

City of Hartford

Travel Policy



July 2007



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City of Hartford Policy – Travel, Living and Entertainment Expenses

- I. Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide a procedure for controlling Travel, Living and Entertainment expenses with the objective of reducing expenses and to minimize personal interpretation of Travel guidelines. It is also to ensure that travel is properly approved and is adequately documented.

- II. Definitions: The City will only provide for, or reimburse the costs of necessary City travel.
 - a. 'City travel' is defined primarily as travel for a necessary City business purpose between one workplace and another - i.e. travelling by an employee in the performance of their duties or travelling to or from a place they have to attend in the performance of their duties, as long as the journey is not ordinary commuting or private travel.
 - b. 'Ordinary commuting' is defined as travel between home and the normal or permanent place of work - is not normally an allowable expense. It is usually clear whether or not a place is the employee's usual or permanent workplace (and, therefore, whether a journey to or from that place is ordinary commuting).
 - c. 'Place of Work' is defined as the employee's permanent workplace if they attend it regularly for the performance of the duties of their employment.

- III. Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the City of Hartford that employees will be provided with adequate funding and reimbursement for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the conduct of City business. Procedures governing most Travel, Living and Entertainment activities are included in this policy.

- IV. Responsibilities:
 - a. It is the responsibility of each employee to understand and comply with the procedures and guidelines described in this policy, to adhere to appropriate ethical standards and to exercise reasonable and sound business judgment in conducting City business. You must exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business.
 - b. You are responsible for all expenses over the reimbursement limits established. The City of Hartford will not pay for excess costs resulting from circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations or services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official city business.
 - c. You must have specific authorization or prior approval to incur expenses chargeable to the City of Hartford:
 - The Department Head, and/or Deputy Director must approve employee travel.
 - All Department Head travel must be approved by the Chief Operating Officer (COO)

- The City Council must approve travel by the Town & City Clerk.
 - The Internal Audit Commission must approve travel by the Internal Auditor.
- d. All city-related business travel expenses should be either, charged to a City-issued "P-Card," to the traveler's personal credit card, or by the traveler spending his or her cash. No cash advances will be issued.
 - e. The Procurement Manager is responsible for updating this Policy in accordance with City of Hartford policies.
 - f. Approval authority for expense accounts shall be in accordance with City of Hartford delegation of authority procedures. That approval is the approving manager's representation that the expenditures listed are in full compliance with City of Hartford Travel and Living Policy.

V. Reimbursable Expenses: Employees will be reimbursed for the necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in the conduct of City of Hartford business. These expenses include air, ground and water transportation, meals and lodging. Also included are reasonable telephone calls home and in the conduct of City business, tolls and parking costs, and taxes on meals and gratuities at a rate up to 20%. A more definitive definition of the foregoing expense items follows:

- a. General Transportation Expenses: Travel should be by that type of transportation which results in the lowest total cost consistent with limitations imposed by required departure and arrival times
- b. Air Transportation: All air transportation reservations must be made through the City of Hartford's designated Travel Agency. The cost of airline travel will be billed directly to the traveler's P-Card. In the event the traveler does not have a P-Card, either a permanent P-Card will be issued to the traveler, or a declining balance temporary P-Card will be provided.
 - Employees flying commercial airlines on City business shall fly coach or economy class unless otherwise authorized by the Chief Operating Officer. The flight should be on the airline offering the lowest fare to the destination.
 - In the event the employee is entitled to compensation for denied boarding, the amount received shall be returned to the City of Hartford. When flight cancellation by the airline necessitates an overnight stay, travelers should attempt to obtain accommodations from the airline or reimbursement thereof.
 - Unused tickets shall be immediately returned to the City-designated travel agency for credit.
 - Additional expenses incurred by the employee for hotel and meals, as well as additional expenses of a personal nature (i.e., shaving items, toothbrush), incurred when an employee is forced to stay overnight in what would have normally been a day trip, are reimbursable. Air travel insurance is not reimbursable.

- Employees are prohibited from piloting a personally owned aircraft on a business trip
- c. Train: If travel by train is necessary, coach service should be utilized whenever available. On overnight trips, Pullman accommodations are reimbursable.
- d. Private Automobile: The traveler must have a valid state driver's license. City-owned vehicles should be utilized whenever vehicles are available. It is preferable that employees use a rental car versus their own vehicle, but in the event a City-owned vehicle is not available, and you must utilize your own vehicle, the following policies apply:
- Managers authorizing the use of employee-owned vehicles must ascertain that the employee has personal liability insurance of at least \$250,000 per person, \$500,000 per accident for bodily injury, and \$100,000 each accident for property damage. Alternatively, a single limit of \$300,000 is acceptable. The employee's personal automobile coverage shall be primary.
 - Employees shall be reimbursed for the use of a personal vehicle based on City of Hartford Guidelines. The total cost for the trip by using a personal vehicle shall not exceed the total cost that would have been incurred had public transportation been used, unless there is a commensurate advantage to the City in the use of the employee's vehicle. For purposes of this comparison, total cost shall include lodging, meals and other expenses incidental to each mode of travel. Commensurate advantage would include such things as transporting equipment or other City employees, or an appreciable savings in the employee's time.
 - Mileage costs allowed should be consistent with GSA Domestic cost per mile Rates, which can be found on <http://www.gsa.gov/>. As of January 2007, that reimbursement rate was 44.5 cents per mile.
 - Actual expenditures will be reimbursed for bridge, ferry, tunnel and highway tolls, and parking and overnight storage charges. Towing charges or traffic fines will not be reimbursed.
 - Costs, which will not be reimbursed, also include charges for repairs, depreciation, replacements, grease, oil, antifreeze, towing and similar expenses, gasoline, insurance and state and federal taxes.
 - An employee involved in an automobile accident while on City business, or at any time if using a City owned vehicle, must file an accident report with the Risk Manager. If the accident involved bodily injury or serious property damage, it must be reported immediately by telephone to the Risk Manager and confirmed with a written report as soon as possible.
 - Employees using their personal cars for City business should list the name of other employees who accompany them. Likewise, passengers should indicate the name of the employee who has furnished transportation.

