

Business Travel, Seminars & Conferences Policy



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Human Resources	December 15, 2020	180-2020	1	8
Subsection	Repeals By-Law Number		Policy Number	
Employee Conduct	46-2018		HR-2-7-2	

Purpose

This policy governs the reimbursement of travel, hospitality and other business expenses incurred during the conduct of approved City of Kenora business. It is the City of Kenora's policy to reimburse employees for ordinary, necessary and reasonable expenses when directly related to the transaction of approved City of Kenora business.

Directly related expenses are those in which there is the expectation of deriving some current or future benefit for the City of Kenora, the employee is actively engaged in a business meeting or activity necessary to the performance of the employee's job duties, or, in the case of hospitality, there is a clear business purpose.

Reimbursement for expenses that are not in compliance with this Policy requires the prior written approval of the Senior Leadership Member.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the City of Kenora.

Where any provision of this policy conflicts with the terms of the collective agreement, the collective agreement will prevail.

This policy also applies to all facets of performing their duties and responsibilities for the City, including but not limited to duties which are performed;

- In the workplace;
- During work-related travel;
- At restaurants, hotels or meeting facilities that are being used for business purposes;
- In company owned or leased facilities;
- During telephone, email or other communications; and,
- At any company-organized social event.

Authorizations and Regulations

Requests for reimbursement of business expenses must be approved and submitted using the following documentation and regulations.

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Section 1–Business Travel for Conferences, Seminars, Special Events

This section provides the guidelines for travel for attendance at Conferences, Seminars and Special Events. A Travel Expenses Form must be completed and authorized.

1. Attendance Authorization

Employee travel to attend conferences, seminars or other business travel requires the following approvals:

- a) Travel within Ontario and Manitoba must be approved by the immediate supervisor and the Senior Leadership Member.
- b) Travel outside of Ontario and Manitoba but within Canada must be approved by the Senior Leadership Member or above.
- c) Travel outside of Canada must be approved by the Senior Leadership Team Member and the CAO and or designate. The CAO travel outside of Canada must be approved by the Mayor.

Note: Page 1 of the *Travel Request/Evaluation Form* must be completed and approved for all Employee travel to attend conferences, seminars or other business travel that requires an overnight stay. Approval is required prior to incurring costs.

The immediate Supervisor and or Senior Leadership Member is responsible to communicate what is authorize acceptable costs prior to travel. Supervisor is responsible to ensure the expenditures are within approved budgets.

2. Guidelines

- a) A Travel Expense Form must be submitted for approval, as outlined in Section 1, prior to any travel expenses being incurred or committed to. Payment for travel expenses incurred or committed to prior to obtaining documented approval will be the sole financial responsibility of the employee if the travel request is denied.

Note: A Travel Request/Evaluation form must also be completed for all travel that requires an overnight stay.

- b) Supporting documentation must be attached to the Travel Expense Form and must clearly identify the event attended, date of the event and purpose of the event. A copy of the conference, seminar or event agenda is required providing information on cost, location, dates and meals. Printed estimates for airfare, airport transportation and other costs must be provided.

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- c) An approved Travel Expense Form, with the supporting documentation, must be submitted to Accounts Payable with any request for payment of a travel advance, registration fee or other travel expenses in advance of the trip.
- d) Travel advances will not be made for less than \$100. If the estimated cost of out of pocket expenses is less than \$100, the employee will be reimbursed upon submission of the final Travel Expense Form. Requests for cash advances are not mandatory and discretion should be used when determining the requirement for each trip.
- e) Application for travel advances will be signed by the claimant indicating authority for the City to recover through the Payroll system any advances unaccounted for.
- f) All fees paid prior to the conference, referred to as prepaid expenses, must be reflected on the Travel Expense Form that is submitted for reimbursement. All costs related to the travel must be included on the form so the approver is aware of the final costs for the employee's attendance.
- g) In exceptional circumstances, the CAO may approve staff expenses over or outside the limits of this policy.

