




Clean Water Services

Administrative Policy

Section: Finance & Accounting	Policy #: FA103
Title: Travel and Training Policy	
Implemented by Administrative Procedures #:	R&O #: Ordinance 38
Authorization Signature: 	Effective Date: September 5, 2025

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the guidelines for requesting approval for training and documenting work-related travel.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all District employees: non-represented, represented, temporary, interns, probationary employees; and to the CWS Board of Directors when acting on behalf of Clean Water Services and/or as a CWS public official.

DEFINITIONS

- Travel/Training Coordinator: a member of the Administrative Services program who is trained in the process and practices of CWS travel and training and authorized to purchase travel arrangements and training registrations and fees using their CWS p-card.
- Meals - a meal option including a protein source provided to participants as part of a conference or training event registration fee. Light or continental breakfast provided as part of a conference or training event registration fee are not considered meals for the purpose of this policy and are still eligible for the breakfast component of the per diem reimbursement.

POLICY GUIDANCE

General Policy

1. It is the District's intent to comply with current Internal Revenue Service (IRS) taxable fringe benefit laws, rules, and regulations by adopting this policy.
2. It is the District's intent to reimburse its employees for reasonable, ordinary, and necessary business expenses incurred when traveling on behalf of the District, in accordance with this policy. Expenses solely for the personal benefit of an individual are not allowable.
3. District employees shall be responsible for tax consequences associated with the reimbursement of expenses considered by the IRS to be taxable fringe benefits.
4. District employees are responsible for obtaining approval(s) for travel prior to travel. Travel/Training Coordinators are available to assist with travel arrangements and practices.

Training Approval and Priorities

Management approval for training may be granted or denied based on budgetary priorities and operational needs. Priority for employee travel will be given for training that is required to maintain job qualifications and/or is directly related to Clean Water Services (CWS) delivery of service.

Employee Travel Priority Guidelines:

In determining travel/training priorities, the following guidelines are offered for managers:

1. Trainings to maintain a certification or licensure required for the position held by the employee.
2. Technical or professional development that is focused on developing skills and/or competencies within the current position held, or to meet a specific CWS need for competency in a cross-functional team, or to meet succession planning goals.
3. Travel related to presenting on a topic aligned with CWS core mission where the presentation was already pre-approved by the CEO, or CEO designee.

For travel for service on outside Boards or association committees or leadership to be considered a necessary business expense requires: 1. such service was first authorized in advance with specific approval of the CEO or designee; 2. there was advance authorization for travel parameters as part of that approval; and 3. there is documentation of how such travel serves the CWS mission. Travel must further comply with the policy set out below.

Training Without Travel

1. When training does not involve travel, (e.g., virtual training or external trainers that come to CWS), employees do not need to complete a travel/training request form but **do need to document** their direct supervisor's approval for the time and cost associated with the training and submit that documentation with receipts as a record of the CWS expense or to seek reimbursement for the expense.
 - a. Acceptable forms of documentation include a written note, email, or other electronic communication including Teams or Asana approval tracking, chat message, or text message.
 - b. Additional approvals will only be needed if the request exceeds the spending authority of the direct supervisor.
 - c. Training reconciliations and Oracle Learning Management (OLM) numbers are not needed for training without travel.
 - d. Employees are responsible for submitting requests for reimbursement within two weeks of the completed training.
2. For Board of Directors training without travel, Board Directors will work with the CWS designated staff person to submit any necessary documentation.

Local Travel for Training

1. Local travel requests must be approved by your supervisor prior to travel. Reconciliation of local travel will be submitted by the traveler and closed out by the approval of the direct supervisor unless the reconciliation notes cost differences beyond the spending authority of the direct supervisor.
2. Local travel is defined as within a 100-mile radius (one-way) of the employee's primary workplace and may include locations within Oregon or southwest Washington in alignment with the mileage boundary. Distances less than 50 miles (one-way) are not eligible for overnight accommodation. Local travel beyond 50 miles one-way can be considered for overnight accommodation but requests require prior approval by the direct supervisor.
3. Approved travel requests should be provided to a Travel/Training Coordinator at least 14 days in advance of travel when overnight accommodations **are not** needed and 21 days in advance of travel when overnight accommodations **are needed and an advance is requested**.
4. Transportation – Using cost-effective transportation is preferred for local travel. Please refer to the CWS mileage policy if an employee uses their personal vehicle for District business.
5. See "Travel Arrangements" information below for additional details.

