

City of Port Townsend

Guidelines for Employee Travel

General

- Pre-Approval prior to overnight Travel (Travel Authorization Form) required. Day travel/meetings do not require written pre-approval.
- Department heads are responsible for ensuring that funds for the estimated travel costs for the trip are available prior to approving the Travel Authorization Form.
- All travel requires submission of Travel Expense Voucher even if City Funds (purchasing card/advance payment) are used
- Merchant receipts that list the items purchased (not just the credit card charge amount) are required.
- Use purchasing cards to pay for lodging and transportation related expenses when possible. Merchant receipts with a detail of the items purchased or lodging/transportation fees paid must be retained and submitted with the purchasing card statement and the Travel Expense Voucher.
- Agenda for related conferences or meetings must be attached to the Travel Expense Voucher. If no agenda is available, a detailed description of the business purpose for the travel must be attached to the Travel Expense Voucher.
- Code travel expenses to BARS object code 43.
- Travel expense reimbursement guidelines can be found in the City of Port Townsend Personnel Policies Manual:(Chapter 5.7).

Exceptions

- Limited exceptions to these guidelines will be considered, providing there is a valid business reason for the exception.
- ALL exceptions must be approved in writing by the City Manager.

Transportation

- Personal vehicle mileage should reflect point to point mileage from Port Townsend (City Hall or employee work location). If leaving from your home, record point to point mileage from the shorter of your home location or Port Townsend. Point to point means worksite or home to travel location with no personal side trips included.
- Do not claim both mileage and gasoline expenditures on your travel form. If you claim mileage, payment for gasoline should be made via your personal credit card or cash. If you claim mileage and gasoline is paid for on your City purchasing card, you must submit a copy of the receipt with the Travel Expense Voucher and deduct this amount from your reimbursement.
- If not using a personal vehicle, please indicate mode of transportation under the Purpose of Trip/Comments column. If using a city vehicle or traveling with another employee or other mode of transportation, please indicate in this column.
- If travel by air, purchase the most economical flight possible for your travel dates. 14 day advance tickets are encouraged to obtain the best price for flights. The City will pay for one

piece of checked luggage. For longer trips, reimbursement for additional checked luggage reimbursement may be authorized by the City Manager.

Lodging

- Lodging rates should be at or under the allowable per diem amounts listed on OFM.wa.gov. Any rates over the per diem amount must be approved by the City Manager in advance on the Travel Authorization Form.
- Approval to exceed the per diem lodging rate may be given when the conference or event hotel rate is higher than the per diem amount, when business related travel occurs during a peak season or event that makes lower rates unavailable or for other documented city business purpose.

Meals

- Meal costs are reimbursable for any overnight travel assignments if meals are not provided as part of the conference or meeting fee.
- Meal costs for non-overnight travel must meet the following two criteria:
 - Traveler must be in travel status for the entire scheduled working hours plus an additional three hours including the normal scheduled meal break. (Example: 8 hour working day requires traveler to be in travel status for 12 hours).
 - Traveler must be in travel status during the entire meal period in order to qualify for meal reimbursement. The traveler may not stop for a meal just to meet the three hour rule.
 - Non-overnight meal travel costs are considered taxable by the IRS and will be reimbursed on the employee's regular paycheck.
- Meal reimbursements will be made at the per diem rate for the travel location listed on OFM.wa.gov. Meal receipts are not required for per diem reimbursement.
- 1st and last day of travel will be reimbursed at 75% of the per diem rate for the travel location.
- Payment for meals should *not* be made via a City purchasing card. Meals should be paid for by the individual and reimbursed through the Travel Expense Voucher. If an employee requires a travel advance to pay for meals, an advance equal to (or less) the amount of the anticipated meal per diem may be requested from Finance. Travel advances should be requested *at least* two weeks in advance of the travel date to ensure that the check is ready in time.
- When conference meals are provided, the associated meal should be deducted from the requested per diem rate. Conference meals are defined as a full breakfast, lunch or dinner. Continental breakfast or snacks are not regarded as meals.
- Any request for reimbursement in excess of the per diem amount will require the City Manager's written approval.

Forms

- Travel Authorization Form is required to be completed and signed by all parties prior to the travel dates.
- The Travel Expense Voucher must be completed within 30 days of the completed travel.