

City of Ferndale TRAVEL POLICY MANUAL

City of Ferndale
TRAVEL POLICY MANUAL

UPDATED November 17th, 2008 as Addendum to City of Ferndale Personnel Policies and Procedures – Approved by City Council via Resolution #08-11-17

See Also: RCW 42.24, PAYMENT OF CLAIMS FOR EXPENSES, MATERIALS, PURCHASES -- ADVANCEMENTS
TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION, ADVANCE AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT FORM:

Scope:

This policy pertains to: All employees and elected officials of the City of Ferndale, as well as members of City Boards and Commissions. Although elected officials and members of City Boards and Commissions are not considered employees of the City of Ferndale, as used below, "employee" means all persons included in "Scope."

Purpose: The City of Ferndale's travel manual is created for the purpose of describing the policies, procedures, and expectations for City staff, elected officials, and other members of the Ferndale community who travel on City business.

Conditions**1. City Pays Reasonable & Necessary Business Travel Expenses**

The City of Ferndale pays for allowable business travel expenses when reasonable, necessary, and directly related to conducting business for the City of Ferndale. The City pays the following employee travel expenses:

- Transportation by airplane, train, ship, bus, auto rental
- Meals
- Lodging
- Personal vehicle mileage when directly related to City business and no City vehicle is available
- Parking and toll expenses
- Registration fees for conventions, conferences, training and tuition
- Expenses for required educational materials, which remain the property of the City
- Other incidental business expenses (copies, faxes, telephone)

2. City Does Not Reimburse Certain Expenses

The City of Ferndale will not pay or reimburse costs for:

- Liquor
- Theft, loss, or damage to personal property
- Any expenses for spouse, family, or other persons not authorized to receive reimbursement under this policy
- Airline and other trip insurance
- Medical or hospital expenses not covered by medical benefits or workers compensation
- Fines for parking violations or traffic violations.
- Personal telephone calls
- Personal entertainment and transportation
- Personal care service
- Other items deemed non-reimbursable by City Administration

3. City Administrator Administers Policy

The City Administrator develops and implements procedures for administering this policy. The City Administrator ensures compliance with policy and state law.

4. City Administrator Authorizes Exceptions

The City Administrator authorizes exceptions to the policy, such as emergency travel and any other exceptions not addressed in this policy. Unless authorized as an

exception, employees are responsible for payment of any incurred expense not in accordance with this policy.

5. Department Heads Authorize Travel In Advance

The Department Head must authorize travel expenses in advance:

- Overnight travel
- Less costly alternative airfare (Section 8)
- Lodging when destination is less than 75 miles of the workplace (Section 10)
- Use of rental vehicle (Section 12)

6. City Administrator Authorizes All Travel

The City requires final City Administrator approval in advance for all travel. (see travel authorization form)

7. City Authorizes Use of Advance Travel Funds

Employees may receive a travel advance when:

- Travel expenses are expected to be paid out of pocket; and
- A travel Authorization form is submitted with travel documentation
- All travel advances must be approved by the Department Head and the City Administrator.

With the exception of Advanced Travel Funds associated with meals, employees must submit Reconciliation for Advanced Travel Funds documentation, including repayment of excess travel advance, on or before the 10th day following the close of the authorized period, or

- City shall charge interest at a rate of 10% per annum on the advance from the date of default until settled or paid, and
- City has right to withhold unsettled advance plus interest from employee's pay.

8. City Limits Business Air Travel Arrangements

The City requires employees to make their own air travel arrangements, choosing the lowest published fare available, even if the lowest fares require layovers. Exception: when a lower fare requires an additional hotel stay or per diem costs that would exceed the difference in cost between fares. In the event of unused tickets, the City requires the Department to notify Finance Department immediately.

The City allows employees to make air travel arrangements when:

- (a) There is a greater cost savings to the City by air travel than ground travel; and
- (b) The employee obtains and documents quotes for lowest published fare; and
- (c) The Department Head and City Administrator approves in advance.

