

City of White Rock

Financial Services

Staff Administrative Directive # 209

BUSINESS TRAVEL & EXPENSES

Revised: August 2023

Effective: September 1, 2023

STAFF EXPENSES

This staff policy directive replaces Human Resources Staff Policy Directive #13 – Staff Expenses

POLICY

Refer to Finance Policy # 325 – Business & Travel Expense which will enhance the reader's interpretation of this Administrative Directive.

The purpose of this policy and its related Staff Administrative Directive (# 209) is to establish a framework and guidelines for the purchase and reimbursement of approved business and travel expenses incurred on behalf of the City of White Rock (the "City") while on authorized City business. The policy and related Administrative Staff Directive will:

- a. define approved reasonable business and travel expenses and establish responsibility for the approval of business and travel expense reimbursements.*

DEFINITIONS

1. **External client:** A guest, visitor, client, prospective employee, benefactor or stakeholder (spouses/partners/family members of City employees and/or Council members are not considered external clients).
2. **Flexible travel arrangement:** Arranging for travel such that the individual combines personal travel with business travel. This must be approved by the employee's direct Supervisor and is only permitted as long as no additional expenses are incurred by the City.
3. **Hospitality (event):** The provision of food and beverages for work related social or recreational activities, events and functions.
4. **One-over-one approval requirement:** Individuals claiming a payment to themselves or for their own benefit are expected to obtain a signature from their direct supervisor as well as an individual who has signing authority on the department paying for the expenditure, who may be the same individual.

5. **Reasonable expense:** An expense that, in its amount and nature, demonstrates prudence, good judgement, and due diligence; reflects moderation and defensibility to an impartial observer. The City will accept and reimburse out-of-pocket, City business travel and related expenses that are legitimate, reasonable, appropriate for the business activity undertaken, and are in accordance with the policy and this administrative directive. The claimant may not request reimbursement on behalf of another individual.
6. **Travel Status:** Travel by an employee, outside the [Metro Vancouver Regional District](#), on City business where authorization for such travel has been requested in advance and has received one-over-one approval.
7. **PCard:** A City purchase card/corporate credit card.
8. [Metro Vancouver Regional District](#): Municipalities included in the Metro Vancouver Regional District as per Metro Vancouver.

PROCEDURE

1. Prior to Travel Procedures

a. Pre-Approval

- i. The employee submits a written request to obtain one-over-one pre-approval (can be via email) at the earliest available opportunity prior to the expected travel date. The employee must retain a copy of this approval and attach it to their expense report.
- ii. Employees and Council members can contact the Manager, Revenue Services, or designate, to request a travel advance. Advances will only be based on per diem meal rates and anticipated local travel costs (i.e., taxis, ride sharing) for the number of days the employee will be on travel status. The minimum travel advance is \$200. This travel advance will be deducted from the employee's/Council member's expense report reimbursement.

b. Flexible Travel Arrangements

- i. If flexible travel arrangements are approved by a direct Supervisor, the employee must retain evidence and calculations of savings and/or incremental costs for submission for payment of expenses.

The City will only pay the lesser of:

- a. The actual travel expenses; or
- b. An estimate of the minimum acceptable expenses that would have been incurred if the flexible travel arrangements were not made.

c. Travel Insurance

The City does not provide, or reimburse for, travel insurance for lost or damaged personal property.

d. Flight Cancellation Insurance

Flight cancellation insurance enables travelers to be reimbursed for the cost of cancelled airline flights when the cancellation was due to events that are not under the control of the traveler (i.e., medical reasons). The cost of flight cancellation insurance is a reimbursable expenditure. In the event that such insurance is used (e.g., the travel cancels their flight for medical reasons) that amount reimbursed by the insurance provider is to be remitted to the City.

e. Tickets Purchased using Loyalty Program Points or Personal Airline Vouchers/Credits

Travelers shall not use their personal points from loyalty programs or personal airline vouchers/credits for City related travel. Should they choose to do so, they shall not claim reimbursement for the 'equivalent' cost of the airline ticket. The City will only reimburse the cost of taxes and surcharges actually paid by the traveler.

f. Visas and Travel Papers

Travelers are eligible for reimbursement for expenses related to securing travel visas and travel papers for City related travel.

2. Original Receipts

- a. Original itemized receipts must be submitted for all PCard charges and expense claim charges, with the exception of the per diems listed in Appendix A, Table A1 below. In circumstances where the original itemized receipt is missing or lost, a Missing Receipt Declaration form must be completed and signed by the person claiming the expense, as well as their one-over-one supervisor.
- b. Employees who fail to submit original itemized receipts more than three times in a 12-month period may have their travel and/or expense charging privileges revoked.

