

COLLIN COUNTY TRAVEL POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

The information contained within this manual pertains to financial policy related travel and transportation allowances authorized to county officials and employees. The regulations contained herein have been reviewed and approved in Collin County Commissioners' Court. Legal changes to the entitlement contained in these regulations are initiated by Commissioners' Court and no other source.

CHAPTER 1

POLICY

Section 1.1 Travel Justifications

Travel and transportation at county expense will be permitted only when officially justified and required to conduct official county business. Travel must comply with good management practices. All travel must be entered on an Estimated Expenditure form and turned in to Auditor's Office prior to travel. Otherwise, travel may not be reimbursed. The Auditor's Office must be notified if a trip is cancelled so the encumbered funds can be returned to the department's travel account.

Section 1.2 Equitable Expense Allowance

County officials/employees will not be required to perform official travel at their own expense or at rates of allowances and amounts of reimbursement inconsistent with the provisions contained herein, with the exception of grant funded travel.

Section 1.3 Grant Travel Policy

Expenditures related to travel will only be reimbursed for allowable expenditures and will follow the travel policy guidelines for that specific grant. Expenditures that are deemed unallowable for the grant will not be reimbursed.

Section 1.4 Limitation of Funds

Limitation of available travel funds will be a basis for denying reimbursement for official travel or reducing allowances until funding is made available.

Section 1.5 Weekends, Holidays, Day Travel

Travel on weekends, holidays or day travel to and from points having no connection with official county business is not authorized unless such travel provides a cost savings to the county.

Section 1.6 Expenses Incurred

All expenses incurred shall be made in the name of the county official/employee only. Expenses incurred for activities not connected with county business shall not be reimbursed. These activities shall include, but not be limited to, hotel movies, health club, etc.

Section 1.7 Exercise of Prudence in Travel

A traveler on official county business will exercise the same care in incurring expenses and accomplishing official business that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. Excess costs, indirect routes, delays,

or luxury accommodations unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of the official business are not considered as exercising prudence.

Section 1.8 Illness, Injury, or Death during Period of Official Travel

If a death, serious injury or illness occurs in the employee's immediate family, the employee shall be authorized to immediately return to their place of residence at county expense. When, during a period of official travel, an official/employee dies due to illness or injury not induced by personal misconduct, the county will pay for all transportation expenses to return the deceased to the point of origin. The official/employees' next of kin shall be authorized travel to the official travel site to make the necessary arrangements. Expenses for such travel shall be reimbursed in the same manner provided in this manual.

Section 1.9 Overpayment or Multiple Payments of Travel Expenses

Duplicate travel expense payments to county officials/employees are prohibited. When an employee engages in travel that is compensated by another source outside of the county, expenses will be reimbursed first by the county. When payment from the outside source is received it must be turned into the Auditor's Office to be deposited into your departments travel account.

Section 1.10 Liquor Purchases

Reimbursement of liquor purchases is prohibited.

Section 1.11 Travel to Receive Non-County Sponsored Honor Awards

Travel and transportation at county expense may be authorized for an employee who travels to receive an honor award sponsored by a non-county organization provided the award is determined to be closely related to the duties of the employee.

Section 1.12 Beginning Travel from Other than the Local Point of Origin

Travel reimbursement shall be based on beginning travel at a local point of origin. Additional expenses incurred from beginning travel at a point greater than the local point of origin shall be at the expense of the official/employee.

Section 1.13 Personal Telephone Calls

Each official/employee shall be allowed one personal telephone call per day at county expense. In situations where an emergency has occurred at the official/employee's home while that official/employee is away on county business, more than one personal call per day maybe allowed at county expense.

The County Auditor shall determine reasonable reimbursement on an individual basis.

Chapter 2

MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

Section 2.1 Routing

In determining transportation reimbursements for travel, the Auditor shall base reimbursement using the shortest practical route between point of origin and the business destination. When traveling via a privately owned vehicle, the most recent internet mileage map must be printed and included in travel voucher, with reasonable additional miles allowed to travel to and from county business and meals. Travel performed, other than the usually traveled route, must be justified as officially necessary and have approval of the Department Head. When, for an employee's own convenience, a person travels by an undirected route or interrupts travel by a direct route, the extra expense will be the responsibility of the traveler, with reimbursement based only on such charges as would have occurred by a usually traveled route. Any excess travel time or expense not justified as officially necessary will be charged as recommended by the Department Head and approved by the Auditor

Section 2.2 Transportation Authorized

Travel of an employee will be by the most expeditious means of transportation practicable. The Official/Department Head directing travel will be responsible for the mode of transportation selected. It is recommended that a county vehicle is used when there is one available.

