



**CITY OF PETERSBURG
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS
TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

I. PURPOSE

This Administrative Policy provides guidelines for reimbursement of authorized travel expenses incurred while traveling on City business.

II. SCOPE

This scope applies to all City employees and all elected or appointed officials. This policy is also intended for application to independent contractors of the City, where appropriate. These procedures are not intended to bypass the existing policies that are in place for employees who use City vehicles to perform job duties. The intent of these procedures is to provide documentation to certify that the spending of public funds is appropriate, to display transparency, and maintain confidence of the community.

III. POLICY

- A. It is the policy of the City of Petersburg to reimburse all legitimate and necessary expenses incurred while traveling on City business. It is the responsibility of each department to ensure that budgetary requirements are met prior to spending funds for travel. Employees traveling on City business must have a travel authorization form approved by a designated official of the department. It is the responsibility of the travelling employee to ensure that the best possible rates are obtained when traveling on City business.
- B. Travel expense accounts are open to the public and must be able to sustain the test of public review. Economy, prudence, and necessity are the primary concern when planning and paying for travel. The use of City funds to accommodate personal comfort, convenience, and taste is not permitted. Travel costs should be limited to only those expenses that are necessary for essential travel. To reduce the amount of funds requested on a Travel Advance, items such as registration fees, hotel accommodations, and airfare should be prepaid when possible.
- C. Covered travel includes trips outside of the City of Petersburg for conferences, conventions, workshops, seminars, educational and training courses, forums and other business activities related to the administration of municipal government and related to the employee's current position with the City of Petersburg.
- D. Commuting to and from work in a personal vehicle is not considered as reimbursable travel mileage.
- E. This policy is not intended to lessen the restrictions dictated by federal or state grant regulations. Therefore, when travel is grant-funded, more rigorous restrictions may apply.
- F. Only electronically generated forms will be accepted by Finance.

IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Local Travel:** Within 40 miles of the City of Petersburg
- B. **Non-Local and Out of State travel:** Any trip that requires an employee to travel overnight
- C. **Meal and Lodging Per Diem:** GSA Per Diem rates can be found here:
<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>

- D. **Base Point:** Primary office or building where the employee's job duties are routinely performed. Multiple base points are not allowed. One base point must be designated, documented and approved for those who often work in multiple locations.

V. PROCEDURES

The Finance Department is responsible for administering the City's travel policy and procedures contained herein.

A. Travel Authorization

1. The Travel Authorization or Permission to Attend form, with supporting documentation, must be approved prior to the event and any travel advance request. Examples of supporting documentation are the conference information or conference agenda.
2. Department Directors will approve all travel authorizations, as well as subsequent travel settlement forms, for employees in their respective departments.
3. Department Directors may delegate to department managers the authority to approve all travel authorizations/travel advance requests and travel settlements for employees within their divisions.
4. The City Manager will approve travel authorizations and travel advance requests and travel settlements for City Manager staff.
5. The City Manager or designee will approve travel authorizations, travel advance requests, and travel settlements for the Agency Heads/Department Directors, City Council members and Council appointees.
6. If the City Manager or designee is not reasonably available, the Director of Finance/Chief Financial Officer may approve all travel authorizations, travel advance requests, and travel settlements for council members and their appointees.
7. Travel reimbursements for the City Manager, City Council members, Council appointees and Department Heads/Directors will be reviewed by the Finance Director or designee.
8. Under no circumstances will anyone authorize his or her own travel authorization, travel advance or travel settlement form.
9. A copy of the approved travel authorization form must accompany invoices for payment (i.e., registration, hotel), travel advances and travel settlements.
10. If an employee is unable to attend a scheduled training, the employee must immediately notify the supervisor and cancel all reservations. The employee is responsible for reimbursing the City for any outstanding charges incurred as a result of the cancellation.
11. If the event becomes impossible to attend through no fault of the employee because of illness, emergency or other circumstances beyond the employee's control, the traveler shall contact the department head to be excused from repaying the outstanding charges.
12. Travel may not be authorized if other methods of communication via telephone, online meeting, online seminar, or email can accomplish the purpose of the trip less expensively.
13. A cost benefit analysis must be included for travel greater than 200 miles one way and accompanied with the Travel Authorization Form.