3. Transportation

The most economical and efficient mode of transportation must be used as follows:

- a) Economy airfare including all applicable taxes, surcharges and cancellation insurance:
 - The cost of basic seat selection will be reimbursed.
 - Expenses incurred to change travel plans are allowable provided the changes are a result of City Business. Only charges relating to the employee are reimbursable.
Reasonable exceptions may be made based on approval by Human Resources
 - Luggage cost charged by airlines is reimbursable.
 - The cost of passports **will not be** reimbursed.
- b) Train/bus fare when applicable.
- c) Transfer fees to and from transportation terminals at points of departure and arrival must be the most economically feasible method available as circumstances warrant. Parking expenses must be included in this cost decision. Parking shall be only reimbursed for standard parking rates.

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- d) Car rental, including fuel purchases, instead of public transportation may be claimed providing it is more economical or if required under certain circumstances. A reputable rental company must be used to ensure adequate insurance coverage is secured. A national rental chain is considered to be a reputable company as opposed to a local operation. First option should always be taking a corporate vehicle.
- e) Where an individual uses his/her own car for business travel to attend Conferences, Seminars or Special Events, mileage from home to the event or from their regular place of work to the event, whichever is less may be claimed. Employees are responsible for ensuring that they have adequate insurance coverage. The current applicable mileage rate for the use of personal automobiles on City business will be reimbursed. This rate is determined by the current CRA recommended rate. While operating a personal automobile on City business, the individual is responsible for all vehicular costs, for example, repairs, fines, fuel insurance, deductibles, etc. Use of a City vehicle shall be the first option when traveling.
- f) Unless exceptional circumstances apply (see note below), the charges for the use of a personal automobile shall not exceed the equivalent cost of economy airfare, plus airport parking and transfers.
- g) Handling charges for bulky items such as exhibits are permissible provided they are indicated separately on the advance form and pre-approved. Receipts should be obtained where at all possible; however, expenses without receipts will be reimbursed if they were pre-approved and are reasonable (in the opinion of the Senior Leadership Member) and equal to or less than the pre-approved amount.
- h) Use of personal automobile may be appropriate when traveling with bulky displays or traveling in groups. Written justification (supported cost comparison) for use of personal automobile when air or train travel appears to be the most appropriate means of transportation must be obtained at the time of initial authorization to attend.
- i) Shared transportation is encouraged when appropriate.
- j) All time spent traveling to and from meetings and training request by the Employer shall be paid for at the employee's regular straight time rate of pay. Traveling time shall be considered to include traveling from point A to point B, any time including overnight delays accrued as a result of delayed flights are not compensated. At the request to of the employer, travel arrangements will be scheduled in the most effective manner. If require to use own vehicle reimbursement will be in accordance with this policy.

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- k) The current mileage allowance rate payable to employees who use their vehicle is \$.59 per km.

4. Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation expenses where overnight accommodation is required are allowable as follows:

- a) The accommodation chosen must be the most economical and advantageous to the conduct of City business.
- b) Receipts are required in support of all such expenses and must show the place, date and number of days or part days and the rate per day for single occupancy.
- c) Internet charges for business use on hotel bills will be reimbursed. Other incidental expenses detailed on the hotel bill such as movies or meals **will not be** reimbursed because they are covered by the per diem reimbursement.

5. Meal Allowance/Telephone Allowance

A meal allowance represents the maximum that will be paid without receipts. The meal allowance covers the cost of meals and gratuities. Personal telephone charges for calls to family at home which is not to exceed one per day. If an employee has an issued City cellular phone they are to use that phone was calling home and not charge to hotels.

- a) Where some meals are provided by the event registration, these **will** be deducted from the applicable meal allowance as follows:

(CDN) \$15 breakfast, \$20 lunch, \$30 dinner

Breakfast may only be claimed if departure is before 8:00 am and dinner may not be claimed on the day of return unless return is after 5:00 pm.

Itemized receipts, not debit or visa receipts, should show the name of the other persons for whom a meal was purchased.

- b) Staff traveling under this policy may be reimbursed for meals upon submission of receipts even if the meal is supplied by the conference. In this circumstance, there must be a valid reason for the person not being able to attend the meal as supplied by the conference.
- c) When overnight accommodation is **not** required, reasonable meal expenses, that are not included with registrations, will be reimbursed based upon submitted receipts.