When the employee makes reservations, the City requires:

- (a) Advance purchase of air travel , utilizing the City credit card; and
- (b) Employee to absorb the cost of any unused tickets or ticket changes as a result of ticket restrictions.

When personal air travel is combined with a City business trip, the City requires

- (a) That the employee make air travel arrangements

- (b) Advance purchase of air travel by the employee,
- (c) Reimbursement for business travel portion only of the air travel at the lowest published fare after the completion of travel, and
- (d) Employee to absorb the cost of any unused tickets or ticket changes as a result of ticket restrictions.

9. City Pays Per Diem for Meals

The City pays a per diem rate for meal expenses based on the current GSA rate for the primary destination/region. These rates:

- (a) Are adjusted for partial day travel
- (b) Include taxes and tips
- (c) **Do not require receipts or reconciliation following the conclusion of a trip.**

For partial day travel, the City pays a portion of per diem for meals eaten while on travel status based on the most current GSA rate for the primary destination/region.

The City will not pay a portion of per diem for meals that are included in the conference registration.

10. City Pays Costs for Lodging

The City pays lodging expenses when:

- Travel destination is in excess of 75 miles from City Hall, or,
- Less than 75 miles from City Hall with Department Head approval.

Employees must reserve lodging at the government rate or at the least costly room rate.

When attending a conference the employee may elect to stay at the conference hotel at the lowest available room rate.

The City allows the option of a daily commute for out of town business. The City pays the lesser of:

- The travel expense incurred in repeated commutes, or,
- The amount that would have been allowable if employee stayed overnight.

11. City Pays For Travel Mileage

City vehicle must be used when available.

City pays for mileage when personal auto is used:

- At the IRS "standard mileage rate" in effect at the time of travel
- For round trip mileage from the workplace to the business destination
- To only one of two or more employees traveling in the same automobile

12. City Pays for Cost of Rental Vehicles

Rental Vehicles shall be considered by the City to be under the same policy and use restrictions as City owned vehicles (see Policy #402: Automobile Usage – Ferndale Policy and Procedures Manual)

City pays for mid-size vehicle rental when:

- Used for business purposes only
- No less costly transportation alternative exists
- Department Head and City Administrator approve in advance

The City does not pay for supplemental car rental insurance.

13. Employees Conserve Travel Funds

When feasible, employees shall conserve City travel funds by:

- Sharing rides
- Using state-contracted airfare (if available)
- Using government discount rates
- Using cost saving alternatives

14. City Does Not Pay for Personal Travel Expenses

The City does not pay any personal travel expenses that may be associated with business travel.

When personal travel is scheduled in connection with a business trip, the City pays only those expenses directly related to official City business. Any expenses related to personal travel must be clearly distinguishable and paid directly by the employee.

15. City Requires Reconciliation for Advanced Travel Funds

Employees who received Advanced Travel funds must complete a Reconciliation for Advanced Travel Form report upon return from travel. The City requires documentation supporting travel expenses including:

- Travel itinerary
- Conference registration
- Conference or meeting agenda
- Original itemized receipts
- Mileage logs

The City does not require documentation for:

- Meals paid on a per diem basis

16. City Requires Employees who did not Receive Advanced Travel Funds use Claim Reimbursement for Expense(s)

Employees who did not receive Advanced Travel funds must complete a Claims Reimbursement for Expense(s) report. The City requires documentation supporting expenses including:

- Travel itinerary
- Conference registration
- Conference or meeting agenda
- Original itemized receipts
- Mileage logs

The City does not require documentation for:

- Meals paid on a per diem basis

17. City Requires Approval of Claim Reimbursement for Expense(s)

The City requires approval of itemized Claim Reimbursement for Expense(s) by:

- Department Head for department staff travel
- City Administrator for Department Head travel
- City Clerk for Elected Officials travel

18. Employee Responsibility and Ethics During Travel

Employees travelling on City business are seen as, and are expected to act as, representatives of the City of Ferndale. While travel may provide opportunities for socialization and provides a less-formal environment than the normal work environment, the City will not tolerate illegal actions, or actions that may present the City of Ferndale in a negative light while travelling on City business. Discipline, up to and including termination, may result from such actions.