

# **Employee Travel Policy and Procedures**

## **3.1 Purpose**

To provide a standard policy for employees, elected officials, and appointed officials traveling on City business.

## **RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Direction of the City Manager's Office**

The following rules are applicable to all City employee(s), elected officials, and appointed officials (hereafter referred to as City employees) traveling on approved City business:

## **3.2 Introduction**

The purpose of this Travel Policy and Procedures is to establish uniform regulations governing expenses incurred by employees who travel out of the area on necessary City of Show Low business. These policies shall apply to all City employees when traveling away from their normal designated place of employment. Exceptions to these policies may only be granted by formal written approval of the City Manager, or his/her designee.

Requests for reimbursement of travel expenses will not be paid for travel expenses that have not been pre-authorized. Employees should consult the Travel Policy and Procedures prior to undertaking any travel. All Travel Authorization and Expense forms must be approved prior to travel in accordance with these instructions.

It is also City policy that employee requests for the reimbursement of necessary expenses incurred while traveling on authorized City business is processed in an accurate, efficient, and timely manner.

## **3.3 Personal Travel**

When personal travel is commingled with City business travel, the benchmark to be used in these situations is business is business and personal is personal. Employees are required to separate business expenses from personal expenses when submitting their Travel Authorization and Expense form, and when making payment with a City credit card. Only allowable expenses should be made on City credit cards. Travel requirements for the City supersede all personal travel requirements.

Please remember that employee travel is always subject to public disclosure and, consequently, additional accounting and scrutiny is

required by the employee and the City to separate City business travel from any personal travel. The City is a public entity; therefore, it is the responsibility of the employee to maintain correct and proper records to report only authorized City business-related expenses when filing Travel Requisitions.

### **3.3.1 Authorization**

All travel shall be authorized and approved on a City of Show Low Travel Authorization and Expense form as follows:

Travel requests from \$0 to \$250 require approval of the employee's supervisor/manager.

Travel requests over \$250 shall include the department director's approval.

All Travel requests must be submitted to the Finance Department for review at least two (2) weeks prior to travel, with post-travel accounting submitted within five (5) days after the employee's return.

All out-of-state travel must be authorized by the City Manager prior to registration.

### **3.4 Transportation**

All modes of transportation shall be in the best interest of the City of Show Low and approved at the discretion of the applicable department director.

#### **3.4.1 Air**

Airfare costs should be paid by City credit card whenever possible.

Air coach transportation will be considered standard for out-of-state travel. Round-trip tickets shall be purchased and receipts for such travel must be submitted even if payment is made directly by the City. Reimbursement will be for the exact amount of airfare only. Whenever possible, the employee shall make reservations far enough in advances to receive the discounted fare. When the employee makes personal stops en route to a business destination point, the employee will be reimbursed only for the discounted round-trip coach fare directly to the business destination point.

Any frequent flyer miles earned accrue to the individual making the flight and not to the City. However, criteria for flight selection must always be based on the lowest-priced airfare rather than the opportunity for personal benefit of the traveling employee.

Use of other modes of transportation (bus, rail, City vehicle, personal vehicle, etc.) may be approved by the department director based on the circumstances of travel that render air transportation uneconomical or impractical.

When air, bus, or rail transportation is used, expenses for local transportation, such as taxicab and bus fare, will be allowed whenever such transportation is necessary for the conduct of City business. Employees should check ahead to see if a shuttle service is available for airport pick-up to conference or seminar locations. It is the employee's responsibility to use the most economical means available for transportation and parking in order to maintain control over his/her departmental travel budget.

### **3.4.2 City Vehicle**

Employees traveling on approved City business are encouraged to utilize a City of Show Low fleet vehicle. Use of personal vehicles is allowed only with the prior approval of the applicable department director and in accordance with the following "Personal Vehicle" section of these policies and procedures.

