

City of Beaumont
Travel Expense and Reimbursement
Policy



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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clearly delineate and establish guidelines for the expenditure of public funds for authorizing attendance, travel, and reimbursement of expenses for all Elected Officials and Appointed Officials, commissioners, City employees and volunteers when traveling on official City business.

The City hereby expressly acknowledges funds are to be expended for legitimate public purposes only. All funds received by the City are considered public funds and therefore it is the City's responsibility to wisely administer limited public resources and to expend them only when there is a substantial benefit to the City and its residents. Accordingly, it is the intent of the City of Beaumont to ensure business travel expenses are in the best interest of the public and an appropriate use of taxpayer funds.

This policy supersedes all other previous travel policies.

SCOPE

It is periodically necessary for Elected Officials and Appointed Officials, commissioners, City employees and volunteers to attend business related meetings, conferences, educational seminars and professional development trainings sessions. In participating in travel outside of the workplace, travel costs can vary considerably as there are various modes of transportation, various options for lodging and relative price fluctuations among different geographic locations. This policy is designed to control costs associated with necessary travel and establish procedures for uniformity and fair payment of expenses while traveling on City business.

This policy shall apply when the City of Beaumont Elected Officials or Appointed Officials, commissioners, employees, and volunteers are representing the City of Beaumont in their official capacity on approved City business. This policy conforms to the requirements of California Government Code sections 53232 through 53232.4.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

- A. "Appointed Official" means any official appointed by the City Council of the City of Beaumont to serve on any entity or body duly created by the City Council.
- B. "City" means the City of Beaumont.
- C. "Elected Official" means each member of the City Council, the Mayor, the City Clerk, and the City Treasurer.
- D. "Commuter Travel" means travel to any conference, meeting, educational seminar, event, or activity that occurs within a 50-mile radius of the City of Beaumont and does not include an overnight stay.
- E. "Resident Travel" means travel to any conference, meeting, educational seminar, event or activity that occurs beyond a 50-mile radius of the City of Beaumont and includes a minimum of one night away from the Traveler's primary residence.
- F. "Traveler" for the purposes of this policy shall mean an Elected or Appointed official, commissioners, city employees, and volunteers who is attending a meeting, conference, seminar, event or activity as an approved representative of the City of Beaumont.
- G. "Coach" means lowest airfare of the airline, i.e. economy, at the time of booking.
- H. "GSA" means U.S. Government Services Administration

PROCEDURES FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENTS**A. Travel Forms**

1. [City of Beaumont Travel Authorization and Expense report form \(COB Form #15-02\)](#). (See Addendum A: Procedures for COB Form #15-02).
Beaumont Police employees shall use BPD Form 07-04. [City of Beaumont Travel Authorization Form - PD](#)

All Elected and Appointed officials, commissioners, City employees and volunteers shall complete a Travel Authorization and Expense Report form (No. 15-02) or BPD Form 07-04 prior to travel arrangements being made. This form shall be used to receive travel authorization and to claim reimbursement for authorized travel expenses. The form is designed to do the following:

1. Estimate Cost of Travel
2. Acquire initial approval for the proposed travel; **unless travel falls under "B"**.
3. Identify proper accounting and budget information to account for the travel.
4. Report the actual, allowable, and documented costs of travel.

All expenses for the trip must be shown on the Travel Authorization Form. Reimbursement shall generally be limited to incidental fees associated with said pre-approved travel including, but not limited to, conference or meeting fees, mileage at current IRS rate, toll charges, parking fees, airline ticket fees (economy, or Coach fares), one piece of checked baggage, rental car/tax/rideshare – uber/lyft, shuttle fees, hotel costs based on current IRS rates, per diem based on GSA rates, and incidental expenses as noted above.

At the discretion of the Finance Director or Administrative Services Director. Cal-Cards may be used to pre-pay for authorized travel expenses such as:

- 1) Lodging – hotel at GSA or conference rate
- 2) Conference and training registration fees
- 3) Airline fees at Coach-economy rate, including ONE checked luggage.

The traveler shall not use city Cal-Cards for personal expenses, even if the intent is to reimburse the City later. Charging personal expenses on City purchase cards is a misuse of City funds and a severe breach of the City's [Ethics policy](#). Doing so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

B. Authorized Expenses

All travel not covered by the agency and outside of regular meetings of an appointed position (e.g. RCTC and WRCOG) shall **not require reaffirmation by the City Council presuming an elected official appointment to a regional committee is a city approved agency and of best interest to the city and its residents**. Public funds will not be used for any expense that does not clearly benefit the City of Beaumont.

Expenses incurred by traveler in connection with the following activities or events constitute authorized and reimbursable expenses, provided that the following requirements of this policy are also met:

1. Communicating or meeting with representatives of Regional, State or Federal agencies and entities on policy positions expressly adopted by the City Council;
2. Participating in Regional, State and Federal organizations whose activities directly affect and enhance the City's interests (e.g., League of California Cities);
3. Attending City-sponsored or endorsed events as directed by the City Council;

4. Meeting to implement a strategy approved by the City Council for attracting or retaining businesses already established in the City.

