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## TRAVEL POLICY

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 6, 2016



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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 PURPOSE**

The purpose of these regulations is to establish a system of reimbursement for authorized expenses, for all officials and employees, required to travel on behalf of, or in representation of, the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District (District).

### **1.2 GENERAL**

These policies shall apply to any required and duly approved travel for official District business, and to all officials and employees who receive appropriate authorization to travel on behalf of the District.

The District recognizes the benefits that accrue when its employees attend conferences, seminars, and professional training activities. The District will bear approved expenses incurred by District officials and employees to attend such activities provided the stated procedures are followed. Travel, conferences, seminars, trainings and similar activities shall be directly related to District business.

The most reasonably priced arrangements for travel events will be utilized. Personal safety and a reasonable level of comfort and dignity will be taken into consideration.

Individuals are expected to exercise sound judgment when incurring and submitting travel expenses, keeping with the standard and proprieties of a visible and accountable public agency.

Although these travel regulations set specific procedures for employees to follow, it is not intended to be all inclusive and exceptions may be reviewed on a case to case basis.

## **SECTION 2: TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION PROCESS**

### **2.1 INTENTION**

The travel authorization process is intended to ensure budget compliance and appropriate use of public funds.

**BUDGET:** Travel authorization begins with the budgetary process. Travel needs shall be anticipated and submitted in the annual budget for approval by the District General Manager/Board of Directors. It is the authorizing party's responsibility to stay within departmental budget travel allocations as approved by the GM/Board of Directors. Travel requests are to include all costs associated with any/all types of travel including registration, lodging, meals, transportation, parking, and incidental expenses.

## SECTION 3: VEHICLE USE

### 3.1 USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLE FOR DISTRICT BUSINESS

It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain a valid California driver's license, and personal insurance coverage equal to, or greater than, the minimal coverage amounts required by any/all applicable state law while utilizing his/her private vehicle for transaction of District business.

Employees are responsible to notify the Human Resources Department of any changes in license, or insurance. Employees are responsible for any parking, mechanical or moving violations received while using their own vehicle for approved District business. Some employees' job title and description (e.g. transportation department drivers) may require reporting DUI, DWI, and other moving violations.

### 3.2 REIMBURSEMENT FOR USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLE

Use of an employee's private vehicle shall be reimbursed at the current mileage reimbursement rate determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Private automobiles may not be used for trips over 100 miles one-way except by prior written approval of the General Manager. Employees who use their private vehicle for travel are expected to follow the District's Travel Policy, and Employee Manual.

Reimbursement requests shall be submitted to the appropriate authorizing party (usually employee's supervisor) within 30 days of the month the mileage expenses were incurred, and shall be complete and accurate with proper approvals.

Parties of two or more may be expected to carpool unless approved by the General Manager prior to travel.

## **SECTION 4: LONG DISTANCE TRAVEL**

### **4.1 DEFINITION**

The most economical mode and class of transportation reasonably consistent with scheduling needs shall be preferred, using the most direct and time-efficient route. The cost of rental vehicle, parking and gasoline shall be compared to the combined cost of other forms of transportation and the least expensive method shall be used.

Long distance travel is defined as any travel that:

- a) Requires an employee to leave Ventura County, AND
- b) Includes at least one (1) overnight stay.

### **4.2 AUTHORIZATION**

All long distance travel requires prior written approval of the General Manager. Every effort will be made to pre-arrange and pre-pay all approved expenses. However, in the event this is not possible, employees are eligible for:

- a) Reimbursement of approved expenses paid for by employee, with accompanying itemized receipts.

### **4.3 AIR TRAVEL**

For authorized air travel, the District reserves coach rate seats at government or group rates (when such rates are available), and makes every effort to schedule reasonable flight times. Seat upgrades or flight/schedule changes unrelated to District business are not approved expenses, and become the responsibility of the employee.

It is the intent of the District to book all air travel on the District's credit card unless otherwise approved by the General Manager.

### **4.4 GROUND TRANSPORTATION & RENTAL CAR**

The District makes every effort to reserve appropriate ground transportation for traveling employees (e.g., *airport shuttle, rental car*). When that is not possible, with prior written approval of the General Manager, employees may claim reimbursement for ground transportation at actual cost, utilizing reasonable ground transportation services such as taxi services.

