

SECTION 8.0: TRAVEL

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SECTION 8.0: TRAVEL

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Types of approved travel for county employees include the following:
 - a. daily travel in a county or privately-owned vehicle (Section D.),
 - b. multiple day travel in a county or privately-owned vehicle or by commercial transportation (Section E. through Section I.).
2. To facilitate the accuracy and consistency in administering the travel process, each Department Head is encouraged to designate an employee as the primary contact for travel arrangements and reimbursements. For the purpose of this policy, the Department Head or his/her designee is the "approving official."
3. Employee travel expense documentation shall be submitted by each Department to the Auditor's Office. Expenses such as registration, lodging, and/or commercial transportation may be submitted for pre-payment prior to travel. (In such circumstances the Department bears the responsibility for ensuring that if the employee does not use the items paid for, the funds are retrieved to the extent appropriate and possible from the employee and/or the vendor. When a refund is unavailable, a credit is acceptable.) Other documentation may be submitted for reimbursement after travel is complete.
4. With the exception of per diem items, employees are instructed to provide the receipts and/or other documentation acceptable to the approving official substantiating the expenses have been incurred for *all* requested payments and reimbursements, including those items pre-paid. Payment or reimbursement for any item submitted without a receipt or other proof acceptable to the approving official of the amount of the expenditure will be rejected.
5. Reimbursement shall not be made without the signature of the approving official, and submission of evidentiary material acceptable to the approving official.
6. Violation of the provisions of this Policy may subject the employee to disciplinary action which may include termination of employment.

Effective: November 12, 1991

Revised: 11/03/93, 06/16/94, 11/01/95, 05/09/01, 05/27/03, 08/13/04, 12/17/04, 01/01/09, 01/01/13, 03/02/16

B. EMPLOYEE AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL

1. A Department Head may authorize and shall be responsible for all travel for employees under his/her direction, and may permit supervisory or administrative personnel to authorize and/or monitor such travel. The Department Head should establish internal procedures for the control of travel and related expenses for his/her employees.
2. When an employee travels on a multiple-day trip, or a one-day trip that involves expenses other than those reimbursable on the Mileage Reimbursement Voucher (mileage, parking, telephone, public transportation), approval must be obtained prior to travel.
3. To assure compliance with Section 325.20 of the Ohio Revised Code, travel at County expense to association meetings and conventions requires approval prior to travel. (Please refer to Section F. for instructions.) Travel to training seminars does not require BCC approval unless that travel is to training sessions pertaining to weights and measures for County Auditor staff and others (as noted in Section 901.10 of the Ohio Revised Code).

C. LICENSE, INSURANCE, AND VEHICLE REQUIREMENTS

1. Employees who are authorized or required to operate a County-owned vehicle or a privately-owned vehicle on authorized County business must have a valid Driver's License issued from their state of residency or, if required by the employer, a valid Ohio Commercial Driver's License. Employees must provide proof of such driving privileges upon request of the immediate supervisor or Department Head. Any employee who has such license or driving privileges suspended, revoked, or altered in any manner must immediately notify his/her Department Head in writing, stating the nature, length, and alteration.
2. Employees who are authorized or required to operate a privately-owned vehicle on authorized County business must ensure that such vehicle is properly insured and provide proof of such insurance upon request of the immediate supervisor or Department Head. Any changes in insurance status (lapse, revocation, alteration, change of carriers, etc.) must be reported in writing by the employee to the employee's Department Head or designee prior to any reimbursable travel.
3. If driving privileges or insurance are suspended, revoked, lapsed, or altered in any manner that would restrict the performance of the employee's assigned or required duties, the employee is subject to

Effective: November 12, 1991

Revised: 11/03/93, 06/16/94, 11/01/95, 05/09/01, 05/27/03, 08/13/04, 12/17/04, 01/01/09, 01/01/13, 03/02/16

termination of employment or being placed on leave without pay until such driving privilege or insurance is fully reinstated. During any required leave period, an employee may request and be paid for any accrued but unused vacation time, but shall not be paid for any accrued but unused sick time.

4. Employees who are authorized or required to operate a privately-owned vehicle on authorized County business shall not operate a vehicle that is mechanically unsafe, or that is a threat to the safety of the driver, other motorists, pedestrians, or any property.
5. Any employee who is involved in an automobile accident while driving a privately-owned or County-owned vehicle on authorized County business must report the accident to the County Risk Manager and follow the provisions of the Vehicle Use Policy.
6. In addition to the provisions of this section, employees who are authorized or required to operate a County-owned vehicle or a privately-owned vehicle on authorized County business must comply with all requirements of the Vehicle Use Policy (see copy in Appendix).