C. Unauthorized Expenses

The following expenditures incurred by Traveler in the course and scope of their official duties shall not be reimbursed:

1. Any personal portion of a trip; including travel to consultant funded events.
2. Costs associated with any political or charitable event;
3. Expenses associated with entertainment, including but not limited to, theater events, movies (including in-room viewing), sporting events, and personal recreation, such as golfing, spa treatments, and fitness workouts at a gym, optional tours, banquets or other activities not related towards professional development offered through the conference, but as an additional cost to registration are solely at the discretion of the employee and considered personal expense;
4. ~~Non-mileage personal automobile expenses, including but not limited to~~ Personal automobile expenses such as repairs, insurance, ~~gasoline~~, traffic citations and;
5. Any personal losses incurred while on City business.
6. Uber rides to and from ~~non – sponsored~~ breakfast/lunch/dinner locations.

D. Family Members or Guest Travel

The City shall not pay for the travel expenses of family members or guests. If family members or guests accompany an individual on City-paid travel, arrangements must be made for separate billing of family members by the employee/Elected Official.

E. Transportation

1. General Rules
 - a. To conserve City resources and keep expenses within community standards for all Elected and Appointed officials, commissioners, employees and volunteers, expenditures shall adhere to the guidelines set forth in this policy. If expenses are incurred that exceed these guidelines,

the cost reimbursed by the city shall be limited to the expenses that fall within the guidelines.

- b. All travel on city business shall be planned to provide for the most economical mode and class of transportation reasonably available, using the most direct and time-efficient route. Reasonable travel modes include airline, city or personal vehicle, commuter trains, shuttles, or rideshare/taxis.
- c. Traveler shall travel using government and group rates where available.
- d. Except as provided below, travel expenses shall be reimbursed only for those days spent on City business. Accordingly, allowable expenses generally are those incurred for the days on which conference/event activities are scheduled. Extending trips for personal travel may be authorized at the Traveler's expense including, but not limited to, increased transportation costs, if applicable.
- e. Only if circumstances prevent reasonable hours of travel, expenses may be reimbursed for resident travel days not to exceed one day before and one day after the event. Reasonable hours are defined as between 5:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Reimbursement for more than one day of travel to or from the destination must be approved in advance by the approving authority.

2. Air Travel

- a. Whenever possible, travel arrangements should be made in advance to take advantage of discount plans. All air travel bookings shall be coordinated by the office of City Manager and or designee.
- b. The City will only reimburse Coach or equivalent air fare. Priority boarding shall be allowed so that Travelers can sit together.
- c. The City will reimburse the regular cost of one "checked bag" if charged by the airline and the Traveler is staying more than one night at their destination. This expense is to be reported on the travel form under incidentals.
- d. Any changes in flight status will require approval before the changes to the flight, wherein the city incurs additional costs due to the change.

- e. Appointed Officials and Elected Officials, and City employees are not authorized to utilize any flight reward credits (ie. Delta sky miles, United Mileage plus, American airlines AAdvantage etc.) awarded from official travel for personal use.

3. Automobile

a. City Vehicle

A city vehicle should always be used first, and shall be used for all business travel whenever possible and shall only be used for official city related business.

(1) If more than one person is going to a conference/training, the same mode of transportation should be used.

(2) Take home city vehicles may only be driven by authorized city employees or elected officials and shall not be used to transport non-city employees, except when authorized to conduct city business.

- a. Persons not employed by the city may be carried as passengers only when their transportation has a direct connection with City business.

b. Use of Personal Vehicle

In accordance with the automobile policy found in the personnel handbook (14.12) a personal vehicle can be used when the Traveler receives a vehicle allowance, or the Traveler has opted out of utilizing a City vehicle, or one is not readily available to the Traveler. Prior approval of a personal vehicle is required. If the Traveler is approved to use a personal vehicle, reimbursement for use of personal vehicle will be made at the current rate set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for actual business mileage traveled.

A traveler seeking approval of a personal vehicle must provide proof of valid car insurance before being approved to do so.

In instances where more than one employee is attending the same event, employees may choose to travel together in which case, mileage reimbursement will for one vehicle only.

a. Rental Vehicles

Rental vehicles should only be used at the final destination of the trip. Example: training/conference held out of state and rideshare to and from airport is not available. When rental vehicles are required and used, the least expensive vehicle practical will be used. The Traveler will inform the approving authority of the rental vehicle in advance to ensure the most economical and reasonable vehicle is being used.

4. Travel Advance

The only payment that will be made to employees in advance will be for IRS per diem, bridge toll, and mileage. A per diem check shall be issued no earlier than 30 days prior to travel at GSA rate with no receipts required after.

F. Lodging for Travel

* Only conferences outside of 50miles qualifies for overnight stay/lodging. **Additionally, if a conference has an evening event past 5:00pm lodging shall be considered.**

Exemption: In certain circumstance with City Manager approval, if the Traveler(s) is/are a board/voting member or part of a planning committee wherein staying overnight is advantageous to the wellbeing of the Traveler(s) because their responsibilities extend before and after the meetings.