Section 2.3 Travel via Privately Owned Vehicle

Payments to officials/ employees for the use of privately owned vehicles shall be on a basis of actual mileage traveled round trip from place of employment to purpose of travel destination while on official county business. Such payment or allowance shall be made at the current rate approved by Commissioners' Court. Any mileage related to education and conference must be turned in on a travel voucher. All other mileage reimbursement requests must be turned in on a mileage sheet.

Section 2.4 Two or More Employees Traveling in a Single Private Vehicle

When two or more employees travel in a single vehicle, only one shall receive a transportation allowance.

Section 2.5 Travel via Commercial Aircraft

Travel via commercial aircraft will generally be the least costly mode of long distance travel. This method shall be used whenever it is reasonably available. The employee must use most cost effective method of travel arrangements,

must be a non-refundable ticket if purchased with personal credit card or procurement card and must be based on coach fare. If airfare is cancelled for any reason, on a non-refundable ticket, a credit voucher will be issued by the travel agent. It is the responsibility of the official/employee to report unused airfare to the Auditor's Office. Credit vouchers for non-refundable tickets must be used toward the purchase of another ticket for the same traveler, within one year for county travel only. The official/employee must provide the confirmation number when the next reservation is made. This must be notated on the Estimated Expenditure Form when used. If traveling long distance via a privately owned vehicle, you must obtain the airfare cost from the least expensive airfare source as of the date of the estimated travel form and will be reimbursed that rate of airfare or actual mileage, whichever is less.

Section 2.6 Rental Vehicle

Reimbursement to county officials/ employees for the use of a rental car shall be based on actual cost incurred for the most economical vehicle. All upgrades will be the responsibility of the employee. The fuel tank must be filled prior to returning the vehicle to the rental agency. Additional fuel charges, by rental agency, will also be the responsibility of the employee. Receipts are required in support of claims for reimbursement. Rental car insurance is not necessary and will not be reimbursed. The county insurance will cover accidents incurred for the duration of the business trip. If additional days are added to the trip, for personal reasons, insurance for additional days would be the responsibility of the employee. If an accident occurs during the business portion of the trip a police accident report must be obtained and the County Risk Claims Manager must be notified immediately. (972) 548-4605 (located in Human Resources)

Section 2.7 Use of Public Transportation

While on official travel, public transportation shall be allowed when necessary for local commuting including airport to travel destination and return to travel origin. Reimbursement to county officials/ employees for the use of all other modes of transportation shall be based on actual cost incurred. Receipts are required in support of claims for reimbursement.

Section 2.8 Transportation Expenses of Spouse

Elected Officials/Department Heads are not allowed to authorize reimbursement of travel expenses incurred by a county employee's spouse, relative or friend while accompanying that employee to a conference.

Section 2.9 Parking Fees, Toll Charges, etc.

Reimbursement is authorized for parking fees, road and tunnel tolls which have been incurred. Receipts are required in support of claims for reimbursement.

Chapter 3

County Vehicles

Section 3.1 Authorization

County vehicles will be utilized only for county business, not for personal business of employees. Only authorized personnel may ride as passengers.

A current license or certification, appropriate to the assigned vehicle, will be maintained at all times. Any employee whose license becomes suspended for any reason will notify their supervisor immediately.

Section 3.2 Definition and General Matters

- A county vehicle is defined as any car, truck, van, etc., which is owned by the county, including Sheriff vehicles.
- County business is defined as any work done by a county employee on behalf of Collin County.
- Authorized personnel are defined as county employees or individuals conducting business for Collin County.
- "Stand-by" employees are those county employees who drive county vehicles to and from their home, conducting after business hour service calls.

Each county department utilizing county vehicles shall develop and maintain departmental procedures regarding their particular use to include after hours usage, stand-by duty restrictions, etc. Said procedures are to be approved by Commissioners' Court annually or as revised. Departmental procedures shall be consistent with this policy.