B. Prepaid Expenses and Travel Advances

1. **Travel advances must be approved by the Finance Manager/Budget Manager before payment is issued.**

2. Whenever possible, expenses such as registrations, airline tickets, bus tickets and train tickets should be prepaid through Accounts Payable.
3. The invoices and travel advances should be and submitted to Accounts Payable at least 15 business days prior to the event.

C. Transportation

1. Reimbursable transportation options include rental car, plane, train, bus, taxi, shuttle, ride sharing or 'for hire' services.
 - a. The maximum allowable reimbursement amount for tip on transportation is 15% of the cost of travel expense.
2. Employees must use the most effective means of transportation.
3. An agency vehicle, and City fuel for the agency vehicle, must be used whenever possible. Employees who have not been authorized to use an agency vehicle are exempt from this rule.
4. If an agency vehicle is not available, an employee may use a personal vehicle and receive reimbursement for mileage at the current GSA mileage rate and fuel respective to the miles traveled.
5. Mileage will be calculated based upon travel from 'base point' or 'home location,' whichever distance is less, to place of travel, airport, train station, or bus station.
6. Mileage should be supported with a mileage print out from websites such as Mapquest, Google Maps or Yahoo Maps.
7. Carpooling with other employees is strongly encouraged to reduce expenses.
8. Expenses for parking and tolls are reimbursable and must be supported with receipts. If receipts are unavailable (i.e., unmanned toll booths, 'honor box' parking), it must be noted on the travel settlement.
9. **Airline Tickets:**
 - a. The City will pay for, or reimburse for, coach or economy class tickets.
 - b. Employees shall not use private airplanes or charters.
 - c. Expenses for luggage will not exceed the cost of more than two pieces of luggage.
10. **Train and bus:**
 - a. The City will pay for, or reimburse for, coach or economy class tickets.
 - b. Expenses for luggage will not exceed the cost of more than two pieces of luggage.
11. **Rental Cars:**
 - a. Proper justification must be included to ensure that this method of travel is the least expensive method of travel.
 - i. Supporting documentation and comparable costs of other methods of travel must be included.
 - ii. Employees should sign and accept the liability/collision insurance agreement on the rental contract.
12. Planned personal vehicle or rental car costs cannot exceed the total costs of the trip.
 - a. All travel costs (including meals, lodging, parking, ground transportation, air transportation) should be considered.
 - b. Reimbursement will be limited to the least expensive option (i.e., flying or taking the train instead of driving).
 - c. Department heads can grant an exception and the reason must be noted in writing.

D. Lodging, Meals & Incidentals

1. The maximum reimbursement for tip, or incidentals, is dictated by federal GSA regulations.
2. **Meal Per Diem Parameters**
 - a. The meal per diem rate will be in accordance with federal GSA regulations.
 - b. Departure Times: Only 75% will be allowable if this is a travel day.
 - i. Departure from 'home base' at 8:00am and conference continues throughout the whole day, meal per diem for breakfast, lunch and dinner will be paid.
 - ii. Departure from 'home base' after 11:00am, meal per diem will be paid for lunch and dinner.
 - iii. Departure from 'home base' after 2:00pm, meal per diem will be paid for dinner only.
 - c. Return Times: Only 75% will be allowable if this is a travel day.
 - i. Return after 5:00pm, meal per diem for breakfast, lunch and dinner will be paid.
 - ii. Return after 12:00pm, meal per diem for breakfast and lunch will be paid.
 - iii. Return after 10:00am, meal per diem for breakfast will be paid.
3. If meals are included with registration or conference fee, there will be no per diem for these specific meals.
4. **Lodging Parameters:**
 - a. The lodging per diem rate will be in accordance with federal GSA regulations.
 - b. The employee should stay in the hotel hosting the conference.
 - c. If accommodations are not available, the employee should attempt to find comparable lodging with comparable rates.
 - d. If only one employee is in a hotel room, only the single occupancy rate will be reimbursed.
 - e. If two employees are sharing a hotel room, the double occupancy rate will be reimbursed. See E. Travel Settlement/Reimbursement Requirements, # 8-Splitting Expenses
5. **Non-Reimbursable Expenses (Not Allowable)**
 - a. All services or items that do not pertain to official City of Petersburg business
 - b. Round trip, regular commuting mileage
 - c. Alcoholic beverages
 - d. Rental of movies
 - e. Gym fees
 - f. Social or any recreational expenses
 - g. Laundry or dry-cleaning services
 - h. Lost or stolen articles
 - i. Non-business related phone calls
 - j. Damage to clothing or other items
 - k. Any expenses related to the negligence of the employee such as fines, towing charges, traffic tickets, parking tickets, etc.
 - l. Expenses for children, spouses or companions not employed by the City
6. All expenses for individuals not employed by the City of Petersburg or agents of the City of Petersburg will not be reimbursed and are the complete responsibility of the City employee.

