



# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TRAVEL POLICY

These guidelines establish the basic policies and procedures for **overnight** travel on City business. All City employees and City officials traveling for City business purposes are responsible for knowing and following this policy.

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## **1. GENERAL STANDARDS:**

The purpose of this policy is to document allowable business travel expenses eligible for reimbursement. These include necessary and reasonable expenses as defined under Section 162 of the Internal Revenue Code for purposes of Federal and State Income Tax Laws. This policy applies to all travel expenses regardless of the source of funds.

**“Out-of-town travel”** means travel on City business away from the normal workplace or residence and requires an overnight stay. Out-of-town travel expenses include transportation, meal and incidental per diem, lodging, and other travel related allowable expenses.

**Adoption and Implementation:** The City Council is responsible for adopting the City's Travel Policy and for approving any significant policy revisions. The City Manager, or his/her designee, is responsible for developing administrative procedures to implement this policy. In this role, the City Manager is authorized to make minor administrative changes in the guidelines without significant policy impacts. Updates to Per Diem and Mileage rates may be made periodically in accordance with Federal General Services Administration (G.S.A) established rates.

**Public Records Requirement:** All documents related to reimbursable City travel expenditures are public records and may be subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act (Government Code §6250-6270).

**Employees and City Officials are responsible for exercising good judgment in requesting, arranging, and reimbursing a business trip. Accordingly, the basic standard that should prevail is to provide prudent stewardship of public funds and the City's resources.**

## **2. TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION:**

All employees must receive authorization for travel from their Department/Division Head prior to scheduling a trip. In addition, all requests for **out-of-state** travel must be approved by the City Manager prior to taking the trip. Authorization may be granted when travel funds are available in the Department's approved budget. All employees must have the Travel Authorization and Advance (T.A.A) Form completed and signed by their Department or Division Head prior to booking or paying for travel.

Requests for advances, per diem for meals and incidentals, and support for all expenses directly paid to the vendor must be included on the approved T.A.A Form.

### **2.1. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

Finance Director for:	City Manager
City Manager approves for:	Direct Report Employees, Department Heads, & City Clerk/ Elected Officials
Department Heads approve for:	Division Managers, City Employees
Division Managers approve for:	Direct Report Employees

The Authorized Signor is responsible for determining the cost to be reasonable and justified, assuring the following:

1. The purpose cannot be accomplished by internet, mail, or telephone.
2. The seminar, meeting, or conference is necessary to accomplish key City goals/objectives and is unavailable locally if overnight accommodations are required.
3. The minimum number of City staff members will be going.
4. The itinerary ensures accomplishment of the purpose at the lowest reasonable cost.
5. The traveler understands and follows these guidelines.
6. There is enough budget in the appropriate travel line item to cover the costs.
7. A Travel Expense Reconciliation Form with all substantiated receipts will be submitted.

## **2.2. ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

Expenses incurred in connection with the following activities generally constitute authorized expenses when guidelines of this policy are met:

1. Communicating with representatives of regional, state, and national government on City adopted policy positions.
2. Serving on professional organizational/governmental committees, boards, or task forces.
3. Attending educational seminars, conferences, or organized educational activities designed to improve skill levels or provide information on topics important to City policy and operations.
4. Preparing research for City projects or implementing adopted City plans, policies, goals, or programs.
5. Attending meetings involving activities or decisions important to City interests and are consistent with adopted plans, policies, goals, or programs.
6. Attending events where the City is a formal sponsor or participant, or in performance of official duties for the City.
7. Communicating with individuals or representatives of community groups on policy positions adopted by or under consideration by the City.
8. Engaging in other business-related activities with a direct connection to the implementation of adopted City plans, policies, goals, or programs.

## **3. PLANNING AN OFFICAL TRIP:**

### **3.1 COMPENSATION**

When travel time exceeds the normal work week and the operating MOU allows, the City's rules for overtime apply. In determining overtime compensation, normal commute time

should be deducted from the total time traveled. Additionally, normal unpaid meal periods are not considered work time when traveling. Overtime eligibility applies equally to drivers and passengers and should be granted whether the travel occurs during normal workdays, weekends, or evenings.

