

**LEELANAU COUNTY
BOARD POLICY**

GENERAL SUBJECT: Employee Benefits and Policies
Administrator

Policy No. **5.01**

SPECIFIC SUBJECT: Travel Policy

Adopted: 05/21/2002
Revised: 08/17/2010
Revised: 07/19/2011
Revised: 09/16/2014
Revised: 08/20/2019
Revised: 12/17/2019

APPLIES TO: All Leelanau County Employees and Elected Officials

PURPOSE: To provide a written policy for standard travel regulations for County employees and officials

SECTION I – GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. These regulations shall govern all persons engaged in official travel for Leelanau County and submitting Travel Expense Vouchers/Requests (defined below) to the County for reimbursement, subject to respective collective bargaining agreements, if applicable. There shall be no duplication or pyramiding of benefits to any employees.
2. Compliance with these regulations is the responsibility of each employee and department head. The County reserves the right to question and reject any Travel Expense Voucher/Requests that appears to violate the intent of these regulations.
3. All travel, other than routine local travel as part of the employee’s principal activity, shall be authorized and approved by the department head, elected official, or County Administrator prior to departure. Such approval shall be in writing. Sufficient, appropriately budgeted funds must be available to support authorized travel. The County will reimburse reasonable expenses associated with out-of-town travel in connection with County business as outlined herein. Distance, weather, and the timing of the program/meeting will guide whether a department head, elected official, or the County Administrator approves overnight travel.
4. Travel for County business is provided at the expense of the taxpayer. Employees should never consider business travel an opportunity to “treat” themselves or take advantage of luxuries through the use of expense reimbursement. Employees traveling on official County

business are expected to exercise care in incurring expenses. Under no circumstances will expenses of a personal nature be included in a charge against public funds.

5. County-related travel shall require the submission of itemized receipts, except in extenuating circumstances that have approval of the County Administrator for employees to be eligible for expense reimbursement. The County reserves the right to reject any request for reimbursement not deemed directly related to County business.
6. All requests for reimbursement must have itemized receipts. Employees will only be reimbursed for their own expenses; when traveling with coworkers, each employee is responsible for their own expenses and **only individual reimbursement requests will be considered.**
7. The County will not reimburse any expense, including conference, meal, travel, and other related costs, for spouses, family members or guests to accompany an employee on business travel except for the benefit of the County and with prior written County approval.
8. Travel advances will be utilized to facilitate travel by County personnel on authorized County business when approved in writing by the department head or County Administrator.

SECTION II – GENERAL PROCEDURES

1. Travel requests shall be approved by the supervising department head, elected official, or County Administrator, as appropriate.
2. A Request for Travel Advance must be approved by the department head, elected official, or County Administrator and submitted to the Accounting Department at least seven (7) business days' prior to the anticipated departure date. This requirement may be waived by the County Administrator for unavoidable or emergency circumstances. All expenses must be accounted for with itemized receipts and any excess funds will be returned to the County Treasurer's office on the first workday following the employee's return. No County employee shall be approved for a travel advance unless all prior advances have been settled. The County Treasurer will provide an entire copy of the documentation from the employee, as well as a copy of receipt of returned funds, if applicable, to the County Clerk to be attached to the Request for Travel Advance.
3. Authorization for out-of-state travel, except in cases of emergency or extraditions, must be approved by the Board of Commissioners, upon the recommendation of the County Administrator.

SECTION III – TRAVEL EXPENSE VOUCHER/REQUEST

1. In order to receive reimbursement, an employee shall complete a Travel Expense Voucher/Request and submit it to the Accounting Department for processing. A Travel Expense Voucher/Request (“Vouchers”) is to be used for reimbursement of any/all expenses involving meals, mileage, lodging, and/or other miscellaneous travel expenses. Itemized receipts must be attached. Credit card receipts **will not be accepted**.
2. The expense of **only one employee** shall be included on any single expense voucher, except for an employee working in a custodial capacity, such as an inmate or juvenile, that is responsible for and pays the expenses incurred on behalf of others. The names of the other individuals must be shown on the expense voucher. No reimbursements will be made to employees who pay on behalf of a co-worker.
3. Expense vouchers must be filed by the end of each calendar year quarter (March 30, June 30, September 30, and December 31.) Vouchers submitted after the end of the quarter shall be rejected. This requirement may be waived by the County Administrator for unavoidable or emergency circumstances. Vouchers must be submitted to the department head, elected official, or County Administrator for reimbursement authorization and processing through the Accounting Department.
4. Pursuant to these regulations, supporting receipts/itemized documentation must be attached for all items for which reimbursement is sought.
5. Vouchers that are illegible, lacking itemized documentation, or otherwise incomplete will be returned for clarification and/or correction.
6. Expenses claimed for mileage, lodging, meals, and other expenses must be itemized and detailed by day.

SECTION IV – TRANSPORTATION

1. Employees requiring air travel should make travel arrangements with proper advance notice to obtain the most competitive fares. Arrangements for air transportation may be made through a travel agent, if appropriate. The expense of traveling by public carrier shall be based on actual cost. Reimbursement for air travel shall not exceed coach rates. The County’s credit card is to be utilized for payment.
2. Use of County vehicles for travel by departments with assigned vehicle fleets is required unless other arrangements have been approved in writing in advance or operational circumstances warrant use of personal vehicles. Employees should refer to the County Board Policy on Vehicles, #23 for additional rules and guidelines.

