAL

1.1 Purpose

Spokane Municipal Code (SMC) 3.07.040 Reimbursement of Expenses – In General provides that “The mayor is directed to adopt and promulgate from time-to-time policies and procedures whereby officers and employees of the City are reimbursed for travel and other expenses necessarily incurred in performance of City business.” This policy and procedure provides guidance concerning authorization for travel while conducting City business, allowable costs and rates, requirements for receipts, and guidelines for the responsibilities of travelers.

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2.0 DEPARTMENTS / DIVISIONS AFFECTED.

Except as otherwise provided, this policy and procedure shall apply to all City departments, except Library and Retirement. Provided the provisions of this policy and procedure do not supersede the provisions of any collective bargaining agreements, and when in conflict, the specific terms and conditions of the collective bargaining agreement will prevail.

Departments or Divisions with specific travel circumstances may develop additional more restrictive policies regarding travel which should be documented. It is the responsibility of the traveler to ensure compliance with all relevant travel policies.

3.0 REFERENCES

SMC 3.07.010, .020, and .040 (Payments to Employees and Applicants)
U.S. General Services Administration Website (<https://www.gsa.gov/>)
Vehicle Usage and Accidents Policy and Procedure (ADMIN 0620-12-26)
Purchasing Card Policy (ADMIN 5600-16-01)

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Concur Solutions: Authorized platform used for Travel and Expense electronic approval and expense reporting. www.concursolutions.com

Documented Travel: when an employee attends city business occurring 50 miles or more from duty location.

Local Travel: when an employee attends city business occurring within 50 miles or less from a duty location (see 5.2.7)

Travel Approver: Supervisor or Department Head authorized to approve travel requests through Concur.

Travel Delegate/Assistant: authorized person who may assist travelers with submitting travel requests through Concur, book and reserve, and submit travel expense reports through Concur. (Travelers are still responsible for maintaining compliance.)

5.0 POLICY

5.1 Policy Statement

The City of Spokane will pay reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by its employees while conducting City business. When incurring such expenses, City employees must be sensitive to the public's expectations of the use of public funds and the need to use good judgment. For combined business and personal trips, based on the business itinerary/period of travel, the City will pay allowable business expenses incurred during the business portion of the trip. No added costs will be incurred by the City as a result of extending the business trip for personal reasons. The City will not pay unallowable expenses nor will the city pay duplicative, excessive, extravagant, unnecessary or unreasonable expenses. Where payment of expenses is the subject of a collective bargaining agreement or grant agreement, the terms of that agreement will prevail.

5.2 Payment of Travel Expenses

5.2.1 Authorization for Travel

Authorization requirements are such that no employee may approve his/her own travel expenses. Travel authority is designated to each Director and/or Department Head. Directors and Department Heads may, at their discretion, delegate authority to approve travel, expense reimbursements, required pre-authorizations, and any travel exceptions to other management personnel. Approved Travel Requests are required prior to booking, incurring any expenses, and commencement of travel, by using Concur Solutions.

Any travel that is not pre-approved shall not be eligible for payment or reimbursement. In certain instances of travel related to grant funded activities, additional prior approval may be required by the Director Accounting and Grants.

In the event the City is in a Non-Essential Travel Freeze status, travel must receive approval through the Request for Essential Travel Authorization Form prior to submitting a Travel Request through Concur Solutions. The Essential Travel Authorization form must accompany the Concur Solutions Travel Request and Travel Expense Report. The form shall be available on the SharePoint Travel page.

5.2.2 Length of Travel Expense Payable

A conference agenda, program, training schedule or other which indicates the length of travel conducted for business purposes is required supporting documentation and must be included in the Concur Travel Expense Report. Reasonable allowance of time for travel to and from the destination is preferred at same day of business commencement and conclusion and may not exceed one day before and one day after business is conducted.

5.2.3 Travel Cards

A City travel card application is required for all travelers in order to set up a Concur profile. Travelers are encouraged to obtain a City-issued travel card to be used for travel purposes only. A City travel card is the preferred method of payment for travel expenses. The supervisor or manager must approve the application along with the Director of Accounting and Grants.