### **3.2 REGISTRATION**

Fees charged for registration at any convention, meeting, or training are reimbursable with prior approval. Registration fees can be paid with a Cal-Card, requested as an advance with documentation of published rate, or reimbursed with itemized receipt if the employee pays for the registration on their own.

### **3.3 TRANSPORTATION**

**Transportation at the Destination-** Use of public transit such as intercity trains, buses, streetcars, or ridesharing etc. is appropriate. If a car rental is required, attach a quote from the most reasonably priced rental car company for an advance check, use your Cal Card for payment, or attach an itemized receipt for reimbursement.

**Air Travel-** All air travel on City business should be coach class. Compare airline carriers prior to making reservations to ensure the most competitive rates are available to the City.

**Traveling by Automobile-** Traveling by a City vehicle is the most ideal. If one is not available or a personal car is preferred, approval of the Authorized Signor is required.

**City Vehicle:** When using a city vehicle, reimbursement for gas expenses is appropriate. Due to liability concerns, non-City employees/officials including spouses, children, and guests should not ride as passengers in City vehicles.

**Personal Vehicle:** When using a personal vehicle for travel; reimbursement at the current approved IRS Mileage rate (2022 rate of 62.5 cents per mile) will be provided. "Google Maps" or other mapping sites must be used in determining mileage reimbursements. The City will not reimburse for non-business-related mileage such as a personal stop or an indirect route taken for personal reasons.

**Mileage in-lieu of Commercial Carrier Costs:** In the event a commercial carrier such as an airplane would otherwise be the preferred mode of transportation, but a personal car is preferred (subject to the approval guidelines set forth above), mileage will be reimbursed up to the cost of a commercial carrier.

**To drive a privately-owned vehicle on City business it is required to:**

1. Possess a valid license to drive in California.
2. Carry liability insurance limits required by Human Resources with the City named as additional insured.

3. Realize that any damage to the car or needed service/repair occurring on the trip will be your responsibility as these costs are included in the City's per mile cost reimbursement.

### **3.4 LODGING**

**Accommodations-** The City will pay for a single room (including taxes and parking) for as many nights as necessary. The accommodations used should be economical but practical. In general, choose the most reasonably priced accommodations available consistent with the purpose, goals, and convenience of travel.

**Canceling a Reservation-** Cancel any reservation that cannot be used. If the City is charged for an unused reservation, the employee will pay the charge unless circumstances requiring cancellation were reasonably beyond control and approved by the Authorized Signor.

### **3.5 MEALS**

**Please note: Procurement cards (CAL-Card) cannot be used for meals while traveling.** Please see Section 8 (Restricted and prohibited purchases) of the Cal-Card User Handbook.

#### **To qualify for meal allowance:**

1. Travel must be to an **overnight** destination outside of the City limits.
2. Meal expenses will be paid on a not to exceed per diem rate while traveling on official business as published by the Federal Government [gsa.gov](http://gsa.gov) website under Per Diem Rates.
3. The per diem will generally be paid in advance of travel (receipts not required). Where a timely per diem request is not submitted (within 10 days prior to travel) and/or as determined by the employee's department head; a reimbursement of meal expenses may be submitted after travel (requires submittal of receipts).
4. Reimbursement in excess of allowable standard Federal Per Diem rate is taxable and must be reported on an employees' W-2 as wages. Therefore, under no circumstances may the cost of meals exceed the per diem rates allowed under this policy.  
**Employee is responsible for meal costs above current approved per diem rate.**
5. Employees may not claim meals provided by the event or included in hotel costs or conference fees.
6. Meals must be accounted for upon your return on the Travel Expense and Reconciliation (T.E.R) Form. No receipts are required for advance per diem payments. All reimbursed meal expenses require attached receipts.

