
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District

Administrative Regulation No. 251A: Travel and Meeting Expense Reimbursements for Employees

Issuing Officer: General Manager
Date of Adoption: 10/89
Most Recent Amendment: 5/14/19
See Also: 177

Subject Category: Section 200: Human Resources
Subsection: Travel
Control Department(s): Finance and Audit

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Administrative Regulation is to establish procedures relative to travel and meeting expenses incurred by Employees of AC Transit District in the performance of their duties; to define authorizations required to incur such expenses; to ensure uniform and fair payment of expenses; and to establish procedures for securing reimbursement.

This Administrative Regulation applies to and affects all employees of the District as herein defined. Members of the Board of Directors and Officers of the District shall follow Board Policy 180A for travel and meeting expense reimbursements.

II. PERSONS AFFECTED

This Administrative Regulation is limited to District employees only, excluding Board Officers, with limited applicability to Accessibility Advisory Committee members as prescribed in Board Policy 177.

III. DEFINITIONS

"Employees" means those individuals who are employed for a salary or wage by the District. Employees, however, shall not include members of the Board of Directors, the General Manager, General Counsel, and District Secretary. Employees also shall not include individuals working under a contract for services unless specifically so identified in said contract.

"District Business" means carrying out the responsibilities and duties of the office or position held by the Employees.

"Conference" means official functions or gatherings of transit organizations or professional organizations directly related to the responsibilities and duties of the Employees.

"Meeting" means any meeting of individuals where District Business is discussed.

"Long Term Assignment" means an authorized assignment of an employee to a location outside of the District's geographic area for a period in excess of six months.

“Personal Business” means the conduct of business for personal financial gain which is not specifically related to District business at a conference or meeting.

“Political Function” means any activity that is held for the purpose of supporting or opposing, or raising money to support or oppose, any candidate, ballot measure, or political party.

“Incidental Expense” means any fee or tip given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, or taxi cab drivers.

“Written Justification” means an explanation of an expense provided in electronic mail, fax, digital or handwritten formats that provide a record.

IV. REGULATION

A. Authorizations and Approval

1. Out-of-State Travel

The General Manager will be required to approve, in *advance*, all out-of-state travel by District personnel, other than the Board of Directors and Board Officers, to attend a conference or a meeting related to District business and at District expense. Requests for travel shall be submitted to and approved by the appropriate department head, and approved by the Employee’s Executive Staff member, where applicable, prior to submittal to the General Manager.

A quarterly report which details the General Manager approved trips undertaken by staff during the preceding quarter and any budgetary overruns resulting from said trips shall be submitted to the Board of Directors.

“The General Manager shall not approve any District funded out of state travel to any of the states listed on the [California Attorney General’s website](#) that are listed pursuant to California Government Code Section 11139.8 unless one of the exceptions listed in said Government Code section applies.” If an employee submits a request to travel to a banned state, the travel authorization must clearly identify the applicable exception; however, the listing of an exception is not a guarantee that the requested travel will be approved.

2. In-State Travel

All in-state travel involving overnight accommodations shall be approved by the General Manager prior to incurring expenses when such travel is required in connection with the performance of the Employee’s duties and responsibilities to the District.

In-state travel not involving overnight accommodations shall be approved by the Employee’s Executive Staff member, prior to incurring expenses when such travel is required in connection with duties and responsibilities to the District.

3. Long Term Assignments

The General Manager will be required to approve, in advance, all long term assignments of District personnel.

A quarterly report (coinciding with the District's quarterly employee travel report) will be submitted to the Board of Directors which details the existing long term assignment(s), the expenses incurred since the last reporting period and an assessment of the duration of the long term assignment(s).

4. Limitations

- a. Travel and meeting expenditures shall not exceed approved budget appropriations and associated fiscal policies established therewith.
- b. Personal Business: The District shall not be responsible for any travel associated with personal business. If an Employee attends a conference or meeting for which reimbursement is claimed that also includes personal business, the Employee shall only seek reimbursement for expenses associated with the conduct of District business. The Employee shall disclose, prior to the approval of the travel, the dual nature of any travel and the portion undertaken on behalf of the District.
- c. Guests: Regardless of Employees attendance at a conference or meeting, expenses for family or guests shall not be incurred, nor reimbursed by the District.

B. Reimbursable Expenses

1. Accommodations:

- a. No reimbursement is authorized for overnight accommodations in the counties of Alameda, San Francisco, Contra Costa, San Mateo, Marin, Napa, Solano, Sonoma, or Santa Clara.
- b. In the event exceptional circumstances can be documented to justify a waiver of this provision, the General Manager may authorize a waiver of this provision for employees. The Board of Directors must ratify all such waivers approved by the General Manager.
- c. Reimbursement for hotel or motel lodging expenses, including applicable taxes, will be on the basis of actual expenditure but shall not exceed the standard room rates at official conference hotels for single occupancy. Reimbursement for hotel and motel lodging expenses shall cover the days of travel (to and from the conference or meeting) as well as the days of the conference or meeting. No expenses shall be incurred by the District for additional days of stay to conduct personal business. Employees shall be responsible for any amount in excess of the standard room rate for conferences. In instances where lodging is required for a meeting, every effort shall be made to choose the lowest cost lodging alternative.

