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# City of Seattle Travel Policies & Procedures

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## **1.0 Statement of Purpose**

### **1.1 Purpose of Rules, Policy and Procedures**

The purpose of this document is to provide City employees, managers and accounting administrators with detailed information on the processes, policies and procedures required for traveling on authorized City business.

- 1.1.1 These rules, policies and procedures include instructions for payment and reimbursement of all allowable travel expenses. Allowable travel expenses are defined in SMC 4.72 and Section 2.0 of this document.
- 1.1.2 The City agrees to pay for or reimburse employees for the cost of certain allowable meeting and travel expenses, which may be incurred as a part of the performance of that employee's job.
- 1.1.3 The employee's department head or his/her designee is required to authorize all travel and related expenses. All authorized travel or related expenses must be for the purpose of conducting official City business, the attendance at professional meetings, conferences or training that promotes overall job knowledge.
- 1.1.4 The City agrees to pay only for authorized travel and related expenses.
  - (a) An employee may consider a "Saturday" night stay if the airfare savings is greater than the additional costs of lodging and meals and is approved in advance by the department head or his/her designee.
  - (b) If an employee combines a personal trip with his/her City business travel, the City will only pay or allow reimbursement for that portion of the travel expenses which are directly related to the business travel.
- 1.1.5 The City's travel policies do not apply to an employee's normal commute.

### **1.2 Approval of Travel Requests & Claims for Reimbursement**

- 1.2.1 The City will not reimburse any employee claim for travel or related expenses without the approval of the department head or his/her designee.
- 1.2.2 Claims made by employees of the City's Boards and Commissions, shall be approved by the Chairperson, Board of Administrators or his/her designee.
- 1.2.3 Claims made by elected City officers shall be authorized and approved by each such officer.

### **1.3 Responsibilities & Enforcement**

Employees and their supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules, policies and procedures detailed herein.

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**1.4 Reports to Mayor & Council on City Travel Expenses**

- 1.4.1 Upon request of the Mayor and/or the City Council, the City's accounting system, Summit, can provide information on the dollar amount spent, by departmental organization number in the travel expense account. Detailed travel expense information by employee is not available from Summit.
- 1.4.2 The City's designated travel agent(s) will be required to provide management information and billing reports for all travel services arranged for or provided by their company to City of Seattle employees via the Travel Management Services contract.

**1.5 Definitions**

- 1.5.1 Commercial Credit Card: A City credit card that may be used to make job-related purchases in accordance with the policies outlined in the City Commercial Card Handbook. Throughout this document, the Commercial Credit Card will be referred to as the C-card.
- 1.5.2 Designated Travel Agent(s): The City has contracted with four travel agent(s) to provide travel services for all City employees. Departments may identify one or more of the City designated travel agent(s) for their employees to use. Employees should confirm their departmental preferences with their supervisor.
- 1.5.3 Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form: All City employees will be required to complete the City's Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form. This form will be required to request approval for travel, for submittal to the travel agent for booking reservations and for submitting expenses at the conclusion of travel. The City's Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form is available on the InWeb at: [http://inweb/citytravel/forms\\_instructions.htm](http://inweb/citytravel/forms_instructions.htm)

**2.0 Allowable Expenses**

**2.1 General Allowable Travel Expenses**

When authorized in writing by the department head or his/her designee, employees will be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while conducting City business. In accordance with SMC 4.72, the following are allowable travel expenses:

- 2.1.1 Meal expenses when travel outside the City is not a routine or normal part of an employee's job.
- 2.1.2 Lodging expenses when travel requires an overnight stay.
- 2.1.3 Transportation to and from travel destination or mileage expenses in accordance with SMC 4.70.025.
- 2.1.4 Local ground transportation or car rental.
- 2.1.5 Other reasonably necessary expense incurred related to the conduct of City business.

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These include, but are not limited to writing materials, reading materials and telecommunication.

2.1.6 The City will pay miscellaneous travel expenses essential to the transaction of City business, either directly, or through employee reimbursement. The employee must provide original receipts, or other proof, of miscellaneous travel expenses claimed. These reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Registration fees required in connection with attendance at an approved meeting, conference, convention, or training session.
- (b) Charges for facsimile (FAX) or copy services related to City business.
- (c) Gratuities and tips for services for which a tip is customary, including, but not limited to taxis, shuttles, and baggage handlers. Reimbursement is limited to 15 percent for services with actual charges or \$2.00 for complimentary services.

