

City of Lakewood
Administration
CITY-WIDE
Policies & Procedures

SUBJECT: Travel Policy		INDEX: Travel Policy	
		NUMBER: Travel Policy: 002	
Effective Date: 2/15/07	Supersedes: Travel Policy 001	Page Of: 1 9	Prepared By: Sherri Gordon Galen Kidd
		Approved By:	

ARTICLE I: POLICY

1. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish the City’s travel policies and to delineate those valid business expenses for which payment or reimbursement may be sought by employees, officials and volunteers of the City. Personnel traveling for the purposes of and funded by grant money will rely on the provisions of this policy in instances where the individual grant has no guidelines.
2. **PERSONS AFFECTED:** This policy applies to City employees, City officials, and volunteers of the City of Lakewood, hereafter referred to as “authorized staff.”
3. **REFERENCES:** Internal control procedures of Finance, Chapter 42.24 RCW, Policy 500-14 Use of City Vehicles, Safety Policy 1400-01 Driving Licensure, and current credit card policy of the city.

4. POLICY STATEMENT:

- A. It shall be the policy of the City of Lakewood to allow the attendance and participation of authorized staff at meetings, conventions and seminars (hereafter referred to as events) where such participation is determined to be in the best interests of the City.
- B. All subsistence rates, allowances and payments provided under this policy shall be paid when authorized staff are engaged in City business and where the attendance or participation at events has been authorized in advance by the approval authority. The City Manager shall be the approval authority for City employees and volunteers, and the City Council shall be the approval authority for the City Manager and/or City officials;. provided, however, that an elected official shall not be required to obtain approval of the City Council to travel on City business unless and until that elected official has expended over one-seventh (1/7th) of the total travel related budget allocated for the entire City Council for the year in which such expenses are incurred, or because of the travel expenses anticipated to be incurred in that elected official’s travel would reasonably be expected to cause that the elected official’s travel expenses to exceed one-seventh (1/7th) of the total travel related budget allocated for the entire City Council for the year in which such expenses are incurred.
- C. Travel expenses that are not otherwise provided may be paid by the City by the use of either:
 - (1) the receipt method; or
 - (2) the per diem method.

Only one method must apply for the entire trip.

When the receipt method is used, receipts, proof of payment documentation, or certification in the case of lost or non-available receipts are required for all reimbursements. Such documentation shall be provided to the Finance Department within five (5) business days of returning from travel.

When the per diem method is used, a Travel Expense Voucher must be completed and submitted to the Finance Department within five (5) business days of returning from travel.

- D. If authorized staff desires to have their family members or guests accompany him/her on any City related travel, the authorized staff shall advise the City at the time the advanced travel request is made. The authorized staff shall provide payment of any costs for family members or guests so that no obligation by the City exists during any period of time.
- E. When travel costs and/or registration or other fees have been paid by the City on behalf of the authorized staff, and that the authorized staff fails, without good cause to attend the eventsaid staff shall reimburse the City the amount paid by the City. Questions of good cause shall be determined by the approval authority.

Operating city owned vehicles requires a valid Washington State driver's license. Employees shall provide proof of a current and active Washington State driver's license to the Human Resource Department. . It is the responsibility of the employee to provide Human Resources copies of the active driver's license including any conditions and situations that may impact the employee's driver's license. When using a personal vehicle for City business, proof of a valid Washington State driver's license and valid insurance is required.

- F. The City shall pay for the least costly and/or appropriate mode of transportation to the destination.
- G. The City shall not reimburse more than the reasonable cost of travel.
- H. All out-of-state travel must be pre-approved by the approval authority before the commitment of liability against the City of Lakewood for payment.

ARTICLE II: DEFINITIONS

1. **ADVANCE TRAVEL PAYMENT** – Payment in advance for out-of-pocket travel expenses for authorized travel may be made from an advanced travel fund. Travel advances are not intended for travel tickets, pre-registration fees, prepaid lodging or other such items which can normally be billed to the City, paid through the regular accounts payable system, or City credit card.
2. **APPROVAL AUTHORITY** – The City Manager or designee shall be the approval authority for City employees and volunteers. The City Council shall be the approval authority for the City Manager and/or City officials except as provided under Article 4.B. above.
3. **AUTHORIZED STAFF** –City Employees, City officials, and volunteers of the City of Lakewood.
4. **CITY EMPLOYEES** –All regular, temporary or seasonal employees of the City of Lakewood, whether full-time or part-time and whether represented by a bargaining unit or not, including but not limited to the City Manager, department heads, supervisory or management employees.

