

POLICY MANUAL



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Travel, Conferences and Expense Reimbursement For Employees	December 11, 2019	C19-230

PURPOSE:

To establish a framework for expense reimbursement for Starland County employees for reasonable travel, conference and other business-related expenses.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Starland County will reimburse employees for the use of personal resources while conducting official County business in a fair, reasonable and transparent manner.

DEFINITIONS:

- Accommodation:**
 - Commercial accommodation – lodging facilities such as hotels, motels, corporate residences or apartments.
 - Private non-commercial accommodation – private dwelling or non-commercial facilities where the traveller does not normally reside.
- Economy class** – the standard class of air travel, including special discount fares. It excludes first class and business class or equivalents.
- Employee** – a person employed by Starland County.
- Receipt** – an original document or paper copy showing the place, date, goods and/or service, and amount of expenditure paid by the claimant.
- Travel Expenses** – those expenses that are incurred for business purposes including transportation fares such as air, bus, train or taxi, vehicle rental, private vehicle mileage allowance, accommodations, parking fees, meals, and business-related telephone and fax charges. Non-reimbursable travel expenses include expenses incurred by spouses/partners or other persons accompanying a Starland County employee on business travel, un-authorized service upgrades (i.e. business class airfare or hotel rooms), personal services (i.e. massages, spa/beauty treatments, movie rentals, personal bar tabs, dry cleaning/laundry services), personal purchases (i.e. gifts or clothing), traffic violations/parking tickets, lost personal property (i.e. luggage) or alcohol.
- Travel Status** – occurs when an employee is on authorized Starland County business travel outside of the local area. This includes business meetings, training events and workshops, conferences and conventions.
- Traveller** – a Starland County employee on travel status.



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TRAVEL

Accommodation:

8. A commercial accommodation allowance of \$250.00 per night shall be paid to employees on travel status and who stay overnight at commercial accommodations. An original hotel receipt must accompany the travel claim for the allowance to be paid.
9. If the actual reasonable travel expense incurred for commercial accommodation is greater than the allowance, then reimbursement of the actual expense incurred shall be made supported by original receipts.
10. When a hotel receipt is not provided for an overnight stay, or when the traveller stays at private non-commercial accommodation, a private accommodation allowance of \$50.00 per night shall be paid.

Transportation:

11. The standard for air travel is economy class. The lowest available airfares appropriate to itineraries shall be sought,
12. Where air transportation is authorized and used, the traveller shall be provided with the necessary prepaid tickets whenever possible. If a traveller books their own air travel, they shall be reimbursed immediately based on actual receipts including all taxes and fees.
13. In the event a traveller cancels a flight which has already been reimbursed by Starland County, the full amount of the reimbursement is due back to Starland County immediately upon cancellation. Employees are encouraged to have their air travel booked and paid directly by Starland County.
14. Where a traveller uses loyalty program points to acquire airline tickets for business travel (i.e. Air Miles, Aeroplan), they shall only be reimbursed for the actual expense incurred (generally taxes and fees). Reimbursement shall not be based on a conversion of points used into dollars or an estimated value of the ticket.
15. Actual expenses for taxis, shuttles and local transportation services, including gratuities, shall be reimbursed based on original receipts.
16. The use of a private vehicle for travel may be authorized when it is not feasible or practical to use a Starland County fleet vehicle.
17. A private vehicle mileage allowance shall be paid at the Federal Government's Canada Revenue Agency rate for the Province of Alberta. These rates are reviewed and revised on January 1st, April 1st, July 1st and October 1st. The rates applied shall correspond to the actual dates of travel and not to the payment dates.
18. When a private vehicle mileage allowance is paid, no other costs associated with that vehicle will be reimbursed to the traveller (i.e. gas, repairs, parking tickets, etc.).
19. Parking fees shall be reimbursed based on actual receipts.



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Meals:

20. A half-day meal allowance shall be paid for travel under five hours in a day at a rate of \$32.00.
21. A full-day meal allowance shall be paid for travel greater than five hours in a day at a rate of \$57.00.
22. Where the actual reasonable travel expenses incurred for meals are greater than the approved rates, then reimbursement of the actual expenses incurred may be made based on receipts.
23. Alcoholic beverages and drugs shall not be reimbursed with this allowance.

Travel Claims:

24. Upon completion of a business trip, the traveller shall complete an expense claim and attach all required receipts.
25. The travel expense claim shall be approved by the traveller's Department Head or Chief Administrative Officer as per Policy 970-11 *Financial Signing Authorities*.
26. The approved travel expense claim shall be forwarded to Accounts Payable for processing and payment on the subsequent cheque run.

CONFERENCE/CONVENTION ATTENDANCE

27. Attendance by an employee at any conference or convention shall be pre-approved by Council resolution.
28. Attendance by an employee at a training event, such as a workshop or seminar, may be approved by the employee's Department Head.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

29. Starland County purchases of goods and services shall be direct billed to Starland County and be supported by a duly approved purchase order.
30. In exceptional or emergency situations (i.e. urgent requirement for a good from a supplier that we do not have a charge account with), reimbursement of goods or services purchased by employees shall be made based on original receipts and shall be approved by the appropriate manager.
31. Where Starland County employees have made small out-of-pocket expenditures for goods, they will be reimbursed either through petty cash (under \$100.00) or by cheque. Reimbursement shall be based on original receipts only.

POLICY AMENDMENTS

June 28, 2023 – [C23-171] Removal of Partners Program and clarifying non-reimbursable expenses.