**2.2 Other Allowable Expenses**

**2.2.1 Prospective Employees Interview Expenses**

When payment of reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by job applicants from outside of Seattle are approved, pursuant to SMC 4.14.100, the expenses must be incurred in accordance with the City's adopted travel policies and procedures.

**2.2.2 Applicability to City Contractors**

Consultants and others under contract with the City may only charge the City for travel in accordance with the City's adopted travel policies.

**3.0 Disallowed Expenses**

The following is a non-exclusive list of expenses that are not reimbursable.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Air phone charges</li><li>• Airline club memberships</li><li>• Airline upgrade certificates</li><li>• Alcoholic beverages</li><li>• Baby-sitting, child care</li><li>• Barber, hair stylist, manicurist</li><li>• Briefcases/luggage</li><li>• Car washes</li><li>• Clothing, including formal business attire rental</li><li>• Dry cleaning, laundry</li><li>• Fines</li><li>• Flight insurance</li><li>• Forfeitures</li><li>• Free flight, hotel, or car rental</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal or chartered aircraft (unless it can be shown it was for legitimate City business and was the cheapest mode of transportation)</li><li>• Personal entertainment, including theater/sports tickets, in-flight/in-room movies, books</li><li>• Personal telephone calls</li><li>• Pet boarding or supplies</li><li>• Shoe shines</li><li>• Sports and social club dues/memberships</li><li>• Supplemental car rental insurance</li><li>• Theft or loss of personal property</li><li>• Toiletries</li></ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>coupons</li><li>• Gambling losses and expenses</li><li>• Gum, candy, or cigarettes</li><li>• Lost luggage</li><li>• Massage/spa charges</li><li>• Penalties (other than airline en route changes outlined in section 7.0)</li><li>• Personal credit card fees or interest charges</li><li>• Personal property insurance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traffic, speeding, or parking tickets</li><li>• Travel, lodging, and meal expenses for non-employees (i.e. family, vendors, and consultants) is not allowed. Under certain circumstances in which a <u>non-employee's</u> expenses are being paid through grant funds, the City Finance Director or his/her designee may make an exception to this policy and approve the payment of travel, meal and lodging expenses in accordance with the City's travel policies.</li></ul>
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#### **4.0 Travel Arrangements**

The City has contracts with designated travel agents that will be used to make travel arrangements for employees traveling on City business. Airline tickets may be purchased through these City travel agents, off the State travel contract, or via the Internet. Departments may require their employees use one of more of these options. Instructions will be outlined in department-specific travel policy and procedures. Employees must make travel arrangements in accordance with their department-specific policy and procedures, which incorporate the procedures established in this section.

##### **4.1 Travel Agent**

4.1.1 Air and other transportation, including car rental, for individual or group travel, may be booked through the City's designated travel agent(s). Lodging may be either booked through the travel agent, using the traveler's credit card or a City C-Card, if available, or may be arranged independently by the traveler.

4.1.2 The City's designated travel agent(s) will be required to arrange authorized travel services for City personnel to include the following:

- (a) Booking and securing transportation reservations and issuing and delivering tickets (including travelers' itineraries for air, rail, bus, rental cars) to various City offices. Wherever possible, obtaining advance seat assignments will also be required.
- (b) Booking and securing reservations for hotel/motel accommodations.
- (c) Coordinating international travel arrangements, which will include, in addition to reservations and issuance/delivery of tickets, provision of State Department advisories for destination countries/cities; assistance in obtaining passports and/or visas; and advice and/or documents regarding health requirements, foreign currency exchange, etc., pertinent to the traveler's destination(s).

4.1.3 The City's designated travel agent(s) will use the following guidelines when booking airline transportation:

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- (a) The flight's departure or arrival time is within one hour before or after the requested departure or arrival time.
- (b) One stop or connecting flights may be required if savings of \$200 or more can be achieved.

Employees may consider a "Saturday" night stay if the air fare savings is greater than the additional costs of lodging and meals.