Employees traveling on District business for whom it was not possible to reserve a rental car service, either at the point of departure or at the destination:

- a) Will be reimbursed by the District for the rental expense of a comparable compact automobile, AND
- b) Will purchase damage insurance (comprehensive and collision but **not** liability) through the rental car company.

The District and its employees shall use government or group rates, when available, for ground transportation or rental car services.

#### 4.5 LODGING

The District shall make every effort to pre-arrange appropriate lodging (*using government or group rates, when available; Board Members; GC § 53232.2(e)*), for approved travel. When that is not possible, with prior written approval of the General Manager, employees may reserve reasonable lodging, and claim reimbursement for such lodging in accordance with this section and with appropriate receipts.

***Board Members (GC § 53232.2(d))***

*For lodging in connection with a conference or organized educational activity, lodging costs shall not exceed the maximum group rate published by the conference or activity sponsor, provided that lodging at the group rate is available at the time of booking.*

If a group rate or government rate is not available, reasonable lodging shall be booked at standard lodging rates for the destination's specific geographic area. Any lodging upgrades made by employees in excess of approved lodging rates are not approved, and become the responsibility of the employee.

#### 4.6 MEALS

Daily reimbursement rates for meals are as follows:

*Breakfast - \$12*

*Lunch - \$16*

*Dinner - \$22*

Eligible meals are defined as meals for which an employee incurs a cost due to a valid and authorized business reason (e.g., *overnight travel, business meeting, special dietary requirements that cannot be accommodated, meal not covered by conference fee, etc.*). Meals provided as part of a conference or seminar are not eligible for separate reimbursement. Reimbursement requests for approved meal expenses must be submitted with itemized receipts. The District does not reimburse for alcoholic beverages.

An increased or decreased meal allowance may be considered when traveling to remote or metropolitan areas. Any changes must be pre-approved by the

General Manager prior to travel.

#### **4.7 INCIDENTALS**

Employees are eligible for reimbursement for incidentals up to \$5.00 per day while on District business travel. Incidentals may include such items as tips, soft drinks, phone call, postage, etc. Items such as gifts, entertainment (including in-room movies), alcohol, or other similar items are not reimbursable. Itemized receipts and/or an approved written list of expenses will be required for reimbursement.

Parking fees shall be reimbursed when related to District business travel, including airport parking fees, and parking fees for personal or rental vehicles.

#### **4.8 TELEPHONE CALLS**

The District will reimburse one (1) 15-minute telephone call per day while an employee is on official business. If the employee receives a cell phone stipend they will not be reimbursed.

### **SECTION 5: REIMBURSEMENT**

#### **5.1 REIMBURSEMENT**

For all reimbursement requests, employees shall complete a Claim for Reimbursement of Travel Expense Form to document that expenses meet this Policy and are required to conduct District business.

Claim forms shall be submitted within thirty (30) days of incurring an expense, and shall be accompanied by receipts documenting each expense. Upon appropriate written approval, employees will be reimbursed as quickly as possible. Personal items, alcoholic beverages, and expenses of family members are not authorized.

### **SECTION 6: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### **6.1 APPLICABILITY OF THIS POLICY TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

This Travel Policy shall apply, in addition to District employees, to members of the District's Board of Directors.

The General Manager shall review Board members' requests for travel and incidental expenses for compliance with this Travel Policy and other applicable District policies. All expenses that do not fall within this Travel Policy or the Internal Revenue Service reimbursable rates as established in IRS Publication 463, or any successor publication, shall be approved by the Board of Directors at a public meeting before the expense is incurred. (GC 53232.2(f))

If a member of the Board of Directors chooses to incur travel or incidental costs that are in excess of the rates established under this Policy or IRS Publication 463, or any successor publication, and such costs have not been pre-approved at a public meeting of the Board of Directors, the member does so at his or her own expense. (GC 53232.2(g))

Members of the Board of Directors shall provide brief reports on meetings or other events attended at the expense of the District at the next regular meeting of the Board. (GC 53232.2(d))