Purpose

The Spokane Valley Fire Department, hereinafter referred to as the “District”, will reimburse District personnel for reasonable approved mileage and travel expenses. The District will follow the recommendations and guidelines of the State Auditor’s Office for personal reimbursements.

Authority

Resolution 35-87
Resolution 2006-266
Board Action 12/5/94
Board Action 1/17/94
Board Action 1/03/01
U.S. General Services Administration – (Domestic Per Diem Rates)

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   A. The term “District personnel” includes the members of the Board of Commissioners, the appointed Secretary, the officers and the firefighters and support staff of the District.
   B. The term “authorized purpose or travel” means such purpose or travel that has been approved in advance by the Board of Commissioners of the District, the Fire Chief or authorized designee.
   C. The term “expense reimbursement” means the amounts paid to personnel for reimbursement of expenses incurred and shall be in addition to any other sums to which the individual might be entitled for services performed.

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D. The term “reasonable person standard” is a test used to define the legal duty to protect one’s own interest and that of others. The standard requires one to act with the same degree of care, knowledge, fair-mindedness, and awareness of the law that the community would expect of a hypothetical reasonable person. The purpose behind the reasonable person standard is the public good.

E. The term “incidental expenses,” are fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, hotel staff, and staff on ships, per the Federal Travel Regulation Chapter 300, Part 300-3.

F. The term Tri-State area refers to Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

II. General Travel Rules

A. SVFD agrees to pay for or reimburse employees for the reasonable cost of certain allowable meeting and travel expenses, which may be incurred as a part of the performance of that employee’s job.

B. SVFD will not reimburse for any travel expenses that are associated with personal side trips.

C. The employee’s Chief Officer is required to:
   a. Ensure that any travel costs incurred are:
      i. Directly work related
      ii. Obtained at the most economical price
      iii. The most advantageous to the District
      iv. Both critical and necessary for District business
      v. not influenced by the personal plans of the traveler

D. All travel outside the Tri-State area shall require prior approval of the Fire Chief.
   a. Travel requests shall include the rationale of how attendance will be of benefit to SVFD.
   b. The employee shall provide a brief written or oral report to the Board of Commissioners upon return summarizing the content of the conference.
   c. Travel for the purpose of mobilization shall be exempt.

E. The traveler on official District business is responsible for:
   a. Being familiar with District travel and transportation regulations before embarking on travel.
   b. Paying any excess costs and additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.
   c. Returning as promptly as possible to either the official workstation or official residence when the District business is completed.
   d. Securing prior authorization for travel.
e. Travel shall be by the method of transportation and route most advantageous to SVFD. This means the traveler must make the travel arrangement that is the lowest cost alternative. If, for personal reasons, the traveler wishes to make travel arrangements that are not the lowest cost alternative, the traveler will only be reimbursed for the lowest cost alternative. Any excess costs become the personal responsibility of the traveler. For example, if a person chose to drive their personal vehicle to Seattle, the lesser of the mileage expense or the airfare + transportation cost would be reimbursed.

F. Miscellaneous travel expenses not directly related to conduct official District business are not reimbursable. Examples are:
   a. Airline upgrades
   b. Alcoholic beverages
   c. Early boarding
   d. Insurance for rental vehicles
   e. Rental vehicle upgrades
   f. Flight insurance
   g. Limousine services
   h. Transportation to places of entertainment or similar personal activities
   i. Travel, lodging, and meal expenses for non-employees (i.e. family, vendors, and consultants).

III. Travel Arrangements

A. All reservations for transportation and lodging will be arranged by the Executive Administrative Assistant or Division’s Administrative Assistant, unless approved by the Chief Officer responsible.

B. Travel requests shall be approved by a Deputy Chief prior to travel and submitted to the Executive Administrative Assistant or Division’s Administrative Assistant two weeks in advance of the anticipated travel. In cases of unanticipated travel needs, this two-week notice may be waived at the Deputy Chief’s discretion.

C. Travel by members of the Board of Commissioners must be approved in advance by the Board of Commissioners.

IV. Per Diem and Travel Reimbursement

Personnel traveling for an authorized District purpose will be compensated for meals and incidental expenses at the established IRS per diem rates. Employees receiving a per diem may not charge meals to the District credit card. Meal receipts are not required when receiving a per diem.

Travel Days: The per diem on the first and last day of travel is calculated at 75 percent of the prescribed meals and incidental expenses (M&IE), except for travel related to
mobilizations. Meals provided on travel days are not reduced from the 75% per diem.

**Partial per diem**: will apply when meals are provided during travel, i.e. when meals are provided during a conference. Meal payments are not required to be reduced due to meals served on airlines or continental breakfasts.

**Meals shall be reimbursed at the current IRS per-diem rate.**

**Advance for per diem**: Requests for per diem in advance of travel should be submitted two weeks prior to travel to the Finance Administrative Assistant for timely voucher processing.

**Motel or Hotel Accommodations:**

Lodging will be reimbursed at the actual reasonable cost.

**V. Transportation**

A. **Mileage reimbursement**: District personnel using a private automobile for authorized District travel shall be reimbursed at the rate of the allowable Washington State government maximum at the current IRS rate.

B. **Public carriers**: District personnel on authorized travel on behalf of the District using public carriers shall be reimbursed for the actual reasonable cost of the transportation. In the event different fares are charged for different classes of accommodation, the reimbursement shall not exceed the lowest fare available for such transportation.

C. **Car Rental**: Car rentals require approval by the Fire Chief or his designee.

**VI. Registration Fees**

District personnel shall be reimbursed for the actual amount of any required registration fee paid by the individual for attending a conference, class or school providing the attendance has been authorized by the Board of Commissioners, Fire Chief or authorized designee.

**VII. Payment of Authorized Expenditures**

Travel Reimbursement: All requests for reimbursement of expenses shall be presented to the Finance District within thirty days (30) of return from authorized travel. All receipts for expenditures charged to SVFD shall be presented to the Finance Division within the time frame provided by the Finance Administrative Assistant. Claim of any charge which could reasonably raise a question should be accompanied by an explanation of such charge.
VIII. Proof of Expenses

All requests for reimbursement shall be submitted together with proof of the travel, attendance or expense. This requirement may be satisfied by submission of any of the following documents:

A. Reimbursement of actual expenses. Original detailed receipts for all expenses incurred.

B. Per Diem. Proof of attendance for event or function including registration receipt or if registration is required or receipt for lodging if registration is not required. A copy of the agenda denoting which meals are included must be provided.

C. Transportation reimbursement. Proof of attendance for function or event or if private transportation is used together with record of mileage driven or carrier receipt if public transportation is used.

D. Affidavit for Lost Receipt-Expenditure Certification In the event that it shall be impossible for the individual to obtain the required receipts or in the event of the loss or destruction of such receipts, the individual shall submit an affidavit attesting to the amount of the expenses. (See Forms in Power DMS) **Incomplete forms will be returned unpaid.** The determination of the sufficiency of an affidavit shall be at the discretion of the Finance Director.

Adopted 11/12/1987, Amended 12/12/2022, Reviewed 11/27/2023