

**RESOLUTION 2017-09**  
**July 11, 2017**

The Board of Fire Commissioners of Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 5 hereby resolves to adopt the attached Travel Authorization and Expense Reimbursement Policy which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference:

**Travel Authorization and Expense Reimbursement Policy # 7000.5.1**

Adopted at a regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners, Pierce County Fire District No. 5, this 11th day of July 2017.

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Secretary

PIERCE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION  
DISTRICT NO. 5

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner

## **7000.5.1 Travel Authorization and Expense Reimbursement Policy**

### **Reference**

### **RCW 42.24, Policy 1000.19 Board Travel and Expenses**

### **POLICY**

It is the policy of Pierce County Fire District #5 to provide payment for the reasonable accommodation of travel required to conduct district business by employees.

"Travel" may consist of lodging, meals, transportation, seminar/meeting attendance and related activities in the conduct of official district business.

**"Official Fire District Business" shall mean, but not be limited to:**

1. Conducting legitimate district business such as fulfilling normal job functions, negotiating agreements, inspecting or purchasing equipment, coordinating with other governmental agencies, serving on interview or judging panels, training, and providing consultation; or otherwise approved.
2. Obtaining information or training directly related to a person's official function.
3. Serving as an official representative of Pierce County Fire District #5.

### **Persons Eligible for Travel Expense Reimbursement:**

Within budgetary constraints, Fire District staff and employees or uncompensated volunteers participating in approved district business are eligible for travel expense reimbursement in conformance with this policy or applicable collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and are likewise responsible for compliance with any implementing procedures.

**Prior Authorization:** Authorization to travel and for reimbursement of travel expenses shall be obtained from the Fire Chief, Assistant Chief, or designee prior to commencement of the travel. Even if the district will not be funding the travel expense, travel authorization is required if the person is to maintain official employment/business status during the travel.

**Standards for Approval:** Persons responsible for authorizing travel or approving expense claims shall ensure that the traveler is provided adequate information about the applicable travel and reimbursement policies prior to travel and shall apply, as a

minimum, the criteria outlined below in making decisions on granting or denying such requests:

1. The purpose of the requested travel shall be for the conduct of official Fire District business. It must be demonstrated that there is a direct relationship between the purpose of the travel and the employee work functions.
2. Budgeted monies for reimbursement must be available and authorized. Expenditure plans must be necessary and reasonable. Excessive or unnecessary expenses shall not be approved or reimbursed.
3. Travel requests and reimbursement claims shall conform to provisions of this procedure and other applicable laws, grants, contracts or policies.
4. A signed Claim for Expense Form will accompany copies of the agenda or flyer identifying the event, location and dates attended. Receipts for lodging, meals and registration will be required if reimbursement for these expenses are being requested.

**Reimbursement of Expenses and Allowances:** All persons are to exercise prudent judgment to avoid unnecessary District expense.

1. The Fire District shall not provide funding of a travel event or item of expense where a source of reimbursement to the traveler other than the District is specified in county, state or federal law or policy. In cases where reimbursement is available from another source, the District may, at the option of the approving authority, pay the differential between what District policy would allow for the total travel activity and the total reimbursed from the other source, but shall not selectively reimburse for only specific items with differing reimbursement rates between the District and the other source.
2. Advance Payment of Expenses. Advance funds for airfare and meal per diem, as listed on the approved Training/Advance Travel Request Form will be provided upon request. No advance payment will be made for mileage, lodging, shuttle, taxi, car rental or any other allowable expense incurred by the employee during the travel.

Within 5 business days of the member's return, a completed Advanced Travel Expense Verification/Voucher shall be submitted to the Administrative Manager with appropriate receipts or verification of eligibility to receive per diem meal allowances.

3. Travel expenses, which are paid directly by Fire District employees, shall be reimbursed in accordance with the rate schedule listed below unless otherwise

stated in an applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement. Reimbursement for any expenses, which exceed the limits set forth in this policy, shall require approval from the Fire Chief or an Assistant Chief.

Within 5 business days of the member's return, a completed District Expense/Reimbursement Claim Form shall be submitted to the Accounts Payable Department with appropriate receipts, documentation, and/or verification of eligibility to receive per diem meal allowances.

***Transportation:***

- Air Travel - Coach rates
- Private Car - current rates as authorized by IRS
- Rental Car - requires prior approval and receipt
- Lodging - requires prior approval and receipt
- Regular Lodging - government - commercial rate
- Conferences - conference facility rate
- Meals: Not to exceed approved per diem rate.
- Telephone: One personal call per day kept to a reasonable amount.

