

WHATCOM COUNTY TRAUMA CARE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES COUNCIL (COUNCIL) TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Applies to all persons requesting travel reimbursements. These individuals will be referred to as “travelers” throughout the remainder of this policy. Travelers are expected to exercise prudent judgment when incurring travel expenses on official Council business. All travel costs shall be reasonable and necessary.

1. The Council Reimburses Travelers for Expenses Incurred While Conducting Official Business.

- The Council does not reimburse travelers when funding is available from another source (e.g. sponsors).

2. Definitions:

Annual Council Conference – Conference sponsored annually by the Council and held in Whatcom County

Commercial Lodging – Lodging in an establishment that provides overnight sleeping accommodations and where a bona fide landlord/tenant relationship exists (ie. hotel, motel).

GSA Rates – available on the web at <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>

In-County Travel – all travel from a point of origin within Whatcom County to a point of destination also within the County.

Non-commercial Lodging – Lodging in private homes, public or private parks, camps or similar arrangements for overnight stay.

Official Station – the location to which a traveler is assigned

Out-of-County Travel - All travel between a point of origin in Whatcom County to a point of destination outside the County.

Overnight Travel – Travel requiring the traveler to remain overnight.

Residence – the current dwelling place of the traveler

Travel Status – The period of time from departure to return. Time of departure and return mean the time a traveler starts from and returns to his official station or residence, as applicable, exclusive of time added to a trip for personal reasons.

3. The Council Reimburses Overnight Travel.

- a. Overnight travel requires advance written approval.

- Travelers or Annual Council Conference coordinators submit written requests to the Council President or Executive Board Designee . Submit requests at least two weeks before travel dates.

b. Lodging reimbursements

- The Council reimburses commercial lodging at GSA rates for the area traveled to. For GSA rates, the Council requires receipts proving the traveler paid for commercial lodging.
- The Council pays non-commercial lodging at the rate of \$30 per day and requires NO supporting documentation.

c. Transportation costs reimbursements

- The Council reimburses:
 - Airfare at actual cost not to exceed reasonable coach-class internet rates for daytime flights.
 - Rental cars at actual cost not to exceed mid-size auto rates.
 - Taxi fares at cost plus reasonable tips.
 - Privately-owned vehicles at the current IRS mileage rate. Mileage will be paid to only one of two or more travelers using the same vehicle.
 - Out-of-state travel at the lesser of airfare rate (defined above) or IRS mileage rates if the traveler chooses to travel by private vehicle or some other mode of transportation other than air.

d. Meal reimbursements

- The Council reimburses meals at area-specific GSA meal per diem rates, based on destination, and requires NO receipts. Seattle GSA rates will apply for travel to Canada. Tips are included in GSA rates.
- Each meal per diem is for a 24-hour period beginning at the time the traveler goes on travel status.
- If the cost of a meal is included in a conference registration fee, the traveler will deduct the corresponding amount from the per diem amount:
 - Breakfast 20%
 - Lunch 30%
 - Dinner 50%
- The Council reimburses the actual costs of banquets or dinner/luncheon meetings when attending as an official representative of the Council. Receipts must be obtained.

e. Other expense reimbursements

- The Council reimburses other reasonable expenses including:
 - Parking fees
 - Ferry tolls
 - Bus/transit costs
 - Registration fees required in connection with attendance at conventions, conferences, training seminars and official meetings.

- Incidental supplies and materials needed at training seminars or meetings while on travel status.

4. The Council Reimburses Non-Overnight Travel

- a. Non-overnight travel requires verbal approval.
 - Travelers request verbal approval of any Council Executive Board Member before travel status begins.
- b. Transportation reimbursements
 - The Council reimburses privately-owned vehicles at the current IRS mileage rate. Mileage will be paid to only one of two or more travelers using the same vehicle.
 - The Council reimburses travelers at the lesser of the actual miles from their residence or official station to their destination and return.
- c. Meal reimbursements
 - The County reimburses meals for out-of-county travel, with NO receipt required, as follows:
 - Breakfast at 20% of GSA meal per diem rates if the traveler is required to begin travel status prior to 6 AM
 - Lunch at 30% of GSA meal per diem rates if the traveler is required to be on travel status during the period of 11 AM – 2 PM.
 - Dinner at 50% of GSA meal per diem rates if the traveler has not returned from travel status by 6 P.M.
 - Tips are included in GSA rates.
 - The Council reimburses the actual cost of an in-county non-overnight travel meal only when the individual is attending a conference or meeting and is required to pay for a meal. The conference or meeting must be for official Council business.

5. The Council Does Not Reimburse the Following Expenses:

- Laundry, valet service, entertainment expenses, radio and television rental, and other items of similar nature
- Alcoholic beverages
- Transportation costs to and from place of entertainment and other similar facilities
- Transportation costs that would be considered commuting expenses by the IRS
- Costs of personal trip insurance and medical services
- Personal telephone calls except for one five-minute call per day while on overnight travel
- Tips other than taxi and luggage service
- Expenses unrelated to travel.
- Personal travel expenses that may be associated with business travel.

6. The Council Requires Valid Documentation of Expenses Claimed

Travelers must provide valid receipts and other supporting documentation to substantiate expenses claimed, except for:

- Meals reimbursed at per diem rates
- Parking meter fees
- Transit fares
- Necessary pay-phone calls
- Expenses under \$5

7. Travelers Submit Expense Claims

Travelers submit and certify itemized expense reimbursement claims. The traveler must show the inclusive dates of each trip for which reimbursements are claimed. The time of departure and time of return must also be shown. Travelers provide odometer/tripmeter readings for reimbursement of private vehicle mileage. Travel claims must be submitted within 30 days of the return travel date.

8. Travelers May Submit Expense Claims of Other Travelers

Generally, Council travelers will submit expense claims for reimbursement of their own expenses. Occasionally, it may be more efficient for one traveler to pay the expenses of another. For example, two travelers share a hotel room at a convention and one of them pays the bill. In these situations, the traveler claiming the reimbursement must prepare a detailed account that includes:

- Names of the other travelers and how they are connected with the Council
- Who provided the lodging, meals or other services in question, dates, and times
- A detailed breakdown of amounts
- A statement that sufficiently explains what Council business was being carried out when the expenses were incurred.

9. The Council Authorizes Use of Advances to Travelers

The Council:

- Pays advances no more than two weeks prior to travel unless required for early registration or air fare.
- Limits advances to \$1,000 unless pre-approved by the Council President or Executive Board Designee.
- Requires the traveler to submit a fully itemized travel expense claim for all reimbursable items expended, along with the unexpended portion of the advance, if any.
- Requires the traveler to submit the travel expense claim within two weeks following the end of travel status.

- Does NOT pay advances to any traveler if he/she is delinquent in accounting for, or repaying, a prior advance.
- Has the right to withhold unsettled advances from any payments due travelers.

10. The Council President Authorizes Exceptions

The Council President, or Executive Board Designee, authorizes exceptions to the policy. Unless authorized as an exception, travelers are responsible for payment of any incurred expense not in accordance with this policy.