



Regional Transit Authority

Travel and Business Expense

(GEN2)

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to reimburse staff for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred during approved work-related travel.

PURPOSE

Employees seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been, and will not be, received from other sources. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this travel policy, then the most conservative course of action should be taken.

Business travel policies are aligned with agency reimbursement rules. All business-related travel paid with RTA funds must comply with agency expenditure policies.

APPLICATION

Full-time and regular, part-time employees are eligible to receive this benefit.

APPROVED:

ADOPTED: Board Chair

Chief Executive Officer

Effective Date:

Date of Last Review:



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1.0 GENERAL

RESPONSIBILITY

Staff travel must be authorized. Travelers should verify that planned travel is eligible for reimbursement before making travel arrangements. Within 10 days of completion of a trip, the traveler must submit a travel reimbursement form and supporting documentation to obtain reimbursement of expenses.

An individual may not approve their own travel or reimbursement. The travel reimbursement form must be signed by the Respective Executive Officer or the Chief Financial Officer.

Designated approval authorities are required to review expenditures and withhold reimbursement if there is reason to believe that the expenditures are inappropriate or extravagant.

PERSONAL FUNDS

Travelers should review reimbursement guidelines before spending personal funds for business travel to determine if such expenses are reimbursable. See Section 2: Travel Expenses/Procedures for details. RTA reserves the right to deny reimbursement of travel-related expenses for failure to comply with policies and procedures. Travelers who use personal funds to facilitate travel arrangements will not be reimbursed until after the trip occurs and proper documentation is submitted.

Vacation in conjunction with business travel

In cases in which vacation time is added to a business trip, any cost variance in airfare, car rental or lodging must be clearly identified on the Travel Request form. RTA will not prepay any personal expenses with the intention of being "repaid" at a later time, nor will any personal expenses be reimbursed.

EXCEPTIONS

Occasionally it may be necessary for travelers to request exceptions to this travel policy. Requests for exceptions to the policy must be made in writing and approved by respective RTA Officers. Exceptions related to the Officer or the Chief Financial Officer expenses must be submitted to the CEO for approval. In most instances, the expected turnaround time for review and approval is 10 business days.



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Section 2. Travel Expenses/Procedures

General information

Authorized business travel for staff that includes prepayments must be pre-approved. Reimbursement of parking, mileage, gasoline in lieu of mileage and ferry or bus passes require receipt. Requests for reimbursement of expenses over must be submitted on a travel reimbursement form.

Permissible prepaid travel expenses

Before the travel, RTA may issue prepayments for airfare, rail transportation, rental vehicles, conference registration fees and cash advances. Applicable policies and methods of payments for these prepayments follow.

Airfare. Travelers are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare that reasonably meets business travel needs. Airfare may be prepaid by the business office. Travelers are encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium airfare pricing.

Coach class or economy tickets must be purchased for domestic or international flights with flight time totaling less than five consecutive hours excluding layovers. A less-than-first-class ticket (i.e., business class) may be purchased at RTA's discretion for domestic or international flights with flight time exceeding five consecutive hours excluding layovers.

Airfare may be purchased with a credit card or check through the business office with a request for payment form.

Rail transportation. RTA will prepay rail transportation provided that the cost does not exceed the cost of the least expensive airfare.

Rental vehicles. RTA will pay for approved use of a rental vehicle. See the section on reimbursements below in this section.

Conference registration fees. Conference registration fees can be prepaid with a credit card or check through the business office with a request for payment form. Business-related banquets or meals that are considered part of the conference can be paid with the registration fees; however, such meals must be deducted from the travelers per diem allowance.

Travel advances. Cash advances are authorized for specific situations that might cause undue financial hardship for business travelers. These situations are limited to staff



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traveling on behalf of RTA. A maximum of 80 percent of the total estimated cost can be advanced.

Expenses associated with the travel must be reconciled and substantiated within two weeks of the return date. The traveler must repay RTA for any advances in excess of the approved reimbursable expenses. The department initiating the travel is responsible for notifying the business office to deposit any excess funds into the appropriate departmental account.

Travel advances are processed by submitting a completed RTA Travel-Expense Reimbursement form and Travel Request form to the business office. Reimbursement for any remaining expenses is processed on a Travel-Expense Reimbursement form approved by the designated approval authority.

