

**Sebastian County Travel Expense Reimbursement
Policies and Procedures Manual
August 23, 2012**

Section 1. General

County officials and employees shall be entitled to receive reimbursement of allowable expenses incurred in the conduct of county business as provided in the travel expense reimbursement policies and procedures set forth herein.

Section 2. Prior Approval for Travel

Prior approval must be obtained from the county elected official for reimbursement to be paid for county in-state and out-of-state travel expenses, provided that travel allowances are included in the approved budget.

Section 3. Transportation

For travel by air, bus or rail, actual costs of coach airfare will be paid with a County Travel Card, or reimbursed with actual receipts. Where possible, reservations should be made 30 days prior to departure to maximize discounts. Vendor supplied receipts must be submitted with payment requests. Air travel insurance is not reimbursable.

Reimbursement for use of a private owned vehicle is allowed on a per mile basis at the federal mileage rate. Reimbursement shall be based on official miles driven (trip distance) and the County shall not assume responsibility for any maintenance, operational cost, accidents, or fines incurred by the owner of the vehicle while on official business for the County. Receipts are not required for tolls. The Sebastian County Employee Mileage Report Form must be attached to the Travel Expense Reimbursement Form. Where more than one county employee is transported in the same vehicle, only one owner shall be entitled to mileage reimbursement or actual gasoline expenses (receipts required). Reimbursement shall be calculated with the assistance of an internet mapping software. Personal vehicle mileage reimbursement shall not exceed the available coach airfare. When two or more travelers from the same department are attending the same conference, seminar, etc. and the travelers are driving two separate automobiles, the elected official must approve the use and reimbursement of multiple vehicles.

County vehicles may be driven outside Sebastian County for official business only if prior approval by the elected official has been obtained. Fuel, gas and oil charges, and minor repair charges for county owned vehicles are reimbursable with receipts.

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Section 4. Taxicab, Shuttle and Rental Vehicles:

Any ground transportation expenses associated with attending conferences, seminars, business meetings, etc. are reimbursable at cost with actual receipts. Buses, airport coaches, or limousines are to be used for local vicinity travel when practical. Taxicabs may be used if other facilities are not adequate or when time is essential. Rental cars may be used if it can be determined this is the most practical and economical means of travel to accomplish the purpose of the trip and when no other means of travel is available. Written approval must be obtained from the elected official. Rental car receipts must accompany the expense report. All car rentals should be booked at economy class. Exceptions must be approved in writing by the elected official and attached to the expense report.

Section 5. Food

A travel maximum per day shall be paid based on the per diem for meals and incidental expenses as authorized at the Maximum Federal Per Diem Rate as published by the Internal Revenue Service (Publication 1542). The per diem rate table will be published annually to reflect any updates made by the IRS. The per diem is allowable for employees or elected officials when travel requires staying overnight away from home, and is calculated at seventy-five percent (75%) of the daily rate for travel days to and from the destination and full daily rates for all other days. If the travel day falls on the event date, calculate the Per Diem at 100% for that day. Rates may also be obtained by going to www.gsa.gov on the Internet.

When meals are provided as a part of the conference registration fee, the elected official/employee shall deduct the GSA per diem allowance for each meal based on the appropriate meal amount from the GSA per diem rate for your destination. You can find the meals and incidental expenses breakdown at www.gsa.gov, under the per diem drop down box, M&IE Breakdown or Section 301-11-18 of the Federal Travel Regulation. It is the responsibility of the elected official/employee to list and deduct each such meal provided on their travel reimbursement form and document compliance with this policy by signature.

Section 6. Lodging

Actual costs for single-room rate lodging may be paid by Travel Card, when available; directly by the County to the establishment; or can be reimbursed to the employee with actual receipts attached to the payment

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as established by the GSA for the specific area. In cases where an employee is attending a conference and the conference assigns or recommends the hotel, then the County will pay the conference rate. If an employee stays at a hotel not recommended by the Conference, and it is higher than the GSA rate, a written memo must be attached to the claim to justify the lodging, and this memo shall be signed by both the elected official and the employee.

Section 7. Travel Cards

Travel Cards are issued by the County Judge's Office and may not be used until an approved travel request is received by the County Judge's Office Purchasing Department "prior to travel". The approved funds will be loaded into the Travel Card by the County Judge's Office. All purchases with Travel Cards must have receipts and be turned in with travel claims within one week of return.

Only authorized employees who have a Travel Card may utilize that card for lodging. The Travel Card will also be allowed for meals, but cannot exceed the maximum Federal per diem rate per day. Travel Card receipts for meals must be turned in with travel expense vouchers within one week of return.

Fuel purchases for County vehicles and rental cars utilizing the Travel Card must be approved by the Purchasing Department and requested on the Travel Authorization Form.

Section 8. In/Out of State Travel – No Overnight Stay

When county business requires personnel to spend over ten (10) hours out of the office for business travel, meal expenses shall be reimbursed at the maximum rate of \$15.00 per day. Actual receipts shall be required for reimbursement.

Section 9. Seminar and Conference Registration

Seminar and conference registration fees, etc., are paid directly by the County to the registrar, or can be reimbursed to the employee with actual receipts attached to the request.

Section 10. Parking

Expenses incurred for parking County-owned vehicles, privately owned or rental vehicles are reimbursable with actual receipts.

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Section 11. Miscellaneous expenses

Miscellaneous regular expenses for which reimbursement will not be made and other restrictions are as follows:

- a. Expenses which are being reimbursed by another source or the same expenses which are being reimbursed to another person are not allowable.
- b. Meals, drinks, or other expenses incurred for persons other than the employee requesting reimbursement are not allowable, provided however, officers transporting prisoners may file a claim for feeding of such prisoners. Alcohol beverages are not reimbursable.
- c. Tips for meals shall not exceed 15%. Room service, bellhops, and parking attendants shall not exceed \$5 per day and is included in your per diem rate.
- d. Laundry and cleaning expenses are reimbursable only if the employee is away from home base for more than five (5) days.
- e. Claims made out in the name of a hotel or claimant other than the traveler will not be approved for payment. All claims for travel by county employees must be made out by the traveler and payment will be made only to the traveler.
- f. One county employee may not include upon his travel expense statement the expenses of another county employee. Where county employees are traveling together on an assignment, each employee must submit his/her own reimbursement claim separately.
- g. The traveler is responsible for obtaining required receipts to support the items listed on the Travel Expense Reimbursement Form.
- h. Travel and expense vouchers are to be submitted no later than one (1) week following travel return date.
- i. Claim vouchers must be approved by the county elected official before reimbursement will be made. All required documentation shall be the responsibility of the traveler and Elected Official to obtain prior to approval for payment.

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- j. All other incidental expenses incurred in connection with travel reimbursement requests must be clearly identified and explained in detail on the Travel Expense Reimbursement Form and be held to a minimum.
- k. It shall be the responsibility of the elected official to designate the official station for employees claiming reimbursement for travel expenses. Meals and lodging shall not be paid within the city or town of an employee's "official station" or the place of residence.
- l. The County Judge is authorized to revise the Travel Expense Forms, making any changes and improvements deemed necessary.
- m. Claim vouchers are required along with proper documentation and signed by the Elected Official before reimbursement will be made.