### **3.4.3 Personal Vehicle**

If a City car is not available and prior approval has been obtained from the applicable department director, the City will reimburse the use of the employee's personal vehicle at the current federal mileage rate per mile. Reimbursement equal to that allowable under the Internal Revenue Service regulations may vary from year to year (contact the Finance Department for the current-year rates).

If a City car is available and the employee makes the personal choice to use his/her personal vehicle, the mileage rate will be 50% of the federal mileage rate per mile. The choice to use one's personal vehicle must be approved by the applicable department director. The employee must submit a Google map with the destination address en route from Show Low City Hall, attached to the Travel Authorization and Expense form.

When a personal vehicle is used for out-of-state travel in lieu of traveling by air (personal trips are not mileage-reimbursable), the most direct route from Show Low will be used for vehicle mileage. The employee must submit a Google map with the destination address en route from Show Low City Hall, attached to the Travel Authorization and Expense form. However, the total reimbursable cost for transportation shall not exceed the cost of a round-trip discounted airfare.

Note: All employees are required to carry proper levels of insurance to be authorized to drive a privately owned vehicle on City business. It is a personal choice of the employee to travel by vehicle in lieu of air travel and/or use a City vehicle; therefore, any travel problems created by this choice are the responsibility of the employee. The City mileage reimbursement in this situation covers insurance costs and if an accident does occur on City business in the employee's personal car, the employee's insurance will be fully responsible.

#### **3.4.4 Rental Car**

If a rental car is necessary for City business, the Travel Authorization and Expense form must include the reason the rental vehicle is required. Reservations should be secured and rental fees paid with a City credit card.

Information should be obtained about available ground transportation and costs from the organization sponsoring the conference (often, conference materials will contain such information). An employee must inquire about all ground transportation options and use the most economical in figuring comparative costs, as reimbursement will be made accordingly. Costs for shuttles or buses are often less than taxi services.

All quotes should be based on a two-door compact/midsize vehicle and reflect total estimated costs (i.e., a base 24-hour rental, grace periods beyond the 24-hour period, hourly pro rata cost, mileage costs, any special or discount rates available).

Note: The City will NOT reimburse the employee for insurance charges. The City of Show Low is self-insured for vehicle property and liability costs. Prior to travel contact the City of Show Low Safety/Loss Coordinator to obtain a copy of the certificate of insurance. The employee should refuse the additional insurance coverage offered by the rental agency. If the employee is involved in an accident while driving a rental car on City business, notify the Safety/Loss Coordinator at (928) 532-4012 as soon as possible so the City can arrange to handle the claim with the rental car agency.

#### **3.4.5 Lodging**

Lodging is permitted a minimum of 50 miles distance from the City of Show Low, unless otherwise approved by the department director, prior to travel.

Lodging expenses should be paid by a City credit card whenever possible. If paid by the employee with a personal credit card or cash, these lodging expenses are reimbursable only when supported with original detailed hotel receipts. A credit card receipt is not an acceptable receipt for purchasing documentation.

Lodging arrangements should be made at the single room, moderate rate. Seminar, conference, or government discount rates should be requested. If the employee's family accompanies the employee, any difference between single and actual lodging rates should be noted and adjusted as a non-allowable expense. Expenses for personal or vacation time used before or after necessary City business are also non-allowable expenses.

#### **3.4.6 Other Non-Reimbursable Lodging Expenses**

Additional hotel services purchased for personal comfort, convenience or entertainment (such as dry cleaning, video or DVD rentals, video-game rentals, room service in excess of the per diem maximum) are not reimbursable.

### **3.5 Per Diem**

Employees will be authorized a per diem allowance of \$50.00 per day for in-state travel. The daily per diem is intended to cover the costs of meals and all gratuities given while traveling (this includes, but is not limited to, lodging tips, , shuttle fare tips, rental car tips, etc.)