Section 3.3 Use of County Vehicles

The following are guidelines for the use of county vehicles before or after business hours:

- The use of county vehicles shall be for official county business only.
- All employees are expected to operate their assigned vehicles in a lawful, safe, and prudent manner at all times. Transportation, or consumption, of any drug or alcoholic beverage in a county vehicle is prohibited.
- Only the employee(s) assigned to operate a vehicle may drive that vehicle. Other employees may drive the vehicle with the authorization of the

Department Head. A non-employee is not authorized to drive a county vehicle under any circumstances.

- Before or after business hours, vehicles are to be driven either to or from work by the most direct or practical route available. Side trips to tend to personal affairs are not authorized.
- If an accident occurs, when an employee is not on the most direct or practical route to work or residence, then that employee is not considered to be a permissive user of the vehicle for insurance purposes. This means that the employee has the personal responsibility, either through personal insurance or out of pocket expense, to provide compensation to both the third party and to the county for property damage to the vehicle. Additional disciplinary action may be taken according to departmental policy.

Section 3.4 Authorized Persons

- In the interest of safety, to expedite response to calls, and to protect the county from possible costly civil claims, it is necessary to restrict passengers in departmental vehicles to those necessary to the duty being performed. No person other than those listed below shall ride in departmental vehicles.
- On duty sworn officers of the Sheriff's Department.
- Departmental employees required to use or ride in such vehicles in line of duty and then only as needed to perform those duties.
- Officers of other departments may be transported only when required to perform a specific task and only when necessary to the successful completion of that task.

Section 3.5 Other County employees when their transportation is necessary to official business.

- An employee on county business is the only person allowed to ride as a passenger in a county vehicle. Exceptions can be made in certain emergency or humanitarian situations where transportation of an individual (s) will prevent a threat to their well-being. Hitchhikers, family and friends are not authorized passengers unless the transportation is directly related to county business.
- Persons who are in custody of a Sheriff's Deputy, or who are being transported in line of duty (motorist being assisted, etc.).
- Reserves of the Sheriff's Department in training. They may ride in county vehicles only on a prescheduled basis. This scheduling must be approved by

the Sheriffs designated representative who will be responsible for notifying the officer in charge of the shift.

Section 3.6 Travel via County Vehicle

No county official/employee shall be reimbursed for mileage while operating a county vehicle. If gas is purchased, other than the county gas card, the receipt must be submitted for reimbursement in travel voucher.

Section 3.7 Operation of County Vehicle

All county vehicles shall be operated in a safe manner consistent with good defensive driving. Neglect of this responsibility shall necessitate suspension of continued use of county vehicles. County officials/employees must possess a current Texas driver's license and insurance to operate county vehicles.

Section 3.8 Repair of County Vehicle

Reimbursement for local travel expenses incurred while waiting for repair of a county vehicle is authorized if such expense(s) fall within the guidelines of this chapter.

Section 3.9 Insurance

The county shall provide basic insurance coverage for all county vehicles. Any additional insurance coverage shall be the responsibility of the county official/employee concerned. If a privately owned vehicle is used for official county business, the owner of that vehicle shall ensure the vehicle's insurance coverage meets or exceeds the minimum coverage required by law. The county shall not be responsible for damage to a privately owned vehicle which is used for official business.

Section 3.10 Authority

Commissioners' Court shall have the final authorization for use of county vehicles and may exclude certain provisions from this policy.

CHAPTER 4

LODGING

Section 4.1 Reimbursement Rate

A county official or employee shall be reimbursed for available lodging based on double room accommodation rates utilizing the most economical rates pertinent to the conference/travel. Unnecessary lodging expenses shall be the responsibility of the traveler unless justification for such expense can be established.

Section 4.2 Staying with Friends or Relatives

If a county official/employee stays with friends or relatives while on official county business, no reimbursement for lodging shall be allowed.

Section 4.3 Expenses Incurred

Expenses incurred for activities not connected with county business shall not be reimbursed. These activities shall include, but not be limited to, hotel movies, health club, hotel computer access etc.

CHAPTER 5

MEALS

Section 5.1 Meal Expenses

All county officials and employees shall be reimbursed for meal expenses. Meal reimbursement must be supported by an **itemized** meal receipt. Reasonable meal expenses would be as follows: Breakfast - \$10.00; Lunch - \$15.00; Dinner - \$25.00. Unusually high expenses must be justified in writing by the Department Head and approved in Commissioners' Court before reimbursement. Tips will be reimbursed at a preferred rate of 15%, with a maximum of 20%.

