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TRAVEL POLICY

1. TRAVEL STATUS/OFFICIAL STATION

An employee is in travel status when the employee is on official business at a distance of more than 35 miles from the official work station or place of residence.

The official station is used to determine allowable mileage expense reimbursement. The official station is generally considered the place of work; however, if the employee leaves from their residence, mileage can be charged from this location.

2. AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL FORMS

An "Authorization to Travel" form must be submitted at least ten days prior to the date of travel and must be approved by the County Administrator for any travel an employee may incur if:

1. The trip is for more than one (1) day and/or
2. A registration fee (no minimum dollar value) is required.

The "Authorization To Travel" form must be submitted to the Auditing Department in the Legislative Office. Please note that if an authorization form is required and is not on file, the Auditing Department will be unable to process corresponding travel vouchers for payment.

"Authorization To Travel" forms must be accompanied by any information received regarding the conference or meeting announcement, agenda, or similar material for the review of the auditing staff and the County Administrator.

3. TRAVEL WITHIN NEW YORK STATE

One day trips within New York State that do not require a registration fee do not require authorization to travel prior to departure unless the request includes more than one employee (See Section #5).

4. OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

Out-of-state travel requires that an "Authorization To Travel" form be submitted to the auditing staff in the Legislature, who will then submit it to the Legislature for approval by resolution. Out-of-state travel **ALWAYS** requires a resolution. A claim for expenses submitted for meals, lodging, mileage, etc. while on business out of New York State will not be paid unless the trip has been previously authorized by the Legislature. A copy of the resolution authorizing the trip must be attached to the travel voucher.

5. MULTIPLE ATTENDANTS AT A CONFERENCE/SEMINAR

Multiple attendants at a conference or seminar by employees from the same department requires prior approval by the County Administrator. Justification in writing at least ten days prior to travel as to why one person could not attend and share the information with his/her colleagues must be submitted to the County Administrator. It is recommended that an "Authorization to Travel" form be submitted along with this justification.

6. RECEIPTED MEAL ALLOWANCE

Reimbursement for meals will only be made if the employee is in travel status (35 miles from the designated official station or place of residence) unless special circumstances exist and are approved prior to travel by the County Administrator. Travel times must fall within the guidelines stipulated below:

Time of Departure/Time of Return

Meals will be allowed when the time of departure from home or the official station at the beginning of the trip occurs before the following hours:

Breakfast - 7:00 a.m.
Lunch - 12:00 p.m.
Dinner - 6:00 p.m.

Meals will be allowed when the time of return to home or the official station at the conclusion of the trip occurs after the following hours:

Breakfast - 8:00 a.m.
Lunch - 1:00 p.m.
Dinner - 7:00 p.m.

Employees will be reimbursed up to the maximum meal allowance (Tax & Tips Included) as listed below:

<u>Breakfast Maximum</u>	<u>Lunch Maximum</u>	<u>Dinner Maximum</u>
<u>\$7.50</u>	<u>\$12.50</u>	\$25.00

Please note that some registration fees include meals. No reimbursement will be made for meals that were included in registration fees paid. No reimbursement will be made for unreceipted meals unless approved by the County Administrator.

7. MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

Employees are encouraged to use a county vehicle if they work in a department that has vehicles but will be reimbursed a maximum mileage rate for the authorized use of personally owned vehicles as stated in the current CSEA contract agreement. A statement must be attached to the travel voucher to support all claims for mileage reimbursement. For out-of-county travel, even if a travel request is not required, exact odometer readings from an employee's personal vehicle are required for mileage reimbursement. Estimates will not be accepted.

8. REGISTRATION REIMBURSEMENT

Employees are encouraged to have all registration expenses for conferences or seminars billed directly to the county. If registration fees must be prepaid, a copy of the conference brochure/announcement indicating the registration fee must be attached to the voucher. Employees can also be reimbursed for registration fees by submitting an original receipt or a copy of a cancelled check.

