

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES – CITY OF KNOXVILLE

9 – Travel Regulations

9.01 **POLICY**

This policy governs travel on official business for the City of Knoxville. These regulations cover all City personnel, elected officials, and other travelers using City money, except the City Council and its employees. The Mayor, the Department of Finance and Accountability, and Departmental Directors have full responsibility for the enforcement of these regulations. Travel is defined as work-related activities outside of the Knoxville area.

9.02 **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

- A. All travel on official business must be authorized by the responsible authorities prior to occurrence. Travel must be pre-approved by the Department Director, and travel by all Department Directors and members of the Mayor's staff must be pre-approved by the Mayor. Unauthorized travel costs will not be reimbursed.
- B. Prior to overnight travel, the employee must complete a Travel Request/Reimbursement Form. All proposed expenditures related to the travel must be estimated. The availability of funds must be certified by the Director of Finance and Accountability for all proposed expenditures as part of the travel authorization process prior to travel.

Additionally, the form must be approved in one of the following ways:

- All travel must be approved by the Department Director. (Department Directors must get approval from the Mayor)
 - All travel outside the continental United States must be approved by the Department Director and the Mayor.
- C. All travel that does not require an overnight stay must be pre-approved by the Department Director (or by the Mayor in the case of Department Directors and the Mayor's staff), but the Travel Request/Reimbursement Form does not need to be completed prior to travel. The form should be submitted after the travel occurs only if reimbursement for expenses is required.
 - D. To minimize costs to the traveler, advance invoicing of registration fees, air fares, and similar expenses can be made directly to the City. For travel within the United States the amount reimbursed for meals and incidental expenses shall be equal to the per diem rates as listed in the Federal Travel Regulation. The amount allocated for lodging shall not exceed the maximum per diem rates as listed in the Federal Travel Regulation. Exceptions to the maximum lodging allocation must be requested with justification to the Department of Finance and Accountability.
 - E. All costs associated with the travel should be reasonably estimated and shown on the Travel Request/Reimbursement Form. The form must be approved by the proper authority before any advance fees or other expenses are paid. A copy of

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES – CITY OF KNOXVILLE

9 – Travel Regulations

the conference program, where applicable, should be attached to the form. If the program is unavailable prior to the travel, it must be submitted when requesting reimbursement.

- F. A reconciled Travel Request/Reimbursement Form must be submitted to the Department of Finance and Accountability within five (5) days of return or at the end of the month, whichever is more practical.
- G. Receipts for lodging, vehicle rental, conference fees, and other reimbursable costs are required.
- H. Employees should make full use of discounts which are given for advance registrations or advance airline reservations. Employees should request the conference, governmental, or weekend rate, whichever is cheaper, when making lodging or car rental reservations.
- I. Travelers are responsible for accurately describing their travel requirements and for certifying the accuracy of their reimbursement request. Any person attempting to defraud the City by misuse of City travel funds will be prosecuted.
- J. Travel outside the United States will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

9.03

TRANSPORTATION

All potential costs should be considered when selecting alternative modes of transportation. For example, airline travel may be cheaper than automobile when time away from work and increased meal and lodging costs are considered. When time is important, or when the trip is so long that other modes of transportation are not cost-beneficial, air travel is encouraged. In the event an employee chooses a more expensive mode of transportation for personal reasons, the City will only reimburse up to the cost of the most cost-beneficial mode of transportation.

A. Air:

The City will pay for tourist or economy class air travel. The traveler must obtain the cheapest reasonable fare and is expected to take advantage of "Super Saver" or other discount fares.

Mileage credits for frequent flyer programs accrue to the individual traveler. However, the City will not reimburse for any additional expenses such as circuitous routing, extending stays or layovers due to scheduling a particular carrier, upgrading from economy fare to first class (to accumulate additional mileage), or additional overnight stays, etc. for employees participating in such programs.

The City will not reimburse travel by private aircraft unless authorized in advance by the Mayor.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES – CITY OF KNOXVILLE

9 – Travel Regulations

B. Rail or Bus:

The City will pay for actual cost of ticket.

C. Automobile:

Automobile transportation may be used when common carrier transportation cannot be scheduled, when it is more economical than common carrier transportation, or when expenses can be reduced when two or more City employees are traveling together.

1. Personal Car

Employees should use City vehicles when possible. Use of a private vehicle is discouraged and must be approved in advance by the Director of Finance and Accountability and/or the Mayor. The City will not pay a mileage rate, only expenses for gas (with the original receipts) will be reimbursed to the traveler.

If a privately owned automobile is used by two (2) or more authorized travelers on the same trip, only the traveler who owns or has custody of the automobile will be reimbursed.

Travelers will not be reimbursed for automotive repairs or breakdowns when using a personal vehicle.

2. City Car

Personnel traveling in City vehicles must furnish original (not photocopied) receipts for gas, oil, and any necessary automotive repairs for reimbursement.

3. Rental Cars

Use of a rental car is only allowed if the cost is less expensive than public transportation. [Groups of three (3) or four (4) traveling together can usually obtain a rental car for less than public transportation.] Rental cars must be from the standard, midsize, or economy category unless an exception is pre-approved by the Department of Finance and Accountability.

Approval of rental car is required in advance by the Departmental Director. Anyone who rents a car should use the City credit card while on official City business. (Liability coverage is not required when renting a car.)

