

CITY COUNCIL TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

January 2006

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define and clarify authorized reimbursable general business expenses in accordance with California Government Section 53232 et al. (AB1234, October 7, 2005). It includes, but is not be limited to travel, business meals, lodging, conference expenses, professional memberships, employee functions, and other related expenditures incurred while conducting City business, and to establish procedures for authorization and reimbursement of such expenses.

II. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to the Mayor and City Council, and all Boards, Agencies, and Commissions, (hereafter, "Agencies") of the City that are subject to the Brown Act. This includes, but is not limited to the Harbor Commission, Water Commission, Civil Service Commission, and the Redevelopment Agency.

III. EXCEPTIONS

In accordance with Government Code Section 53232.2 (f), all expenses that do not fall within the adopted travel reimbursement policy must be approved by the related Agency, in a public meeting, before the expense is incurred.

IV. AUTHORITY

This policy is adopted under the legal requirements of AB 1234, signed by the Governor on October 7, 2005, and adopted accordingly by the City Council on _____, 2006.

V. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions will be used:

- Elected Officials - those individuals elected by the Citizens to office.
- Appointed Officials - members of all Long Beach Commissions, Boards, and Agencies appointed and subject to the Brown Act.
- Agency - the Mayor and City Council, and all Long Beach Boards, Agencies, and Commissions.
- Member - any elected or appointed official subject to this policy.

Members shall be expected to exercise good judgment and show proper regard for economy when incurring expenses in connection with official City business. The principle of "reasonable and necessary" should be used when deciding to expend taxpayer money.

The following sections list expense classifications for information and guidance in determining expenses which are appropriate for City business-related purposes, memberships in professional organizations, and subscriptions to business-related newspapers and journals.

VI. AUTHORIZATION AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY FOR TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES.

Specific Occurrences:

Government Code Section 53232.2 (b) requires the local Agency to specify the types of occurrences that qualify a Member to receive reimbursement of expenses relating to travel, meals, lodging, and other actual and necessary expenses. Accordingly, the Agency has adopted the following list of occurrences as approved:

- Meetings with government and business leaders.
- Conferences, training, and educational trips, including visiting other governments to discuss and observe best practices.
- Lobbying trips.
- Business-related trips where a benefit to the City can be defined.

The following transportation modes may be employed for the purpose of traveling on City business:

1. Domestic Air - All Members shall utilize coach or tourist class accommodations when traveling within the continental United States by commercial airline. Reservations, where possible, should be made at least 14 days in advance to take advantage of all available discounts. Increased fees related to late booking may be disallowed without a sound business reason. Travel can be made through a City-approved travel agent or on a personal credit card. Credit card purchases will be reimbursed only for the actual round-trip fare and only after the trip. Members may at their own expense pay to upgrade their airline accommodations.

International Air - For travel outside of the continental United States, Members may choose to travel business class with sound business justification and benefit to the City.

2. Private Automobile – Members will be reimbursed actual mileage, not to exceed coach or tourist class airfare, for the use of their private cars in travel to and from designated place(s) on City business outside the City. The reimbursement rate will be at the rate in the current Salary Resolution. For Members who receive a monthly auto allowance, the reimbursable mileage is calculated by deducting 100 miles from the total round-trip miles traveled. Members who do not receive a monthly auto allowance shall be reimbursed for total round-trip miles.

Rental car used as the primary source of transportation to and from the destination is considered a personal vehicle and will be reimbursed actual expenses not to exceed mileage allowance.

3. Garage and Parking Expenses - Expenses for necessary parking and storage of private or City vehicles may be authorized. Receipts should be provided to obtain reimbursement.
4. Vehicle Rentals, Taxi, and Transit Fare - Out of town expenses for such transportation may be authorized where reasonable and necessary to conduct City business. Receipts must be provided to obtain reimbursement. When vehicle rental is chosen over taxi or shuttle service, there should be a business reason or economic benefit to support the rental decision. If rental vehicle is subsequently denied, the related parking fees will also be denied and the employee will be reimbursed the round trip shuttle charges.

Lodging:

Expenses will be allowed for adequate lodging. Price is an issue in selecting “adequate lodging”. Prudence and good stewardship should be used when selecting a hotel. Itemized receipts for lodging must be provided to obtain reimbursement. Lodging in connection with a conference or event held in a hotel qualifies as adequate lodging for purposes of this policy. However, if lodging at the event hotel is not available, lodging is then limited to the maximum group rate published by the conference or activity sponsor, provided that lodging at the group rate is available at the time of booking. If the group rate is not available, the employee shall use comparable lodging that is consistent with the requirements of this policy.