The City's Travel Cards may be used for reasonable and necessary travel purchases as listed below:

- Registrations involving travel
- Lodging
- Airfare or other large commercial transportation (including baggage fees)
- Parking
- Car rental
- Taxi fares or other transportation such as Uber or Lyft, and public transportation

- Fuel or electric vehicle charging for rental cars and city vehicles while in travel status
- Tolls and ferries
- Internet/data service fees

A Travel Card may be used for making or guaranteeing reservations (e.g. lodging, car rentals). As per City Policy ADMIN 5600-16-01, City Purchasing Cards, issued for the purpose of procuring low value goods and services, may not be used for travel related purchases, except for registrations as needed and the approved travel authorization must accompany the purchase card log.

All permissible travel-related purchases must be accompanied by detailed receipts. In those instances where it is not possible to obtain a detailed receipt or the receipt is lost, the employee shall submit a Missing Travel Receipt Certification Form. Depending on the circumstances, expenses without receipts may or may not be approved. All Travel Card purchases must be reconciled in an electronic expense report with all supporting detailed receipts attached. An itemized expense report must be created for each travel request initiated in Concur to account for all card transactions.

Employees must ensure all Travel Card purchases fully comply with this policy. In the event that a Travel Card purchase is unauthorized, the employee will have 30 days or one statement period from time of discovery to rectify by either:

- Calling the vendor and have the purchase(s) transferred to his/her personal card, or
- Submit a personal check or cash for the amount of the unauthorized cost to accounting. A receipt will be provided to the traveler. Accounting will process this reimbursement with a Treasurer's Receipt, which will then be attached to the travel report and/or card statement, or
- If per diem was not issued in advance, the amount may be deducted from per diem due if any, or
- If the purchase was meant for the purchase card, please provide the appropriate budget code to accounting for proper allocation along with receipt(s).

See 5.5 for unallowable expenses.

The Director of Accounting and Grants may revoke Travel Cards for any violation of this policy, see 5.6.

5.2.4 Airfare & Lodging

Airfare: Economy coach class airfare for most business travel is preferred. First class accommodations are not normally acceptable and require prior approval from the Chief Financial Officer or their designee. It is expected that the airline offering the cheapest fare be selected unless overriding considerations can be documented such as excessive layover. All major carriers including discount carriers shall be reviewed for flight prices.

Many airlines charge a fee for each piece of luggage that is checked in prior to boarding. The charge for one bag will be reimbursed by the City or may be paid using a Travel Card. A detailed payment receipt is required. Additional baggage charges and over-weight charges may be reimbursed if circumstances warrant (i.e.: conference presenters who must take additional materials or equipment, police officers traveling with K9).

If flight delays occur and cause late-night or after midnight arrival, the "additional" day of travel per diem will not be reimbursed.

If flights are canceled due to unforeseen circumstances and causes an additional overnight stay, lodging and per diem will be considered allowable.

Airfare paid for by personal air miles or non-City-incurred e-credits / gift-certificates are not reimbursable and are not allowable for business related travel.

Lodging: The City will pay actual costs for lodging when employees travel more than 50 miles from their duty station. With prior approval, overnight lodging within the 50-mile radius may be permitted when there are back-to-back evening/early morning business events, when the traffic commute is excessively burdensome, or when overnight lodging at conferences and training seminars is an integral part of the experience.

When traveling on City business, employees are expected to use standard lodging options with economical rates. When making reservations directly with a hotel, through the internet, or via a travel agent, the government (U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)) rate or lowest rate should be requested.

For conferences or training seminars, the standard room rate at the conference hotel or accommodations are allowed even if it's not the most economical option available.

Actual costs are limited to the room rate and applicable taxes. Employees are responsible for any additional charges or increased rates due to non-employees accompanying them while traveling, any ineligible room

charges or incidental non-reimbursable expenses (i.e.: television channels, room service, etc.).

