
 <b>Costa Mesa Sanitary District Employee Handbook</b>	Policy Number: 2.4
	Effective Date: May 26, 2016
Subject: Training & Travel	Supersedes: April 27, 2015
Approved by: Board of Directors	Signature: 

- (1) At the convenience of the District
- (2) Because of death, prolonged illness, disability or other eventuality beyond the control of the employee as determined by the supervisor and approved by the General Manager

## 5) TRAVEL AND PER DIEM



### a) Travel Reimbursement.

1) Scope. It is the intent of the District to reimburse District personnel for all reasonable expenses incurred whenever they are required to travel on business for the District. "Business for the District" shall include expenses incurred in connection with approved official representation of the District from which the District will derive a specific benefit such as: attendance at training, seminars, symposia, conferences, hearings, conventions or other meetings.

b) **Travel Authorization.** When it is necessary for District staff to attend meetings or training away from the District or to travel outside the District to conduct District business, various modes of transportation, lodging accommodations and meal alternatives are available. The associated costs vary considerably. In an effort to control costs and to compensate personnel for reasonable expenses, the following policy shall be adhered to for all District travel:



- i) All travel requests shall be submitted with the annual budget requests.
- ii) District staff may not attend out-of-state conferences unless approved by the Board of Directors.
- iii) District staff may attend in-state conferences. The General Manager must approve all travel, provided sufficient monies have been previously budgeted.
- iv) The General Manager may authorize the attendance of additional District personnel if deemed appropriate and travel funds are available.
- v) Arrangements must be made sufficiently in advance to take advantage of available discounts for registration, air fare and lodging.

c) **Transportation.** For travel outside the Southern California area, employees are expected to travel by air. If traveling by private vehicle, departure and arrival times shall be based on air travel time. Departure shall not be earlier than that which would allow the District personnel to arrive within a reasonable amount of time to attend the first scheduled event of the conference, seminar, etc.; in turn, the same reasonable time period shall apply to departure from the event

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when returning and shall allow District personnel to return at the earliest reasonable time possible. Reasonable amount of time shall be determined in one-half day increments, subject to General Manager or designee's approval, i.e.:

- i) If the conference begins at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday in San Francisco, the employee may leave Costa Mesa Monday evening after the work day.
- ii) If the conference begins at Noon Tuesday in San Francisco, the District personnel may depart from Costa Mesa (or home) early Tuesday morning.
- iii) If the first scheduled event begins at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday in San Francisco, District personnel may depart from Costa Mesa late Tuesday morning or early Tuesday afternoon.
- d) Departures and subsequent arrival practices will be contingent upon flight schedules and fare discounts.
- e) If District personnel wish to deviate from the reasonable arrival or departure time period for personal reasons or if alternative transportation is involved, any excess time (that which is above the time required to fly) shall be charged as vacation leave time and will require General Manager approval in advance. This practice shall apply to District personnel driving personal vehicles. Permission to drive shall not be construed to mean "on District time". Any additional expenses, including meal and lodging costs, resulting from excess travel time will be at the individual's own expense.
- f) Use of a private car (if authorized in advance) will be reimbursed at approved rates in effect at the time of travel. A copy of the employee's proof of automobile insurance must remain on file with the District. In cases where more than one person is attending the same event, they will be strongly encouraged to travel together and mileage reimbursement would be for one vehicle only. In instances where this is not possible, advance approval by the District will be necessary. Mileage reimbursement will be based on actual miles driven, from the District office. The maximum paid for transportation to areas outside Southern California shall not exceed the equivalent cost of "coach fare" airline transportation plus the cost of other necessary ground transportation at the destination.
- g) Payment for travel reservations should be made far enough in advance (generally 14 to 21 days) to take advantage of discounts. Staff is required to make their own travel arrangements, but are encouraged to use the local travel agencies or the internet (depending upon which is least expensive) to make travel arrangements.
- h) **Car Rentals.** When traveling, the use of rental cars is discouraged. Airport shuttle service, buses,

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or taxis should be utilized between airports and hotels or meeting locations if within 30 miles. Staff should check availability and cost, and make their own car rental arrangements. When renting a car, insurance and other extras should not be requested. Before returning the car, the District personnel are to make sure the car is returned with the same amount of gas as when rented, usually a full tank. The District personnel may then claim reimbursement for the gas with the proper receipt.

