TRAVEL POLICY

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All official travel on behalf of the City of Vicksburg shall require the prior approval of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. All travel requests must be submitted for placement on the routine Board agenda no less than thirty (30) days before the anticipated date of travel. No exceptions will be recognized unless expressly authorized by the Board under extraordinary circumstances. In addition to this, department heads no longer possess the authority or discretionary power to approve, authorize, or commit funds from the City of Vicksburg for employee travel, regardless of whether the travel is included in the approved budget. Any travel authorization issued solely by a department head shall be considered null and void and shall be recognized as invalid and impermissible. All travel requests shall be emailed to the Human Resources Department at hr@vicksburg.org. Estimated cost of lodging, transportation and meals must be made prior to getting approval to travel. Any request for approval of travel related to conferences, seminars, or workshops must be accompanied by literature showing location, number of days, registration fees, dates of the meetings.

All travel shall be restricted to mandatory certifications, required professional licenses, legally mandated training, or other training expressly required to maintain an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of their position as an employee of the City of Vicksburg. The Human Resources Director shall review and evaluate each travel request to determine whether the proposed travel meets the aforementioned conditions. Travel that is discretionary, optional, or not essential to the employee's official duties shall not be approved.

Upon such determination, the travel request shall be placed on the Board agenda for approval by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

The Director of Purchasing and the Director of Accounting are hereby directed not to process, prepare, or issue any payment, reimbursement, purchase order, registration fee, lodging expense, transportation expense, travel check, or any other travel-related expenditure unless the travel has been formally approved by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and bears all the required signatures of a majority of the Board. Any request submitted without the required Board approval shall be rejected, vetoed, and dismissed without consideration. Travel priorities shall be limited to matters involving Public Safety, the Mayor and Alderpersons. Requests outside of these priorities will only be considered under exceptional circumstances and solely at the discretion of the Board on a case-by-case basis. Submission of a request does not constitute approval or create any expectation that approval will be granted.

Upon the date of the issuance, any travel that has been scheduled, reserved, registered, or approved solely by a department head is hereby declared null and void. Such travel shall be canceled immediately and shall not proceed under any circumstances. Departments are responsible for ensuring the prompt cancellation of all unauthorized travel arrangements and for resubmitting any request through this revised established approval process for consideration by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Failure to comply with this directive will constitute a violation of City Vicksburg policies and procedures. Any employee or department head who authorizes, schedules, incurs expenses for, or participates in travel without the required approval of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen may be subject to administrative action, including the denial of reimbursement, personal responsibility for unauthorized expenses, and any additional disciplinary measures deemed appropriate by the City of Vicksburg's Human Resource Department.

Employees traveling on official City business shall be compensated for all compensable travel time in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 207, and 29 C.F.R. §§ 785.33–785.41. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to deny compensation for hours worked as required by federal law.

These regulations establish a City of Vicksburg Travel policy to help ensure fairness and consistency in the application and administration of travel-expense reimbursement and to reduce and control the City's costs related to all components of official city business travel.

An employee traveling on official city business is expected to exercise the same care incurring expenses as would a prudent person traveling for personal reasons. Travel for business should be conducted at a minimum cost for achieving the success of the mission. Travelers (excluding elected officials) shall request air, bath, bus, hotel, and vehicle rental reservations as far in advance as possible (at least 1 month) and utilize the lowest logical rate available. Travel advances and reimbursements will be paid at the Board meeting on the 25th of each month or the Friday before the 25th if on a weekend or holiday.

AIRLINE TRAVEL

Upon Board approval only, an employee who is traveling by airline or other public carrier, he/she is required to have all travel arrangements handled by the City of Vicksburg Purchasing Department. This does not apply to the Mayor and Aldermen. Under no circumstances should the City of Vicksburg Purchasing

Department handle any airline travel arrangements that has not been approved by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

In all cases, the least expensive economy fare will be used. Delays enroute that will not delay the traveler's arrival at destination by more than 3 hours actual travel time within the same day travel was begun and that result in a substantial cost benefit to the City of Vicksburg will be used. Alternate departure and return dates and times will be proposed to all travelers when they will result in lower fares. Traveler's preferences will determine flight departure times when travel costs are equal. If, for whatever reason, routing or accommodations other than the most economical are required, the Mayor and Aldermen may allow alternate routing and accommodations.

AIRLINE TRAVEL INVOICES

There are only three ways to pay for airline travel: City credit card, direct invoice to the City of Vicksburg from the designated travel agent, or personal credit card with pre-authorized reimbursement.

FREQUENT FLYER PROGRAM AWARDS

Any bonus or promotional gratuity received as a result of official City travel shall be used to offset or reduce the cost of subsequent official City travel. Under no circumstances can the employee keep a bonus or other promotional gratuity so earned for his/her own personal use. As sufficient mileage, earned as a result of City-paid travel, is accumulated, free ticket coupons will be applied for and used to offset official City travel costs. Follow airline procedures to exchange the miles for a ticket.