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- d) When it is necessary to entertain clients while traveling, detailed receipts must be submitted indicating what was purchased, who was entertained and the reason. The applicable meal allowance will be reduced by the employee's meal claimed as part of this hospitality receipt.
- e) While this policy addresses the maximum that the City will pay for travel, the individual may choose to upgrade at his/her own expense. If paid directly by the City, reimbursement must be received at time of claim submission.

Examples include additional accommodation expenses for an accompanying spouse or extended stays.

6. Extended Stays

- a) Sometimes employees pay for extended stays themselves. This is allowable as long as it can be proved ahead of time that there is no cost to the City for this extended stay, and the employee uses their vacation, overtime bank or lieu day entitlement time.
- b) If a stay has been extended due to uncontrollable circumstances, such as delayed/cancelled flights due to bad weather, the employee will be reimbursed for reasonable meal and hotel costs. Receipts are required.

7. Items Not Allowable

Claims for reimbursement will **not** be allowed for:

- a) Personal Effects and Services – Claims for loss of personal effects, for medical and hospital treatment, for purchase of trunks, hand luggage, clothing and other personal equipment, or for personal services such as, shoe shines, valet services and other personal expenses.
- b) Items not substantiated by receipts, except for meal allowance, will not be reimbursed.
- c) Gratuities are covered by the meal allowance. They are to be excluded from reimbursement unless justifiable circumstances.
- d) Long distance phone calls are to be excluded from reimbursement as appropriate **unless** these calls were made for City business and in consideration of being out-of-town on City business, one call per day to family at home will be allowed. These must be properly identified on the hotel and/or cell bill.

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8. Reporting

- a) All expense claims/reimbursements must be submitted to the Payables in the Finance Department within 30 working days of the event. Claims without travel advances are subject to the same deadlines. Receipts for the refund of unused advanced funds must be attached to the final Travel Expense form that is submitted to Accounts Payable.
- b) If an employee's expense claim "actual" is overdue under this policy, the individual will be notified in writing with a copy to the Senior Leadership Member. Additional expense claims/advance requests including mileage claims and all other reimbursements will not be processed until the past due and has been received.
- c) Expenses unsubstantiated by proper receipts are not allowable. Travel expenses which have been submitted without receipts will automatically be processed in Accounts Payable by deducting the unsubstantiated amount. If this action causes the advance to exceed the adjusted claim, the employee will be notified and required to pay the difference. Should the payment not be made within a reasonable time period, the city reserves the right to deduct the amount owing to the City from the employee's pay.
- d) Completed Travel Request/Evaluation forms are required for all travel that requires an overnight stay.
 1. Page 1 must be completed and approved for all conferences, seminars or trips that required overnight accommodation prior to registration/booking.
 2. Page 2 must be completed upon employees return.
 3. Completed forms are retained within the Finance Department and will be accessible for future review if required.

Business Meeting/Entertainment

- (a) Entertainment expenses will only be allowed for the CAO and Senior Leadership Team or designate when deemed to be in the best interest of the City.
- (b) Entertainment charges incurred for legitimate purposes will be permitted. The expense must be supported by an itemized receipt. The reimbursement documentation shall indicate the names, position, and organization of individuals being entertained as well as the purpose of the entertainment.

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- (c) Personal expenditures for hospitality will be considered entertainment in nature when incurred:
- (i) upon completion of the regular business activity; and
 - (ii) for meals, beverages, refreshments, receptions, shows and/or performances and other related costs.
 - (iii) Any claim for entertainment expenses up to and including \$200.00 must be approved by the department Senior Leadership Member.
 - (iv) any claim for entertainment expenses in excess of \$200.00 must be approved by the CAO.
- (b) Expense accounts shall be submitted to the appropriate authority within ten (10) days of the last expense incurred.

Section 2 - Mileage and Other Expenses

This section provides guidelines for reimbursement of expenses incurred while an employee is attending meetings or performing activities necessary to the performance of the employee's job duties. Some examples are, site inspections and training. A Mileage and Other Expenses form must be completed and authorized.

I have read and understand this policy _____

Signature of employee

Date: _____