2. Transportation:

- a. Travel up to 150 miles one way may be by private automobile. Reimbursement shall be at the rates prescribed by the Internal Revenue Service. Reimbursement for modified vehicles for disabled individuals shall be reimbursed at the rate authorized by the Internal Revenue Service.
- b. When actual mileage exceeds by 10% the reasonable distance between points, the Employee must justify such excess, otherwise, reimbursement will be made only on the most direct route.
- c. Travel to destinations over 150 miles one-way will be paid at mileage or airfare cost, but in no event shall the reimbursement exceed the value of coach airfare and related surface travel authorized in subsection d, e and f below.
- d. Airfare and reasonable baggage fees based on the length of the trip for foreign and domestic flights shall be reimbursed based on the value of the applicable round trip coach airfare to the proposed destination. All efforts should be made to obtain the lowest available fare by making reservations well in advance of departure. The District shall not reimburse Employees for seat selection fees, "early bird" check-in fees, or in-flight food or beverages. No District funds shall be expended on airfare for guests.
- e. If transportation is provided as part of the registration fee for a conference, reimbursement may not be sought if the Employee prefers another mode of transportation unless it is public transportation.
- f. Other Transportation Costs: The following expenses shall be authorized when such services are the least costly available given the individual circumstances of the travel:
 - i. Travel to and from airports, including private automobile mileage, taxis, airport shuttles or buses. Public transportation shall be the preferable method of travel, whenever feasible or when other more cost effective transportation is not available.
 - ii. Storage, parking, and toll charges when such charges are reasonable and necessary.
 - iii. Automobile rental expenses shall only be authorized in those unusual situations where written justification showing that the rental fees are the most cost effective means of travel is provided to the General Manager in advance of the trip.
- g. Frequent Flier Miles: If an employee purchases airline tickets (and then directly requests reimbursement from the District), the employee may retain "frequent flier" miles for which he/she may be eligible.

3. Meals

- a. The District's maximum full day meal and incidental expenses rate shall be equal to the maximum federal per diem and incidental expenses rate established by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for travel within the Continental United States (CONUS), outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) and foreign rates as published by the United States Government, or \$50 per day, if the rate is unpublished. Per Diem rates can be found at www.gsa.gov/perdiem.

Per Diem for the first and last day of actual travel to and from a conference or meeting will be based on the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) Breakdown published on the GSA website at the rate published for First and Last Day of Travel for the corresponding M&IE total. Per Diem will be allowed in full only when:

- i. The conference is located beyond the nine Bay Area counties (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Santa Clara, San Francisco, San Mateo, Solano or Sonoma;
 - ii. While in attendance at the conference or meeting; and
 - iii. When conference fees do not include meals.
- b. If a conference fee includes some, but not all meals, or if an attendee must forego some or all of the provided meal(s) for health or business reasons, reimbursement shall be based on the M&IE Breakdown published on the GSA's website. If a conference attendee forgoes a meal for health or business reasons, an explanation for the separate meal purchase(s) must accompany the claim for reimbursement along with a receipt for the meal(s). Reimbursement shall be based on the overall meal and incidental expense total for the city the conference or meeting takes place and shall not exceed established rates.
 - c. Employee meal expenses, incurred while on District business within the nine county Bay Area Region, shall not be reimbursed unless authorized by the Employee's Executive Staff Member and the General Manager. Reimbursement shall be allowed only when a receipt for actual meal expense has been provided and shall not exceed the M&IE Breakdown published on the GSA's website. Expenses for non-district personnel are not reimbursable unless authorized by the General Manager in advance and the claim for reimbursement identifies who is included in the District business meeting and the nature of the District business.
 - d. Expenses for conference luncheons, special banquets, or other set price official affairs which exceed the federal per diem limitation, will be reimbursed on the basis of actual expenditure upon presentation of documentation of the set price. Any meal(s) subject to this provision shall be deducted from the total per diem amount based on the M&IE value of the meal.

- e. Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages as part of meal expenses shall not be permitted unless said expense is part of a fixed-price conference or meeting event and separation of such expense from the total cost is not possible.
 - f. No reimbursement shall be provided for incidental expenses beyond what is already included in the IRS per diem rate.
4. Other

- a. Registration: Registration fees for conferences or meetings will be paid at actual cost. Official literature indicating the cost of registration and conference or meeting dates must accompany the Employee expense claim.
- b. Telephone: Reimbursement for District business related telephone and facsimile toll charges are permitted under this policy. Any charges in excess of \$5.00 per day shall be itemized to include to whom the call is made or facsimile sent and the nature/need for the call.