D. DAILY TRAVEL FOR JOB-RELATED DUTIES USING COUNTY AND PRIVATELY-OWNED VEHICLES

1. This section applies when an employee travels to any location other than the normal work location and returns to the normal work location or his/her residence within the same day, for the purpose of conducting the normal duties of his/her classification, or to attend any job related activity. (Please refer to Section F. for additional instructions on travel to association meetings and conventions.)
2. All mileage incurred on a privately-owned vehicle while traveling on County business is reimbursable. Commuting expenses are not reimbursable. Normal commute is the mileage between the employee's home and work location.
3. In no circumstance shall an employee be reimbursed for normal commuting mileage from his/her residence to his/her normal work location nor from his/her normal work location to his/her residence.
4. Travel during on-duty hours must be by the most direct route unless an alternate route would be less time consuming and/or more effective. Variations in the normal route should be clearly documented on the record of daily travel; e.g., detours, lunch/break stops, etc.
5. When a portion of an employee's assigned duties are of an investigative nature, and it is necessary for the employee to drive in various areas

Effective: November 12, 1991

Revised: 11/03/93, 06/16/94, 11/01/95, 05/09/01, 05/27/03, 08/13/04, 12/17/04, 01/01/09, 01/01/13, 03/02/16

without stopping at specific destinations, the term "investigation" must be written in the appropriate areas of the Mileage Reimbursement Voucher and the general nature of the investigation indicated. Examples of investigative activities include inspectors randomly looking for violations, disciplinary surveillance or investigation, complaint or nuisance investigations, or any other activity where an exact destination or general area cannot be readily identified. All such investigative activities shall be approved in advance by the Department Head or designee.

6. Employees must request reimbursement for their daily travel expenses on the Mileage Reimbursement Voucher form. If this daily travel involves expenses other than those reported on the Mileage Reimbursement Voucher (mileage, parking, telephone, public transportation), employees must follow the instructions for multiple-day travel in Section E.
7. Employees shall sign an affidavit line on the Mileage Reimbursement Voucher attesting to the fact that they currently possess both a valid Driver's License issued from their state of residency and/or an Ohio Commercial Driver's License and vehicle insurance. Forms submitted without this affidavit signature will not be processed for reimbursement.
8. Other expenses for which employees may request reimbursement on the Mileage Reimbursement Voucher include:
 - a. Parking - A receipt must be provided for all parking expenses, except parking meter expenses.
 - b. Telephone - All expenses for any County business telephone use during authorized travel. When such telephone use is billed on the employee's own cellular phone bill, telephone credit card bill, or long distance phone bill, the bills must be provided.
 - c. Public Transportation - Use of public transportation such as a bus, taxi, etc. A receipt must be provided for any taxi expenses and for any other public transportation when available.

E. MULTIPLE-DAY TRAVEL FOR JOB-RELATED DUTIES USING COUNTY AND PRIVATELY-OWNED VEHICLES OR COMMERCIAL TRANSPORTATION

1. This section applies when an employee travels on a multiple day trip, for the purpose of conducting the normal duties of his/her classification, or to attend any job related activity. (Please refer to Section F. for additional instructions on travel to association meetings and conventions.)
2. Any employee traveling on a multiple day trip must receive approval from his/her Department Head or designee prior to travel using the Request for

Effective: November 12, 1991

Revised: 11/03/93, 06/16/94, 11/01/95, 05/09/01, 05/27/03, 08/13/04, 12/17/04, 01/01/09, 01/01/13, 03/02/16

Travel form (HR013). If an employee travels to such a destination without approval, reimbursement for expenses may not be approved. Employees shall sign a statement on the Request for Travel form attesting to the fact that they currently possess both a valid Driver's License issued from their state of residency (and/or an Ohio Commercial Driver's License) and vehicle insurance. Forms submitted without this signature will not be processed for approval.

3. Employees who travel on a multiple day trip must request reimbursement for their expenses on the Employee Travel Reimbursement form. All eligible travel expenses may be itemized and reimbursed on an actual cost basis, subject to limitations set in this policy.
4. Following the approval of travel, a request may be made that a check(s) be issued in advance for registration, lodging, and/or commercial transportation expenses relative to such travel.