***Transportation Costs:*** Pierce County Fire District #5 will pay the actual and necessary costs of transportation in the course of official District business, unless otherwise stated in an applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement, as follows:

1. Where automobile transportation is necessary, a District vehicle shall be used where practical. Authorized use of a private automobile shall be reimbursed not to exceed the current Washington State Travel & Transportation Regulations.
2. The transportation allowance shall be based upon the direct route roundtrip costs. Other allowable costs shall include ferry/bridge tolls and off-street parking. Taxis may be used if they are the most reasonable means of transportation available.
3. If an indirect route is taken for personal reasons, all extra costs of such travel are not reimbursable.
4. Use of Private cars. Employees should use private cars whenever a District vehicle is not available. Drivers must have a valid operator's license, and the car must be insured to the state's minimum liability standards. Elected officials and District employees shall not be reimbursed for mileage expenses incurred within the Fire District response area. Persons using a private vehicle and seeking

reimbursement for mileage must maintain a valid driver's license and individual auto insurance, including public liability, bodily injury and property damage, which insurance shall be deemed to be primary as to any other insurance available to the District. If a private vehicle is used in lieu of air transportation, the total amount of reimbursement shall not exceed the cost of airfare.

5. Academy Attendance: This policy may also be used to provide interim reimbursement to qualified individuals who are required to pay in advance, from their own funds, for their travel costs related to attending academies, such as the National Fire Academy. In such instances, individuals may be forced to wait six to eight months for the federal funds to reimburse them for these out of pocket costs, thus causing a disincentive or hardship related to applying to participate in such academies or training. To mitigate the hardship to such employees or individuals, the District includes potential reimbursement in this policy. When this type of reimbursement is utilized, the attendee must reimburse the District within thirty days of receipt of Federal reimbursement funds. If the attendee fails to repay the District within the thirty days, a payroll deduction for the appropriate amount will be made.

**Lodging Costs:** Lodging costs actually incurred are reimbursable only as follows:

1. When travel requires leaving Pierce County for at least twelve (12) hours, unless otherwise justified and approved in writing by the respective supervisor or designee.
2. From the night before the authorized event starts through the night before it ends, unless reasonable and timely return transportation is not available, thereby necessitating additional lodging and subsistence costs. If, with the consent of both the traveler and the approving authority, the duration of the trip is extended beyond District business needs, and this results in a reduction of airfare ticket costs, the additional related lodging and subsistence costs will be reimbursed consistent with provisions of this chapter but up to a maximum of the documented airfare ticket savings.
3. When one (1) employee is involved, the receipt shall identify the respective single occupancy rate.

**Meal Costs:** Meal cost allowances or reimbursements are payable for official District business purposes only when:

1. Traveling outside the District.
2. Meals are necessary and integral to conducting official District business including training, job candidate interviews, seminars or business meetings with non-District employees.

**Meal Costs Are Not Payable When:**

- a.) The expense of the respective meal is included in a registration fee, airfare or another District expense.
- b.) Meals are incurred in the normal course of the employee's job, including staff meetings and consultation with subordinates or between employees.
- c.) The meal occurs in the approximate location of the employee's normal place of work where the employee's normal means of subsistence can be reasonably accommodated.
- d.) District staff retreats or training programs without justification relating to District business and cost approval of the respective supervisor or designee.

***Miscellaneous Reimbursable Expenses:*** Miscellaneous expenses related to official District business travel which are considered essential and reimbursable include, but are not limited to:

1. Registration fee of convention, banquet, luncheon, seminar or similar organized program.
2. Rental of hotel room or other facility.
3. Parking, ferry/bridge tolls, taxi fare, subway fare, airport bus service and rental car.
4. Telephone calls necessary to conduct official District business or to advise of a change in official travel plans, and for check in with family in the event of travel plans

***Non-Reimbursable Personal Expenses:*** Certain expenses are considered personal and therefore non-reimbursable including but not limited to:

1. Laundry and personal telephone calls.
2. Entertainment, television rental, clothing, personal sundries, transportation to places of entertainment and similar personal items.
3. Room service and valet service, unless unusual circumstances are cited to justify business necessity.

4. Personal "trip insurance" and medical or hospital services.
5. Transportation between the employee's home and official workplace.
6. Alcoholic beverages and tobacco products.
7. Tips and gratuities, except as related to actual meal costs.
8. Travel costs paid by another organization, i.e. mileage (if traveling as a passenger in a non-owned vehicle).
9. Expenses for family or guests.

Adoption Date: March 14, 2011

Last Reviewed and/or Revised: July 11, 2017.