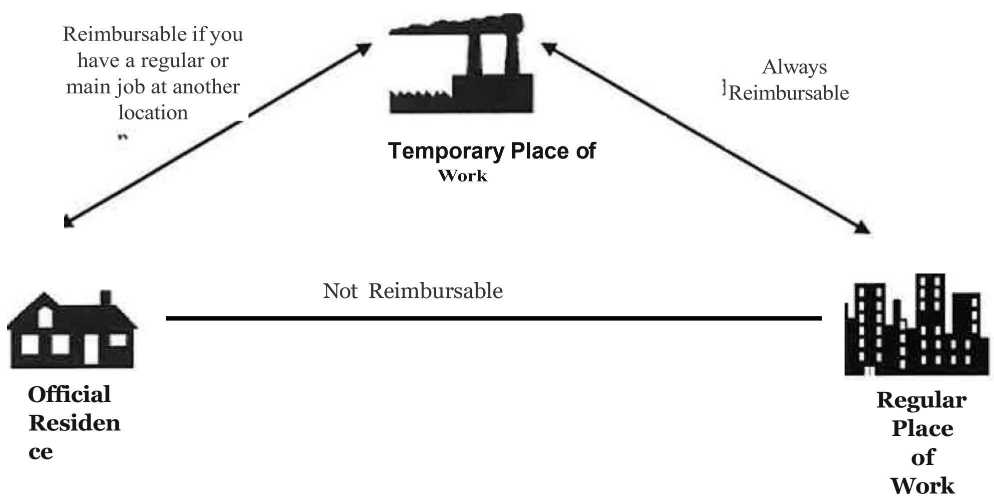
AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL

PRIVATE AUTOMOBILE USE FOR CITY BUSINESS

City vehicles are the preferred means of transportation for official city travel. If an employee who is on the approved driving list does not have a city vehicle suitable for business travel, the City will try to make one available. Employees will use their personal vehicle only when a city owned vehicle is not available or the employee is not on the approved driving list, and only with the approval of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. In accordance with Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended, the Mileage Reimbursement Rate for travel in a private vehicle will be the same as authorized by the Department of Finance and Administration for State officers and employees. When two or more employees travel in one private vehicle, only one travel expense at the authorized reimbursement rate per mile shall be allowed.

The City of Vicksburg will not reimburse employees for private vehicle mileage for optional travel. Employees will only be reimbursed for private vehicle mileage for travel for City business.

When are Transportation Expenses Reimbursable?



RENTAL CAR USED FOR CITY BUSINESS

Charges for rental cars shall be allowed only when there is a demonstrated cost savings, including compensated employee time, over other modes of transportation, such as buses, subway and taxis, and not strictly for the convenience of the employee. The most economical rental car and rental car company shall be used, and the lowest cost vehicle necessary to achieve the traveler's mission shall be reserved. Rental car reservations must be made through the city purchasing department. Should you arrive at your destination and find a more economical promotional rate with another rental agency, you may change to the more economical car without checking with the purchasing department. Rental insurance should always be purchased with the rental vehicle.

CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS

CONFERENCE HOTELS

When hotel rooms are blocked for a conference seminar, etc., and a special discounted conference hotel rate provided, the employee should go through the conference housing bureau, or, when appropriate, directly to the hotel to obtain lodging. A copy of the conference literature must be attached to the expense report showing the conference hotels and rates in the conference package.

CONFERENCE MEALS

Meals shall not be claimed as a separate item of expense on the travel voucher when included in the conference registration fee. Provided, however, any fees charged for attending the official meetings of a convention, seminar or similar convocation where the meeting includes a meal are excluded from the daily maximum. Claims for reimbursement for these fees, however, must be supported by a receipt if these fees cause the total daily reimbursement claimed for meals to exceed the maximum daily expenditure set for the conference location. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

Meals, alcohol, room service, etc., are not authorized to be charged on the Travel Card.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FEES

Registration fees paid by an employee for a conference will be reimbursed on a travel expense report when supported by a paid receipt. When pre-registration is paid directly to the conference/seminar sponsor by the city, a copy of the pre-registration form and charge is acceptable.

LODGING

LODGING SHARED WITH FAMILY MEMBER

If a member(s) of the city officer or employee's family, or other non-city employee travels with the officer or employee, the employee may claim hotel/motel room rate at the king or double rate unless pre-approved in writing by the accounting department, purchasing department or City Clerk.

LODGING SHARED WITH ANOTHER CITY EMPLOYEE

If more than one employee shares a motel/hotel room, one of the employees should report the total on the travel form. If the employee does not have an original receipt, he/she should submit a copy of the receipt and refer to the fund and requisition number, name of the employee and where the original receipt may be located.