9. LODGING

Employees are encouraged to have all hotel expenses billed directly to the county. If this arrangement is not possible, employees will be reimbursed as long as an original receipt is submitted with the travel voucher. If employees are attending meetings, seminars, or conferences where the lodging is not included, they must make every effort to reserve lodging at government rates. Travel requests will be screened for compliance.

10. RENTAL CARS

Commercially rented vehicles can be used at the option of the employee. In no case should rental fees exceed the standard reimbursement amount that mileage would have been. Written justification for extenuating circumstances will be considered by the County Administrator. The employee must have an original receipt attached to the travel voucher for reimbursement.

Additional insurance and damage to rental vehicles are the responsibility of the employee. Employees are encouraged to check with their own personal insurance provider for details on insurance coverage.

11. PHONE CALLS

Employees will not be reimbursed for personal phone calls.

12. FOREIGN TRAVEL

Travel to any foreign country involving foreign currency should be converted to U.S. dollars on the travel voucher. A local bank will provide the conversion rate on the date of travel. Please indicate on a separate form the conversion rate used for each day and the name of the bank that provided the conversion rates. This form should then be attached to the travel voucher.

13. TAX-EXEMPTION FORMS

New York State tax charged on lodging bills is not reimbursable. Any employee traveling within New York State is required to supply the hotel with a tax-exemption form for lodging. The forms should be obtained from the auditing staff in the Legislative Office prior to traveling. It is suggested that travelers identify themselves as County employees when making lodging accommodations in order to prevent any unnecessary charges.

14. REIMBURSEMENT ON A TRAVEL VOUCHER

The dates of travel and the place of the conference or meeting must be noted on the front of all travel and mileage vouchers. It is not sufficient to submit a voucher for payment without noting where, when, and why these expenses were incurred.

Original receipts are required for any parking, tolls, taxi fares, airfare, lodging, and meals. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable. Please be sure to staple all small receipts onto an 8-1/2" x 11" sheet of paper behind the travel voucher.

Exact odometer readings must be provided for any travel requiring an "Authorization to Travel" form as well as all out-of-county mileage. Odometer readings must be indicated on the voucher or on an attached sheet.

Travel and mileage vouchers should always be submitted promptly after the completion of a trip. If a travel voucher is received in the Auditing Department and errors are found, the voucher will be returned to the appropriate department for correction.

15. TRAVEL ADVANCES

If extraordinary circumstances exist, employees can request a travel advance for mileage, meals, and tolls if an "Authorization To Travel" form has been approved. A voucher is submitted with a "Travel Advance" form and a copy of the approved "Authorization To Travel" form attached. The voucher must be submitted for payment in the last voucher payment cycle before the employee plans to travel. The employee must sign the "Travel Advance" form when obtaining the check from the Auditing Department in the Legislative Office. Employees must retain all original meal and toll receipts from the trip and submit these together with the exact odometer readings to the Auditing Department. The receipts are reconciled with the amount of the cash advance. Any money returned by the employee is deposited back into the department's travel account. If the county owes the employee an additional amount, a voucher is submitted for payment in the next voucher payment cycle.

16. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

Travel related forms are available through the Auditing Department located in the Legislative Office. Copies of the following County forms have been included at the end of this manual:

1. Authorization to Travel
2. Application for Travel Advance
3. Statement of Automobile Travel
4. Tax Exempt Certificate

Instructions

Please type or print clearly. Do not use abbreviations when indicating the purpose of the trip. If additional space is needed, please attach a separate sheet. Please fill in all information that applies to a particular trip. The department head's original signature and title are required. Please remember to provide the department account number and the expense code from which the trip will be paid.

17. EXCEPTIONS TO THIS TRAVEL POLICY

Exceptions to this travel policy will be handled on an individual basis by the County Administrator or his designee. Prior approval for exceptions is necessary.

18. APPEAL PROCESS

Any employee who has been denied travel by the County Administrator shall be permitted to appeal the denial by bringing the issue before the full Legislature at a regular meeting.

