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Policy 270**

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TRAVEL & TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

.1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 Prudent Judgment

County Officials (as used in this policy meaning elected officials and appointed department heads) and employees are expected to exercise prudent judgment when incurring travel expenses on official County business. The failure of employees to follow this policy, or incur excessive expenses, may be cause for disciplinary action. Non-business related expenses and/or expenses not made in accordance with this policy will not be approved or reimbursed.

Employees are expected to utilize local training opportunities, where travel is not necessary, as much as possible. The use of local training and other alternatives to travel such as teleconferencing, on-line training, satellite training, and/or train the trainer models is encouraged. The number of employees attending a particular meeting should be the minimum necessary, consistent with the benefit to be derived therefrom.

1.2 Travel Restrictions

The Board of Clallam County Commissioners may place additional requirements or restrictions on out-of-County travel in conjunction with adoption of Clallam County's budget. A copy of any such board restrictions shall be considered an addendum to this policy and distributed to County departments.

1.3 Volunteers and Board Members

Officially recognized volunteers, board members, and others authorized to be reimbursed for travel expenses shall be reimbursed consistent with this policy. Reference in this policy to employee(s) shall include county officials, recognized volunteers, and/or board members.

1.4 Out of State/Alternative Travel

Employees should consider method and times of travel in order to minimize costs to the County. As an example, if air travel over a Saturday is less expensive it may justify extension of travel dates when cost of airfare is weighed against the additional costs of hotel and per diem. If traveling to a remote city where airfare is costly, the cost of travel to a nearby hub and car rental should be considered when determining travel arrangements. When an employee extends travel or travels to an alternative location in order to save money, a statement of monetary and benefit savings is to be submitted with the reimbursement request. Employees who extend travel or travel to alternate

destinations that result in increased expenses shall be required to pay for any such difference in costs.

1.5 Determination of Policy Application and Payment of Claims

The County Administrator is authorized to make determinations regarding the interpretation of this policy. The Auditor is authorized to make determinations on approval or rejection of claims under this policy. Individuals who travel are responsible to actively assist and cooperate with the County in the investigation and settlement of travel claims. Such determinations shall be final unless appealed, in writing, to the Board of Commissioners within 10 working days of the Auditor's notice to the employee.

.2 REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

2.1 Registration

Registration fees required in connection with attendance at conventions, conferences, and official meetings are reimbursable. Reimbursable registration fees may include meals, special dinners, and banquets but may not include recreational activities such as golf tournaments and pistol competitions, etc. When possible, registration should be done prior to travel through the normal voucher system.

2.2 Meals for Travel Outside Clallam County Overnight

Reimbursement for meals when an employee is traveling outside Clallam County for more than one day shall be on a per diem basis. The allowable amount for meals shall be the current rates established in the U.S. General Services Travel Regulations. Additional partial days shall be calculated in 4-hour increments with reimbursement of one-fourth the daily rate for each full four hours of absence from the County, up to a maximum of the daily per diem rate. Maximum daily rates for per diem and hotel are available at <http://policyworks.gov/org/main/mt/homepage/mtt/perdiem/perd05d.html> or on the County's intranet site under "County Forms". A list of hotels in various communities that accept the per diem rate is also located on the web site. There is no additional allowance for tips when employees travel under this section.

Meals included in a convention seminar, lodging payment, or other registration fee shall be deducted from the per diem rate at one-fourth the daily rate for breakfast or lunch and one-half the daily rate for dinner. A continental breakfast will not be considered a meal.

Employees may submit travel claims for less than the allowable per diem rate at their discretion and without receipts.

2.3 Meals for Travel Outside Clallam County One Day

Reimbursement for meals when an employee is traveling outside Clallam County for one day or less shall be paid by receipt to a maximum of one-fourth the daily per diem rate for lunch and one-half the daily rate for dinner, plus allowable tip (as used in this policy "allowable tip" means up to fifteen percent of the allowable meal cost, including tax). Allowable meals for one-day travel are restricted to lunch if the employee is out of the County during the noon hour and provides a meal receipt, and dinner if the employee is out of the County after 6 p.m., provides a meal receipt, and is gone for four or more hours. Over expenditures may not be applied to other meal allowances.

