

HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS PROPOSED TRAVEL POLICY

April 22, 2008

Overview of Proposed Revisions

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Authorization for Travel

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Current Policy<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Requires budgetary approval of travel by the Department of Budget and Management for all in-state and out-of-state travel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">□ Proposed Policy Revisions<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ A purchase order will have to be requested to ensure that sufficient funds are available.■ Department of Budget and Management (DBM) must approve all out-of-state travel PRIOR to the trip taking place<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Exceptions: transporting detainees or conducting investigations■ Traveler will be responsible for expenses if pre-approval from DBM is not obtained. |
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Coordination of Travel

- Applies when county employees travel in a personally owned vehicle, county vehicle, or leased motor vehicle.
 - Required when:
 - 2 to 4 County employees
 - Employed by the same County Department
 - Travel on the same dates
 - With the same itinerary
 - To conduct the same official County business.
 - Exception: Official/department head determines that coordination of travel is not feasible **PRIOR** to the trip taking place
 - Determination must be based on a trip-by-trip basis and factors related to official County business
 - A written statement made by the official/department head identifying the reasons for the determination must be provided to the County Auditor's Office
 - Reimbursements for factors not related to official County business will be disallowed.

Travel by Aircraft

- Current Policy
 - The most economical airfare should be obtained. If travel more expensive than coach fare is obtained, then the difference must be paid by the official or employee.
- Proposed Revisions
 - Only coach fare allowed. If travel more expensive than coach fare is obtained:
 - Fare must be paid with the traveler's own funds
 - Difference in price will not be reimbursed
 - Refundable fares should be considered if possibility of a trip cancellation exists.
 - If a package fare is obtained (e.g., Friends Fly Free) when traveling with family or friends,
 - traveler will be responsible for payment of the airfare
 - The County will only reimburse 50% of the cost.

Travel by Personal Vehicle

- Current Policy
 - The County will reimburse the lesser of the currently adopted rate per mile (rate may vary if grant funds are being used) or the coach airline fare. Mileage is calculated on a point-to-point basis using the official mileage charts, plus reasonable incidental travel.
- Proposed Revisions
 - Employee must have a valid Texas driver's license and current automobile insurance policy.
 - In-County Travel
 - Daily travel log must include specific destination points and purpose of travel, including address information
 - Employee must submit monthly reimbursement requests
 - Commuting expenses will not be reimbursed

Travel by Rental Vehicle

- o **Current Policy**
 - Rental cars are to be restricted to compact or mid-sized sedans unless several individuals will occupy the car or other unusual circumstances exist.
- o **Proposed Revisions**
 - If the department has an assigned county vehicle, reasons for obtaining a rental vehicle must be justified in a written statement by the public official.
 - Travelers are required to use the State of Texas contracted rental companies.
 - State contract rates include basic insurance coverage.
 - Vehicle rentals one day prior to and/or one day after the trip may be allowed only if same day rental and return is not practical.

Travel by Rental Vehicle (cont.)

- o **Proposed Revisions (continued)**
 - **Size and type restrictions:**
 - Compact, midsize, or full-size vehicles are allowed for up to four county employees
 - Midsize sport utility vehicle or minivan are allowed for four or more county employees
 - Luxury or large sport utility vehicles are not allowed.
 - Traveler is responsible for payment of rental vehicle if rental vehicle is not of the allowable size and type. County will only reimburse for the allowable size and type at the state contract rate.
 - The original car rental receipt and car rental agreement must be submitted with the Final Travel Expense Claim.



Lodging

- o **Current Policy**
 - If a spouse and/or dependants accompany the official or employee, the difference in hotel rates above the single rate must be deducted.
- o **Proposed Revisions**
 - Use of the State of Texas travel management services contract for hotels in Texas is required unless cost benefits may be achieved by other means.
 - The county will pay:
 - If in-state, the most economical single occupancy room rate up to \$100 plus applicable tax, or
 - If out-of-state, the most economical single occupancy room rate, or
 - If staying at the hotel where the seminar is being held, that hotel's applicable rate for the most economical single occupancy room rate.

