	<p><b>Title:</b> Travel and Travel Reimbursement Policy</p> <p><b>Number:</b> 402</p> <p><b>Effective:</b> December 15, 2020</p> <p><b> Cancels:</b> Resolution No. 2017-28</p> <p><b>Prepared by:</b> LeeAnn McNulty Administrative Services Manager</p> <p><b>Approved by:</b> Authority Board Resolution No. 2020-46</p>
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**POL-402 TRAVEL AND TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to authorize travel on behalf of Mason Transit Authority (MTA) and to reimburse employees for travel and business expenses that are compliant with state and federal laws ensuring the responsible use of taxpayer dollars. This policy applies to all MTA employees, officially recognized volunteers of MTA and members of the Board (herein after “employee” refers also to officially recognized volunteers and members of the Board.)

**1.0 Travel Authorization and Approval**

An employee is considered to be in a travel status when more than 50 miles from the agency and the employees’ residence, using the most direct route.

The employee’s manager must authorize all travel, related expenses and alternative travel requests in advance. The General Manager must also authorize all out-of-state travel requests. This authorization is obtained by completing a Travel Form prior to making any reservations.


Prudent judgment is expected when incurring travel expenses while conducting official MTA business. Employees should consider methods of travel and times of travel which minimize costs to MTA. Employees who, for personal reasons, extend travel or travel to alternate destinations cannot incur additional expenses for the agency.

MTA intends to reimburse using standard practices such as those set by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) and the Federal General Services Administrations (GSA). MTA adheres to IRS Code Section 463, under “An Accountable Plan.”

The team manager and/or general manager is authorized to administer the procedures for reimbursement of travel expenses to allow for full flexibility when necessary, provided that reasons for deviations from the policy are fully documented.

**2.0 Travel Expenses and Allowances**

MTA reimburses employees for allowable expenses incurred while traveling on MTA business. Once approved, travel arrangements may be charged to a MTA credit card or personal credit card to be reimbursed to the employee.

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### 3.0 Airfare

MTA will cover employee cost for actual coach airfare for the approved travel. Reservations should be made as far in advance as possible to take advantage of the most economical rate. The employee must pay additional charges for personal detours, flight upgrades, reservation changes (unless beyond control of the employee), etc.

### 4.0 Agency and Personal Vehicles

Agency vehicles are available for business use. If an agency vehicle is unavailable, employees may use personal vehicles and be reimbursed for mileage at the IRS business rate. Employees should carpool to the extent practicable when two or more employees are traveling to the same destination for the same period of time. A vehicle may be taken home for travel the following day.

Please note that family members may not travel in agency vehicles, due to insurance liability issues.

Employees should use airport shuttles, taxis, rideshare services or public transportation onto their destination whenever possible. If a rental car is necessary, reimbursement is limited to the cost of a compact car, unless three or more employees are traveling together. Employees should purchase only auto physical damage insurance, since Washington State Transit Insurance Pool (WSTIP) covers liability insurance for rental cars.

### 5.0 Parking, Taxi, and Tolls

MTA will reimburse employees for business-related parking fees. Airport parking costs will be reimbursed for more than one day only in off-premise parking lots (park and shuttle). The airport parking garage should only be used to park for one day or less.

Bridge and road tolls, shuttle, and taxi expenses are reimbursable.

### 6.0 Per Diem

Per diem is available for meals and will be reimbursed using federal per diem rate published by the Department of General Service Administration (GSA).

([www.gsa.gov/perdiem](http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem))



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When a meal is provided by an organization or included in a registration fee, the per diem rate will be reduced for each meal provided.

Excess travel advances, if requested and received, must be reimbursed to MTA upon return.

## 7.0 Accommodations

Accommodation expenses will be reimbursed at the designated rate published by GSA. Ask for the government rate or discount when making reservations.

When lodging is part of the official business package (meetings held in a hotel or if arrangements have been made to reserve a block of rooms for participants) an employee may use accommodations provided. Any other deviation from the designated rates must be pre-approved by the employee's team manager and documented with an explanation.

Employees may stay over the night before if the conference starts before 9:00 AM the following day.

When lodging expense is increased because it includes family members traveling with the employee, the employee shall pay the difference in cost directly to the lodging facility.

Itemized receipts for hotel accommodations are required to be submitted upon return.


## 8.0 Travel and Work Time

Travel that keeps an employee away from home overnight is travel away from home. Travel away from home is clearly worktime when it cuts across the employee's workday. The employee is simply substituting travel for other duties. The time is not only hours worked on regular working days during normal working hours but also during the corresponding hours on nonworking days. Thus, if an employee regularly works from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday through Friday, the travel time during these hours is worktime on Saturday and Sunday, as well as on other days. Regular meal period time is not counted. Non-exempt employees whose time while traveling away from home will result in overtime in a pay period are required to flex (reduce) their working time in the pay-period whenever possible to avoid additional costs.

## 9.0 Incidental Expenses

Incidental expenses for fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel and restaurant staff, flight attendants and others for personal services performed are expenses and will be reimbursed according to GSA guidelines.

See Also: POL-206; POL-401; PRO-401; PRO-402; FRM-402A; FRM-402B

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**10.0 Miscellaneous**

Other business-related expenses may be reimbursed with the approval of the employee’s manager. Receipts must be submitted for reimbursable costs incurred during travel. Examples of business-related expenses include, but not limited to, business phone calls, fax machine charges, computer or business center charges and business meals.

**11.0 Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

Employees will not be reimbursed for the cost of:

- Movies, video rentals, and/or airplane earphones;
- Alcoholic Beverages;
- Childcare;
- Upgrades (flight upgrades, upgraded car rentals, larger hotel rooms, etc.);
- Laundry services (Unless incurring a minimum of four (4) consecutive nights lodging on official travel. Receipts required.)

**12.0 Travel Advance**

A travel advance may be requested when completing the Travel Form. Any travel advance is only an estimate of expenses and is for meal per diem only. The cost of airline tickets, rental cars and hotel accommodations are paid by company credit card or personal credit card, rather than a cash advance.

**13.0 Responsibility and Accountability**

It is the employee’s responsibility to submit receipts for expenses not included within the per diem and to account for advances made within a reasonable time. Excess travel advances not returned will be treated as W-2 wages per IRS Code Section 463, under “An Accountable Plan.”

If applicable receipts are not submitted, the employee’s travel reimbursement will not be processed. A detailed receipt must be submitted when a receipt is required for reimbursement. An affidavit will be required for a missing receipt.

All guidelines for using a MTA credit card must be adhered to when travel expenses are paid with such card. (See Credit Card Usage Policy #POL 401)