- i) **Lodging.** Receipts for lodging must be submitted to obtain reimbursement. Lodging reimbursement may be requested when traveling outside of Orange County or when attendance at events is for two or more consecutive days. Lodging reimbursement for the night prior to the beginning of an event may be allowed only if time and/or travel schedules prohibit travel at reasonable hours on the first day of a conference. Generally, reimbursement would be allowed if the event begins before 9:00 a.m. (and is outside of Orange County) or is out of the state. Note: No lodging decisions should be made based on where an employee’s residence is located (i.e. an employee who commutes 50 miles to work each day should be held to the same standard for lodging purposes that would be applied to an individual who commutes five miles to work). No lodging reimbursement will be allowed for the night following the event, except under circumstances beyond the control of the District personnel (i.e. flight canceled).
- j) Lodging reimbursement will not be approved for travel within Orange County regardless of the length of the event. Note: This applies to all events attended by any District Official or District Staff, since it is inappropriate to use District funds for unnecessary and frivolous purposes. An exception will be made if on site lodging is a requirement of the event and it is approved in advance by the Board of Directors, or if the event is structured to go later into the evening than a normal conference (typically past 8:00 p.m.).
- k) Lodging shall be obtained at the most economical rate available for good quality. Lavish or oversized accommodations are not justified. Conference headquarters hotels are encouraged, when not unnecessarily expensive. Reservations made through the convention and/or housing bureaus (usually offered through conference literature) are encouraged. If the convention or housing bureaus are not used, and if more than one place of lodging is available, the prevailing rate for a single occupancy room will be allowed. In the absence of group or special rates, District personnel should request a “government rate” discount.
- l) Advance payment may be made by check requisition or the District’s credit card. Check requisition forms may request the check being mailed to the lodging provider. For all travel advances paid either directly to the individual or a third-party, a supporting schedule detailing the type of expenditures being advanced must be attached to the check requisition. This will allow the Accounting Department to determine if the expenditures requested for advance are eligible for reimbursement prior to those costs being incurred. Receipts are to be kept and



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attached to the employee's travel form and submitted to Accounting immediately after the conclusion of the event.

- m) **Meals.** The meal allowance is \$65.00 per day including taxes and tips. All meal reimbursements will be completed after an itemized receipt is submitted to Accounting. In instances where District personnel will be purchasing less than a full day of meals (i.e., less than three meals per day), the per diem, including tax and no more than 20 percent tip, will be on a per meal basis as follows:
- i) breakfast \$13.00
  - ii) lunch \$17.00
  - iii) dinner \$35.00
- n) Reimbursement for an evening meal on the night prior to the beginning of an event may be allowed if the event begins at 9:00 a.m. or earlier the following day and the amount of time required to travel to the location does not provide for dinner at a regular hour. Per Diem may not be claimed for meals which are already included in the conference registration fee. Any claiming of per diem for meals that have been provided or paid for by other parties shall be considered inappropriate and subject to disciplinary action.
- o) The per diem meal breakdown summarized above will be adhered to in all instances, examples are as follows:
- i) If breakfast and lunch are included with a conference an individual may claim a maximum of \$35.00 for dinner – not the \$65.00 daily allowance.
  - ii) An employee will not be reimbursed per diem amounts if alternate meals are purchased when meals have been included with the conference (i.e. an employee decides to skip the lunch banquet and eat at a nearby restaurant - an individual may elect to eat elsewhere, but at the employee's expense).
  - iii) All receipts must be kept and submitted when seeking reimbursement for meals purchased for individuals other than the claimant and shall indicate the date, participating parties and purpose of the meeting.
  - iv) The employee, who picks up the check for a group of employees, will not be reimbursed for more than a single per diem.

