
TRAVEL EXPENSE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

To provide for the reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while travelling for business purposes including performing job duties, attending conferences, conventions, training, workshops and meetings.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to Council and staff of North Cowichan.

3. POLICY

3.1. North Cowichan is committed to providing reimbursement for expenses at rates that are reasonable and sufficient to cover all expenses that could be incurred while travelling for business purposes.

4. GENERAL

4.1. Expenses for municipal business travel shall be budgeted by each department and shall be contained in the Financial Plan Bylaw approved and adopted by Council. The Financial Plan Bylaw shall constitute authority for these expenditures.

Where possible, a Purchasing Card should be used for registration, accommodation and airline/ferry/taxi costs. Purchasing cards must not be used for meals or fuel.

For clarity, expenses will only be covered for Council and staff, not for travelling companions.

5. TYPES OF EXPENSES

5.1. Lodging (receipts required)

- a) Actual expense paid for a basic room with single occupancy. Government or event discounted rate should be utilized when available.
- b) Private accommodation shall be reimbursed directly to the Council member or staff person at \$50 per night (no receipt required).

5.2. Transportation – includes airfare, bus, train, taxi, car rental and ferry, but not including personal motor vehicle (receipts required).

- a) Actual expense for basic fare. Upgrades may only be authorized in extenuating circumstances as approved by supervisor.

- b) The use of air travel is encouraged for trips farther than locations on Vancouver Island and the lower mainland. Where a person chooses to use a private vehicle in lieu of air transportation, payment shall be the lesser of:
 - The mileage from the Municipality to the destination; or
 - The combined total expense of airfare, mileage to and from home to the airport, parking fees and transportation to and from the destination airport to the meeting place or hotel.
- c) Travellers must use the best method of travel to minimize time away as well as cost.
- d) Luggage fee shall only be reimbursed at the actual expense incurred when travel is longer than two days.
- e) Airplane seat selection fee shall only be reimbursed at the actual expense incurred for flights longer than 4 hours.
- f) Parking charges shall be reimbursed at the actual cost incurred.
- g) Insurance and fuel costs related to rental vehicles shall be reimbursed at the actual cost incurred.

5.3. Mileage (no receipts required)

- a) Where personal vehicles are used, mileage will be reimbursed at the Canada Revenue Agency's acceptable non-taxable mileage rates starting and ending at the usual workplace location.
- b) There will be no reimbursement for traffic or parking fines.

5.4. Meals

- a) An allowance will not be paid for any meal that is included as part of any function unless the offered meal does not meet dietary restrictions of the traveller and receipts are submitted.
- b) Where a continental breakfast is provided, or reception is held, the traveller may be reimbursed for actual expenses of breakfast or dinner purchased up to a maximum of the meal rate listed in subsection (c), upon submission of a receipt.
- c) Meal allowance rates are:
 - i) Breakfast \$20.00
 - ii) Lunch \$25.00
 - iii) Dinner \$40.00
- d) Breakfast will be paid if travel starts before 7:00 am, lunch if travel starts before or ends after 12:00 pm and dinner if travel ends after 6:00 pm.
- e) Costs related to alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed and must not be paid using a Purchasing Card.
- f) Where applicable, a copy of the program brochure showing included meals should accompany a request for meal allowance.

5.5. Registration

- a) Travellers are encouraged to take advantage of early bird discounts when available.
- b) All registration costs for functions that are actually attended will be reimbursed.

6. Combining Business with Personal Travel

6.1. Travellers wishing to combine business and personal travel may do so at their own expense. The traveller will be required to pay any additional expenses that are not associated with the business travel.

7. Travel Cancellations

7.1. In case of travel changes and cancellations due to emergency circumstances or municipal employment requirements, the cost of any penalties, lost or changed reservations will be reimbursed.

7.2. In case of all other travel changes and cancellations, the cost of any penalties, lost reservations or changed reservations will be the responsibility of the traveller.

8. Travel Expense Forms

8.1. Request for payment for travel expenses shall be submitted on an approved administrative form for approval by the traveller's direct supervisor and then to the Finance Department for payment. Forms should be submitted within 30 days after you return. Expenses of the CAO and Council will be approved by the Chief Financial Officer.

9. Release of Expense Information

9.1. Expense reports and supporting documentation are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and may require disclosure to the public upon formal appropriate request. Please do not include personal information in your submissions.

9.2. Total expense information for all staff who have earned over \$75,000 in a year is disclosed as part of the municipality's Statement of Financial Information.

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Council Conference Attendance Policy

APPROVAL HISTORY

WRITTEN BY: Talitha Soldera, Chief Financial Officer	APPROVED BY: Council	DATE: June 21, 2023
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