**Current Per Diem rates for 2022 for South Lake Tahoe are as follows:**

**Breakfast:** \$17.00

**Lunch:** \$18.00

**Dinner:** \$34.00

**Incidental Expenses:** \$5.00 (payable full day)

**Total M&IE allowable payment for a full day (excess of 12 hours): \$74**

**First & Last Day of Travel (less than 12 hours): \$55.50\***

\* per GSA allowable Per Diem rates, the first and last day of travel may be received at 75% of total M&IE, this amount is only allowed on first and last travel days.

Rates are subject to change per Federal Government General Services Administration (GSA) [www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem).

### **3.6 PROHIBITED EXPENSES**

Examples of prohibited expenditures include but are not limited to:

- Alcohol/narcotics
- Toiletries/medicines
- Car repair/traffic citations (parking tickets, toll fines)
- Credit card interest charges
- Pet hotel fees, Health club fee/ spa treatments
- Fees for upgrades of air, hotel, or auto
- Headphones or extra incidentals on airlines
- Laundry/dry cleaning
- Movies/entertainment (in-room or off-site)
- Sporting events, theater, or cinema
- Personal expenses/spouse or guest expenses

### **3.7 PERSONAL TRAVEL**

If time is taken away from official business for personal matters, or return is delayed after completing the business trip, reimbursement will not be provided for expenses incurred during that time. Pre-approval is required when combining business and personal travel. If this extended period occurs during regular scheduled work hours, the time will be counted as vacation, comp time, paid time off, or leave without pay.

### **3.8 ILLNESS WHILE TRAVELING**

Should an employee/official become sick or ill during a travel business trip, reimbursement will be provided for necessary additional living expenses (except those directly related to your illness, such as physician or hospital costs) until the employee can return home.

Employees are required to notify the supervisor or Authorized Signor as soon as possible of becoming ill. If applicable, the time will be counted as sick leave or paid time-off during your normally scheduled work hours.

## **4. PAYMENTS AND REIMBURSEMENTS:**

The City will pay all legitimate expenses of your trip or meeting. These include transportation, lodging, registration fees, meals and any other related expenses such as parking, baggage fees, and bridge tolls **if they are for official business and within the guidelines of this policy.**

#### **4.1 PAYMENT OPTIONS**

**Direct Vendor Payments:** Direct payments made by the City to an organization to pay for specific costs related to a trip, usually registration fees, lodging and airfare. To obtain direct vendor payments, complete the appropriate sections of the T.A.A. Form and attach payment information for all direct payments. Retain a copy of the completed form to assist in reconciling actual expenses.

Cal Cards may be used to pay vendors directly for travel expenses, upon approval with completed T.A.A form. Receipt of payment on a Cal Card must be submitted with both the Travel Expense and Reconciliation (T.E.R.) Form and Cal Card Statement. ***Payment for travel meals on a Cal Card is prohibited.***

**Cash Advances:** Advance payments can be provided to an employee prior to travel to cover expenses including per diem for meal expenses, Hotel Registration, Transportation etc. To request cash advance, the Authorized Signor must review the amount ensuring it is reasonable and within the current Approved Per Diem Rates and department budget.

Employees must submit a T.E.R. Form to Accounts Payable with final reconciliation documenting all expenses and attaching receipts. Meals must be accounted for although receipts are not required if the employee received a per diem advance.

**Reimbursements:** Upon return, account for all expenses incurred on the T.E.R. Form attach substantiated receipts for all expenses and obtain proper approval from the Authorized Signor. Reimbursements will be processed within ten (10) days of submittal to Accounts Payable.

### **5. FINAL ACCOUNTING AND RECONCILIATION:**

#### **5.1 MAINTAINING DOCUMENTATION**

- Maintain a detailed record of all expenses incurred during travel: meals, transportation/mileage, lodging, car rentals, parking fees, registration fees, and any other reasonable and necessary expenses to assist with final reconciliation.
- Detailed receipts must be submitted for all expenses except when receiving advanced per diem for meals. Failure to provide such documentation will result in denial of reimbursement.
- In the event receipts are not available, provide a written explanation, description and cost of the expense to your Authorized Signor for approval, submit this documentation with your T.E.R. Form to Accounts Payable. The City reserves the

right to require additional approval of the City Manager, where necessary or deny the reimbursement.