An itemized hotel receipt is required for reimbursement and Travel Card charges. Credit card receipts alone do not provide sufficient detail and will not be accepted for this purpose. Internet sites such as Expedia or Priceline may offer better values than those directly available from hotels and traditional travel agencies. However, be alert to any non-refundable reservations. These sites may also directly bill the customer's charge card and the hotel bill will not reflect the room charge billed by the travel site. When making these types of reservations, print out a copy of the confirmation provided at the time of the internet reservation and submit it along with the hotel receipt (confirming the overnight stay), as the source documents for reimbursement. (*Note: Internet sites that charge a membership fee are not authorized for use.*)

If the employee reserves and personally pays for hotel and/or airfare 30 days or more in advance of actual travel, reimbursements of airfare/hotel (prior to completion of travel) may be requested, by completing an expense report with supporting documentation of the confirmed reservation and payment, and once processed payment will be initiated through accounts payable.

Maximum of two expense reports can be produced for each travel request. When the trip is completed, the itemized expense worksheet must reference the earlier reimbursement, so all trip activity and expenses are reported and reconciled.

If the employee cancels the reservation after claiming or receiving such reimbursement and does not incur the costs after all, the employee must refund the City.

When business trips are extended for personal reasons (combined business/personal trip), any added costs for airfare/hotel or other commercial fares due to side trips, non-business routes or extended itineraries shall be paid by the employee. The employee shall segregate City business costs from any added costs due to personal travel and may charge only the business travel portion of the airfare or other commercial fares to a City Travel Card.

Failure to settle travel advances within ten (10) business days after return from travel may be considered a misuse of City funds.

5.2.5 Rail or other Commercial Transportation

Other commercial transportation such as rail or bus is permitted and may be reserved either through the internet, authorized travel agencies, or directly by the employee.

5.2.6 Meals and Personal Expenses

Daily per diem is to be used when travel requires over-night stay. Meals will be calculated using the GSA per diem rates for the city/county to which you are traveling. Thus, meals are not to be charged on the travel card.

Calculated per diem will be reduced for meals already paid by the City (e.g. meals included and paid as part of the conference or training registration fee, meal tickets, hotel continental breakfasts containing protein, etc.), unless extenuating circumstances warrant a separate meal such as special dietary needs as documented or reported.

If a city/county is not specifically listed on the GSA website, the lowest Meal and Incidental per diem rate in the state must be used as the allowed rate. The first/last day travel option is calculated at 75% of GSA per diem daily rates. Meals provided on the first and last day of travel will be deducted at the full allocated amount from the already reduced rate per GSA Federal Travel Regulation section 301-11.18. Included in the GSA rate is an incidental amount of \$5 per day that will be paid even if all meals were provided for the day.

Employees may request per diem reimbursement upon return from travel or a cash advance may be requested with a minimum of two weeks' notice before traveling. In the event of a cash advance, and at a later date a meal was provided, this must be accounted for in the final expense report and refunded to the City in a manner chosen in section 5.2.3 within 30 days.

Concur Solutions will automatically calculate these rates.

For non-overnight single-day travel assignments, per diem (including incidentals) are subject to federal withholding and payroll taxes, per IRS regulations, and are not available for a cash advance. These taxes are mandatory, and reimbursements will be processed through payroll. This per diem will still be recorded in an expense report through Concur and accounts payable will notify and provide payroll the information:

For non-overnight multiple-day travel assignments, per diem will not be subject to federal withholding and payroll taxes and will not be issued through payroll.

5.2.7 Use of Privately Owned Vehicles and Parking

When City employees are authorized to use a privately owned vehicle to travel on City business, the employee will be reimbursed for the actual number of miles traveled at the IRS business mileage rate in effect at the time of travel. Current rates will be automatically calculated in Concur

Solutions from the employee's home or normal duty location, whichever is closest, to the airport or business destination.

Airport shuttles are permissible if cost-effective to the City when compared to airport parking and mileage.

Wherever practicable, employees should ride together to minimize costs. Only one employee will be reimbursed for mileage when two or more are riding together.

For trips beyond a 350-mile radius from the employee's duty station, mileage reimbursement is limited to the cost of the lowest available alternative as indicated on the Lowest Cost Alternative worksheet, which must be included in the Concur Travel Expense Report. This worksheet shall be available on the SharePoint Travel page.

