

**GENERAL ORDER**

August 2017

Immediately

**II-16**

Distribution: All Employees

Subject: **EMPLOYEE TRAVEL**

Index as: Employee Travel Reimbursement Travel Procedures

Accreditation Standards: 33.1.3  
Cross Reference: City of St. Petersburg Administrative Policy #040900  
City of St. Petersburg Rules and Regulations Section 5-13  
§ 112.061, Florida Statutes  
Replaces: G.O. II-16, Employee Travel (March 5, 2021)

This Order establishes guidelines and procedures for Police Department employees who are traveling on City business outside of St. Petersburg's City limits. The Order consists of the following sections:

- I. Policy
- II. General Travel Procedures
- III. Air Travel
- IV. Department or Personal Vehicle Use
- V. Rental Vehicle
- VI. Meals, Lodging, and Miscellaneous
- VII. Accounting and Reimbursement

**I. POLICY**

- A. Training registration and training-related travel arrangements will be made by the Training Division. Exceptions will be approved the Bureau Assistant Chief.
- B. Travel arrangements for all other travel will be coordinated, planned, and scheduled by the Bureau bearing budgetary responsibility for the travel.
- C. Employees are prohibited from benefitting by frequent flyer and all other promotional offers being issued by airlines, car rentals, hotels or other travel service providers while traveling on City business.

**II. GENERAL TRAVEL PROCEDURES**

- A. Travel requests will be initiated by the originating Bureau. Employees must obtain prior supervisory authorization to incur any expenses to travel or attend school or training to ensure expenses claimed are reasonable, appropriate, and for the benefit of the City.
  - 1. Travel requests will be submitted by the traveler at least thirty (30) days prior to departure. Exceptions will be made for emergency travel.
  - 2. Travel requests approved at the Bureau level, regardless of the purpose, will be forwarded to the Training Division upon approval by the appropriate Bureau Assistant Chief. This is to facilitate statistical tracking of agency training and travel.

- B. Registration/tuition will be prepaid unless special arrangements are made to pay on site.
- C. Employees may not use a purchasing card for the payment of any travel expenses except for lodging, flights, meals or transportation.
- D. Travel arrangements will be made in accordance with *Administrative Policy #040900, Employee Per Diem and Travel Expense Policy*.

### III. AIR TRAVEL

- A. Travelers will not change pre-booked flights without prior approval from the approving Bureau Assistant Chief, unless necessary while actually in transit in order to arrive at the scheduled destination. This often results in additional fees being charged to the City.
- B. When traveling by plane, the City will reimburse the traveler for reasonable round-trip expenses to and from the airport, unless the employee is receiving a car allowance.

### IV. DEPARTMENT OR PERSONAL VEHICLE USE

- A. If the traveler wishes to drive in lieu of flying or because the destination is not served by a regularly scheduled airline, the following conditions will apply:
  - 1. Whenever possible, the traveler will utilize a City vehicle. If no City vehicle is available, the traveler will be reimbursed for use of a personal vehicle at the rate identified by the City, per mile based on the most direct route from St. Petersburg (this rate covers all maintenance and fuel expenses), up to an amount not exceeding round-trip coach fare to the destination.
  - 2. Approval for reimbursement for use of a personal vehicle must be made by the Bureau Assistant Chief, prior to commencement of the travel.
  - 3. Travelers using a City vehicle must submit receipts for vehicle-related expenses i.e., garage services, parking, gas card and tolls, in order to receive reimbursement and/or process travel orders. When traveling in a city vehicle, a city gas card will be the preferred method of payment. A gas card can be obtained from the Training Division.
  - 4. If the traveler uses a City vehicle, it must be used ONLY as a method of transportation to and from the destination location and for travel necessary at the destination city. The traveler cannot consume alcoholic beverages eight (8) hours prior to driving the City vehicle.
- B. Employees traveling together are encouraged to use the same vehicle. If one employee uses a City vehicle and the other opts to use a personal vehicle, no reimbursement will be provided for the personal vehicle. If both employees use personal vehicles, reimbursement will be provided for one vehicle. If more than one employee is traveling to the same destination, only one City vehicle will be used, unless approved by the Bureau Assistant Chief.

### V. RENTAL VEHICLE

- A. A rental vehicle will be provided for any traveler who, upon reaching the provided hotel, has a reasonable distance to travel to accomplish City-assigned business. When transportation is provided by the school, conference or other agency, the traveler will use the provided transportation.
- B. The rental vehicle must be booked by the Training Division prior to traveling. The vehicle reservations will be made at the time the airline reservations with a City purchasing card.
  - 1. The state contract covers insurance so the traveler should REFUSE the insurance offered by the rental agency.
  - 2. When the car is returned to the rental agency, the traveler must obtain a receipt, which will be submitted with the *Travel Expense Report*.

## VI. MEALS, LODGING AND MISCELLANEOUS

- A. Travelers are responsible for using personal funds to pay for meals and incidental expenses and will be reimbursed according to the per diem rates for the destination city of travel as established by the U.S. General Service Administration (GSA) and 75% of the per diem rate on the first and last days of travel.
- B. Receipts for miscellaneous items, such as required books or tools, must be provided to the organizational unit with budgetary responsibility and will be reimbursed in accordance with City policy.
- C. No reimbursement is payable for meals & incidentals within the local area (defined as Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, and Manatee counties) except for the instances identified in *Administrative Policy #040900, Employee Per Diem and Travel Expense Policy*.
- D. Reimbursement for miscellaneous costs such as rideshare/taxi fares, public transportation, baggage handling, etc., will be at actual cost substantiated by receipts.
- E. Employees will use reasonable prudence in selecting such accommodations for economy, adequate quality, and comfort. Commercial or government rates shall be obtained when available. The City will reimburse up to the daily lodging rate for the destination city of travel as established by the GSA unless proper approval has been obtained in accordance with *Administrative Policy #040900, Employee Per Diem and Travel Expense Policy*.
- F. State/local taxes on lodging within or outside of Florida will not be paid by the City unless documentation can be provided to establish that the lodging facility refused to accept the City's tax-exempt status despite the employee's submission of the City's Certificate of Tax Exemption.
- G. Employees traveling for official business, who encounter serious problems with travel arrangements, may contact the Major, Training Division during regular business hours for assistance.

## VII. ACCOUNTING AND REIMBURSEMENT

- A. All travelers are responsible for submitting an account of expenses incurred on a *Travel Expense Report*.
  - 1. The *Travel Expense Report*, with all receipts attached, is due to the Fiscal Services Division, via Chain of Command, within ten (10) days after the completion of travel.
- B. Valid receipts must be obtained for all expenses for which they plan to have reimbursed. Valid receipts identify the date of purchase, vendor name, itemized list of the purchased items or services, and total amount. If the employee is unable to obtain a receipt that contains all the required information, documentation should be submitted.
- C. All travel requests, even if completely funded by another agency, requires Bureau level approval and a *Travel Expense Report*.
  - 1. Expenses will be reimbursed at the rates established by *Administrative Policy #040900, Employee Per Diem and Travel Expense Policy*.
  - 2. Any excess funds from the sponsoring agency will be deposited in the General Fund.
- D. Every effort should be made to travel to and from authorized City business and training during normal work hours.
  - 1. Overtime will be authorized for travel when it is an extension of the scheduled business day.
  - 2. Overtime, or schedule adjustments for travel occurring on the employee's day off, must be arranged through the employee's Chain of Command, prior to traveling.

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Anthony Holloway  
Chief of Police