1. Use of Sponsor Group Rate Where Available

Resident Traveler shall be reimbursed for the reasonable cost of single occupancy accommodation. The lodging expenses must not exceed the maximum group rate published by the conference or activity sponsor, if lodging at the group rate is available at the time of booking.

2. Allowable Alternatives When Sponsor Group Rate Not Available

a. Comparable Lodging at Government and Group Rate.

If lodging at the published group rate offered by the sponsor is not available at the time of booking, the Traveler shall be reimbursed for the costs of lodging comparable in location and quality. Comparable lodging

must be reserved at the government or group rate offered by the provider of lodging. To obtain a list of hotels offering government rates in various areas, refer to the State of California's travel website (<http://www.catravelmart.com/lodguideframes.htm>).

b. Internal Revenue Service Rates.

If government or group rates are not available from the provider at a given time or area, lodging rates that do not exceed the IRS per diem rate for a given area are presumed reasonable and hence, reimbursable. Current rates can be found at www.gsa.gov/perdiem.

G. Meals Expenses

1. Meal allowance will be based on IRS publication 1542, as may be amended from time to time, which includes tax and gratuity. Only meals falling within the travel time will be reimbursed.

For calculation of meal and incidental (M&EI) expenses allowance, the following percentages apply to the established General Services Administration (GSA) IRS/City rate, www.gsa.gov/, depending on the City traveled.

Breakfast 20%

Lunch 30%

Dinner 45%

Incidentals 5%

Gratuity 18%

2. The City will not reimburse for the purchase of alcoholic beverages.
3. Meals included in registration costs or hotel fees cannot be claimed for reimbursement.
4. No room service charges allowed.

H. Final Accounting

Accounting for meetings, training and travel activity should be done as soon as the event concludes but no later than thirty (30) business days after returning to the City. Receipts and documentation are required where per diem reimbursement is not permitted. Receipts shall indicate the following:

- a. The amount of the expenditure
- b. The date and place of the expenditure.
- c. The business purpose of the expenditure.

I. Audit of Reimbursement

All expenses are subject to verification and policy compliance.

J. Reports to the City Council

When requested, Traveler shall provide a brief report to Council on meetings and conferences they have attended at City expense. If multiple Travelers attended the same event, they may make a joint report. Travelers should confer with the City Attorney regarding legal issues that may arise under the Brown Act when they prepare and present joint reports.

K. No Show and Late Cancellation Fees

In situations where an approved Traveler does not attend a conference, seminar or general business meeting and costs are incurred for that event (e.g. conference fees, prepaid hotel charges, airline charges etc.) Traveler shall make every effort to ensure any all fees prepaid by the City are refunded to the City. The approved Traveler shall seek refunds for costs such as hotel cancellation and airline charges. A written explanation addressing the reason(s) Traveler was unable to attend shall be attached to the Travel Authorization and Expense report form documenting the expenses incurred and shall be subject to City Manager approval prior to any reimbursement.

L. Compliance with Laws

Traveler should be aware that some expenditures may be subject to reporting under the Political Reform Act and other laws. In addition, all agency expenditures are public records and may be subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act.

M. Policy Violations

Violations of this policy, including falsifying expense reports, may result in any or all of the following: (1) loss of reimbursement privileges; (2) a demand for restitution to the City; (3) reporting the expenses to state and federal tax authorities as income to the Traveler; (4) civil penalties of up to \$1,000.00 per day and three times the value of the resources used; and (5) criminal prosecution for misuse of public resources. Government Code, Section 53232.4.

N. Discretion

This policy does not claim to have addressed all contingencies and conditions. Any necessary and reasonable expense that may be from time to time justified due to circumstances or opportunities benefiting the City of Beaumont will be honored upon authorization by the approving authority, the Mayor for City Council and the City Manager for all city employees. Those expenses will be reimbursed to the employee with adequate documentation and justification.

Addendum A: Procedures for Completing form COB Form #15-02

The Finance Director and Administrative Services Director designated this form as the appropriate travel reporting form to report travel expenses and reimbursements. Prior to travel, the Travel Authorization and Expense Report Form must be completed, signed by the traveler and by the approving authority, and submitted to the Finance department along with the relevant information and substantiation of anticipated expenses.

Substantiation of expenses shall include:

- A. Conference or event registration form, outlining fees
- B. Estimate of mileage calculator
- C. Airline pre-confirmation print-out
- D. Anticipated Lodging Costs
- E. Meal Costs
- F. Car Rental Fees
- G. Estimate of Other/Misc expenses

On return from travel, the Travel Authorization and Expense Report Form shall be completed, signed by the traveler and approving authority, and submitted to the Finance department within 30 business days of the travelers return from travel status. The travel authorization and expense report form must be submitted with all relevant information (ie. receipts).

- Loss Documentation and Receipts

- If supporting documentation or receipts cannot be located, the traveler shall address a memorandum to the Finance Director and Administrative Services Director providing a full explanation for losing the receipt, including an explanation of receipt information such as place of business, amount, date, description of item etc.