Per Diem rates shall be provided based on the time of travel. For travel within the state of Arizona the per diem rate is:

Breakfast	\$10.00 of the travel per diem allowance (must be on travel status prior to 7:00 a.m.)
Lunch	\$14.00 of daily per diem allowance (must be on travel status prior to 12:00 noon)
Dinner	\$26.00 of daily per diem allowance (must be on travel status prior to 6:00 p.m. with travel status continuing until after 7:00 p.m.)

Per Diem rates outside of the state of Arizona will refer to the U.S. General Service Administration per diem rates.

A per diem allowance will be given for conference/seminars that do not include meals as a part of the registration fee. If meals are included, per diem will be reduced accordingly for each meal provided in accordance

with the above chart. Tip expenses resulting from travel to and from the conference or seminar will be included in the per diem rate if the travel occurs within the applicable timelines.

Group functions with a consolidated overall billing (i.e., when all employee expenses are combined into one bill) to the City are not eligible for a per diem allowance; rather, participating employees traveling to a group function shall use a City credit card for their actual additional costs.

### **3.5.1 Ineligible Charges**

Personal charges shall not be made to a City credit card.

Alcoholic beverages shall not be charged to a City credit card and are not allowable expenses for reimbursement.

Additionally, employees consuming alcoholic beverages shall not operate a City vehicle.

### **3.5.2 Processing**

Approved Travel Authorization and Expense forms must be submitted to the Finance Department a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to travel if a per diem travel advance is requested. Requests submitted less than two (2) weeks prior to travel may result in out-of-pocket expenses to the employee, reimbursable after travel occurs only upon submittal of a completed Travel Authorization and Expense form and documenting all expenses with original receipts. Approved claims will then be forwarded to the Finance Department for processing.

Final accounting of actual travel expenses must be submitted with detailed receipts and an employee's original approved Travel Authorization and Expense form within five (5) working days of the employee's return from travel.

A copy of the conference/seminar brochure the employee is attending must be attached to the original Travel Authorization and Expense form.



# City of Show Low Travel Authorization

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The employee shall complete this form and submit it to his supervisor for processing, along with a copy of the event brochure. It is the employee's responsibility to make all travel arrangements and to reserve cars prior to submission of this form. If more than one check is required to be issued by Finance, a copy of this form shall be provided and the respective area highlighted for each additional check.

## A. APPLICANT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Purpose of Trip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mode of Transportation:  City Car (see below)  Plane  Personal Car  Other  
 Registration check must be mailed before \_\_\_\_\_ to: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Person(s) in charge in your absence: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Accounts to be charged: \_\_\_\_\_

## B. OTHER INFORMATION (THIS INFORMATION IS REQUIRED)

Advance check:  Yes  No Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date Required: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City car available (see travel policy)? Yes No Car Reserved? Yes No Fleet Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Financial Assistance from: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work days off duty: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Leaving: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Returning \_\_\_\_\_  
 Overtime Required?  Estimated Overtime Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

C. EXPENSE VOUCHER	ESTIMATED COST	ACTUAL COST	D. FINAL ACCOUNTING
Registration Fee:			Total actual
Room: _____ days @ _____ per day			Less:
Meal Per Diem:			Advances and/or
Breakfasts @ _____ each			City Payments
Lunches @ _____ each			
Dinners @ _____ each			<b>BALANCE DUE</b>
Auto Expense: _____ miles x _____ per mile			Employee
Other Transportation (i.e. airfare)			City
Local Transportation (i.e. bus, taxi)			
Other Expenses (list)			<b>ATTACH ITEMIZED RECEIPTS</b>
Total			

## E. APPROVAL (REQUIRED BEFORE TRAVEL OCCURS) By signing below I acknowledge that I have read and will abide by all City of Show Low travel policy regulations and conditions.

Applicant Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Department Director Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Finance Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_ City Manager Signature (out of state travel) / Date \_\_\_\_\_

## F. POST TRAVEL APPROVAL

Finance Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_ Department Director Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_