- 4.1.4 Employees should check with their supervisor to determine if one of the City's travel agents listed on the InWeb has been specifically designated for use by their department. The City's designated travel agents are identified on the InWeb Travel Page at: [http://inweb/citytravel/travel\\_agents.htm](http://inweb/citytravel/travel_agents.htm)
- 4.1.5 Employees will use their department's published internal procedures, if any, when booking reservations with the travel agent.
- 4.1.6 When a conference sponsor requires a registrant to reserve lodging directly by using a form provided by the conference sponsor, the employee may do so. The employee will be required to indicate on the travel request form that lodging arrangements have been made in conjunction with the conference application.

#### ***4.2 International Travel***

Employees traveling on business outside the continental United States, are required to notify the City's Risk Manager of their travel plans within *no less than* five working days of their departure date to ensure the appropriate endorsements have been secured.

#### ***4.3 Traveler Profile Form***

Employees who expect to travel frequently, may choose to complete a traveler profile form provided by the City or the City's designated travel agent(s). This information will be used to ensure that the pertinent details about the traveler are always readily available to the agent(s).

### **5.0 Meal & Other Expenses**

Meal expenses are covered by two different meal rates. The allowable meal allowance or meal per diem includes the cost of the meal(s) and tips based on either the current Runzheimer Cost Index or the Federal Meal Per Diem Rate by travel destination. The City will determine whether the Runzheimer Cost Index or the Federal Meal Per Diem Rate will be used for payment of meal expenses based on the following conditions:

- (a) Non-represented Employees: Meal expenses for employees who are not represented by a collective bargaining agreement will be paid for under the current Federal Meal Per Diem Rate. Prior to January 1, 2000, a department director or his/her designee may choose to have that department's non-represented employees use the Runzheimer Cost Index instead of the Federal Per Diem Rate for meal allowances. Under no circumstances will a non-represented employee be allowed to choose which

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meal rate to use on a trip by trip basis.

- (b) **Represented Employees:** Meal expenses for employees who are represented by a collective bargaining agreement will be paid for under the current Runzheimer Cost Index unless otherwise negotiated with the appropriate bargaining agent.

**5.1 Meal Expenses – Federal Meal Per Diem Rate**

- 5.1.1 The City will pay a per diem amount for meals based on the Federal Meal Per Diem Rate for meals by location. These meal per diem amounts include tips.
- 5.1.2 The amount of the authorized meal per diem is calculated by day. The Federal Meal Per Diem Rate requires reductions of per diem allowances for partial days. The employee is allowed one-fourth of the per diem for each quarter of the day spent traveling or away from home. The IRS defines quarters to be: midnight to 6:00am, 6:00am to noon, noon to 6:00pm, and 6:00pm to midnight. Based on the IRS definition of quarter days for the per diem, the following criteria should be used for identifying the number of meals:

<b>FEDERAL QUARTER-DAY DISTRIBUTION</b>	<b>MEAL ALLOCATION</b>
6 a.m. to noon	1 breakfast
Noon to 6 p.m.	1 lunch
6 p.m. to midnight	1 dinner

- 5.1.3 If meals are included in a lodging, conference or training registration fee, the employee’s daily per diem will be adjusted accordingly.
- 5.1.4 Allowable meal per diems based on the Federal Meal Per Diem Rate should be given to the employee prior to departure on City business. Trips should be planned far enough in advance so that employees can receive the per diem in his/her paycheck prior to departure. If there is insufficient time to provide the per diem in the employee’s paycheck prior to departure, the employee may receive the per diem either via a warrant or in the next available paycheck.
- 5.1.5 Information and rates related to the current Federal Meal Per Diem Rate are available on the InWeb at: [http://inweb/citytravel/meal\\_lodging\\_rates.htm](http://inweb/citytravel/meal_lodging_rates.htm)

**5.2 Meal Expenses – Runzheimer Cost Index**

- 5.2.1 The City will pay the allowable amount for meals expenses, based upon the Runzheimer Cost Index listing of meal allowances by location. These meal allowances include tips.
- 5.2.2 The amount of the authorized meal allowance is determined on a per meal basis dependent upon the departure time from Seattle and the arrival time on return to Seattle. Snacks and/or meals served on airlines will not reduce the meal allowance.
- 5.2.3 If meals are included in a lodging, conference or training registration fee, the