## **5.2 EXPENSE REPORTING**

Within 10 days of return, employees must submit a T.E.R. Form to Accounts Payable with final reconciliation and receipts documenting all expenses. Failure to return this form will result in repayment to the City of any advanced funds and/or denial of reimbursement for expenses not accounted for in this manner.

Per IRS Section 15: to be excluded from taxable wages your T.E.R Form must include the following:

- The business purpose of the trip
- The date and place of the trip
- Receipts for lodging, and all travel expenses
- Receipts for meals if requesting reimbursement

Authorized Signor approving expense reports are responsible to ensure:

1. All expenses are reasonable, necessary and consistent with this policy.
2. All required itemized receipts are attached.
3. The final reconciliation is correct (balance due employee; balance due City).
4. Amounts due to the City are reimbursed within 10 days.
5. Final accounting on T.E.R. Form is submitted to Finance.

## **6. FALSIFICATION OF EXPENSES:**

Submitting fraudulent receipts or falsifying a Travel Expense Reconciliation Form will result in loss of reimbursement privileges and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

*The City of South Lake Tahoe reserves the right to deny reimbursement of expenses that are considered lavish, extravagant, or are unsupported by required documentation. Unusual expenses incurred due to special circumstances may be approved by the City Manager, if those expenses do not violate Federal or State requirements and when in the City Manager's judgment, such expenses are justified. These expenses must be submitted on a Travel Expense Reconciliation Form supported by documentation and written explanation of circumstances, signed by Department Head and City Manager.*

## **7. FORMS AND PUBLICATIONS:**

The following forms are required when traveling for City business:

1. Prior to booking and paying for travel: Travel Authorization and Advance Form (T.A.A.F.).



2. Return from travel: Travel Expense and Reconciliation Form (T.E.R.F.).
3. Examples to assist in filling out these forms is located on the next page.
4. Blank forms are located in Outlook, Public Folders, Finance Dept., Travel-Training Polices. Updated Aug. 2022.

### **7.1 INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS)**

For additional information or clarification, refer to the following IRS publications.

- IRS Publication 15-B, Employers Tax Guide to Fringe Benefits for tax reporting requirement
- IRS Publication 463, Travel, Entertainment, Gift and Car Expenses
- IRS Publication 5318, Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, tax reform 2017



**Financial Management - Travel Policy**  
**CITY OF SOUTH LAKE TAHOE**  
**TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION AND ADVANCE FORM**  
**PRE TRAVEL REPORTING**

*This form should be completed in legible handwriting or in Excel using the City's standard template prior to booking or paying for travel.*

**EXAMPLE**

**PURPOSE OF TRAVEL**

Attend the 2022 Annual ABC Conference in San Francisco, CA to learn of recent developments in xxxxxxxx to assist my department in xxxxxxxx. Conference begins 9:00 AM on June 2nd and ends 12:00 AM on June 4th.

Employee	Department	Position
First & Last Name	City Department	Employee Title

Destination	No. of Days (including first/last)	Total Cost of Travel
San Francisco, CA	3	\$ 1,290.72

**ITINERARY**

Departure From:	Date/Time	Arrival To:	Date/Time
City Offices, address	6/1/2022 12:30	San Francisco, ABC Hotel	6/1/2022 16:30

**ESTIMATED COST SUMMARY**

Description	Vendor	Payment Method*	Account Number	Paid/ Reimb	Advance
Registration	ABC Conference	D (Cal Card)	100 xxxxx 44050	\$ 100.00	
Air Fare	N/A				
Lodging	Hotel (3 nights + park	R (Reimbursement)	100 xxxxx 44050	\$ 735.84	
Rental Car	N/A				
Mileage- Personal Vehicle	5.6 miles (188.3 each w	A (Advance)	100 xxxxx 44051		235.38
Gasoline- City Vehicle					
Parking					
Misc.					
				\$ 835.84	\$ 235.38

\* D= Direct Vendor Payments, A= Advance, R= Reimbursement

\*\* 2022 IRS rate is 62.5 cents (\$0.625) per mile. Attach documentation used in determining anticipated mileage.