When parking is necessary, it will be reimbursed on an actual cost basis. A City Travel Card may be used to pay for travel-related parking. At minimum, the credit card slip must be provided to support the parking costs paid with a Travel Card. Receipts are required, however, if the parking lot does not provide receipts, a missing receipt certification form may be provided. Valet parking is not acceptable unless the option to self-park is not available or there is no additional cost for the service.

When City employees are authorized to travel locally, within 50 miles of the city with a personal vehicle, mileage may be reimbursed using the local travel mileage reimbursement form.

5.2.8 Use of City-Owned Vehicles for Travel Purposes

When appropriate, City-owned vehicles may be used for travel. If City owned vehicles are used, no family members or guests may accompany the traveler and only City employee passengers may be transported in the City-owned vehicle.

For accidents involving a City-owned vehicle, see the City's Vehicle Usage and Accidents (ADMIN 0620-12-26).

The travel card may be used for fueling or electric vehicle charging of City-owned vehicles while in travel status.

5.2.9 Rental Cars, Taxis and Other Hired Vehicles

When it is necessary to travel by hired vehicle, employees are expected to choose a rental car company and vehicle which is appropriate for the circumstances, and which minimizes overall costs to the City. It is preferred the traveler uses the City account with Enterprise Rent-A-Car and their partner, National Car Rental, which provides discounted rental rates and

other benefits. This account is available to all city employees while traveling in business status. The account number may be found on the Travel SharePoint page and by reaching out to accounting or purchasing. In the event that either service provider is not an option, government rates should be requested when seeking rental services with another provider.

When using the City Travel Card, employees must not waive the rental car company's liability insurance for bodily injury and property damage provided at no extra cost and must decline the Collision Damage Waiver (CDW/LDW) or similar coverages offered at an extra cost as coverage is provided through the Visa Travel Card.

If an employee's personal credit card is used, the same coverage rules apply as when using the City Travel Card.

In the event of an accident, the employee's automobile insurance coverage will be primary (check with your insurance agent for appropriate coverage before renting a vehicle) and the employee may be required to pay a deductible. The City will reimburse the employee for the deductible amount up to five hundred dollars (\$500) and the employee's insurer can seek subrogation.

As authorized in 5.2.3, the City's Travel Card can be used for paying for rental car expenses, fuel, and electric vehicle charging for the rental car.

Unless there are unusual circumstances, the traveler is expected to fill or re-charge the vehicle before return. If the rental agency adds a fuel or electric vehicle charging cost upon return of the vehicle, it is the traveler's responsibility to verify that fuel charges are itemized on the car rental receipt or invoice. Whenever there is partial, personal use of such vehicles, only the pro-rata portion of the rental vehicle expenses, including fuel or electric vehicle charging, applicable to City business can be charged to the City.

Employees may be reimbursed for business use of taxis or other commercial transportation by submitting receipts for taxis, and other commercial vehicles. A Travel Card may be used to pay for taxis, shuttles, buses, and other hired vehicles including app-based ride share options such as Uber or Lyft.

5.2.10 Other Travel-Related Incidentals

Bridge or road toll fees and car/passenger ferry fares are permissible and reimbursed at actual costs. The Travel Card may be used for payment of these fees if accepted by the merchants and must be accompanied by receipts.

5.2.11 Other Business Expenses While Traveling on City Business

The City will pay for other necessary business expenses incurred while traveling. Examples of such expenses include business telephone calls and/or facsimiles, rental of equipment or facilities necessary to conduct City business, or similar business-related expenses, and other unforeseen travel needs (e.g., SPD K-9 transportation and supplies needed during transport, purchases necessary during prisoner transport). Receipts are required for such expenses. The City's Travel Card may be used for such expenses if the purchase is otherwise permissible. Please provide Accounting with the appropriate budget codes to which these purchases should be allocated.