Mileage and Expenses Associated with Local Meetings (Not Training)

Transportation expenses (mileage, parking, etc.) related to attendance at meetings (that are not for training) within the defined "local travel" area will be either documented as p-card expenses, if the employee is a p-card holder, or through the employee expense reimbursement processes. See the [Personal Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Policy](#) for further details.

Regional Travel

1. Regional travel requests, with or without overnight accommodation, must be submitted to your supervisor.
2. Regional travel is defined as beyond the 100-mile one-way radius of the employee's primary workplace and within the state boundaries of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.
3. Regional travel requires prior approval by the direct supervisor **and** the department director, or if there is none, the corresponding Executive Leadership Team (ELT) member.
4. Approved travel requests should be provided to a Travel/Training Coordinator at least 21 days in advance of travel.
5. See "Travel Arrangements" information below for additional details.

National Travel

1. Requests for national travel, with or without overnight accommodations, should be submitted to your supervisor.
2. National travel is defined as outside the state boundaries of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho.
3. National travel requires prior approval by the direct supervisor, the department director (if applicable), **and** the corresponding ELT member.
4. Approved travel requests should be provided to a Travel/Training Coordinator at least 21 days in advance of travel.
5. See "Travel Arrangements" information below for additional details.

International Travel

1. Requests for international travel should be submitted to your supervisor.
2. International travel is defined as outside the United States.
3. International travel requires prior approval by the direct supervisor, the department director (if applicable), the corresponding ELT member, **and** the CEO.
4. Approved travel requests should be provided to a Travel/Training Coordinator at least **30 days** in advance of travel.
5. See "Travel Arrangements" information below for additional details.

Exceptions

The CEO shall have final authority for administering, interpreting, and applying the terms of this policy. Exceptions to this policy may be granted when they are in the best interest of the District and requested in writing by an ELT member or designee. Exceptions must be approved in writing by the CEO or designee.

Travel Arrangements

Advances

- a. Travel advances are only available for overnight travel costs paid by employees. To make certain travel advance checks are ready before travel, travel advance requests must be indicated on the travel request form when submitted to the Travel/Training Coordinator at least 28 days before the employee's travel departure.
- b. Employees may request an advance to cover most costs before they travel. The standard calculation will cover 70% of the documented overnight cost estimate.
- c. The Travel/Training Coordinator must submit the travel advance request to AP for payment at least 21 days before the employee's travel departure.
- d. A travel advance check will be issued to the employee to arrive no sooner than 14 days before the employee's travel departure.

Air Travel Guidance

- a. Approved travel requests should be provided to a Travel/Training Coordinator at least 21 days in advance of travel.
- b. Airline tickets are normally billed directly to the District through a District-approved travel agency. The District will pay the competitive market rate for air transportation.
- c. District airline travel will be ticketed as non-refundable, economy class (**not** basic economy or super-saver), non-stop (when available and the ticket price is not greater than 25% or \$150 for a similar flight with one layover) travel during reasonable business hours unless Human Resources confirms a documented travel accommodation exists for an employee.
 - i. Human Resources will communicate to Travel/Training Coordinators regarding staff flight accommodations. Travel will be reimbursed in compliance with state and federal law.
 - ii. Air accommodations will be documented and applied after all applicable DOT accommodations at no additional cost have been exhausted. See <https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/traveling-disability> and <https://www.transportation.gov/airconsumer/disabilitybillofrights#The%20Right%20to%20Receive%20Seating%20Accommodations>
- d. Airline travel will be booked through major carriers, not budget carriers unless major carrier options do not meet travel needs.
- e. The Travel/Training Coordinator will obtain a flight quote from the District's travel agency for economy class, non-stop (when available and the ticket price is not greater than 25% or \$150 for a similar flight with one layover) travel. The quote(s) will consider multiple departures on the date of travel to establish an acceptable range for the flight cost.

- f. After the quote is received, staff will have 3 business days to notify the Travel/Training Coordinator to purchase the ticket(s). After that time, staff will be responsible to make their own travel arrangements and request reimbursement.
- g. A CWS travel agency quote for air travel will be referenced to determine the reimbursement amount in the event that an employee chooses to book their own air travel.
- h. Generally, reimbursement will not exceed the value of the quote. Special appeal for reimbursement above the quoted cost can be submitted to the highest-level approver of the travel request.
- i. Any additional transportation costs for an employee's personal needs are the responsibility of that employee. The Travel/Training Coordinator can provide business-related fare information for the calculation of personal travel costs. Employees will be responsible for travel arrangements that deviate from the default business travel.
- j. Travel/Training coordinators will not make arrangements for non-District travel companions and District will not pay for any companion fees.
- k. Employees may request reimbursement for a maximum of 2 personal checked bags per flight section. Oversize/overweight baggage fees are not reimbursable. Additional checked business-related materials may be eligible for reimbursement subject to a documented business case explanation and receipts.