Individual meals may exceed the maximum per diem amount with the approval of the county official when an employee is required to attend a business-related function where the meal cost is set at a rate higher than the maximum. Reimbursement for such meals shall be by receipt. A tip of no more than fifteen percent may be included. If a reoccurring event, a one year memorandum may be filed with the Auditor.

Tobacco and alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable. Reimbursement will be made from only one vendor per meal. Food must be purchased outside Clallam County.

2.4 Meals and Refreshments within Clallam County

(As used in this policy, the term "nominal cost" means one-fourth of the daily per diem rate for breakfast or lunch and one-half the daily per diem rate for dinner.)

Meals and refreshments for Clallam County employees while within Clallam County shall only be purchased with County funds or reimbursed in the following cases. Except as noted below, receipts are required for reimbursement. Reimbursement may include allowable tip.

- a. Required training at a conference or seminar attended by an employee includes meals and refreshments as part of the cost.
- b. Business-related meetings with outside agencies, groups, organizations, service clubs, etc. where the employee is speaking or has been designated as the representative of the County/department.
- c. Official county business requires attendance of county personnel at a meeting where refreshments or meals are an integral part of the meeting. Normal staff meetings of county departments or personnel over the meal period do not qualify. With authorization of the county official, the County may provide refreshments or meals of nominal expense at training sessions sponsored by the County.
- d. Official meetings with consultants, trainers, or other official County business requires attendance of County personnel at a meeting where refreshments or meals are an integral part of the meeting. Business meetings with persons

- e. providing services to the County when those meetings are conducted during a meal period and are part of an extended meeting of business with the party.
- e. Special annual meetings of the County intended to recognize employee longevity and performance.
- f. Meals and refreshments during travel between the West End of Clallam County and the Port Angeles/Sequim area. Meals for employees traveling out of their area of residence to the other end of the County, and where no other circumstances above apply, shall normally not be paid. Meals may be reimbursed at the discretion of the county official, only when such travel was unexpected prior to the start of the employee's shift, was for four hours or more, was over either the lunch hour or dinner hour (6 p.m. to 7 p.m.), and the employee provides a receipt. In such cases, lunch (one-fourth the daily rate) and/or dinner (one-half the daily rate) may be reimbursed by receipt up to the maximum of the standard cost per diem rate plus allowable tip. Per diem for meals may also be provided for the above travel when the employee is required to stay overnight in the area of the County outside his/her residence due to extended hours of work before or after the employee's normal shift.
- g. During initial crime scene investigations or major crimes, or other emergency situations when employees are working extended hours, and stopping for a meal period could worsen the emergency or increase cost to the County, departments may provide an on-scene meal of nominal cost.
- h. Other circumstances within the spirit of this policy as approved by the county official.

2.5 Meals and Refreshments for Volunteers

County offices and departments may provide meals and refreshments of nominal value to recognized volunteers pursuant to the provisions of this policy.

2.6 Meals and Refreshments for General Public

County offices and departments may provide meals and refreshments of nominal value for customers and general public pursuant to the provisions of this policy.

2.7 Meals and Refreshments for Trainers, Consultants, and Other Persons Providing Services to the County

County officials may authorize meals and refreshments of nominal value for trainers, consultants, and other persons providing services to the County except when contractual per diem is paid by the County to the person providing service.

.3 LODGING

3.1 Reimbursement for Lodging Expenses

Reimbursement for lodging expenses shall be on the basis of actual expenses incurred but not to exceed a maximum of the current lodging rates as established in the U.S. General Administration Travel Guidelines, not including tax.

3.2 Exception to the Lodging Rate

An exception to the lodging rate may be authorized by a County Official under one or more of the situations listed below. Written approval for the exception and the reason for exception, signed by the County Official or his/her designee is to be part of the payment document.

