

PACIFIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
TRAVEL POLICY

It is the policy of PSMFC to reimburse employees and to pay outside vendors for necessary, appropriate and approved travel-related costs and activities. The policies and procedures herein apply to all funds charged to programs as either direct or indirect costs.

PSMFC approved travel is generally defined as transportation on PSMFC business in excess of one's normal commute. Approved travel includes movement on official business from home or the primary work location to another destination, and return to home or the primary work location. PSMFC approved travel does not include the commute between the employee's home and his/her primary work location.

This policy applies to all programs, except when the funding agency guidelines are more restrictive than PSMFC policy and the funding agency rules apply. Employees traveling on program funds are to be familiar with the allowable cost provisions of their program. Travel expenses that do not conform to both this policy and the program guidelines will not be reimbursed to the traveler or expensed to the program.

All travel must be authorized and approved as required by the program. The approval of the "Expense Reimbursement Request" constitutes approval of the travel expenses, as well as the accuracy and reasonableness of the request for reimbursement. Requests for travel reimbursements must be supported by a statement of business purpose and required receipts are to be attached. Receipts are invoices and statements from the vendor itemizing the purchase of a service or product. Credit card statements or vouchers do not constitute "receipts".

A traveler can only be reimbursed for his or her own expenditures, not for expenditures incurred by other individuals.

The traveler's supervisor is responsible for reviewing the travel expenditures for compliance with policy and for providing proper payment authorization. Supervisors also are required to review expenditures, and in situations where there is reason to believe the expenditures may be inappropriate or extravagant, deny reimbursement.

Travelers are expected to compare all the costs associated with each mode of transportation and select the one that is most cost effective.

- A. Air travel:** PSMFC travelers are normally required to take advantage of the lowest airfare available and to plan as far as possible in advance. Travelers should book airline tickets 14 days or more prior to the flight whenever possible.

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- a. The lowest applicable airfare includes:
 - i. Flights with routing/connections that do not increase the one-way total elapsed trip time by more than two hours,
 - ii. The use of secondary airports that do not increase the one-way total elapsed trip time, including additional drive time, by more than two hours,
 - iii. Flights with departure/arrival times that are no more than two hours before/after requested time,
 - iv. In no case will the traveler be required to have a flight depart prior to 6:30 a.m. or a flight arrive later than midnight,
 - v. If traveling using federal grant funds, the traveler must fly a United States of America carrier,
 - vi. A traveler does not have to incur longer trip times if the savings is not at least \$200 for the round trip.
 - b. Deviations from policy will be monitored. No reimbursement will be made for first-class or premium rates where other options are available.
 - c. The traveler can be reimbursed for airline fees/penalties if a trip is changed or canceled because of PSMFC business needs or circumstances beyond the traveler's control (e.g., conference/event canceled or a business meeting ends earlier than scheduled). Individuals will not be reimbursed for fees/penalties resulting from trip changes or cancellations for personal convenience. An explanation must be attached as documentation with the travel expense report. In instances where these fees/penalties are incurred without adequate explanation, the cost of the fees/penalties will not be reimbursed.
- B. Transportation to the airport:** Travelers are to use the most cost-effective mode of transportation from their home or work to and from the airport. Reimbursement for transportation costs other than by personal vehicle should be no more than the cost of the standard mileage rate and the long-term parking fees.
- C. Miscellaneous transportation:** If the traveler requires transportation (bus, taxi, subway, ferry, etc.) between airports, at a destination or related to overnight lodging, the actual and reasonable cost of such transportation will be reimbursed. Receipts must be obtained and provided for any fare that exceeds twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).
- D. Car rental:** Rental cars are authorized if their use is as economical as any other type of transportation.
- a. Travelers may be reimbursed for a rented vehicle and for the gasoline purchased for official business in the rental vehicle. Receipts are required.