- a. If an employee shares a hotel room with someone who is not a City employee, and the cost of the room is higher than the single occupancy rate, the employee must pay the difference.

E. Travel Settlement/Reimbursement Requirements

Although not all inclusive, the following information is required for expense reimbursement and must be submitted with the Travel and Expense Report:

1. Approved Travel Authorization or Permission to Attend Form
2. Travel reimbursement checklist
3. Hard-copy confirmations of expenses if online methods were used to procure services (i.e., airlines tickets)
4. Reason for business phone calls, internet connectivity, or facsimile charges
5. Original, itemized receipt noting payment for lodging
6. Original receipt for registration fees (if not paid in advance by the City)
7. Original receipts for public transportation (i.e., taxi, shuttle, metro) and parking.
See B. Transportation, item #7, for exceptions.
8. If the department p-card is used for travel expenses, the employee must include the Permission to Attend form, and applicable receipts, with the monthly p-card documentation.
9. Copy of travel advance (if applicable).
10. **Splitting Expenses:**
 - a. If one or more employee attends the same event, each employee will complete his/her own expense report.
 - b. If the employees share an allowable expense, every effort should be made to split the expense and provide supporting documentation.
 - c. If the expense wasn't split, the employee who paid should provide a receipt for the entire amount and document the employee with whom the expense was shared.
11. **Return of Unused Funds:**
 - a. If a travel advance has not been entirely used, the employee must return the unused funds and ensure that those funds are being credited to the appropriate general ledger code.
 - b. A travel settlement must be filled out, approved and be accompanied by a copy of the travel advance.
 - c. If the trip was cancelled, documentation indicating so must be included with the travel and expense report.
12. **Local Travel:** Reimbursement for mileage for local travel must be submitted monthly and no more than 30 business days after the end of the prior month.
 - a. A local travel form must be filled out, approved, and accompany mileage print outs. (noted in C. Transportation, #5)
 - b. Travel must be listed per day.

F. Payment Deadlines

1. Travelers must submit the Travel and Expense report, including the Permission to Travel Form, to the Accounts Payable Department (AP) within 30 business days after completion of the trip.

2. In the case of continuous travel, the traveler must submit the travel and expense report to Accounts Payable within 30 business days of the last day of travel for which reimbursement is requested.
3. Travel reimbursements submitted more than 30 days after the date of travel will require additional department head approvals before processed by Accounts Payable.
4. If a travel advance was granted, a copy of the approved Permission to Travel form and approved travel advance documentation must be included with the Travel and Expense Report.
5. Failure to submit complete and approved documentation in a timely manner may result in the forfeiture of the reimbursement and employee may be prohibited from attending future travel opportunities.
6. Travel reimbursement for travel held before June 30 must be submitted to Accounts Payable no later than July 15 to ensure that the payment is applied to the current fiscal year. If received after July 15, the travel reimbursement may be denied.

G. Finance Department

The Finance Department will:

1. Review all travel authorization forms, travel advances and travel reimbursement vouchers with supporting documentation to ensure they are in accordance with policy.
2. Reconcile all travel reimbursement vouchers to the submitted receipts and documentation.
3. Investigate, inquire, and immediately resolve any discrepancies.
4. Withhold payment until all required approvals and documentation have been submitted.
5. Notify the Chief Financial Officer if there are any inappropriate requests or expenses or suspicions of fraud.