5. CITY OFFICIALS:
 - 5a. ELECTED OFFICIALS –Members of the City Council holding current office, whether they have been elected to that position or appointed to fill a vacant position on the City Council.
 - 5b. APPOINTED OFFICIALS –All members of City boards, commissions or committees, who are not employees of the City but who have been appointed to represent the City as a non-paid volunteer on such board, commission or committee.
6. CONTRACT EMPLOYEE –An individual working under contract for the City in the performance of a specific project who is not a regular employee or may not be on staff, but a member of an organization allied with the City on a specific project who might represent the City at approved events or as an agent of the City on a specific, contracted project.
9. EVENTS –For purposes of this policy, events refer to a conventions, seminars and meetings, for municipal, political, educational and professional purposes for which attendance by authorized staff is beneficial to the City of Lakewood.
7. GUESTS – Any person(s) other than employees, City officials or authorized volunteers for the City of Lakewood. Guests may include relatives of the employee/City official/ volunteer.
8. IN-STATE TRAVEL–Travel within the State of Washington.
9. OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL –Travel anywhere outside the boundaries of the State of Washington.
10. PER DIEM METHOD – A daily allowance for eligible meals and incidentals in connection with authorized City-related travel.
11. RECEIPT METHOD – Reimbursement for eligible meals and incidentals in connection with authorized City-related travel based upon original **itemized** receipts, such as credit card slips, cash register receipts, etc.
13. REIMBURSEMENT – Paid for by the City. Eligible expenses need not necessarily be reimbursements to the individual, they can be expenses paid by the City directly to the vendor.
10. VOLUNTEER – A person selected by the City to perform services for the benefit of the City out of his/her own free will for no financial payment.

ARTICLE III: GENERAL

1. Control of Travel

- A. An internal control system over travel, reimbursable under these regulations, is established by the City providing for prior authorization or approval by the approval authority.) Authorization of travel is to be exercised through the use of the current and adopted budget.

- B. An Advance Travel Payment Authorization Form is to be used whenever a travel payment in advance (*pre-payment*) is requested by an authorized staff and such forms shall be approved by the approval authority.
- C. Upon return from travel, authorized staff must complete a Travel Expense Voucher form, which is available on the Intranet or by contacting the Finance Department. Travel Expense Vouchers are to be audited by the Finance Department.
- D. Employees/volunteers must submit an Out-of-State Travel Request form with all required documentation attached. The Out-of-State Travel Request form must be approved by the City Manager before the liability to the City has been incurred on all events or other travel that involves out-of-state travel.
- E. If a question arises regarding the method of reimbursement to be allowed (receipt method vs. per diem method) under these travel regulations, the option elected shall be the option that is most advantageous and economical to the City. The method selected is not to be influenced by the personal travel plans of the authorized staff.
- F. Authorized staff is to exercise the same care and judgment in incurring expenses on official City business and accomplishing the purpose of the travel that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. Excessive or unnecessary expenses will not be reimbursed.
- G. Lodging expenses shall not be reimbursed or paid unless the total distance between the site of the event is at least fifty (50) miles (*one way, using the most direct route*) from the closer of either the traveler's official residence or official work-site. Under special circumstances involving early or late meetings, or multiple day meetings, lodging expenses for less than 50 miles distance may be authorized subject to City Manager's pre-approval and before the occurrence happens.
- H. Maximum payment for or reimbursement of transportation costs and expenses via commercial carrier is to be no greater than the cost of tourist class or its equivalent, provided that it shall be the responsibility of the authorized staff to request of the transportation vendor a "government rate," if available, unless a lower rate for the same travel service is available. Additionally, the maximum payment for or reimbursement of transportation costs and expenses shall not exceed the costs of the lesser/least expensive method of travel where there are two or more methods of travel reasonably available. All exceptions shall be approved in advance by the approval authority.

ARTICLE IV: MEALS AND LODGING

1. Basis for Reimbursements

- A. Reimbursement is to be for all authorized travel, subject to the restrictions provided herein, but shall not be made for expenses incurred at or between the City of Lakewood and the authorized staff person's residence and official work site.
- B. Payment for or reimbursement of any of the following expenses is prohibited:
 - 1. Liquor
 - 2. Tobacco
 - 3. Expense of a spouse or other persons not authorized to receive reimbursement under this policy
 - 4. Gratuities related to personal expenses

5. Theft, loss or damage to personal property
6. Barber or beauty parlor
7. Airline or other trip insurance
8. Personal postage
9. Reading material
10. Personal toilet articles
11. Valet or laundry services
12. Entertainment, including movies, television and video rentals, and travel expenses to and from such entertainment
13. For grants, tips are not reimbursable
14. For grants, telephone calls not related to work are not reimbursable
15. For grants, social meals during site visits from granting authorities are not reimbursable
16. Gambling
17. Cash Advances
18. Loans

C. Allowable lodging expenses are intended to include the basic commercial lodging rate or the “government rate” (*whichever is the lowest cost for the City*) if available, any applicable sales taxes and/or hotel/motel taxes. It shall be the responsibility of the authorized staff to request of the lodging vendor a “government rate,” if available, unless a lower rate for the same accommodations is available with the regular rate.