Lodging (continued)

- Proposed Revisions (continued)
 - Hotel stays one day prior to and/or one day after the event may be allowed, if necessary.
 - Hotel stays one day prior to the event are **NOT** allowed when the destination is within 100 miles from the traveler's normal place of work and the event begins on or after 10 am.
 - Hotel stays one day after the event are **NOT** allowed when the destination is within 100 miles from the traveler's normal place of work and the event ends at or before 3:00 pm.



Meals

- Meals
 - \$30 per diem in-state (out-of-county)
 - \$39 per diem out-of-state
 - Prorated for partial days
 - No receipts required, unless required by grant
 - Meals for travel not requiring an overnight stay are not reimbursable.

Meals (continued)

□ Meals: In-State

Trip Start Time	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total
Before 8:00am	\$8	\$10	\$12	\$30
8:00am -	\$0	\$10	\$12	\$22
After 1:00pm	\$0	\$0	\$12	\$12

Trip End Time	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total
Before 8:00am	\$8	\$0	\$0	\$8
8:00am -	\$8	\$10	\$0	\$18
After 6:00pm	\$8	\$10	\$12	\$30

Meals (continued)

Meals: Out-of-State

Trip Start Time	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total
Before 8:00am	\$9	\$12	\$18	\$39
8:00am –	\$0	\$12	\$18	\$30
After 1:00pm	\$0	\$0	\$18	\$18

Trip End Time	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Total
Before 8:00am	\$9	\$0	\$0	\$9
8:00am –	\$9	\$12	\$0	\$21
After 6:00pm	\$9	\$12	\$18	\$39

Policies and Guidelines

Meals (continued)

- Meals integral to the event, listed separately in the registration materials, may be allowed at a higher rate than the per diem; however, the daily per diem must be reduced by the applicable meal.
- The daily per diem must be reduced when meals are covered by the registration fee.

Travel Advances

Travel Advances

- Allowed if trip lasts for 3 or more days
- May be requested only for:
 - Meals
 - Based on the per diem rate
 - Actual number of days of the seminar/conference/meeting
 - Mileage
 - Calculated on a point-to-point basis using the Texas Mileage Guide
 - Incidental mileage will not be advanced
 - Incidental expenses (taxi fare, shuttle fare, fuel charges for car rentals, airport, and hotel parking)
 - Based on \$20 per day
 - Actual number of days of the seminar/conference/meeting

Travel Advances (continued)

- Requests must be submitted two weeks prior to the date needed
- May only be used by the requesting employee
- May not be used for a different trip other than the one listed on the original request
- Individuals must account for the travel advance within 20 calendar days after the seminar/conference/meeting date ends by completing Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"
 - Subsequent travel advances requested by the traveler with an outstanding travel advance will not be made
 - If Form T-4 is not settled within 60 days of trip return, the County Treasurer will deduct the advance from the traveler's next paycheck

Travel Reimbursements

- Travel expenses paid through personal funds and/or credit cards will be reimbursed upon completion of Form T-4 "Final Travel Expense Claim"
- Reimbursement will only be made if expense was incurred by the employee. The following will not be reimbursed:
 - Free transportation or lodging received in exchange for mileage, points, or other non-monetary credits
 - Reimbursement received from another source

Trip Cancellations

- Trip Cancellations
 - Traveler is responsible for making necessary cancellations
 - Notify County Auditor's Office if payments were made in advance
 - Notify Purchasing Department if travel credit card was utilized
 - Under certain circumstances, traveler may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on a canceled trip.
 - Natural disaster, illness, or personal emergency
 - Failure to cancel reservations for reasons other than those listed above will be at the expense of the traveler and be deducted from the employee's payroll check within 60 days of the seminar/conference/meeting date.