F. TRAVEL TO ASSOCIATION MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

1. To assure compliance with Section 325.20 of the Ohio Revised Code, an employee working in any department reporting to the BCC through the County Administrator, who is traveling at county expense to any job related association meeting or convention, must submit his/her request in advance and receive approval by the County Administrator or designee before actual travel occurs. The County Administrator must submit his/her travel request to the Board President or Acting Board President for approval. The County Commissioners' staff must submit their travel requests to any one member of the Board of County Commissioners or the County Administrator. All other employees working in departments not reporting to the BCC must submit the requests for approval to the BCC at a regular calendar meeting.
2. Travel to training sessions pertaining to weights and measures for County Auditor staff and others (as noted in Section 901.10 of the Ohio Revised Code) also requires BCC approval.
3. Retroactive approval may be authorized on those rare occurrences where advance authorization is not possible and the employee documents the unusual or extenuating circumstances that prevented advance authorization.
4. Prior to submitting to the County Administrator or designee such travel requests to attend association meetings or conventions, an employee must receive approval from his/her Department Head.

Effective: November 12, 1991

Revised: 11/03/93, 06/16/94, 11/01/95, 05/09/01, 05/27/03, 08/13/04, 12/17/04, 01/01/09, 01/01/13, 03/02/16

G. TRAVEL EXPENSES - TRANSPORTATION (TO AND FROM THE DESTINATION)

1. Employees who are authorized or required to operate a privately-owned vehicle on authorized County business shall be reimbursed in an amount which corresponds to Section 162 of the Internal Revenue Code for all miles actually driven. This mileage rate shall be considered as the total reimbursement for all operating expenses incurred, including gasoline, repair maintenance, insurance, etc.
2. When more than one County employee travels in the same privately-owned vehicle, only one employee may request mileage reimbursement. When two or more employees from the same department travel to the same destination, the Department Head or designee may require employees to travel in the same vehicle when practical in order to reduce reimbursement costs.
3. Employees operating a County-owned vehicle shall be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses which are necessary and directly related to the operation of the vehicle. Such items shall be listed separately and individually on the Employee Travel Reimbursement form and receipts furnished for all such items. Permission must be obtained from the Department Head or designee prior to any repairs or service other than normal daily operational needs.
4. When it is cost effective, an employee who is operating a County-owned vehicle may purchase gasoline rather than drive a longer distance to a County gasoline dispensing facility. Receipts must be submitted with the Employee Travel Reimbursement form.
5. Travel arrangements by air, rail, bus, or other commercial carrier to any authorized job related activity must be made at the lowest practical rate. Expenses claimed for travel by any commercial carrier must be supported by the ticket or other documentation acceptable to the approving official substantiating that the expenses have been incurred.
6. Employees are prohibited from accepting any "frequent flyer" benefits obtained from the purchase of airline tickets for use in official county business travel, in accordance with the Ohio Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 91-010.
7. Employees may be reimbursed for all parking expenses incurred during the travel. Receipts must be obtained for all parking expenses, other than parking meter expenses.
8. Employees may be reimbursed for costs incurred during the travel to and

Effective: November 12, 1991

Revised: 11/03/93, 06/16/94, 11/01/95, 05/09/01, 05/27/03, 08/13/04, 12/17/04, 01/01/09, 01/01/13, 03/02/16

from his/her destination for any bus, shuttle, taxi, subway, or other local transportation, plus all tips associated with the transportation, and highway, bridge, ferry and toll charges. Receipts must be obtained for all taxi expenses and for any other public transportation or toll charges when available.

9. When an employee requests the use of a rental car, the reason for using a rental car, along with justification for the size of the rental if larger than intermediate, must be submitted on the Request for Travel approval form prior to the travel. If use of a rental car is approved, the employee may request to be reimbursed for all rental car expenses, except insurance, for all miles traveled on County business. Expenses claimed for rental cars must be supported by the invoice and rental agreement. If the use of a rental car on authorized County business results in a valid accident claim, employees must follow the provisions set forth in the Vehicle Use Policy (see copy in Appendix).

H. TRAVEL EXPENSES - LODGING

1. If travel requires that an employee remain overnight, the employee shall be reimbursed for the actual cost of lodging at the lowest practical single rate at the nearest and most reasonable lodging facility. A detailed receipt must be obtained for any lodging.
2. If overnight travel to a job related activity provides for a specified lodging facility, the employee may choose to stay at that facility and be reimbursed for the actual cost of lodging.