- a. Lodging accommodations at the destination are not available at or below the standard lodging amount and the savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging at a more distant site are consumed by an increase in transportation and other costs.
- b. Costs in the area have temporarily escalated due to special events or disasters.
- c. The traveler attends a meeting, conference, convention, or training session where they are expected to have business interaction with other participants in addition to the scheduled events, and it is anticipated that maximum benefits will be achieved by authorizing them to stay at the lodging facility where the event is held.
- d. Meeting room facilities are necessary and it is more economical for the traveler to acquire special lodging accommodations rather than to acquire a meeting room and a separate room for lodging.
- e. The health and safety of the traveler is at risk, or in order to comply with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

If lodging is in a private residence, one-half of the maximum standard lodging rates may be paid; or via RV, a receipt is required for reimbursement to a maximum of three-fourths of the maximum standard lodging rate per night.

4 TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES AND MILEAGE

4.1 Mileage Reimbursement Rate

The mileage reimbursement allowed to County employees when using their personal cars in connection with County business shall be the current federal travel regulation privately owned vehicle mileage rate.

The Board of County Commissioners may approve different mileage reimbursement rates or payment systems for positions and/or employees who are routinely required to drive their personal cars in connection with County business and as a result incur reasonable expenses in excess of the standard reimbursement.

4.2 Mileage Reimbursement Limited

Reimbursement for mileage and per diem during travel shall not exceed the sum of the round-trip coach airfare of a common carrier plus necessary local mileage/ground transportation, per diem and other related costs had airfare been chosen.

Employees traveling subject to this policy will be reimbursed for only those miles additional to their normal commuting mileage to their usual place of work.

4.3 Miscellaneous Transportation/Mileage Provisions

(1) County Vehicles

County vehicles shall be used in accordance with the Clallam County Vehicle Use and Assignment Policy.

(2) Use of Common Carriers

Air or other transportation shall be at the most economical class.

(3) Car rental

Car rental is reimbursable only if rental is necessary as part of official county business. Shuttles will be used in lieu of car rentals when they are available at less cost. Officials and employees should consider alternative transportation, its availability, and cost prior to vehicle rental. Many times, shuttles between airports and hotels are available at a nominal fee, and taxi, subway, etc. between hotels and business sites may be less expensive and more efficient than vehicle rental.

The County does not provide for insurance of rental vehicles as part of its vehicle coverage. If rented, vehicles must be purchased using a County credit card. Exceptions must be authorized in advance by the County Official, and only after ensuring that the employee is providing supplemental insurance through his/her personal credit card. VISA, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express all provide vehicle insurance as part of the use of their credit card for rental. Purchase of supplemental insurance is not necessary when a County credit card is used, and not authorized as an additional County expenditure when a personal credit card is used.

(4) Other Transportation Fees

Business required taxi fares, parking fees, and ferry and bridge tolls are reimbursable.

.5 DOCUMENTATION OF EXPENSES

5.1 Receipts

Each claim for reimbursement must be accompanied by a travel reimbursement form prescribed by the Auditor and supported by an original receipt or acceptable substitute (the Auditor may accept, at his/her discretion, other forms of documentation such as credit card receipts, invoices, statements, cancelled checks, etc), except for the following:

- a. Meals during travel outside the County for more than one day.
- b. Transit fares, bridge and road tolls, and bus, taxi, and limousine fares if \$20 or less.
- c. Parking fees if \$15 or less (per stay).

5.2 Credit Card Receipts

When paying by credit card, most merchants provide a detailed receipt in addition to the credit card slip. Detailed receipts are required to be submitted in all cases where they are provided by the vendor.

5.3 Misplaced Receipts

Officials and employees who misplace or cannot obtain receipts shall be required to submit an affidavit on a form prescribed by the Auditor. Such affidavit shall provide a detailed explanation of the expenditure, the amount, and the signature of the employee certifying that the expenditure was for County business purposes. Chronic failure to provide receipts will be considered failure to follow the intent of this policy.

5.4 Claims for Reimbursement of Food Consumed by Others

All claims for reimbursement for meals and refreshments purchased for others pursuant to section 2.5, 2.6, or 2.7 must contain the following:

- a. Who consumed the food and drink?
- b. What was the nature of the occasion for the consumption?
- c. What public purpose of policy objective was served?

.6 SPECIAL PROVISIONS

6.1 Tips and Gratuities

Tips and gratuities are not reimbursable except for meals reimbursed by receipt and then only to a maximum of fifteen percent of the allowable amount.