OUT-OF-STATE LODGING

Interstate discounted lodging is often available through government rate programs and honored by participating properties of most major chains (e.g. Holiday Inn, Hyatt Inn, Marriott, Hilton, Sheraton, Ramada and others). When making lodging reservations, always request government rates. Hotel maid service tips may be reimbursed between $3.00 -$5.00 per night. Valet parking tips may be reimbursed between $2.00 -$5.00. When traveling out of the state on official city business, the employee should ask for an exemption from taxes on the hotel rate. That state may or may not honor the tax exemption. A letter from the Mississippi Department of Revenue out of state showing proof of tax-exempt status will be provided to the employee for submission to the hotel.

LODGING REWARDS

Any bonus or promotional gratuity received as a result of official City travel shall be used to offset or reduce the cost of subsequent official City travel. Under no circumstances can the employee keep a bonus or other promotional gratuity so earned for his/her own personal use. As rewards benefits, earned as a result of City-paid travel, are accumulated, free ticket coupons will be applied for and used to offset official City travel costs.

MEAL ALLOWANCES

City employees shall be reimbursed the actual cost of meals incident to official travel, not to exceed the daily maximums. as established by the State Department of Finance and Administration in accordance with section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended. The law requires the Mississippi State Department of Finance and Administration to establish the maximum daily meal allowance every six months. The maximum daily meal allowances as currently issued and the maximum daily meal allowances to be issued in the future are made a part of this policy as if set out in fill herein.

If funds are advanced for meals, up to the maximum daily allowance, itemized receipts must be presented and the balance of advanced funds paid back to the City if not used.

If funds are not advanced for meals, itemized receipts must be provided for reimbursement, not to exceed the maximum daily allowance. The maximum reimbursement amount allowed for individual meals, for travel when a full day is not claimed, shall be $15.00 per meal and shall be pre-approved by the Division Head on the travel authorization form, provided that the total does not exceed the maximum daily expenditure. Reimbursement for non-overnight travel meal cost must be made through the officer's or employee's payroll check in accordance with the United States Internal Revenue Service laws, rules and regulation.

Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

MEAL ALLOWANCE UNDER GRANT FUNDED TRAVEL

City employees or Representatives of the City (contractor) who travel for and on behalf of the City under a grant funded program shall be reimbursed the cost of meals, with proof of actual meal receipts, not to exceed the maximum daily reimbursement rate for the specific location of travel. Meal tips should be included in the actual meal receipts unless the inclusion of the tips would cause the meals to exceed the maximum daily limitations. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable and should not be included on the reimbursable meal receipt Meal receipts shall be for the City employee or Representative of the City (Contractor) only; dinner guests, if any, are not reimbursable and should be on separate receipts.

MEAL TIPS

Meal tips should be included in the actual meal expenses unless the inclusion of the tips would cause the meals to exceed the maximum daily limitations placed on meals by the State Department of Finance and Administration. If the daily limitation would be exceeded, then the employee is allowed to pull meal tips out and record the total of meal tips for each day under other authorized business expenses. TOTAL MEAL TIPS SHALL NOT EXCEED 20% OF THE MAXIMUM DAILY MEAL LIMITATION.

OTHER TRAVEL EXPENSES

TAXI FARES

Fares for taxis or airport transportation services require a receipt which must be attached to the expense report. The average tip for taxi services is between 15% and 20% of the total fare.

MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

Baggage Handling. Reasonable charges will be allowed without receipt.

Hotel/Airport Parking. Receipts must be attached to the expense report to be reimbursed.

TRAVEL ADVANCES

Travel advances are authorized by Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended. Travel advances must be approved by the Division Head. An advance will generally not be issued to the employee earlier than 3 days before the travel. As soon as the officer/employee returns from the travel, a travel expense report shall be completed and the advance settled within 5 days. This is to be done whether the employee's expenses were more than the advance, less than the advance, or the same as the advance. The Mayor and Aldermen have the authority to withhold payment of further expense accounts if any advance has not been settled. If an advance is not settled within 5 working days, the employees' paycheck may be held until the debt to the city is resolved. An officer or employee may have only one travel advance outstanding at a time.

TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORTS

One expense report should be completed for each business trip. Travel expense reports should be typed or completed in ink and signed by the employee. Receipts for all claimed expenses should be attached to the expense report unless not required by this policy, including meals. The hotel invoice submitted with the Travel Expense Report shall be the official itemized invoice issued by the lodging establishment at check out, as opposed to a credit card receipt. The invoice must clearly identify the name of the hotel, the name of the individual for whom lodging was provided, the dates of occupancy, the applicable room rates per night, and a complete itemization and total of all charges incurred. Invoices that are incomplete, lack the required information, or do not clearly substantiate the lodging expenses will be deemed insufficient. Necessary travel expenses do not include personal expense items such as entertainment and trip insurance.