Lodging expenses are limited to the cost of the room plus related taxes and will be reimbursed after the stay. Advance room deposits may be made directly to the hotel. However, in such instances, the advance deposit MUST appear on the Travel Reimbursement Request form as such. Personal expenses incurred at the hotel, such as movies and laundry, are not reimbursable.

Local lodging, defined as 50 miles from City Hall, will not be reimbursed without prior approval by the City Auditor. Specific events that may qualify for approval include being

a conference presenter before 9 a.m., or an early morning start following a meeting/function the night before that ends after 9 p.m.

Out of Town Meals:

Reasonable and customary expenses for meals are authorized for Members as required to conduct official City duties. Members traveling on City business shall be entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred for necessary meals not to exceed breakfast, lunch, and dinner in any one day. The maximum that will be reimbursed for meals in one day is \$64, excluding gratuity. This sum can be split among meals as desired and should be reduced accordingly for less than full business days. Members who, during the normal course of performing their duties, must provide meals for representatives of other governmental agencies or other persons doing business with the City in order to most effectively execute their responsibilities are authorized to exceed the meal allowance, but must use prudent judgment and are subject to challenge for excessive amounts. In such cases, the meal must be documented with a description of the purpose of the meal(s), including an explanation of its necessity to the City; and a list of all persons, including other Members who were in attendance, specifying their organization and/or title.

Alcohol will not be reimbursed for Members.

Tips and Gratuities:

Reasonable expenses for tips are allowable for meals (as limited above), hotel, and transportation purposes.

Reimbursement of Travel Expenses:

In accordance with Government Code Section 53232.3, Members shall submit expense reports within a reasonable time after incurring the expense, which is defined as 90 days, and the reports shall be accompanied by the receipts documenting each expense. Other documentation required includes, but is not limited to:

1. Credit card slip or meal receipt.
2. Hotel receipt.
3. Conference brochure.
4. Meeting agenda.
5. Trip or meeting purpose.
6. Other attendees at a meal or meeting.

The reason for the expenses should be clearly documented on the Expense Reimbursement Report or in the attached documents.

Public Trip / Meeting Report:

In accordance with Government Code Section 53232.3 (d), a Member requesting reimbursement shall provide a brief report on meetings attended at the expense of the local Agency at the next regular meeting of the Agency. It is anticipated that routine meetings may be addressed in writing on the consent calendar of the agenda.

Registration Fees:

Convention or meeting registration fees qualify for reimbursement. The City will pre-pay conference registrations prior to the date of the event. In cases where early registration is not possible, a receipt or registration form illustrating the fee amount must be provided with the reimbursement request. In all cases, a brochure or registration document must accompany the payment voucher or petty cash voucher.

Telephone, Telegraph, and Fax:

Telephone, telegraph, and fax expenses may be incurred only for the conduct of City business. One daily telephone call to an employee's family for a reasonable duration will be reimbursed by the City. Members are encouraged to use cell phones when available.

General Business Meals:

Members who, during the normal course of performing their duties, must provide meals for representatives of other governmental agencies or other persons doing business with the City in order to most effectively execute their responsibilities are authorized to exceed the meal allowance, but must use prudent judgment and are subject to challenge for excessive amounts. In all cases the attendees and a reason for the meal must be documented.

No Shows and Late Cancellation:

This section addresses situations where a Member fails to attend an event after incurring expenses. Such expenses include conference fees, prepaid hotel charges, and airline charges.

If a Member is unable to attend a planned trip, including a conference or general business meeting, it is the Member's responsibility to ensure any prepaid fees are refunded to the City. For any fees not fully refunded, the Member shall attach a written explanation to the Travel Reimbursement Request form addressing the reason(s) they were unable to attend.

Miscellaneous:

All items of expense otherwise unclassified shall be considered in this category. Examples of such expenses which may be authorized are public stenographer fees, duplicating expenses, and the cost of publications of value to the City. Other expenses as necessary when traveling on City business may be allowed and should be included within this classification when requesting reimbursement.

It is the policy of the City that no employee shall sustain personal monetary loss as a result of duties performed in the service of the City. However, all expenditures and requests for reimbursement shall logically relate to the conduct of City business and shall be "necessary" to accomplish the purposes of such business and shall be "reasonable" in amount.

Ethics Training:

Each Member shall receive at least two hours of training in general ethics principles and ethics laws relevant to his or her public service every two years, with the initial training occurring before January 1, 2007. The form of such training shall meet the requirements of California Government Code Section 53234 et al.