Travel meals in Collin County are prohibited. Business luncheon meetings are not considered as Travel Meals.

Section 5.2 Two or More Meals on the Same Receipt

If more than one employee's meal expense is on the same receipt, the names of all attendees and the reason for the claim must be indicated on the back of the receipt.

Within the limits of each department's budget, an employee may be reimbursed for the payment of meals for guests that are invited to discuss county business. See Section 6.2.

Section 5.3

Reimbursement for meals paid using your department assigned procurement card must be turned in with your department/division procurement card approval list.

Section 5.4 Spouse/Relative Meal Expenses

Reimbursement shall not be made for the payment of meal expenses or entertainment incurred by the spouse or relatives.

Section 5.5 Meals Per Day

No county official or employee shall be reimbursed for more than three (meals) per day. Snacks, candy, gum, etc. and beverages will not be reimbursed unless there is a justification that they are a replacement for a specific meal.

CHAPTER 6

DAY TRAVEL

Section 6.1 Day Travel Definition

Travel away from home outside of Collin County, but not overnight, is considered "Day Travel" for purpose of meals. Therefore, any reimbursement to an employee for meals, incurred on such "day travel", is taxable to the employee and will be processed through payroll. This must be turned in on a travel voucher and must include **itemized receipts**.

Section 6.2 Business Meals

To qualify as a business meal, the employee must identify the participants and the business purpose of the discussion. This must be turned in on an affidavit and must include **itemized receipts** and the Department Head signature.

CHAPTER 7

CONFERENCE SPONSORED ACTIVITIES

Section 7.1 Activities

Expenses incurred by a county official/employee for activities related to the conference, shall be reimbursed by the county. Activities unrelated to the conference shall not be reimbursed.

CHAPTER 8

REGISTRATION FEES

Section 8.1 Registration Fees

Registration fees for a county official/employee shall be paid by the county following the requisition/purchase order process. The **completed registration form** must be submitted to the Auditor's Office at the time that the requisition is entered.

Section 8.2 Registration Fees Paid by Credit Card/Procurement Card

The only exception, to the above, being if there is a deadline that the county cannot meet following this process. If this occurs registration may be paid utilizing your personal credit card, your department assigned procurement card or cash at the door. Reimbursement for registration paid using your personal credit card or cash must be turned in on your travel voucher with a receipt. If registration fees are paid using the department assigned procurement card, the department must turn in the registration forms with their department/division procurement card approval list. The registration form and receipt must be included with payment amount and vendor name highlighted.

CHAPTER 9

ADVANCE OF FUNDS FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

Section 9.1 Advance

A Travel Advance Affidavit must be completed for every advance of funds and must be approved by the Elected Official/Department Head. The request for an advance must be received in the Auditor's Office by the deadline as listed on the AP Check and Commissioners' Court Schedule, for the Commissioners' Court date prior to scheduled travel. (My Network Places/Public share on chdata/Auditor folder/AP Check and Commissioners' Court Schedule.)

Section 9.2 Travel Advance Limitations

Travel Advance Limitations:

- Advances will not be disbursed for less than \$100.00.
- Advances will not be disbursed for "day travel" expenses.
- Advances will not be disbursed after the travel is completed.
- Advances will not be disbursed if you have a procurement card in your name.
- Advances will not be disbursed when a traveler has an outstanding advance.
- Only one advance of funds shall be authorized for each scheduled travel.

Section 9.3 Recovery of Outstanding Travel Advances

An employee is required to complete a travel voucher and forward to the Auditor's Office within **7** calendar days after the travel end date. Once audited, you will receive a travel memo, via email, with the amount due to Collin County. All money owed to Collin County must be received in the Auditor's Office within **15** calendar days. Refer to travel advance which states you must "repay to Collin County any of this unspent travel advance no later than **30** days following the completion of the travel. If I fail to submit the proper documents and do not repay any unspent monies, Collin County has my permission to withhold the outstanding travel advance from my paycheck." If money is owed to the employee, it will be processed on the check run following the receipt of travel voucher in the Auditor's Office or as soon thereafter as is feasible.