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- b. PSMFC guidelines do not provide for the reimbursement of luxury vehicles. The PSMFC standard is an intermediate size car or comparable vehicle.
 - c. PSMFC's automobile insurance policy covers rental cars, and accordingly, insurance offered by the rental agency should be declined. If an insurance claim is necessary, the signed vehicle rental agreement must be filed with the Fiscal Department. When traveling out of the country, the collision damage waiver must be purchased.
 - d. Only PSMFC employees are authorized to drive rental vehicles on PSMFC business.
- E. Personal vehicle:** The use of a privately owned vehicle will be reimbursed at the lower of the current GSA standard mileage rate or as limited by a traveler's program. The mileage rate is to cover all expenses incurred for using the privately owned vehicle except parking fees and tolls. An individual who uses a privately owned vehicle on PSMFC business must meet the liability insurance requirements of the motor vehicle financial responsibility laws of their state.
- a. Transportation costs for parking fees and tolls are reimbursable on an actual cost basis in addition to the standard mileage rate. Receipts must be obtained and provided for any individual expenses that exceed twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).
 - b. All other personal vehicle services (e.g., maintenance, car washing, detailing, oil changes, etc.) are not reimbursable.
 - c. Mileage may be reimbursed for travel to and from an employee's temporary work location. In such circumstances, no adjustment is required for normal commuting mileage.
- F. Lodging:** Travelers on PSMFC business will be reimbursed actual lodging costs, including applicable taxes. However, the maximum lodging reimbursements may not exceed the federal lodging per diem. Itemized receipts are required for lodging reimbursement. The lodging facility must be at least fifty miles from the traveler's home or headquarters. Policy exceptions are described in section (F)(B).
- A. Procedures:**
- a. Domestic federal travel per diems by city are available on the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) website www.gsa.gov/perdiem and foreign federal per diem rates are available on the U.S. Department of State Office of Allowances website <http://aoprals.state.gov/>.
 - b. Travelers will be reimbursed for documented business-related telephone, fax, copying, computer connections, and other necessary business costs.
 - c. Non-business expenses including movies, games, laundry and other personal expenses will not be reimbursed.

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- d. If a lodging facility requires prior financial commitment (e.g., prepayment for one night or credit card guarantee), the traveler is responsible for notifying the lodging facility of any cancellation. If he/she fails to provide notice of cancellation:
 - (i) The traveler will not be reimbursed for the resulting penalty payment.
 - (ii) The traveler will be required to reimburse PSMFC for the resulting penalty if PSMFC funds were used for the prior financial commitment.
- e. Supporting documentation for conference, convention, or training session lodging expenses must include receipts and an official document that indicates the lodging rate for the event site.

B. Exceptions:

- a. Any request for reimbursement of lodging expenses in excess of the federal lodging per diem must be documented in the reimbursement request. However, lodging expenses greater than 300% of the federal lodging per diem will be paid personally by the traveler.
- b. Such lodging expenses will be approved only under the following conditions:
 - (i) The traveler is required to attend a meeting, conference, convention, or training session where the traveler is expected to have business interaction with other participants in addition to scheduled events; and

It is anticipated that the maximum benefit will be achieved by authorizing the traveler to stay at the lodging facility where the meeting, conference, convention, or training session is held; and

The lowest available advertised lodging rate at the lodging facility exceeds the federal lodging per diem amount.

- (ii) When travel is for PSMFC business other than to attend a meeting, conference, convention, or training session and lodging accommodations in the travel destination area are:
 - (a) Not available at or below the federal lodging per diem; and

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- (b) The savings achieved from occupying less expensive lodging at a more distant site are consumed by an increase in transportation and other costs.
- c. Reimbursement for lodging less than 50 miles from the traveler's home or headquarters is allowable only in unusual, infrequent circumstances.

G. Meals, tips and incidental expenses: PSMFC will reimburse business travel meals at the GSA per diem rate. For overnight travel, meals are reimbursed at the rate in effect for the area where the traveler stops for sleep. The meal reimbursement for the last day of travel (return day) would continue to be the rate for the location where the traveler last stopped for sleep. The per diem allowance includes reimbursement for incidental expenses such as fees and tips for porters, baggage carriers, house-cleaning and bell staff; therefore, requests for reimbursements of these types of expenses will be disallowed.