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- employee's daily per diem will be adjusted accordingly. A "continental" breakfast provided at a meeting, conference or training session will not reduce the employee's meal allowance.
- 5.2.4 If the employee requires a cash advance to cover meal expenses, trips should be planned far enough in advance so that a request for cash advance can be processed prior to the employee's departure.
- 5.2.5 Payment of meal expenses will be based on actual expenses per meal, based on the allowable maximum established by the Runzheimer Cost Index. For payment and reimbursement of meal expenses, employees are required to collect original meal receipts for all allowable expenses incurred and to submit those receipts with their expense report.
- 5.2.6 The employee is required to refund meal advances in excess of the actual expenses incurred in accordance with Section 4.4 of the Travel Policies and Procedures.
- 5.2.7 The City's C-card may be used to pay for meals that are covered by the Runzheimer Cost Index. If an employee receives a meal allowance in advance, the C-card may not be used to pay for those meal expenses.
- 5.2.8 Information and rates related to the Runzheimer Cost Index is available on the InWeb at: [http://inweb/citytravel/meal\\_lodging\\_rates.htm](http://inweb/citytravel/meal_lodging_rates.htm)
- 5.3 *Reimbursement of Meal Expenses Exceeding the Allowable Per Diem***
- 5.3.1 Elected officials and federal coordinators of the Office of Intergovernmental Relations may be reimbursed for actual meal expenses in lieu of a flat per diem only when the City business to be conducted occurs during a meal where the actual expense of that meal exceeds the maximum allowable per diem rate.
- 5.3.2 The elected official, department head or federal coordinators of the Office of Intergovernmental Relations may only seek reimbursement from the City for his/her meal.
- 5.3.3 The elected official, department head or federal coordinators of the Office of Intergovernmental Relations must keep and submit original receipts for any meal for which he/she will be reimbursed for actual meal expenses incurred.
- 5.3.4 The elected official, department head or federal coordinators of the Office of Intergovernmental Relations may not receive per diem for any meal in which he/she is reimbursed under this section.
- 5.3.5 Elected officials, department heads and federal coordinators of the Office of Intergovernmental Relations are expected to use the Federal Meal Per Diem Rate for all other meals that do not meet the circumstances set forth in Section 5.3.1.
- 5.3.6 When the State Legislature is in session, in lieu of reimbursement for meals in accordance with these rules, policies and procedures, employees, claims approved by employees of the Office of Intergovernmental Relations shall receive an amount

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equal to the per diem established for the Washington State Legislature pursuant to RCW 44.04.080. No portion of such funds may be used for promotional hosting. (SMC 4.72.080)

**5.4 Reimbursement of Meal Expenses With One Group Receipt**

Employees who are required to obtain original receipts for their meals (those not utilizing the Federal Per Diem meal allowance) must request separate receipts when dining with a group. If the restaurant will not provide separate receipts, a copy of the receipt is acceptable if the total number of diners and the amount being claimed for reimbursement are clearly indicated. Note: With non-itemized group receipts, the acceptable practice is to divide the receipt (including gratuity) by the number of diners to determine the individual meal allowance.

**6.0 Lodging Expenses**

6.0.1 The Runzheimer Cost Index will be used for determining the maximum allowable expense for all lodging at the travel destination. Expenses exceeding the maximum allowable lodging rate will be allowed under the following circumstances.

(a) Exceptions may be made to the Runzheimer Cost Index for lodging when:

- 1) The lodging facility serves as the location for the event which is the purpose of the City business, or
- 2) The event sponsor arranges lodging for the event participant, the cost of the lodging is allowable, even if it exceeds the Runzheimer Cost Index.

(b) If the hotel where the event is scheduled is unavailable to the employee and lodging in the nearest hotel exceed the maximum Runzheimer Cost Index lodging rate for that City, the employee's supervisor may approve lodging expenses at the higher rate.

(c) When the State Legislature is in session, in lieu of reimbursement for lodging in accordance with these rules, policies and procedures, approved claims by employees of the Office of Intergovernmental Relations, shall receive an amount equal to the per diem established for the Washington State Legislature pursuant to RCW 44.04.080. No portion of such funds may be used for promotional hosting. (SMC 4.72.080)

6.0.2 Lodging expenses incurred at a facility located at the employee's official duty station or official residence are prohibited.

6.0.3 Allowable lodging expenses include the cost of lodging and any applicable sales taxes and/or hotel/motel taxes. The original, detailed lodging receipt must be submitted with the expense claim.