3. Travel Expenses

a. Obtaining rental vehicle insurance

- i. Vehicles must be rented from a commercial car rental agency or a recognized commercial peer-to-peer car sharing service where insurance is included.
- ii. For insurance the value of the vehicle must be less than \$75,000 CAD.
- iii. Employees and Council members shall book economy class vehicles, unless four or more persons are travelling together, or there is a need to transport a significant amount of work-required equipment or materials, or the traveler is driving in northern British Columbia in winter conditions (October to March). The rental of luxury or sports cars will not be reimbursed.
- iv. Employees and Council members shall ensure that the names of all drivers are provided to the rental agency (Council members or employees of the City only) and are covered by any available insurance.
- v. When renting a vehicle in Canada using your City PCard:
 - a. Third party liability insurance: Purchase third party liability insurance as this is not covered by the City PCard insurance.

- d. Train
- e. Ferry
- f. Rental Car
- g. Uber/Lyft or another recognized commercial ride hailing service
- h. Use of personal vehicle, when the reimbursement for such does not exceed the cost of full economy airfare to the same destination.

- ii. Receipts are required for all transportation charges, with the exception of the per km rate applicable to the use of personal vehicles.

e. Other Travel-related Procedures

- i. To ensure appropriate telecommunication expenses, employees who travel internationally shall contact relevant IT staff prior to travelling in order to determine the most cost-effective means of internet connectivity.
- ii. Employees shall use the lowest cost alternatives available such as SKYPE, e-mails and free wireless hot spots where available.

f. Travel Expenses that are not reimbursable include, but are not limited to:

- i. Interest charges on outstanding charge card balances whether or not such interest is calculated on reimbursable expenses
- ii. Loss or damage to personal items
- iii. Personal expenses for kennel fees, movies and mini-bar charges
- iv. Expenses attributed to family members unless pre-authorized as City business
- v. Expenses for failure to cancel transportation or hotel reservations
- vi. Passport expenses
- vii. Excess personal baggage (2nd checked bag)

4. Business Expenses

a. Mileage

- i. Employees and Council members shall not use their City PCard to purchase fuel for their personal vehicle, regardless of whether their personal vehicle is being used for work purposes.
- ii. When a personal vehicle is used for travel inside the [Metro Vancouver Regional District](#) on City business, Appendix A Table A2 outlines eligible mileage expenses as well as additional parameters of claiming mileage for reimbursement. Employees are required to provide support for any mileage claim (i.e., distances listed through Google Maps) unless the mileage being claimed is within the City of White Rock.
- iii. Where the use of a personal vehicle for City business outside the [Metro Vancouver Regional District](#) is selected by personal preference, employees can claim the mileage driven by the most direct route which should not exceed full economy airfare. Mileage is calculated by applying the mileage (kilometer) rate (Appendix A, Table A2) to the driving distance travelled.
- iv. Employees are not eligible for mileage reimbursement to and from their place of work, unless on business outside of their regular workplace and the distance exceeds the distance of their normal commute.

- v. To verify that the correct insurance rate class has been applied on personal vehicles used for City business, employees must consult with an ICBC representative. In the event that an ICBC representative deems it necessary for an employee to obtain business class vehicle insurance due to their City related work requirements, the City will reimburse the employee for the difference between the cost of such insurance and that which would have been paid without the business class insurance by submitting such evidence with their expense report.
- vi. Parking and traffic fines are not reimbursable.

b. Hospitality

- i. Hospitality charges incurred in support of the City's business will be paid by the City provided the expenses have been pre-approved and are authorized, reasonable and appropriately documented. Employees and Council members will not be reimbursed for tips/gratuities in excess of 15%.
 - a. Preapproval is required for all hospitality expenses by the administrator or department head responsible (one-over-one approval is required) by using the Hospitality and Entertainment Pre-Approval form.
 - b. Purchases of alcohol will not be reimbursed by the City.

c. Honoraria

- i. Preapproval is required for any payment for honoraria and must be obtained using the Honoraria Approval form.

5. Expense Reimbursement

- a. A completed and approved Expense Report is required for reimbursement of all expenses. Where required, original receipts must be attached to the expense report, including itemized receipts for hospitality expenses.
- b. Any expense submitted without a receipt is not reimbursable by the City, with the exception of meal per diems, mileage, and private accommodation or a duly approved Missing Receipt form.
- c. Approval of the Expense Report form is completed by the one-over-one approver. Any employee claiming reimbursement to themselves or for their own benefit must obtain a signature from their direct supervisor and a signing authority on the department paying for the expenditure, who may be the same individual. The CAO's expenses are approved by the Director, Financial Services and Chief Financial Officer or designate. Council member expenses are approved by the CAO or designate.
- d. For those claiming reimbursement for expenses outside of Metro Vancouver, that traveler is responsible for retaining a copy of the travel approval. A copy of the approval is then attached to the expense report, which is then sent to Financial Services for processing.
- e. Expense Reports submitted more than one year after the travel or expense occurred may not be reimbursed with the approval of the Director, Financial Services and Chief Financial

Officer, or designate. All expense reports must be submitted for payments in the same financial year as the expense was incurred.