1. No reimbursement will be made for a meal that is provided as part of a conference registration fee. Conference registration documentation must be submitted with the travel claim to identify meals included in the conference registration fee.
2. Business travel in excess of 50 miles one-way distance from home or duty station without an overnight stay (i.e., day trips) is eligible for reimbursement. Reimbursements will be based on an actual cost basis as evidenced by a itemized receipt up to the applicable maximum per meal entitlement amount using the following calculations rounded up to the nearest whole dollar (e.g., \$11.35 rounds to \$12.00):
 - a. Breakfast: must be on travel status prior to seven a.m.
The breakfast portion is 20% of the standard CONUS per diem rate for meals and incidentals.
 - b. Lunch: must be on travel status prior to noon.
The lunch portion is 30% of the standard CONUS per diem rate for meals and incidentals.
 - c. Dinner: must on travel status after five p.m.
The dinner portion is 50% of the standard CONUS per diem rate for meals and incidentals.

An individual must be on travel status for a reasonable period after the above meal times to be reimbursed for meals. Reimbursement for meals related to

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non-overnight travel is considered income by the Internal Revenue Service and must be reported as wages on Form W-2.

3. Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages will not be authorized from program funds as either direct or indirect costs.
 4. Reimbursement for meal expenses incurred within 50 miles of the traveler's official duty station is prohibited, unless it is connected with training, a seminar or a conference. Reimbursement for meals at the official duty station is not allowable for informal meetings (i.e. over a casual breakfast, lunch or dinner) between staff members of PSMFC or other agencies.
 - a. Exception: The Executive Director is allowed local meal expense due to meetings that occur throughout the day outside the PSMFC office with other agency personnel and due to sensitive subject matter. Often the Executive Director will meet with high level management positions while they are attending meetings in the vicinity and this gives him/her the opportunity to discuss matters in person without incurring additional travel costs. These meetings may occur over meal periods during meetings, on breaks from one meeting to another, or during flight layovers at the airport. It is cost effective to meet during these periods of time, as many of these individuals have tight schedules due to the level of position within their organization and the numerous commitments they have. The daily maximum for local meal expense is limited to 150% of the GSA per diem meals and incidentals rate established for Portland, Oregon.
 5. Reimbursement will not be made to an employee for expense of meals or lodging provided by relatives or other parties unless the relative or other party is in the business of providing such services and advertises such to the general public.
- H. Personal travel:** The traveler must separate and is responsible for any costs of personal travel that may be combined with business travel. PSMFC reserves the right to determine the fairness of the allocation of costs.
- I. Travel expenses paid or reimbursed by an outside entity:** Employees are not allowed to receive travel expense reimbursement directly from outside sources for travel that occurs while on official PSMFC travel status. A copy of the request for reimbursement submitted to the outside entity must be provided to the PSMFC Fiscal Department at

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the time of submission. The travel claim must direct the outside entity to make payments directly to PSMFC.

J. Refreshments and meals for official meetings: PSMFC recognizes the importance of sponsoring meetings and training sessions. Further, PSMFC understands that to facilitate the needs of the attendees and to ensure the best utilization of attendee time, refreshments and/or meals may be provided to those attending department sponsored meetings and/or training sessions under the following criteria:

1. Refreshments:
 - a. The meeting or training session has a published agenda and attendance is mandatory;
 - b. The meeting or training session has an intended duration of three (3) hours or more;
 - c. There are five (5) or more attendees; and
 - d. The total per attendee cost of the refreshments, per refreshment break, does not exceed the allowable partial day per diem amount established for breakfast per section G(2)(a).

2. Meals:
 - a. The meeting or training session has a published agenda and attendance is mandatory;
 - b. Location or scheduling conflicts do not lend themselves to a meal recess;
 - c. The meeting's business is furthered by speeches, presentations or interpersonal exchange that would not normally occur on a daily basis;
 - d. The meeting or training session has an intended duration of six (6) hours or more;
 - e. There are five (5) or more attendees; and
 - f. The per attendee cost of the meal does not exceed the allowable partial day per diem reimbursement per section G(2).