6.2 Personal Expenses

Personal expenses including mileage, taxi fares, car rental, and other transportation costs to places of entertainment and other non-business facilities are not reimbursable.

Personal telephone calls are not reimbursable, except one brief call per day is allowed to the employee's family/home when the employee is away from home overnight on County business.

6.3 Fines and Penalties

All fines, penalties, and/or forfeitures are not reimbursable. Employees shall pay for all traffic tickets and shall report any violations received to their supervisor.

6.4 Travel with Non-Employee

Expenses for a non-employee (e.g., spouse) traveling with any employee are not reimbursable. Receipts which contain expenses for both the employee and the person traveling with them must clearly indicate only the employee expenses.

6.5 Travel with Another Employee

Employees traveling together and who may share lodging or eat together may combine expenses of a meal or lodging on a single receipt, however, the receipt of claim must clearly indicate who incurred the expense. Each employee must claim per diem individually. One employee cannot claim per diem for other employees.

6.6 Lodging

Lodging receipts must clearly identify the amounts paid, the number of occupants, and the single room rate.

6.7 Expenses Incurred on Behalf of Another

When an employee claims reimbursement for travel or other expenses incurred on behalf of another, in addition to other requirements, a detailed accounting must be attached to the reimbursement claim, which includes at least the following:

- a. Name of person on whose behalf the expenses were incurred.
- b. Whether the person is a County employee and, if not, the nature of his or her connection with County business.
- c. A breakdown of each type of expense for each person, including the claimant, for whom reimbursement is claimed.

6.8 Expenses for Cancelled Travel/Training

It is the responsibility of the County Official to ensure that prepaid travel costs such as registration and airline tickets, as well as non-cancelable reservations are only incurred when travel will actually occur. Payment for expenses related to cancelled travel/training will only be made by the county upon written documentation by the County Official, explaining the circumstances surrounding the cancellation and certification that the travel cancellation was due to a business necessity or personal emergency.

6.9 Credit of Personal Frequent Flier Miles

The County has determined that the cost of the additional administrative efforts required to ensure that the county captures credits for frequent flier miles is beyond the benefit received. County officials are responsible to ensure that internal procedures exist for obtaining the best price for airline tickets. All personnel are prohibited from purchasing tickets from a particular airline without regard to price in order to have frequent flier miles credited to their personal account.

6.10 Use of Personal Credit Cards for Travel

The use of personal credit cards for travel is allowed only for the individual traveling. Employees may not submit travel claims for another individual who has placed expenses on their personal credit card. Personal credit cards that accrue air miles are allowed to be used for the individual's own travel expenses. Refer to the County's policy on credit card use for further information and restrictions.

6.11 Reimbursement by Another Agency or Third Party

When reimbursement for part or all of travel expenses incurred on behalf of the County is available, employees are required to seek reimbursement. Reimbursement for County incurred expenses shall be remitted to the County if received by the employee. Employees traveling on County business and using County funds (receiving advance funds and/or submitting a travel claim) are required to comply with this policy even though they may be receiving full or partial reimbursement for their claim from another agency or a third party. The fact that another agency or third party may reimburse the county for an otherwise non-allowed expenditure under this policy does not justify the expense.

6.12 Authority to Withhold Rejected Expenditures from Pay

Clallam County reserves the right to withhold charges made against the County for travel which are found to be non-business, unjustified expenditures not in compliance with this policy, or for which proper documentation has not been submitted. Employees

in such circumstances are required to assist the Auditor to differentiate between business and non-business expenses and to remit the full amount owed for non-business, unjustified, or expenditures not in compliance with this policy to the County within ten days of notification by their department or the Auditor.

6.13 Method of Reimbursement

The IRS has specific rules regarding reimbursement for travel to which Clallam County will make every effort to comply. Most travel reimbursements are paid through the county's normal voucher process.

The IRS considers reimbursement for meals as part of one-day travel (section 2.3, para 1) to be income. Meal reimbursement (except meals that are part of a meeting registration or meeting attendance where the meal is mandatory) for one day travel will be paid through the county's payroll or added to the employees gross income at the discretion of the Auditor. Advance Travel is not available for expenses on one-day travel.