D. Maximum meal allowances are intended to include the basic cost of a meal, any applicable sales tax, and any tip or gratuity not to exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the total cost of the meal.

E. No payment for or reimbursement of meal expenses shall be allowed when the meals are provided as part of the event.

F. Employees funded by grants must follow any reimbursement authorization/procedures pursuant to the grant.

H. Lodging, Meals and Mileage Allowances

1. The City will follow the US **General Services Administration (GSA)** schedules that provide for maximum reimbursement rates for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses for authorized staff traveling on official City business.

2. For all travel authorizations, accounts payable will advise the traveler of the per diem rates, by providing a printout to the authorized staff using the GSA Website for the location of stay..

3. Domestic Per Diem Rates

The above maximum lodging rates do not apply where lodging is tied to a specific hotel or motel or lodging accommodation in connection with the event being attended. The traveler should always look for a lower rate when applicable.

If special or unusual circumstances or other limitations exist in connection with the lodging for an event, higher lodging rates may be approved in advance by the approval authority.

4 Per Diem Amount. Meal costs for authorized staff in connection with City related travel shall be at the per diem rates as stated in the GSA Website. No receipts are required

when the per diem method is used. It is provided, however, that if any meals are included or provided with the registration costs of the convention, seminar or meeting, the following percentages will be deducted from the per diem amount, corresponding with the meals that are included or provided, per day of the event:

- (25%) BREAKFAST
- (30%) LUNCH
- (45%) DINNER
- (100%) DAILY TOTAL

To determine meal allowance expense, please refer to the State of Washington Office of Financial Management Web site:

<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/resources/travel.asp>

5. It is provided, however, that if meal costs exceed the above maximum amounts, a receipt and a satisfactory explanation shall be provided to the City for each meal in excess of such amounts. The amount in excess of the above maximum shall not be paid unless approved by the City Manager.
6. To be eligible for meal allowances, the authorized staff must be in travel status during the normal meal period(s): To receive reimbursement for breakfast you must be in travel status before 7:00 A.M.; for lunch, before 12:00 noon and/or return after 1:00 P.M.; and for dinner, the authorized employee must be in travel status until after 6:00 P.M.
7. Meals are not reimbursed at events when authorized staff are allowed a lunch break for a free period of time (not a working lunch) unless there is an overnight stay.
8. Meals may be reimbursed if authorized staff must attend a mealtime business meeting to conduct official City business.
9. Meal allowances shall not be reimbursed when meals are furnished to the authorized staff as a part of the event being attended. If some but not all of the meals are provided as part of the event, the meal allowance reimbursement available to the authorized staff shall only be available for the specific meals not included.

I. Private Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement

1. The mileage reimbursement rate available for authorized staff using their own vehicles while on City related travel shall be the mileage reimbursement rate established by the Internal Revenue Service.
2. Contract employees are authorized to use city vehicles.
3. Employees using personal vehicles when an administrative vehicle is available may use their personal vehicle upon the authorization from their Department Director and/or City Manager. It is strongly recommended to utilize city vehicles if available.
4. When using a personal vehicle for City business, proof of a valid Washington State driver's license and valid insurance is required.

ARTICLE V: OTHER TRAVEL EXPENSES

1. Reimbursable Expenses

Reimbursable transportation expenses include all necessary official travel on airlines, buses, private motor vehicles, and other usual means of conveyance.

Daily commute transportation expenses between the employee's residence and the regular work site is a personal obligation of the employee and is not reimbursable by the City. Mileage in a personal vehicle from the employee's home directly to and/or from a work-related destination (*convention, seminar, training or meeting*) is reimbursable after deducting the mileage the employee would normally have driven commuting to and/or from home and the regular work site.

Reimbursement is to be payable to only one of two or more authorized staff traveling in the same motor vehicle on the same trip.

1. Miscellaneous Travel Expenses

Miscellaneous travel expenses essential to the transaction of official City business are reimbursable to the authorized staff. Reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- A. Taxi fares, motor vehicle rentals, parking fees, and ferry and bridge tolls.
- B. Registration fees required in connection with attendance at approved meetings, seminars or conventions.
- C. Telephone charges that are for City business. The number called should be noted on the lodging receipt.