I. TRAVEL EXPENSES OTHER THAN TRANSPORTATION AND LODGING (ACTUAL EXPENSES VS PER DIEM)

1. When an employee is on a multiple-day trip, he/she must select one of two methods of reimbursement for all Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) incurred. Incidental travel expenses include such expenses as tips, gratuities, and transportation expenses incurred after arrival at the destination.
2. The employee may:
 - (a) choose to use a per diem allowance, in accordance with the rates established by the Ohio Office of Budget and Management (<http://obm.ohio.gov/TravelRule/>, GSA Per Diem Rates) OR
 - (b) itemize all expenses, subject to maximum meal costs noted in the GSA Per Diem chart at the link listed above, and submit original receipts.

Effective: November 12, 1991

Revised: 11/03/93, 06/16/94, 11/01/95, 05/09/01, 05/27/03, 08/13/04, 12/17/04, 01/01/09, 01/01/13, 03/02/16

3. When the employee selects per diem allowance, receipts are not required and the maximum cost per meal is not applicable. **NOTE:** The per diem *does not* include lodging, parking expenses, or transportation expenses (including all tips for the transportation) incurred to and/or from the destination. These expenses are reimbursable in addition to the per diem allowance.
4. An employee is eligible for per diem allowance for each day of travel that includes an overnight stay. On the first day of travel employees may claim the full per diem amount, but on the last day of travel employees may claim per diem only when the travel extends past 6:00 p.m.
5. When reimbursement for actual expenses is selected, original receipts must be provided for all eligible expenses, except for reasonable expenses incurred for tips or gratuities in connection with the handling of baggage and luggage. The maximum amounts for meals include tips. The cost of any alcoholic beverage is not reimbursable.
6. When an employee is required to travel on a one-day trip that extends past 6:00 p.m., at the discretion of the approving authority meals may be reimbursed at the maximum meal costs listed on the GSA Per Diem chart at www.gsa.gov/perdiem. Original receipts must be provided.
7. Telephone calls to transact County business and personal telephone calls of a reasonable number and length made from the employee's hotel room may be charged to the employee's room bill and reimbursed as lodging expense. Such calls shall not be deducted from the per diem allowance.
8. County business expenses such as copy and fax service, long distance phone calls, postage, purchase of items necessary for authorized County business, etc. shall not be included in the per diem allowance, and may be claimed as an additional reimbursable expense, as long as receipts are submitted.

J. ALTERNATE TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT PROVISION

The County Administrator or designee may authorize reimbursement for travel under special circumstances which may arise from time to time and not otherwise conform to the strict provisions of this policy. Department Heads wishing to request an alternate travel reimbursement must submit the request in writing to the County Administrator for approval. (Even when alternate provisions are authorized, receipts, where required by provisions of this policy, must be provided to support expenses.)

K. TRAVELING WITH NON-EMPLOYEES

Effective: November 12, 1991

Revised: 11/03/93, 06/16/94, 11/01/95, 05/09/01, 05/27/03, 08/13/04, 12/17/04, 01/01/09, 01/01/13, 03/02/16

When an employee travels on County business pursuant to the provisions of Sections G. through I. above, a non-employee(s) may accompany the employee. All expenses of the non-employee(s) for food, transportation, etc., must be paid by the employee. When lodging expenses are necessary, the employee must pay any additional lodging costs above the single occupancy rate.

L. EXTENDING A MULTIPLE-DAY TRIP

If air or other travel fare can be reduced by extending a multiple-day trip to include additional day(s) at the beginning and/or ending of such trip, and such extension results in a cost savings to the County, the employee may elect to extend his/her multiple-day trip. The per diem or actual cost provisions of Section I. may be applied to any additional days as long as the total expense results in a cost savings to the County.

M. COMBINING COUNTY TRAVEL WITH VACATION

When an employee travels under the provisions of this policy, he/she may extend such travel at the beginning and/or ending of County business for his/her own pleasure as long as such extension does not result in additional expense to the County.

N. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

The Human Resources Department shall establish, maintain and communicate standard operating procedures (SOPs) for effectively administering this policy in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and in cooperation with affected County departments and agencies.

Effective: November 12, 1991

Revised: 11/03/93, 06/16/94, 11/01/95, 05/09/01, 05/27/03, 08/13/04, 12/17/04, 01/01/09, 01/01/13, 03/02/16