6.0.4 Reimbursement for lodging expenses is not to be authorized when an employee does not incur lodging expenses at a commercial lodging facility.

6.0.5 The City's C-card may be used to guarantee a reservation.

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- 6.0.6 If reserved rooms are not needed, it is the traveling employee's responsibility to make sure the room is canceled. The employee may cancel the reservation directly or through the City's travel agent(s).

## **7.0 Transportation Expenses**

### **7.1 Airline Transportation**

- 7.1.1 Payment by the City for first class air travel is not allowed.
- 7.1.2 All airline tickets are required to be booked in advance and expensed at the lowest available airfare, unless otherwise approved by the department head or his/her designee. If the lowest possible fare is a non-refundable, non-transferable ticket, the ticket should be booked at this rate, unless otherwise approved by the department head or his/her designee. To assist with travel planning, employees should consider booking airline reservations 7-21 days or more prior to travel in order to guarantee the lowest fares.
- 7.1.3 Employees may consider a "Saturday" night stay if the air fare savings is greater than the additional costs of lodging and meals.
- 7.1.4 Employees may only change booked airline tickets using the following conditions:
- (a) Designated travel agent(s) must be used to make the necessary changes to agent-booked travel arrangements, unless otherwise approved by the department head or his/her designee. If the employee cannot make the changes through the travel agent, the employee must notify the travel agent as soon as practical.
  - (b) The employee is responsible for changing reservations booked on the Internet.
  - (c) An employee may change an airline ticket if the change does not increase the original price of the ticket and if the change involves only the minimum ticket change penalty. If the conduct of City business requires a change in the ticket, the employee may change the ticket and if the same airfare is not available, may change the price of the ticket.
- 7.1.5 Employees may specify one or more preferred carriers in his/her Traveler Profile Form. If the same low airfare is offered by more than one major carrier, the City's travel agent(s) may book the flight on an employee's preferred major carrier.
- 7.1.6 Traveling employees may retain frequent flier mileage program benefits for their personal use. It is the City's policy that participation in these programs may not result in any incremental cost to the City beyond the lowest available fare, as defined in Section 7.1.2.
- 7.1.7 When airline tickets have been issued for travel on City business, they are the property of the City. When travel arrangements are canceled after airline tickets have been issued, the unused tickets are required to be returned immediately to the employee's department director or designee.

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- 7.1.8 Refundable airline tickets purchased through a designated City travel agent will be returned to that agent for processing of a credit. Credit for refundable tickets purchased through the Internet should be processed through the issuing airline or in accordance with instructions posted on the purchase web site.
- 7.1.9 If the airline ticket is non-refundable and non-transferable, the department director or designee will be responsible for retaining the ticket for possible future use by the employee. Airline policies change frequently. Refer to issuing carrier for current policy.
- 7.1.10 If the trip is canceled, it is the traveling employee's responsibility to notify the travel agent for agent-booked reservations or to notify the appropriate airline for Internet-booked reservations.

**7.2 *Car Rentals***

- 7.2.1 Employees are required to make all car rental reservations through the City's vehicle rental blanket contract, whenever possible. If travel reservations that include car rental are made through one of the City's designated travel agent(s), they must also use the City's vehicle rental blanket contract, when feasible. The City's travel agent(s) will be given a list of vendors and instruction on using the City's blanket contract(s).
- 7.2.2 All car rentals should be for intermediate-size cars or smaller, unless four or more people are traveling together or are otherwise approved by the department head or his/her designee.
- 7.2.3 Employees are responsible for returning rental cars with a full gas tank to avoid the costly refueling charges imposed by the rental companies.
- 7.2.4 If a rental car has been reserved and is not needed, it is the employee's responsibility to immediately cancel the car rental reservation. The employee may cancel the reservation directly with the car rental agency or through the City's travel agent(s).
- 7.2.5 If a rental car is not available through the City's blanket vendor and another vendor is used, the employee is required to purchase all available insurance.
- 7.2.6 Personal use of vehicles rented under the City contract is expressly prohibited, including the transportation of non-City employees, family members, or friends in the rental vehicle.
- 7.2.7 Employees must submit the original, detailed rental receipt with the expense claim.