ARTICLE VI: TRAVEL EXPENSE ADVANCES

1. Purpose of Travel Expense Advances

- A. The purpose of the travel expense advances is to defray the authorized staff's anticipated reimbursable expenses.
- B. Whenever it becomes necessary for authorized staff to travel and incur reimbursable expenses pursuant to the per diem method in connection with approved City related travel, a travel expense advance may be paid to authorized staff prior to departure.
- C. The City may also provide travel expense advances for lodging, if the lodging costs can be adequately determined in advance, in which case the lodging travel expense advance would be paid prior to departure. However, it is preferred that travel expense advances not be used for lodging or other such items which can normally be billed to the City, paid through the regular accounts payable system, or City credit card.

2. Advance Travel Request Procedures

- A. Authorized staff shall submit an Advance Travel Request to the approval authority which shall include a copy of the event agenda with dates and times. All out-of-state travel has to be pre-approved with the City Manager before commitments are made to the event.
- B. The Advance Travel Request shall be considered for approval by the Department Directors (*for their departments*), the City Manager (*for Department Directors*), by the City Council (*for the City Manager and/or City officials*). Upon approval of the proposed travel, the

Advance Travel Request Form indicating approval shall be forwarded to the Director of Finance & Information Systems not less than one week before the departure date. The Finance & Budget Division will issue a city check to the authorized staff, after verification of the request form, including identification of BARS codes and vendor numbers.

- C. Employees/volunteers must submit an Out-of-State Travel Request form with all required documentation attached. The Out-of-State Travel Request form must be approved by the City Manager before the liability to the City has been incurred on all events that involve out-of-state travel.
- D. The following expenses should not be included in the advance travel request, but should be processed via requisition and purchase order, if applicable:
 - 1. Direct payments to vendors
 - 2. Airfare. (*This should be paid by the City through direct billing to the City before departure.*)
 - 3. Registration fees.
 - 4. Reimbursement for travel expenses already incurred.

If the above expenses cannot be processed via requisition and purchase order, whether because of time limitations or other circumstances, they may be included in the travel expense advance if approved by the approval authority.

3. Accounting for Travel Advances

Accounting for travel expenses shall be submitted to the Finance & Budget Division within five (5) business days after returning from the event related to city business. Such accounting shall be completed on the City's Travel Authorization and Expense Claim form and shall include the following:

- A. City employee or volunteer claims must be submitted to the City employee's or volunteer's department head or designated representative.
- B. City official claims must be submitted to the Director of Finance & Information Systems.
- C. The authorized staff who has received advanced travel expenses is responsible for taking appropriate safety measures with respect to all monies received. The authorized staff shall be responsible to account for and/or replace, at his/her own expense, any monies to be repaid to the City even if advance travel expense funds are lost, misplaced or stolen.

4. Use of City Credit Cards

- A. The City's charge cards (*credit cards*) shall be used under authority of the City Manager and/or the Director of Finance & Information Systems, for the purpose of covering expenses incidental to budgeted, authorized travel by City employees or City officials, and for the purpose of covering other budgeted, City related expenses approved in advance by the City Manager if over a certain dollar limit and if the travel related expense is out-of-state. Such charge cards may be used by authorized employees to make arrangements for advance payment of airline fares, lodging, and registration fees as authorized by the approval authority, where such expenses have been included in the budget approved by the City Council. Additionally, charge cards in the form of gasoline credit cards are assigned to each individual vehicle which allows authorized staff to fuel the vehicle of the City while

traveling, for authorized purposes. All credit card receipts and/or other documents identifying credit card expenditures shall be delivered to the Finance & Budget Division within five (5) business days upon return to City Hall along with the completed credit card disbursement form.

- B. Authorization and expense claim vouchers for credit card use are to be distributed back to the Finance & Budget Division no later than five (5) business days upon return from authorized travel. Any charges against the credit card not properly identified by the travel authorization and expense claim voucher or not allowed following an audit by the Finance & Budget Division or other qualified entity shall be paid by the authorized staff by check or United States currency to the City of Lakewood. If the Travel Authorization and Expense Claim form is not submitted within the time frame set forth above, a ten percent (10%) interest per annum amount will be assessed pursuant to Section 42.24.150 RCW.
- C. Any authorized staff that has been issued a credit card by the City shall not use the card fraudulently or used for any disallowed charges.
- D. The City Manager or the Finance & Information Systems Director has complete authority to recall any credit card and/or charge cards and take the credit card and/or charge cards from any employee for abuse or any unauthorized charges.
- E. The City shall have unlimited authority to revoke use of any charge card and, upon such revocation order being delivered to the credit card company, shall not be liable for any costs.