.7 ADVANCE TRAVEL EXPENSES

The following regulations apply to advance travel:

- a. Advance travel allowances may be obtained for all reimbursable expenses for travel in excess of one day, except airline tickets, and pre-registration fees paid prior to the travel.
- b. County officials, employees, officially recognized volunteers, and board/committee members of Clallam County may request advance travel allowances.
- c. The request for the advance shall be made on an advance travel form prescribed by the Treasurer. The advance shall be issued not more than five days prior to commencement of the authorized travel period except under unusual circumstances as approved by the appropriate county official.
- d. Advances shall be accounted for by submitting a proper claim with necessary receipts and any excess monies within five working days following the completion of travel. Excess travel advance funds will be returned to the issuing agent and a copy of the receipt for return of the funds submitted with the travel claim. Failure to submit timely travel claims shall render the individual receiving the advance in default and personally liable for the full unpaid amount, plus interest at ten (10) percent per annum from the date of default until repaid. The County shall thereupon have a prior lien against and a right to withhold funds payable or to become payable by the County to such officer or employee. (RCW 42.24.140)
- e. No advance shall be made to any individual who is in default.
- f. Under no circumstances shall any travel advance be considered as a personal loan to any individual, and any unauthorized expenditure of any advance shall be deemed a misappropriation of public funds.

.8 RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Employee

- a. Be familiar with the requirements of this policy.
- b. Incur travel expenses in accordance with this policy.
- c. Obtain and submit receipts and other documents necessary to document expenditures.
- d. Submit properly documented travel claim within the timelines of this policy.
- e. Cooperate with Auditor and/or County Official in auditing of travel claims.
- f. Promptly repay any advances or travel reimbursement not approved under this policy.

8.2 County Official

- a. Ensure employees possess a working knowledge of the requirements of this policy.
- b. Develop and maintain internal practices that ensure employees make travel arrangements, incur travel expenses, provide documentation, and submit travel claims in accordance with this policy.
- c. Assist the Auditor in audits and investigation of travel claims.
- d. Ensure corrective action and/or disciplinary action is taken against employees who do not follow this policy, have a history of not following this policy, and/or submit fraudulent claims.

8.3 Auditor

- a. Audit travel reimbursement claims to ensure expenditures are legitimate business expenses made in accordance with this policy.
- b. Provide reimbursement of approved travel claims.
- c. Further investigate and make determinations to approve or disapprove questioned claims.
- d. Take measures to recoup excess advanced funds or reimbursements made in error.

.9 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The questions and answers below are intended to guide employees in topics where questions are often asked. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of issues, topics, or answers. The information provided below is enforceable as a part of this policy.

- ***Who must comply with this policy?***

Anyone traveling on County business and requesting reimbursement is required to comply with this policy. This includes employees, volunteers and employees of County agencies.

Employees traveling on County business using County funds are required to comply with this policy even though they may be receiving full or partial reimbursement for their claim from another agency or a third party. The fact that another agency or third party may reimburse the county for an otherwise non-allowed expenditure under this policy does not justify the expense.

- ***Why has the County changed from paying per diem for one day travel to a receipt method?***

The IRS has interpreted reimbursement for meals and other costs during a single day as not qualifying as "travel" under their rules. Consequently, reimbursement must be made by receipt.

- ***Why does the County add reimbursement for one day travel onto my income once a quarter?***

The IRS has determined that since meal expenses on one day travel does not qualify as "travel reimbursement" meals must be taxed as income. The County, at its discretion, either pays one day travel expenses as a part of payroll, or, pays by voucher then adds any one day travel reimbursement to gross income once a quarter.

- ***When can I rent a car as part of my trip?***

A car rental is only allowed when it is necessary as part of County business. It cannot be rented when transportation for business purposes is only required between an airport and a hotel or conference area and a shuttle, limo, or taxi is available at less cost.

- ***Do I need to buy the supplemental insurance offered by most car rental agencies?***

Car rentals must be made using County credit cards. If the rental is accomplished with a County credit card, insurance is provided as a part of the credit card plan. Most personal credit cards also automatically provide insurance on vehicle rentals. Prior to utilizing a personal credit card for vehicle rental, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the credit card provides liability and collision coverage as a part of the card agreement. The employee must also receive prior permission for use of a personal credit card for vehicle rental from the County Official.