**ESTIMATED COST SUMMARY CONT. (MEALS)**

*Note: Calculation of daily meal per-diem must be in compliance with IRS regulations using Federal GSA rates. Follow the calculation below to request proper amounts. If meals are included with registration or hotel fees make sure to deduct them from the calculation.*

<b>Account Number:</b>	100 xxxxx 44050			
	<b>Instructions</b>	<b>Date/ Meal Type</b>		<b>Amount</b>
<b>First Day of Travel:</b>	If two meal periods will be incurred put \$55.50: If only one meal period will be incurred use individual meal rates:	6/1/22 Dinner		34.00
<b>Full Day of Travel:</b>	Put number of full calendar travel days x \$74.00 or deduct meals included in registration, hotel, or provided by event	6/2/22 Full Day		74.00
		6/3 (breakfst/dinner) lunch incl		56.00
<b>Last Day of Travel:</b>	If two meal periods will be incurred put \$55.50: If only one meal period will be incurred use rates below:	6/4 2 meal periods (Breakfast & Lunch)		55.50
<b>Individual Meal Rates:</b>	Breakfast \$17.00, Lunch \$18.00, Dinner \$34.00, \$5.00 incidentals (\$74.00 full day)			\$ 219.50
<b>First &amp; Last Day of Travel:</b>	Calculated at 75% of total daily meals & incidentals.			

**SUM OF ADVANCES AND PER DIEM OWED TO EMPLOYEE:** \$ 454.88

**APPROVALS**

Employee	Date	Authorized Signor	Date
printed employee name	date submitted	Supervisor or Dept Head	date signed



CITY OF  
SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

# Financial Management - Travel Policy

## CITY OF SOUTH LAKE TAHOE TRAVEL EXPENSE AND REIMBURSEMENT FORM POST TRAVEL REPORTING

This form should be completed in legible handwriting or in Excel using the City's standard template.

### EXAMPLE

#### RECAP OF TRAVEL

Employee Name	Department	Location	Date Left	Date Returned	Total Cost of Travel
First & Last Name	City Department	ABC Conf. San Francisco, CA	6/1/2022	6/4/2022	\$ 1,290.72

#### ACTUAL COSTS INCURRED

Description	Vendor	Payment Method*	Account Number	Amount Paid	Amount Due- Attach Itemized Receipts
Registration	ABC Conference	D (Cal Card)	100 xxxxx 44050	\$ 100.00	
Air Fare					
Lodging	ABC Hotel	R- Personal Credit Card	100 xxxxx 44050		\$ 735.84
Rental Car					
Meals**		A- Advanced Per Diem	100 xxxxx 44050	\$ 219.50	
Mileage- Personal Vehicle***	376.6 miles (188.3 each way)	A (Advance)	100 xxxxx 44051	\$ 235.38	
Gasoline- City Vehicle					
Parking					
Misc.					
				\$ 554.88	\$ 735.84

\* **D** = Direct Vendor Payments, **A** = Advance, **R** = Reimbursement

\*\* If a per diem was received prior to travel, fill in total received in the amount column.

\*\*\* 2022 IRS rate is .625 per mile. Attach documentation used in determining mileage reimbursement.

\*\*\*\* All Reimbursements require itemized receipts attached.

#### ACTUAL MEAL COSTS INCURRED: If meal Per Diem was received as an Advance, leave the section below blank.

**Note:** If requesting reimbursement for meals, attach itemized receipts for all meal periods. The City will only reimburse up to the Federal G.S.A Per Diem amounts. \$5.00 Per Diem Incidental rate not applicable for Reimbursement.

DATE	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
<b>Individual Meal Rates: Breakfast \$17.00, Lunch \$18.00, Dinner \$34.00</b>			\$ -

**SUM OF REIMBURSEMENTS OWED TO EMPLOYEE:**

**\$ 735.84**

#### APPROVALS

Employee	Date	Authorized Signor	Date