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- p) The following are examples of how per diem may be claimed:
- i) Per diem for breakfast may be claimed if District personnel are in travel status prior to 7:00 a.m. and breakfast is not provided;
  - ii) Per Diem for lunch may be claimed if District personnel are attending an out-of-town conference through the lunch hour, and lunch is not provided.
  - iii) Commuter courses (i.e. travel within Orange County) meals will be reimbursed to a maximum of \$8.00 for each employee.
  - iv) Per Diem for dinner may be claimed if District personnel are required to stay overnight, and dinner is not provided.
- q) **Unauthorized Expenses.** Items of a personal nature are not reimbursable including: alcoholic beverages, movies, entertainment, premium television services, snacks, dry-cleaning, spas, gyms, barber, magazines, shoeshine, travel insurance, supplemental insurance on rental cars, toiletries, loss of tickets, fines or traffic violations, excess baggage, lecture tapes or books, the incremental cost for spouse or guest accommodations or other items of a personal nature. Business calls to the District work sites will be reimbursed in full. Telephone, FAX and e-mail charges will be allowed for official calls, including Internet access.
- i) If unauthorized expenses have been paid by the District (i.e., via District credit card or petty cash), the individual will be responsible for immediate reimbursement to the District by personal check (or a payroll deduction if necessary).
- r) **Out of Pocket Expenses.** All conference and meeting attendance must be authorized by the General Manager. Requests should be made far enough in advance to take advantage of all available discounts and to take into consideration normal processing requirements. A Check Requisition form made out to the sponsor with the proper supporting registration forms should be forwarded to Accounting for payment and mailing. Registration must be included on a regular warrant register and will not be processed on a “pre-issued manual” basis. If registration is paid upon arrival at said conference by the District personnel, an original receipt must be submitted for reimbursement and in some instances a copy of the employee’s cancelled check may be requested to support the amount claimed.
- s) **Reimbursement and Advance Payment Procedures.** The Monthly Mileage & Expenses Report form is used to request reimbursement for one day commuter activities such as: seminars, professional association lunch meetings, mileage, etc. Mileage amounts are reimbursed on an actual miles traveled basis, while other expenditures (i.e. the cost of a lunch meeting) are reimbursed on an actual out-of-pocket basis. Monthly Mileage & Expense Report must be

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submitted within 10 days after the end of the month, with all original receipts attached.

- i) It is the policy of the District that the standard forms provided by the District be used to document travel and business expenses and in support of request for reimbursement. All expenses must be listed on a single form. Original receipts (not photo copies) are required and must be submitted with all expense reports. It is the responsibility of the individual incurring the expense to see that documentation for business and travel expenses is complete and submitted in a timely and accurate manner.
- 2) Persons with delinquent expense reports (a report not filed within 10 days of the trip return date) will not be allowed to obtain a future travel advance until their delinquent expense reports are filed.
- t) **Exceptions.** It is the District’s desire to generally adhere to these policies. Nevertheless, there may be occasions when District personnel are unable to comply with them. It is the responsibility of the individual to prepare a written, signed statement as to why an exception/s should be approved. The District is under no obligation to provide reimbursement without original receipts. The General Manager or designee may approve of exceptions to these policies. There may also be instances where the General Manager determines it to be in the best interest of the District, primarily due to budgetary constraints to limit the amount of meal per diem or require the sharing of lodging accommodations at conferences. In these situations the individual cannot be required to attend.
- u) **Expense Reimbursement.** Employees will be reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses incurred while conducting official District business. District employees who use their private vehicle while conducting District business will be reimbursed at the rate described in CMSD Operations Code section 3.01.030. All other expenses not related to conferences, meetings and/or use of a private vehicle will be reimbursed by means of the petty cash fund. Original receipts are required for all expenses including meals.
- i) An employee must sign his/her expense claim and obtain General Manager approval to be reimbursed for expenses. All claims for expenses must be submitted within 10 days after the end of the calendar month in which expenses were incurred. Expenses totaling \$100.00 or less shall be reimbursed from the District petty cash fund. Expenditures totaling more than \$100.00 shall be reimbursed by means of a District warrant.