6. General

a. WorkSafe BC Insurance Coverage

- i. WorkSafe BC coverage may be applicable and available to employees and Council members who are injured while performing City business away from their normal place of work. Inquiries about this coverage should be directed to Human Resources.

b. Foreign Exchange Rates

- i. For expenses that were incurred in a currency other than Canadian dollars, one of the two following methods will be used to calculate foreign exchange:
 - a. Where supporting documentation (i.e., a credit card statement) has been provided that clearly shows the foreign exchange rate used and the Canadian dollar equivalent charged, this rate will be used for reimbursement purposes. Please note that personal declarations of the foreign exchange rate will not be accepted.
 - b. When supporting documentation, such as a credit card statement, has not been provided, Accounts Payable will use the Bank of Canada's ending day exchange rate for the date on which the transaction occurred.

c. Technology and Software Purchases

- i. All technology and software purchases, with the exception of those considered 'office supplies', must be purchased through the City's Information Technology (IT) department. IT technology considered as 'office supplies' include keyboards, mice, webcams, speakers and headsets.
- ii. Employees will not be reimbursed for technology or software purchases through the expense report submission process unless they are an employee of the IT department and the purchase has been pre-approved by the Chief Information Officer, or the employee has been directed by IT to purchase the item on their own (proof of such direction from IT is required in order for reimbursement to occur).
- iii. A City PCard may not be used to purchase technology or software. Failure to follow these procedures may result in the employee's PCard being suspended or canceled.

d. Capital Expenses

- i. Employees will not be reimbursed for capital asset purchases, such as: computers, furniture and equipment, through the expense report submission process. All capital purchases must follow the Procurement of Goods & Services policy and its related Staff Administrative Directive.
- ii. A City PCard may not be used to purchase capital assets. Failure to follow these procedures may result in the employee's PCard being suspended or canceled.

e. Gifts, Favours and Other Complimentary Items

Requesting, accepting, either directly or indirectly

- i. Gifts
- ii. Favours
- iii. Services
- iv. Other complimentary items including prizes awarded at work-related conferences and seminars

from any individual or organization that would not have been offered if not for the staff member's/Council member's position with the City, or where receiving the complimentary items could be reasonably seen as compromising the staff member's/Council member's objectivity, other than:

- a. The normal exchange of hospitality between persons doing business together (i.e. lunch with community partner)
- b. Token exchanges as part of protocol
- c. The normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public functions
- d. The normal exchange of gifts or hospitality between friends
- e. The staff/Council member has used their own (personal) funds to purchase 50/50 tickets or to participate in a silent auction at a work-related event or seminar

should not be accepted. Any item accepted with a value greater than \$100 must be reported to the staff member's director, or CAO in the case of directors and Council members, and will become property of the City. Gifts of cash, negotiable instruments, securities, personal loans, airline tickets, use of a vacation property, or multiple gifts from the same source over a short period of time may not be accepted.

RELATED CITY POLICIES AND STAFF ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVES

- Policy # 301 – Procurement of Goods & Services
- Staff Administrative Directive # 107 – Procurement of Goods & Services
- Staff Administrative Directive # 205 – Purchase Cards

Appendix A

Business Expenses (including tips and taxes) while on Travel Status

Meals received without charge or paid for from public funds should not be claimed (e.g., when an outside party covers the costs, or the meal is included as part of a conference fee).

The Incidental allowance listed in the table below is meant to provide for gratuities and other minor fees or costs that are attributed to a period of work-related travel, but for which no other reimbursement or allowance is provided. Examples of incidental expenses that would be covered by this allowance include baggage handler tips, hotel staff gratuities (i.e., room cleaning service), water, coffee, light snacks, bus/tram tickets, phone calls, plant watering, and home security checks. **Travelers are only eligible to claim the incidental per diem when they are spending the night outside of the [Metro Vancouver Regional District](#) on City business.**

Table A1: Per Diems

Maximum Rates (including taxes & gratuities)	Travel within Canada CAD \$	Travel within USA USD \$
Breakfast	\$25.75	\$25.75
Lunch	\$25.75	\$25.75
Dinner	\$36.00	\$36.00
Incidental allowance	\$15.00	\$15.00
Total for Day	\$102.50	\$102.50

Table A2: Other Business Expenses

Reimbursement	Rates
Private Accommodation	<p style="text-align: center;">\$50.00/night</p> <p>This amount is intended to allow the employee to afford a gesture of appreciation for hosts who have provided accommodation at no cost.</p>
Gratuities on Meals (Business meeting/ Hospitality expense)	15% maximum
Personal Vehicle Usage	<p style="text-align: center;">\$0.68/kilometer</p> <p>Receipts not required but documentation supporting distanced traveled (i.e. Google Maps) is required for trips outside of the City of White Rock.</p> <p>Insurance on personal vehicles is included in the mileage (per kilometer) reimbursement rate. Additional cost of insurance coverage beyond to and from work is reimbursable at the department's expense only where the frequency of use necessitates this</p>

	coverage.
Gifts for City Employees	<p>\$75.00 maximum</p> <p>Gifts for employees are reimbursable only for employee recognition such as retirements, achievements, and similar purposes. All other employee gifts are not reimbursable.</p> <p>Exceptions: Gifts of alcohol or gift cards of a direct supplier of alcohol are not reimbursable.</p>
Honoraria	<p>\$750.00 maximum</p> <p>Up to \$2,500.00 with CAO approval</p>