**7.3 *Ground Transportation and Use of Personal Vehicle***

- 7.3.1 The City encourages employees to use local public or other commuter ground transportation (i.e. city buses or airport shuttle services) whenever possible for travel in and around their point of destination. Employees should use rental cars only when other means of transportation are unavailable, more costly, or impractical.

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- 7.3.2 Whenever possible, the City encourages employees to use bus, taxi, subway, ferry, hotel shuttle service or other similar ground transportation between the airport and hotel.
- 7.3.3 Employees may be reimbursed for ground transportation expenses to and from SeaTac Airport. If a personal vehicle is used, the employee will be reimbursed at a rate established in accordance with SMC 4.70.025. The combined mileage expense and cost for parking a vehicle at SeaTac Airport while on a City business trip will be reimbursed based on the amount equivalent to the cost of the round trip taxi or shuttle fare from the airport to the employee's home or duty station.
- 7.3.4 If a group of employees are traveling to an event or meeting within reasonable driving distance from Seattle, a City Motor Pool vehicle or City vehicle assigned to the department may be used if it is more cost-effective than renting a vehicle from a car rental agency.
- 7.3.5 Business use of a personal vehicle will be reimbursed at a rate established in accordance with SMC 4.70.025.
- 7.3.6 Original receipts are required for all transportation expenses in excess of ten dollars (\$10.00) per instance. This does not include mileage reimbursement.

### **8.0 Travel Request and Approval Procedures**

All departments will use the City's Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form found on the InWeb at: [http://inweb/citytravel/forms\\_instructions.htm](http://inweb/citytravel/forms_instructions.htm)

- 8.0.1 The employee will request and receive the required departmental approvals prior to incurring any travel expenses. The official City Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form is available from your supervisor or can be found on the InWeb at: [http://inweb/citytravel/forms\\_instructions.htm](http://inweb/citytravel/forms_instructions.htm)
- 8.0.2 The employee will complete the Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form using the instructions available on the InWeb at: [http://inweb/citytravel/forms\\_instructions.htm](http://inweb/citytravel/forms_instructions.htm)
- 8.0.3 If the request requires air travel, the employee may be required by their department to contact the City's travel agent to obtain an estimate for the lowest airfare and lodging expenses.
- 8.0.4 Once the employee has completed the Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form, he/she will submit it for approval by their department head or his/her designee. Instructions for requesting department approval are provided on the Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form and from the employee's supervisor.
- 8.0.5 If the employee is required to complete a separate conference registration form, the employee should consult his/her department training coordinator and/or accounts payable supervisor to determine who is responsible for the conference/training registration.

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- 8.0.6 If the employee is attending a meeting or conference that requires advance payment of registration fees, the employee should contact his/her department training coordinator and/or accounts payable supervisor to ensure that appropriate process is followed for making payment.
- 8.0.7 If the employee has not already done so, he/she should complete a Traveler Profile Form with the City's designated travel agent(s).

**9.0 Paying for Travel Expenses**

**9.1 Meal Expenses**

- 9.1.1 Employees eligible for the Federal Meal Per Diem Rate may receive their meal allowance in advance of the trip. Employees are not required to collect meal receipts for the actual meal expenses and are not required to refund any unspent portion of the meal allowance, unless the trip is canceled, or the employee returns from his/her trip earlier than originally scheduled. Employees eligible for the Federal Meal Per Diem Rate may not charge meals to the City's C-card.
- 9.1.2 Employees eligible for the Runzheimer Cost Index meal allowance may either use a C-card or request a cash advance for the maximum allowable meal allowance for their travel destination. The employee is required to collect original meal receipts for actual expenses and is responsible for refunding the unspent difference. All receipts for actual expense must be attached to the employee's Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form.
- 9.1.3 Employees eligible for the Runzheimer Cost Index meal allowance may pay for their own meals within the allowable Runzheimer Cost Index rate for their destination and submit original receipts for reimbursement on their Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form.

**9.2 Transportation Expenses**

- 9.2.1 Employees may use the City C-card to reserve and pay for all allowable car rental and related expenses. The employee is required to submit the original receipts for incurred car rental expenses with their Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form.
- 9.2.2 Employees may reserve and pay for the allowable rental car expenses using personal funds. The employee is required to submit the original receipts for car rentals with their Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form in order to receive reimbursement.
- 9.2.3 Employee will reserve and pay for car rental expenses through the City designated travel agent(s) when this service is available. Until this service is available, original receipts are required for all car rental expenses to be reimbursed to the employee.
- 9.2.4 Original receipts are required for all allowable miscellaneous transportation expenses in excess of ten dollars (\$10.00). (i.e. ground transportation, airport shuttle service, gas etc.) . All miscellaneous ground transportation expenses must be reported on the

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City's Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form and be accompanied by receipts.

