

# CITY OF MORGAN HILL

## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

*III006*

**SUBJECT:** TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE EXPENSES

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** JANUARY 10, 1995

**REVISION DATE:** JULY 13, 1995  
MARCH 11, 2010

**ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT:** CITY MANAGER

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### 1. PURPOSE

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The purpose of this administrative policy is to establish guidelines for elected officials and employees to determine reimbursable expenses incurred for authorized attendance at conferences and meetings while in performance of official duties.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will be used:

- 2.1 "Commute" means travel to and from a conference or meeting where overnight stay is not required or desired.
- 2.2 "Conference" means a conference or training seminar attended while in performance of official duties.
- 2.3 "Ground Transportation" means any rental car, shuttle service, public transit, or taxi.
- 2.4 "Lowest Available Airfare" means the round-trip airfare directly between the Bay Area and the destination city, generally involving an advance purchase and other restrictions.
- 2.5 "Out-of-State" means any location outside of California or Reno/Tahoe.
- 2.6 "Prepaid Expenses" means any costs either paid in advance by the City or charged to a City credit card.
- 2.7 "Travel Expenses" means conference registration, tuition fees, job related tours, special events, and programs (other than recreational) associated with a meeting or conference; air travel or mileage reimbursement; ground transportation, hotel

accommodations, food and beverages; parking; and miscellaneous work related expenses or personal expenses that would not normally have occurred outside of the conference or meeting setting.

### 3. POLICY

It is the policy of the City of Morgan Hill to fully cover the legitimate business expenses of employees for attendance at conferences and meetings given the benefit received by the City.

### 4. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- 4.1 Employees shall secure advance permission from their supervisor before attending a conference or meeting at which travel expenses in excess of \$50 will be incurred.
- 4.2 Attendance at out-of-state conferences and meetings requires the approval of the Department Director and should be limited to events where comparable conferences or meetings are not available within the state.
- 4.3 All incremental expenses for spousal/partner attendance shall be the responsibility of the employee.

### 5. TRAVEL EXPENSES


- 5.1 Travel shall be by the most economical means available, either the lowest available airfare, use of a City vehicle, or by the State mileage reimbursement rate then in effect taking into consideration the loss of an employee's productive time.
  - a. Should there be a reason to travel by a more expensive means, the employee shall be reimbursed at the lower of the costs. For example, if an employee elects to travel by car when flying would be less expensive, the employee would be reimbursed based on the lowest available airfare. If however, an employee takes the train rather than driving in order to work while in route, the employee may be reimbursed at the higher amount with Department Director approval.
  - b. The employee should obtain a written quote or receipt from an airline or travel agent as the basis for reimbursement.

- 5.2 Employees shall use the most cost effective means of ground transportation possible and should research alternatives before traveling to the destination city. For example, airport or hotel shuttles together with taxis or other public transportation to get to restaurants may be less expensive than a rental car.
- 5.3 Employees shall plan their travel to minimize the time away from the office and expenses incurred. For example, if a six hour drive is less expensive than a plane flight, the lower cost should be evaluated against the loss of the employee=s productive time.
- 5.4 Where an advance purchase airfare which requires a Saturday night stay will result in substantial savings, an employee shall be eligible to be reimbursed for the additional night(s) hotel stay and related expenses up to the amount of the airfare savings documented.
- 5.5 If a conference or meeting is located less than 50 miles from Morgan Hill or an employee's residence, employees shall commute to the conference and be compensated by the State mileage reimbursement rate then in effect for those employees not receiving a car allowance or using a City vehicle.
  - a. If the conference or meeting extends beyond one day, the Department Director or his or her designee may determine if it is more practical and beneficial to the City for the employee to commute each day or to obtain hotel accommodations for the duration of the conference or meeting.
- 5.6 If more than one employee is traveling to the same conference or meeting by car, they should carpool if possible to limit travel expenses
- 5.7 Mileage costs may be reimbursed by documented actual business mileage traveled, or by estimating the mileage using "mapquest" or other similar source that utilizes a mileage calculation via most direct highway route.
- 5.8 Hotel accommodations should be limited to the most reasonable rate based on the nature and location of the conference. Advances for hotel accommodations shall be made based on a confirmed reservation or credit card receipt. Reimbursement for hotel accommodations shall be documented by receipt.
- 5.9 Food and beverages shall be reimbursed on actual expenses not to exceed \$50 per day, unless specific prior approval is granted by the Department Director. This limit shall not apply to meals which are part of the conference program. The City does not reimburse for alcoholic beverages.

6. REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

- 6.1 To the greatest extent possible, employees are encouraged to arrange for pre-payment of expenses. Cash advances are available for known expenses and should be requested no later than two weeks in advance of travel using a Business Expense Cash Advance Request Form.
- 6.2 Reimbursement requests should always be well documented and shall include receipts, where practical, for all incurred expenses. It is generally not practical to secure receipts for tips, purchases from vending machines, or in some instances when meals are with a larger group and there is a single check. Receipts should be attached to a completed Check Request Form. Any exceptions from this policy should be explained on the Check Request Form.

APPROVED:



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J. Edward Tewes, City Manager

3.17.10

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Date