5. Disabled Persons Attendant

Disabled Employees requiring the services of an attendant while traveling on District Business may be reimbursed for expenses of the attendant as provided herein.

- a. The cost of personal services of an attendant may be reimbursed in an amount not to exceed \$65 per day without prior approval of the General Manager. All reimbursement shall be made directly to the Employee requiring said service.
- b. Disabled individuals who require the services of an attendant may be reimbursed for actual hotel or motel lodging expenses for the attendant, but this expenditure shall not exceed the standard room rates for official conference hotels for double occupancy.
- c. Subject to the provisions of Section IV.C., above, a personal attendant for a disabled individual shall be entitled to receive per diem for meals.

6. Mileage

- a. Employees may seek reimbursement for mileage when using their personal vehicle for District business; however, the District will not reimburse mileage for an employee to commute to and/or from their primary work location.
- b. If an employee begins their work day at a location other than their assigned work location, mileage shall only be reimbursed for the distance between their primary work location and the alternate location.

7. Restrictions

- a. If, for personal convenience, an Employee uses an indirect route to travel or travels by a direct route that is interrupted, except for reasons beyond the control of the Employee, any resulting additional expense will be borne by the Employee.
- b. Reimbursement of costs incurred while attending a political function shall not be authorized.
- c. No District credit cards shall be issued to District Employees unless authorized by the General Manager. Employees who are issued a District credit card shall use it in accordance with the Administrative Regulation regarding the use of the AC Transit Corporate Purchase card except to the extent that those regulations conflict with the provisions of Administrative Regulation 180B.

C. Reimbursement

1. An advance for per diem, in an amount representing the estimated expenses, may be secured upon application to the General Manager or his/her designee. The General Manager may authorize an advance in a higher amount upon receipt of written justification and presentation of an itemization of estimated expenses. Accounting of advances for per diem shall be done on the same form as required for rendering claims for reimbursements.
2. All claims for reimbursement shall be prepared on a District Expense Report form and shall be presented for payment monthly or upon completion of a trip, but no longer than 30 days after the event. Any employees submitting expense reports after the 30-day period shall not be reimbursed.
3. All claims for reimbursement shall include an itemization of expenses, provide a brief explanation of the purpose of the conference or meeting and shall include original receipts or vouchers for all expenses incurred with the exception of per diem. Documentation such as a charge statement or airline boarding passes which do not provide details of such expenditures will be deemed inadequate for purposes of reimbursement. If a receipt cannot be obtained or has been lost, a statement to that effect shall be made on the expense report form and the reason given. In the absence of an explanation satisfactory to the applicable approving authority, the amount involved shall not be allowed.
4. All claims for reimbursement shall include a statement signed by the individual submitting the request for reimbursement that the expenses are actual expenses incurred while on District Business and that the expenses conform to this Administrative Regulation.
5. All claims for reimbursement shall be submitted to the Employee's Executive Staff level supervisor and to the General Manager, or his designee, for approval. A determination shall be made by the General Manager, or his or her designee, that: (1) the claims for reimbursement are in accordance with this Administrative Regulation; and (2) the necessary budgetary funds are available for disbursement.

D. Long Term Assignment

Questions concerning this Administrative Regulation should be referred to the General Counsel and the Control Department listed at the top of this document.

1. District personnel covered by this Administrative Regulation who are on a long term assignment shall receive, in addition to their District salary, an additional amount of money for cost-of-living and housing based on the United States State Department Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 3 (Personnel), Volume 14 (Logistics Management) and the Foreign Affairs Handbook, as they may be amended from time to time. These manuals and handbook are available at <https://fam.state.gov/Fam/FAM.aspx>. The General Manager may permit reimbursement of necessary expenses when in the General Manager's opinion such expenses are appropriate. The General Manager shall include in the report required by Section III.A.3., above, these extraordinary expenses and the justification for them.
2. A District employee on long term assignment may be required to periodically return to the District or attend conferences or other assignments. Provided these trips/conferences/assignments are approved in advance by the General Manager, the affected employee shall be subject to the provisions of this Administrative Regulation to the same extent as any employee who is not on long term assignment status.

E. Applicability to Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) Members

The General Manager may authorize reimbursement of approved expenses subject to the limitations provided in Board Policy 177 - Meeting Expense Reimbursements for Accessibility Advisory Committee Members. Should a conflict arise between the language stated in the Board Policy and the language stated in the Administrative Regulation, the Board Policy shall take precedence.

Approved by:



Michael A. Hursh, General Manager
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District