**9.3 *Miscellaneous Expenses***

- 9.3.1 Employees incurring miscellaneous expenses are encouraged to use the C-card whenever possible to pay for those expenses.
- 9.3.2 Employee must submit original receipts for allowable expenses on their Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form for reimbursement. Reimbursement of employee's miscellaneous expenses may be received in their paycheck

**9.4 *Cash Advance - Requests***

- 9.4.1 Whenever possible, the City encourages the use of the C-card for miscellaneous travel expenses.
- 9.4.2 The City will issue cash advances for travel expenses at the request of the employee and with the approval of the department head or his/her designee.
- 9.4.3 If the employee receives a cash advance, they may not use the C-card for those expenses.

**9.5 *Cash Advance - Repayment***

- 9.5.1 Cash advances must be fully repaid or accounted for within 15 calendar days following the event end date. (See RCW §§ 42.24.120 – 42.24.160, which address cash advances for travel.)
- 9.5.2 If a scheduled trip is canceled and the employee has already received a cash advance, then the employee is required to repay the City the full amount within 15 calendar days of the cancellation of the trip.
- 9.5.3 An employee that fails to reimburse the City for the cash advance will be held liable for the outstanding balance.
- 9.5.4 If an employee fails to repay any portion of the cash advance, the City may withhold the necessary amount from the employee's wages.
- 9.5.5 If an employee is delinquent in repaying cash advances, future cash advances, advance meal per diems, or expense reimbursements will not be allowed until the debt is repaid.
- 9.5.6 Cash advances are under no circumstances considered a personal loan.
- 9.5.7 Any unauthorized expenditures of any such advance shall be deemed a misappropriation of public funds and shall result in appropriate disciplinary action.

**9.6 *Use of the City Commercial Credit Card (C-card)***

- 9.6.1 A C-card may be available for use by traveling employees and is issued to qualifying employees at the discretion of each department.

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- 9.6.2 Employees using the C-card will follow all rules established for the use of the City Commercial Credit Card.
- 9.6.3 The City's C-card may be used to pay air fares, lodging expenses, car rental, other ground transportation expenses, actual meal expenses, and other reimbursable expenses as approved by the employee's department.
- 9.6.4 Employee shall not charge any portion of travel expenses that are personal expenses on the City's C-card. Any unauthorized expenditures using the C-card shall be deemed a misappropriation of public funds and shall result in appropriate disciplinary action.

## **10.0 Expense Payment Procedures**

All City departments will use the City Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form, which is available on the InWeb at: [http://inweb/citytravel/forms\\_instructions.htm](http://inweb/citytravel/forms_instructions.htm)

### **10.1 Payment Procedures**

It is the City's intent to pre-pay as many travel and related expenses through travel agent invoices, or through the use of the City's C-card when available. Whenever possible, it is the City's intention to reimburse employees for travel and related expenses via the employee's paycheck

#### **10.1.1 Pre-Travel Expenses**

- (a) Registration or conference fees that are not direct billed to the City may be paid for using a C-card. If a C-card is not available to an employee, payment of registration or conference fees may be paid for through accounts payable or through the reimbursement process.
- (b) Employees eligible for meal allowances using the Federal Meal Per Diem Rate may be provided whenever possible with the maximum meal allowance for their destination prior to departure via their payroll check. The per diem will not be provided to the employee any earlier than the last paycheck prior to the beginning of the employee's travel. If it is not possible to provide the employee's meal per diem in the last paycheck prior to the beginning of travel, then the employee shall receive the meal allowance via warrant or in the next possible paycheck.
- (c) Employees eligible for meal allowances using the Runzheimer Cost Index may request a cash advance for meal allowances for their destination. Employees are required to submit original receipts for all actual expenses and refund any unspent cash advance.

#### **10.1.2 Post-travel Expenses**

- (a) Managers and supervisors approving a travel request are responsible for ensuring that claims for reimbursement from approved trips comply with City policies and

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procedures.