5.3 Out of Country Travel

Prior permission is required for insurance purposes to travel out of the country. Notice regarding planned business-related out of country travel for the City of Spokane shall be given to the Director of Risk Management. The Out of Country Travel Form required for permission to travel out of country is located on the SharePoint site. The officer or employee shall fully and accurately complete the Out of Country Travel Form and send it to the Director of Risk Management or their designee a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the planned travel. The Director of Risk Management/designee shall review the proposed travel for possible hazards to be mitigated. The form will be counter-signed by the Director of Risk Management/designee and returned to the appropriate Director or Department Head before travel can be initiated. The approved Out of Country Travel Form shall then be attached to the travel authorization in Concur.

5.4 Authorization for Exceptions

No policy can anticipate and provide for all possible circumstances. Consistent with the Policy Statement, the Chief Financial Officer and his or her designee, may authorize exceptions to any rates or restrictions imposed by this policy. Such authorization shall be by memo addressed to the requesting Director or Department Head in advance of the travel, describing the circumstances justifying an exception to the policy and specifically identifying the exception to be authorized. This memo must be attached to the Travel Authorization in Concur. Receipts and itemization are required when requesting reimbursement for amounts that are authorized as exceptions to the standard rates.

5.5 Unallowable Expenses

Regardless of any other provisions of this policy, the following cannot be paid or reimbursed using City moneys, including payment using the Travel Card:

- Alcoholic drinks
- Meals including Room Service (see 5.2.6 Meals and Personal Expenses)
- Entertainment except as part of a conference or training program that is

included in the overall registration fee for all participants

- Airline or other trip/travel insurance
- Any other expenses unrelated to City business
- Duplicate payments
- Costs associated with the personal portion of a combined business/personal trip or extension of the business trip for personal reasons
- Dry cleaning or other laundry services
- Valet parking unless self-parking is not available

5.6 Penalties for Fraud, Abuse, and Policy Violations

Any City employee found in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary actions which may include revoking the city travel card, loss of travel privileges, and other disciplinary actions including termination. Violations include but are not limited to: not seeking proper approval to travel as outlined in this policy before incurring travel expenses, falsely claiming expenses, failure to reimburse the city for unauthorized expenses, fraud, and/or abuse.

In addition to these penalties, state law provides that any person intentionally submitting a false claim is guilty of perjury in the second degree. State and City laws may also provide for additional penalties for theft.

Any City employee who becomes aware of any fraudulent or abusive claims should inform their supervisor or contact the Internal Auditor, Risk Manager, and Chief Financial Officer.

5.7 Travel for Prospective Employees and other Non-Employees

On a limited basis and in compliance with SMC 3.07.010 and .020, travel costs incurred by candidates who interview for City employment may be reimbursed. All travel for candidates and other non-employees traveling on City-sponsored business may be reimbursed, if pre-approved by the Mayor or the Mayor's designee (Chief Financial Officer) and in coordination with the Director of Human Resources and, when necessary, the City's Civil Service Commission. Only costs normally allowable to an employee are permitted for non-employee travelers, subject to the same rates and requirements for receipts, unless an exception has been approved. It is permissible for City staff to make airline, lodging and/or rental car arrangements for these travelers to access Government or contract rates. A City Travel Card may be used to purchase and pay for travel-related expenses, provided the expense is of the nature permitted per the Travel Policy. Employees who use their city travel card in this instance must reconcile through Concur Solutions. Non-employee travel authorization forms must be attached.

6.0 PROCEDURE

All procedures, forms, and user guides related to this policy shall be available to staff on the SharePoint Travel page.

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director of Accounting and Grants administers the City's Travel Policy. Directors, Department Heads, and other personnel who have travel approval and administration responsibilities are accountable for policy compliance, travel management, and oversight. This includes appropriate supervisory review of travel requests, relevant travel card transactions and expense reimbursement claims.

Employees who travel are accountable for compliance with the City's Travel policies and procedures.

8.0 APPENDICES


None.

APPROVED BY:



[Michael J Piccolo \(Apr 9, 2024 09:01 PDT\)](#)

City Attorney



Division Director – Finance and Administration



[Garrett Jones \(Apr 15, 2024 13:24 PDT\)](#)

City Administrator












ADMIN 0410-24-04 (Travel Policy)

Final Audit Report

2024-04-15

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 Agreement completed.

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