Section 9.4 Advance Return for Cancelled Trip

In the event that a trip is cancelled, the advance must be returned to the Auditor's Office upon notice of cancellation of travel.

Section 9.5 Loss of Advance Funds

Each county official/employee shall be responsible for any loss of advance funds. Such incident shall not be considered a travel expense.

CHAPTER 10

ADVANCE FOR SHERIFF'S OFFICE PRISONER TRANSFER

Section 10.1 Advancement of Funds for Prisoner Transfer

An advancement of funds for travel expenses related to prisoner transfers shall be provided through a special fund in the Sheriff's Department. Procedures to account for such funds shall be prescribed by the County Auditor. Upon return from each trip, Sheriff's Transfer Officer shall reimburse the fund any excess advance payments. Documentation of expenses and approval of travel claims shall be made in the same manner as provided in this manual.

Section 10.2 Loss of Advance Funds

Each county official/employee shall be responsible for any loss of advance funds. Such incident shall not be considered a travel expense.

Section 10.3 Usage of Procurement Card for Prisoner Transfer

See Section 11.2.

CHAPTER 11

COUNTY PROCUREMENT CARDS

Section 11.1 County Procurement Cards

County officials/employees who are expected to travel frequently to support the mission of the county may be eligible for a County Procurement Card. Elected Officials/Department Heads may request for their personnel to be cardholders by contacting the Procurement Card Coordinator. (Purchasing Department) The coordinator will issue an employee card request form. Personnel authorized to receive a County Procurement Card must be approved by the appropriate Elected Official/Department Head responsible for the department in which the employee works. After approval of the Department Head, the application will be processed according to the applicable Procurement Card Agreement.

Section 11.2 Use of the County Procurement Card

The County Procurement Card shall only be used by the cardholder for his own travel purposes. In other words a cardholder may not use their card for another employee's expenses or travel arrangements. (Exceptions: Prisoner/Juvenile Transfers) The County Procurement Card shall not be used for personal purposes or family members and may only be used in connection with official Collin County travel or business. When a department needs a new vendor set-up; it is the responsibility of the department to supply the Auditors office with the vendor name, address, phone number and tax id information.

All meal purchases using the County Procurement Card must be in accordance with the policy as indicated in Chapter 5 of the Collin County Travel Policy.

Advances for travel will not be disbursed if you have a procurement card in your name.

All procurement card receipts must be attached to the Department/Division Report.

Section 11.3 Termination from County

Prior to leaving the county or transferring to another department, the cardholder shall surrender the County Procurement Card and all receipts to the approving supervisor of your respective department. Upon its receipt, the approving supervisor will review, approve and deliver the County Procurement Card to the Procurement Card Coordinator. (Purchasing Department) Please be aware that the responsibility of the void card remains with the Cardholder/Department Head until it has been received by the Procurement Card Coordinator.

Final payroll payment will be held until the County Procurement Card has been returned.

CHAPTER 12

INSURANCE CLAIMS

Section 12.1 Reporting Insurance Claims

When a rental vehicle is used, the official or employee should decline all supplemental vehicle rental insurance offered by the rental agency to cover incidents while using the vehicle for county purposes. The County Risk Claims Manager will provide all necessary insurance coverage for employees and officials using rental vehicles for county purposes. If an accident occurs during the business portion of the trip a police accident report must be obtained and the County Risk Claims Manager must be notified immediately. (972)548-4605 (located in Human Resources) While not condoned, all use of a rental vehicle for personal reasons is at the risk of the employee or official.

CHAPTER 13

SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS

Section 13.1 Submitting Travel Claims

Claims for reimbursement or payment shall be made directly to the Auditor's Office. When filing a travel claim, each county official/employee shall complete a Collin County Travel Voucher supported by documentation of expenses. Submission of claims shall be made no later than **7** days after completion of travel. See Section 9.3.

Section 13.2 Documentation

The completed Travel Voucher shall be submitted to the Auditor's Office with a travel expense worksheet and documentation to include statements, **itemized** hotel bills, **itemized** meal receipts, (day travel/business meals) and any other documentation necessary to justify the expenses incurred. Receipts must be taped to an 8½ x 11 paper in date order. Please do not highlight or tape over amounts on receipts. Do not fold or seal envelope.