- (b) If major errors, such as a non-reimbursable expense or expenses in excess of set per diems, are detected, the expense report should be returned to the employee, noting the errors, and requesting the employee resubmit his/her expense report. If the employee resubmits the questioned expenses for reimbursement, the employee's supervisor must approve the resubmitted expense report. Only after receiving the approved expense report, will Accounts Payable process the expense report.
- (c) If Accounts Payable finds any minor errors, such as a mistake in addition or subtraction, it shall correct the error, notify the employee via email of the change, and then process the expense report.

#### **10.2 Expense Claim Procedures**

Expense reporting is included on the City's Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form. The Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form may be completed manually or electronically. The Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form and instructions for completing the form are available on the InWeb at: [http://inweb/citytravel/forms\\_instructions.htm](http://inweb/citytravel/forms_instructions.htm). The following sections provide additional information related to completing the Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form.

- 10.2.1 Meal Expenses: Federal Meal Per Diem Rate: If the employee received an advance meal allowance using the Federal Meal Per Diem Rate, the employee will not be required to itemize meal expense or submit receipts for the actual cost.
- 10.2.2 Meal Expenses: Runzheimer Cost Index: If the employee received a cash advance or is requesting reimbursement for meals using the Runzheimer Cost Index for meals, the employee is required to submit original receipts for all meals.
- 10.2.3 Lodging Expenses: The employee is required to submit original, detailed receipts for all lodging expenses.
- 10.2.4 Transportation Expenses: The employee is required to submit original receipts for all car rental and ground transportation expenses that exceed \$10.00, excluding mileage.
- 10.2.5 Other Miscellaneous Expenses: The employee is required to submit original receipts for all other reasonable and allowable expenses.
- 10.2.6 C-card Expense Transactions: Any travel or training costs incurred using the City's C-card shall be reconciled pursuant to the procedures developed for the City's C-card program. Original receipts must be submitted for all C-card transactions. Information on the C-card can be located on the InWeb at: <http://inweb/accountingservices/docs/C-CardHandbookVersion200.doc>
- 10.2.7 Submittal of Expense Claims: The employee is required to submit an original copy of the City's Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form, with attached original receipts, to his/her supervisor within 15 calendar days following the event end date.

Once approved, the supervisor shall forward the expense form and attached receipts to accounts payable.

### ***10.3 Time and Labor System Data Entry***

The appropriate department staff shall enter the necessary pay adjustment into the City's Time and Labor system in the manner outlined in the Time and Labor procedures.

## **11.0 Health and Safety of Traveling Employees**

Ensuring the health and safety of employees traveling on City business is a top priority for the City. Employees are encouraged to be aware of health or safety issues that may impact their trip on behalf of the City. The employee is responsible for notifying his/her supervisor of any health or safety issue that may cause travel to be altered or for additional expenses to be incurred.

### ***11.1 Emergency Situations***

11.1.1 Altering travel arrangements for health and/or safety reasons, which will result in added travel expenses, require pre-approval whenever possible from the employee's supervisor. In emergency situations, the employee's supervisor should be contacted as soon as possible. All added travel expenses due to illness, safety issues or other similar emergency should be indicated on the employee's travel Expense Report claim. The Travel Request and Expense Report claim should include an explanation of the health and safety issue, the name of the supervisor who approved the added expense and the date the employee contacted the supervisor.

11.1.2 When travel plans are interrupted and/or altered because of severe inclement weather, which may cause additional costs to be incurred, the employee should notify his/her supervisor as soon as possible. The reason for added expenses should be identified with a brief description on the employee's Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form. The supervisor's name shall be printed or typed on the form, and he/she should place his/her initials and the date that they were notified of the added expenses on the Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form.

### ***11.2 Health-Care Coverage When Away From Seattle***

An employee who is traveling away from Seattle should familiarize himself/herself with his/her respective health care provider's out of town coverage. The City encourages employees to carry his/her health care card whenever traveling on City business.

**Appendix InWeb Links**

- A. [SMC 4.14](#) *Executive Recruiting*
- B. [SMC 4.72](#) *Travel Expenses*
- C. [City Travel Information Directory](#)
  - *Travel Request, Approval & Expense Form*
  - *Travel Form Instructions*
  - *City-designated Travel Agents*
- D. [Commerical Card Handbook](#)