Employee Booked Travel

- l. If an employee chooses to personally purchase airline tickets, reimbursement may be requested as part of the travel advance issued pursuant to Regional, National, and International Travel details (above), or may be included with the final travel reconciliation. If an employee books their own air travel, District reimbursement, will not exceed the amount of the fare that could have been purchased through the District's travel contract or travel agent. Travel insurance purchased will not be reimbursed unless external factors significantly increase the uncertainty of the travel and are subject to pre-approval by an ELT member.
- m. Credit card and travel awards including frequent flier miles, compensation for being displaced, and related items accrued or earned by officials and employees on official District business are part of the salary and benefits to which such officials and employees are entitled as compensation. District officials and employees shall be responsible for ensuring this compensation is reported as income for tax purposes to the extent required by law. Please consult a Tax Professional if you have questions on what should be reported on your personal income taxes.

3. **Ground Transportation**

- a. Employees should make arrangements for their ground transportation.
- b. Shuttle service, public transit, and ride-sharing services are the preferred methods of ground transportation.
- c. Vehicle rental must be pre-approved on the travel request and can be booked directly by the District through a District-approved travel agency. The District will pay the competitive market rate for ground transportation.
 - i. Employees are authorized to rent up to a mid-sized sedan or equivalent unless transportation of business-related occupants or equipment is needed. Larger vehicle rentals must be pre-approved through the travel request process.
 - ii. Insurance will be purchased through the rental car provider.
 - iii. Any additional transportation costs for an employee's personal business are the responsibility of that employee.
- d. If an employee chooses to drive to a business destination instead of flying, mileage reimbursements will be based on actual business mileage but will not exceed the cost of what the airfare and related transportation would have been. Mileage reimbursements in excess of the airfare will only be paid if the employee is required by the District to drive to the conference or training, or upon prior approval by an ELT member.
- e. Family members who are not CWS employees will not be allowed as passengers in CWS vehicles unless pre-approved in writing by an ELT member.
- f. The employee shall be personally responsible for costs associated with additional vehicle occupants.
- g. The CWS mileage policy provides additional details and should be consulted.

4. **Lodging** – The District will reimburse for standard, single-occupancy lodging for overnight District business travel, as approved per this policy unless Human Resources confirms a documented travel accommodation exists for an employee.

- a. Lodging options arranged by a conference or seminar sponsor are normally discounted and considered acceptable for District employees, unless the cost is exorbitant in comparison to other acceptable lodging available in the area.
- b. If an employee books their own lodging, the conference hotel rate or a quote from the CWS travel agency for overnight accommodations in the area will be referenced to determine the eligible reimbursement amount.
- c. The employee will be personally responsible for costs associated with additional room occupants and for extra nights of lodging for personal use, including additional companion fees.
- d. A Travel/Training Coordinator will use a District purchasing card (p-card) to secure lodging reservations. The employee will be responsible to pay for the lodging charges at check-out using a personal credit card or a CWS p-card in accordance with the p-card policy. Employees with District-issued p-card may use the card to

pay for approved lodging, taxes, and fees. Fully detailed receipts are required for the travel/training reconciliation and employees must provide the personal payment to the hotel for any personal charges to the room.

- e. For lodging accommodations that cannot otherwise be met, documentation should include the offered lodging accommodations and the basis for exception from the policy. (e.g. accessible bathing not available; non-auditory notification system not available; etc.)

5. Meals - Meals primarily related to approved travel or training and consumed while conducting District business may be eligible to be expensed.