4. Fines for traffic or parking violations will not be reimbursed by the City.

D. Taxi, Limousine and Other Transportation Fares:

When an individual travels by common carrier, reasonable fares will be allowed for necessary ground transportation. Bus or shuttle service to and from airports should be used when available and practical.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES – CITY OF KNOXVILLE

9 – Travel Regulations

For travel between lodging quarters and meetings, conferences, or meals, reasonable taxi fares will be allowed. Original receipts are required for reimbursement. Transportation costs in excess of ten dollars (\$10.00) in any single day must be explained on the travel form. Taxi or transportation to and from shopping, entertainment or other personal trips is the choice of the traveler and therefore is not reimbursable.

The City will reimburse local airport parking fees provided that such fees do not exceed normal taxi/limousine fares to and from the airport. Receipts are required.

9.04 **LODGING**

- A. The City uses the Federal Travel Regulation guidelines to determine the maximum a traveler can be reimbursed for lodging. These amounts are available by calling the Management and Budget office at 215-2081 or at <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>. This is the maximum an employee will be paid for the hotel. (Taxes on lodging are not subject to the per diem limitation.)
- B. The employee must obtain an original receipt when requesting lodging reimbursement. Photocopies are not acceptable.
- C. Unless pre-authorized by the Department of Finance and Accountability, a traveler who chooses to exceed the maximum lodging per diem is responsible for excess costs. (Room taxes will be prorated based on the allowed per diem).
- D. If two or more city employees travel together and share a room, the lodging per diem can be doubled for the room.

9.05 **MEALS AND INCIDENTALS**

- A. Receipts are not required for meals and incidentals. You will be reimbursed the daily amount based on the city being visited and the authorized length of stay. The Federal Travel Regulation identifies these amounts. This meal per diem is expected to cover meals, tips, porters, and incidental expenses. The traveler will not be reimbursed in excess of this amount. However, if registration includes full meals, the per diem will be adjusted accordingly. Department Directors also have the authority to reduce the per diem as needed. In no cases shall the City pay more than the authorized per diem rate for the destination.

Where partial day travel is involved, the per diem allotment may be reduced. The meal reimbursement may be prorated based on arrival and departure times. Breakfast may be claimed if the departure time is before 7:00 a.m. or the return time is later than 8:30 a.m. Lunch may be claimed if the departure is before 11:30 a.m. or the return is later than 1:30 p.m. Dinner will be reimbursed when the departure is before 5:30 p.m. or the arrival later than 6:30 p.m.

<u>Departure</u>	<u>Return</u>		
7:00 a.m.	8:30 a.m.	Morning	25%

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES – CITY OF KNOXVILLE

9 – Travel Regulations

11:30 a.m.	1:30 p.m.	Midday	25%
5:30 p.m.	6:30 p.m.	Evening	50%

- B. If a meal is included as part of a conference or seminar registration or is included with the air fare, then the allowance for that meal will be subtracted from the total allowance for that day. For example, if a dinner is included as part of the conference fee then the maximum meal allowance for that day may be reduced by 50%.
- C. If the travel period is less than one (1) day, and no overnight lodging is required, there is normally no reimbursement for meals and incidentals. However, the Department Director may choose to authorize reimbursement according to the above schedule.

9.06 MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES/ITEMS

- A. Registration fee will be allowed for approved conferences, conventions, seminars, meetings, etc., generally including cost of official banquets and/or luncheons. Travel must be approved by the proper authority before payment for registration is issued. Registration fees shall be submitted on the original Travel Request/Reimbursement Form.
- B. Charges for long distance telephone calls on official business shall be permitted. Personal calls are permitted upon approval of the employee's director or the Mayor. The maximum reimbursement for personal phone costs is \$2.50 per day. Receipts are required.

If the traveler uses a phone card, and does not have the bill when submitting the travel reconciliation, it may be submitted to Department of Finance and Accountability with a voucher request at a later date. If the amount is less than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00), the department director can authorize a petty cash reimbursement.

- C. Whenever travel occurs outside the United States, all expenses claimed must be converted to US dollars. The conversion rate and computation should be shown on each receipt.
- D. All signatures on the Travel Request/Reimbursement Form must be original. No stamped signatures will be allowed. Furthermore, the traveler must sign the Travel Request/Reimbursement Form before travel and when reconciling after travel. Alternate or substitute signatures are not permissible.

9.07 TRAVEL RECONCILIATION

- A. Within five (5) days of return from travel, the traveler is expected to turn in the Travel Request/Reimbursement Form with the "actual" column completed. It must be certified by the traveler and the Department Director that the amount due is true and accurate. All original lodging, travel, taxi, and parking receipts

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES – CITY OF KNOXVILLE

9 – Travel Regulations

should be attached. If the city owes the traveler money, the payroll clerk will make the adjustment in the payroll system.

- B. If the traveler does not have receipts to justify the amount that the City paid on his/her behalf, the traveler must attach a check made payable to "City of Knoxville" for the difference. If the City still owes the traveler money, the payroll clerk will make the adjustment in the payroll system.
- C. For delays greater than the five (5) days allowed, the traveler's department should contact the Management and Budget Office for an extension.

9.08 **TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES**

The Director of Finance and Accountability will address special circumstances and issues not covered in these rules on a case by case basis. Travel outside the continental United States must be coordinated through the Department of Finance and Accountability in advance.

9.09 **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Violation of the travel rules can result in disciplinary action. Travel fraud can result in criminal prosecution.