- Regular transportation between the employee's residence and normal place of business is a personal responsibility and not reimbursable.
- e. Rental Automobile: Approval for the use of a rental vehicle by other City employees may be provided based on sufficient justification. This justification may include the unavailability of a City vehicle. It should be noted that the use of a City vehicle must follow established City approval procedures.
- Car rentals should be made from the lowest cost car rental company. Comprehensive Collision Damage Waiver Coverage insurance should be purchased from the car rental company, with the renter's own car insurance having secondary coverage. It is recommended that prior to returning the rental car, the traveler refuel to avoid rental company gas premium charges.
 - Original receipts for purchase of gasoline, oil or other necessary expenses shall be attached to the City of Hartford expense report.
 - On a pro-rated basis, any mileage, daily rental amounts and taxes incurred for personal use must be indicated and deducted from the total amount of the bill and the net amount shown on the expense account statement.
- f. Limousines and Taxis:
- The most economical forms of local transportation should be used at all times. For fixed (non-meter) taxi expenses, it is recommended that the employee inquire as to the cost prior to entering the vehicle and determine if the amount is reasonable. A gratuity of up to 10% is reimbursable.
 - The use of special luxury limousines is not permitted except in rare instances, subject to approval of the Chief Operating Officer.
- g. Lodging and Meals: The City-designated travel agency will, to the maximum extent possible, book hotel/motel reservations at the lowest rate.
- Reimbursement for lodging, and meals and incidental (M&IE) expenses shall be in accordance with GSA per Diem rates, which can be found on <http://www.gsa.gov/>. To determine the appropriate per Diem rate, the web site will guide you to the state and city in which you are incurring expenses. It must be noted that per diem rates represent the maximum costs that the employee incurs. The City will reimburse the employee; either for costs based on the per diem rate, or for the actual costs incurred, which ever is less. If the employee doesn't incur costs for meals, such as when the conference pays for the meal, the employee is not entitled to recover costs for those meals. The following should be followed when making Lodging reservations:
 - All lodging reservations should be made through the City-designated Travel Agency, and must be made under the City's arrangement with the Travel Agency.

- Normally, lodging reservations must be guaranteed for late arrival (after 6 P.M.). Guarantees must be made using the City-issued P-Card or the traveler's personal charge/credit card.
- It is the traveler's responsibility to cancel lodging reservations, which will not be used. Any charges resulting from a traveler's failure to cancel a reservation are the responsibility of the traveler.
- For extended stays or for group reservations (normally 10 or more), lower rates than normal might apply. Inquire when making a reservation.
- At the time of check in, travelers should verify that the correct rate is being charged, and check if any special, promotional or seasonal rates lower than the rate secured earlier are available.

h. Telephone: Telephone and fax expenses incurred on behalf of the City (including safe arrival and change of schedule calls home) are reimbursable.

i. Entertainment: In some cases, after the appropriate approvals are secured, costs may be reimbursed for Entertainment expenses incurred for certain activities associated with City of Hartford business. These expenses will normally be incurred for such reasons as to nurture relationships with people having some business connection with the City of Hartford, its Public Schools or The Hartford Public Library. Common sense should be exercised in incurring these expenses, to keep costs reasonable in light of the event or circumstances in which the City employee(s) is/are involved.

VI. Travel Approval Forms: Prior to any trip to conduct City of Hartford business or to attend a conference or training session, A **Request for Travel/Conference Attendance** (Exhibit A) must be completed, including the Estimated Expenses section, and submitted to the requestor's Department Head or Deputy, who originally authorized the trip. Upon return from traveling, and regardless of the reason for the trip, the traveler must complete an **Expense Report** (Exhibit B) and submit the form, with all original receipts, to the appropriate Manager. Submittal of the Expense Report should be within four weeks of returning from the trip. All P-Card expenditures for the trip must be included in the Expense Report, and subtracted from the subtotaled amount, since actual payment of these charges is made through P-Card approval routines. The expense report must also include a specific breakdown of M&IE expenses. This expense report will subsequently be forwarded to finance for processing. In addition, if the trip was for the purpose of attending a conference, the employee must prepare and submit to the appropriate manager, a summary indicating what was learned at the conference and what might be applicable to the employee's job and to the City of Hartford.

VII. Standards of Compliance and Disciplinary Action:

- a. The reasonableness, propriety and necessity of expenses in connection with conduct of the City's business, and therefore, the determination of whether such expense should be reimbursed or otherwise paid by the City, is a matter for the considered judgment of both the individual incurring the expense and the manager approving the expense account.
- b. Approval should be refused for any expenses, which the approving manager does not consider reasonable and necessary or for which the employee cannot provide acceptable substantiation.
- c. Every manager having employees reporting directly, who incur travel and/or living expenses on behalf of the City, is responsible for instructing them with respect to City policies and instructions regarding expense accounts. The manager should be certain that employees understand the high standards of propriety, which must be maintained.
- d. Appropriate disciplinary action, including discharge from employment, may be taken against any employee who:
 - In expending funds in connection with City business, engages in conduct that is detrimental to the good character of the City of Hartford, or may be injurious to its reputation.
 - Makes a fraudulent entry on the expense account statement.