a. Per Diem

- i. Requests for full or partial per diem meal allowances shall be submitted by employees through travel/training reconciliation.
- ii. No receipts are required or expected.
- iii. Employees with District-issued p-cards will refrain from charging meals otherwise eligible for meal per diem to their p-card. See [District's p-card policy](#).
- iv. Expenses for meals (and tips) related to overnight travel will be paid based on the Federal per meal per diem rate for the destination city as listed at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.
- v. The amount eligible on the first and last day of travel equals 75% of the total meals and incidental expense (M&IE) for the destination city as listed at <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>
- vi. If a meal or meals are otherwise provided with the lodging, business meeting, workshop, seminar, travel, etc., or through a conference registration fee, the per diem allowance for that meal or meals will be deducted from the total per diem allowance unless Human Resources confirms a documented travel accommodation exists for an employee.
- vii. Per diem requests for meals provided as part of the conference registration fees when a protein source is not provided should include a written explanation as follows: During the [breakfast/lunch/dinner] provided on [insert date] at the [conference/training name], the meal did not include a protein source. The available options consisted of [list items, e.g., fruit, pastries, salad without meat, bread, etc.] and no adequate substitute (e.g., eggs, meat, legumes, tofu, dairy) was available.
- viii. Employees need to provide a copy of the conference/event agenda with their travel/training receipts to claim per diem for meals so that the District has a record of meals that were provided as part of the event. In addition to the agenda, employees will provide any other information about meals provided as part of the conference/training/event with travel documentation.

b. Reimbursement

- i. Meals as part of registration for training - If a meal or meals are incorporated into registration for an approved business meeting, workshop, seminar, or conference, the expense shall be paid by the District.
- ii. If an employee is accepting an award or recognition or representing CWS at an event on behalf of the District, the meal for that event is reimbursable.
- iii. If an employee invites a personal guest to a business-related meeting meal, whether internal, external, or as part of a training or conference, the employee will pay directly for their personal guest. The District does not purchase alcoholic beverages for employees or their guests.

Reconciliation Processing

1. For Travel/Training reconciliations, the reimbursement amount requested may be paid to an employee up to the actual, documented costs as supported by the approved travel/training request. All receipts and supporting documentation must be attached, including the approved travel/training request. The employee must sign to certify that the costs claimed for reimbursement are the actual costs incurred during the approved travel/training period and in compliance with District policy. The supervisor must sign confirming they have reviewed the reconciliation, verifying the expenses incurred align with the approved travel/training request and District policy.
2. To be compliant with IRS taxable fringe benefit regulations, completed travel reconciliation forms and applicable receipts must be submitted to the Travel/Training Coordinator within 30 days of the completion of travel.

Other Travel Expenses Eligible for Reimbursement (District Business Related Only):

1. Out-of-pocket gasoline expenses if using a District vehicle. (Employees should use the Pacific Pride fueling locations whenever reasonably possible.)
2. Parking fees
3. Taxi services / shuttle services / ride share and tips (Tipping should not exceed 20%.)
4. Rental vehicle, including fuel and insurance
5. Mileage to and from the airport and airport parking fees, if applicable
6. Internet connection charges, if an additional charge on the employee's lodging or airline bill.
7. Incidental expenses – approved incidentals will be reimbursed at the Federal per diem rates listed at <https://www.gsa.gov/>, and are for overnight travel only, which includes the following:
 - a. Laundry costs associated with business travel of more than 1-week duration
 - b. Services/costs covered by this allowance that are not otherwise reimbursable under this policy.

Original receipts for expenses claimed, other than qualifying allowances under this policy, must be supplied in order for the employee to receive District reimbursement. No additional personal costs associated with District business travel are reimbursable to the employee unless approved by the CFO.

Exceptions

1. Reasonable exceptions to this policy, supported by appropriate documentation, and in compliance with Oregon State Ethics law, may be authorized by the CFO or CEO.
2. If travel/training is canceled due to CWS business reasons, the employee remains eligible for reimbursement of non-refundable out-of-pocket costs already incurred.

RESPONSIBILITY

- All department and program leaders should be familiar with this policy and implement this policy within their responsible offices, departments, and divisions.
- The Chief Financial Officer will review and revise this policy annually or as needed. The Finance & Accounting group will audit travel reimbursement requests and business meal expense reimbursements on a sample basis for compliance with this policy.
- Employees who receive training and the associated business-related travel are responsible for providing all records and documentation supporting all travel expense reimbursement claims.
- Violators of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, depending upon the nature of the violation, the violator may also be prosecuted under applicable local, state or federal civil or criminal law. Employees shall be held personally financially liable for inappropriate expenditures.

REFERENCES

- IRS Publication 5137 (Taxable Fringe Benefits Guide)
- ORS 244.040 (Oregon Public Employee Ethics Statutes)
- <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates - US per diem rates>
- [U.S. Department of State | Home Page](#) – Foreign per diem rates
- [P-card Policy](#)
- [Personal Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Policy](#)

REVISION HISTORY

- Revised on March 1, 2012
- Signature authority revised on September 19, 2023
- Signature authority revised in 2025
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