3. Ride sharing is required for employees traveling to the same destination unless other arrangements have been approved in writing in advance. When two or more employees travel in the same vehicle, mileage allowance will be paid to the operator of the vehicle only.
4. Employees using their personal vehicles for County business shall be reimbursed at the approved County rate for mileage. To be eligible for mileage reimbursement, the employee must submit a mileage voucher detailing the total number of miles actually driven, excluding any unnecessary or personal side trips, and it must be submitted to their department head, elected official, or the County Administrator for verification and approval to authorize payment.
5. Necessary travel-related costs, such as parking, tolls, valet parking, taxi/shuttle service, etc., may also be reimbursed. Receipts for these expenses are required to be submitted. A detailed account of all such travel-related expenses shall be submitted in an employee's Voucher.

SECTION V – OVERNIGHT TRAVEL: LODGING, MEALS, OTHER EXPENSES

1. The costs for lodging during overnight travel shall be reimbursed at conference rates or for accommodations reasonable to the trip. The County is a tax-exempt entity. As many hotels/motels offer a government rate, employees are required to use this rate, if available, but employees should always seek the most competitive rate for lodging. Any employee authorized for overnight lodging shall obtain a Tax Exempt Certificate prior to departure.
2. Employees are encouraged to have the County pay any lodging reservations in advance. The County will not cover costs for suites or upscale special rooms. Room sharing is encouraged where appropriate. Employees are responsible in obtaining a receipt for lodging expenses upon departure and for delivering the itemized receipt to the County.
3. Employees should observe check-out hours in order to avoid an extra day charge. Additionally, employees are required to use their personal credit card for incidentals if requested by the hotel at time of check-in. At check-out/departure, the employee is responsible in obtaining a separate itemized receipt for incidentals, if applicable, and verify those charges are on their personal credit card.
4. County employees engaged in official overnight travel will be provided daily subsistence and lodging allowances as follows:¹
 - Lodging: Up to \$120.00/day
 - Meals: Up to \$55.00/day

¹ All rates updated to 2010 costs and adjusted for inflation.

All allowances in this policy may be periodically adjusted to comply with the most current IRS standards.

5. Machine printed receipts for lodging expenses are required. Where a place of lodging does not customarily issue a machine printed receipt, the receipt ordinarily issued to a guest will be acceptable provided it shows the name of the facility, street address, and city or town.
6. Reasonable meal expenses in compliance with Section 4 above, including tips and incidentals, will be reimbursed provided that itemized receipts are submitted. All incidental meal expenses, such as convenience store snacks or fountain soda, shall require the submission of itemized receipts to be eligible for reimbursement. Items purchased from vending machines shall not be eligible for reimbursement. Under no circumstances will the County reimburse for alcoholic beverages.
7. Gratuities may be reimbursed not to exceed 15% and only when actually paid or added to charge and reflected on receipt.

SECTION VI – DAYTIME/SAME DAY TRAVEL: MEALS AND INCIDENTALS

1. County employees required to attend prearranged meetings or in-service training events held in Leelanau County may be reimbursed for one (1) meal, not to exceed \$10.00, in connection with such meetings. The employee or elected official must be representing the County at these meetings, and it must be established that it was not practical for the person to return to his/her residence for the meal. An itemized receipt is required.
2. Subject to prior written department head approval, County employees engaged in official daytime or same day travel outside of Leelanau County may be reimbursed for one (1) meal no more than \$10.00. An itemized receipt is required.

SECTION VII – MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

1. Miscellaneous expenses incidental to official County daytime and overnight travel will be held to the minimum required for efficient conduct of County business. The department head or authorized representative approving the Voucher will be held accountable for all items of expense as being necessary and correct. The following are established as guides for the traveler:
 - a. Necessary bus, subway, taxicab, or other types of public transportation is allowed for overnight travel. An itemized receipt for such charges must be attached to the Voucher.

- b. Facsimile or Telephone charges are allowable when necessary for official business, with submission of an itemized receipt.
- c. Registration and enrollment fees for seminars, meetings or conventions are allowable for official representatives of the County.
- d. Itemized receipts must be attached to Vouchers for all parking expense claims.
- e. Itemized receipts must be attached to Vouchers for all road tolls or bridge crossing fees.

SECTION VIII – SPECIAL REGULATIONS

1. At no time will any individual establish special rates or certify for payment any expenses contrary to these regulations, and in no case will the amount allowed be in excess of the maximum approved rates. However, reimbursement for appropriate expense items not specifically covered under this policy shall require the approval of the County.
2. Hourly employees in travel status attending required training, seminars, and conferences will be paid for hours worked in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206). The following rules shall apply:
 - a. Employees will keep records of all hours spent in attendance at each training, seminar, or conference attended using a timesheet provided by their respective department head or elected official.
 - b. Employees will provide a copy of the training, seminar, or conference schedule to their department head or elected official. If possible, the schedule should be provided prior to the training, seminar, or conference.
 - c. Unless specifically instructed to attend by their department head or elected official, employees are not required to attend any social events or receptions that occur during or in conjunction with any training, seminar or conference. Employees will not be paid for worktime for time spent at social events or receptions unless attendance is required by their department head.
 - d. Regular meal period time is not considered worktime.
 - e. Any work an employee is required to perform while actively traveling will be considered worktime.

3. In compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 206), the County will not consider as worktime an employee's time spent in travel outside of regular working hours as a passenger on an airplane, train, boat, bus, or automobile.
4. Extra costs not related to County business, such as personal telephone calls, movies, room service, laundry service, pre- and post-conference side trips, etc., shall not be reimbursed.