- ***Why can't I get a breakfast reimbursement for one day travel?***

Prior to finalizing our travel policy, the County surveyed the policies of other counties. It was found that our final policy on meal allowance for one day travel is similar to or better than most. Breakfast is seldom allowed as part of other county policies. In a number of counties, only lunch reimbursement is allowed for one day travel.

- ***What is the responsibility of the traveler in filling out the Travel Claim Form?***

- Prepare the Travel Expense Voucher, providing the level of detail requested on the form.

- In the "PURPOSE OF TRIP" column, describe the name of the training, or the purpose of the trip in enough detail to document that the travel was essential to carry out the necessary work of the agency.
 - Attach original receipts and documentation required by County policy.
 - Submit the travel voucher to the person authorized in your department to approve travel.

 - ***What are the responsibilities of the department?***
 - Department Head or Designee reviews and approves the voucher.
 - The accounts payable personnel should check to be sure all receipts, exception forms, etc. are attached and explanations for special circumstances are included. Also, to present to the Auditor's office for timely payment.

 - ***What can I claim for mileage?***

Any mileage traveled for the County can be claimed with the exception of commute mileage. For example, if you live in Joyce and normally travel to the courthouse for your normal work day but must travel to Seattle you may only claim mileage from your workplace. Mileage between home and your work place is considered commute mileage and may not be reimbursed.

 - ***If employees share a room can lodging expenses double the federal per diem rate be reimbursed?***

No. To encourage the cost savings practice of sharing a room, a rate higher than the allowed federal per diem rate will be reimbursed without the need for the exception form. When submitted to the Auditor's office simply note the name of the other employee and state that the room was shared.

 - ***Is my spouse allowed to travel with me?***

Yes. However, any extra costs incurred because of the extra person will not be reimbursed. Some hotels/motels charge for an extra person. If this happens you are responsible for obtaining the rate for a single and will be reimbursed for the single rate. This should be noted on your travel claim form or on the invoice provided by the hotel.

If using a County vehicle please see the County code on vehicle use, section 4.4.

 - ***On a day trip I didn't use all of my lunch per diem. Can I be reimbursed for a snack I purchased on my drive home?***

No. Employees and volunteers are reimbursed for the meal only. Per Clallam County Travel Policy, section 2.3, reimbursement is for one vendor only.

 - ***I will be buying dinner for a group of four volunteers locally. This is a working dinner. Is the amount I can spend based on individual per diems or a total of all per diems added together? (Per Diem for dinner in Port Angeles is \$21 per person. Do I get \$84 total or is each diner limited to \$21?)***
-

Meals within the county are reimbursed by detailed receipt only. Each diner should remain under the \$21 per diem rate. This includes meals, beverages, desserts, and tax but not tip. An approval form signed by the County Official explaining the necessity of a dinner meeting must also be submitted with the voucher.

- ***Why can't I be reimbursed for tips when I travel overnight?***

For overnight travel you are reimbursed by a rate set by the Federal Government. This rate includes allowances for meals and incidentals.

- ***How does pay work when I am traveling to training or a meeting?***

There are several rules concerning compensation when traveling. Basically they can be broken down into two situations:

- *One Day Travel* - When traveling to training or a meeting for one day (leave and return on the same day) all employees traveling are considered on compensable work time. This includes driving or riding in a car or on a common carrier.
- *Overnight Travel* - Travel time is compensable work time when it occurs during the employee's regularly scheduled work hours. This is true whether the employee is driving, or riding in a vehicle or on a common carrier. In addition, if the travel occurs during normal work hours on nonworking days (i.e., Saturday or Sunday 8am to 4pm for an employee who works Monday through Friday, 8am to 4pm), the time is compensable. Overnight travel that occurs outside of regular working hours as a passenger on an airplane, train, boat, bus or car is not considered compensable work hours. If an employee is required to drive, the time spent is considered work hours. An employee riding in a car outside normal work hours is not on compensated time.

Employees are not authorized to travel separately in order to be subject to compensation while traveling. Departments are required to minimize travel costs by requiring employees to travel together when possible.