Reimbursements. Requests for reimbursements of travel-related expenses are submitted on an RTA Travel-Expense Reimbursement form. This form must be accompanied by supporting documentation. If the requested reimbursement exceeds 20 percent of the total pre-trip estimate, the Travel Reimbursement form must be signed by the CEO or CFO.

These forms must be submitted to the business office within two weeks after the trip is completed. Travel Reimbursement forms not submitted within this time frame require exception approval from the executive officer or from the CFO.

Reimbursement of travel expenses is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenses supported by the original, itemized receipts where required. Reimbursements that may be paid by RTA are shown below.

Airfare. If the airfare was not prepaid by the business office, an original itemized airline receipt, an e-ticket receipt/statement or an Internet receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment and indicate that payment was made.

Rail transportation. If rail transportation was not prepaid by the business office, an original itemized receipt, original e-ticket receipt/statement or Internet receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment and indicate that payment was made.

Automobile (personally owned—domestic travel). A valid driver's license issued within the United States and personal automobile insurance are required for expenses to be reimbursed. Drivers should be aware of the extent of coverage (if any) provided by his or her automobile insurance agency for travel that is business or not personal in nature.

Reimbursement for use of a personal automobile is based on the federal mileage rate. A staff travel reimbursement form is required for reimbursement of personal vehicle business mileage



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Automobile (rental—domestic travel). Reimbursement for a commercial rental vehicle as a primary mode of transportation is authorized only if the rental vehicle is more economical than any other type of public transportation, or if the destination is not otherwise accessible. Vehicle rental at a destination city is reimbursable. Original receipts are required.

RTA authorizes reimbursement for the most economic vehicle available. In certain circumstances, larger vehicles may be rented, with supervisory approval. The rental agreement must clearly show the date and the points of departure/arrival, as well as the total cost. Drivers must adhere to the rental requirements, and restrictions must be followed. Original receipts are required.

Drivers should be aware of the extent of coverage (if any) provided by his or her automobile insurance agency for travel that is business or not personal in nature.

Parking fees, tolls and other incidental costs associated with the vehicle use are not covered by the rental agreement. Travelers are strongly encouraged to fill the gas tank before returning the vehicle to the rental agency to avoid service fees and more expensive fuel rates.

Conference registration fees. If the conference fee was not prepaid, RTA will reimburse these fees, including business-related banquets or meals that are part of the conference registration. Original receipts to support the payment are required. If the conference does not provide a receipt, then a cancelled check, credit card slip/statement or documentation that the amount was paid is required for reimbursement.

A prorated amount for the meals provided must be deducted from the travelers per diem. See Meals (per diem) for more detail. Entertainment activities such as golf outings and sightseeing tours will not be reimbursed.

Registration fees paid directly by an individual will not be reimbursed until the conference is completed.

Lodging (commercial). The cost of overnight lodging (room rate and tax only) will be reimbursed to the traveler if the authorized travel is 45 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite.

Exceptions to this restriction may be approved in writing by the executive officer or by the CFO.

RTA will reimburse lodging expenses at reasonable, single occupancy or standard business room rates. When the hotel or motel is the conference or convention site, reimbursement will be limited to the conference rate.



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Only single room rates are authorized for payment or reimbursement unless the second party is representing the agency in an authorized capacity. If the lodging receipt shows more than a single occupancy, the single room rate must be noted.

Meals (per diem). Per diem allowances are reimbursable for in-state overnight travel that is **45 miles** or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite. Per diem allowances are applicable for all out-of-state travel that is **45 miles** or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite.

RTA per diem rates are based on the **U.S. General Services Administration Guidelines**, which vary by city location. In addition to meals these rates include incidental expenses such as laundry, dry cleaning and service tips (e.g., housekeeping or porter tips). Incidental expenses, unless specifically cited in this policy, will not be reimbursed.

Per diem reimbursements are based on departure and return times over the entire 24-hour day and are prorated accordingly. If a free meal is served on the plane, included in a conference registration fee, built in to the standard, single hotel room rate or replaced by a legitimate business meal, the per diem allowance for that meal may not be claimed.

Receipts are not required for per diem allowances.

Business meals. Travelers are required to follow RTA expenditure policies when requesting reimbursement for business meals. Original itemized receipts are required.

Business expenses. Business expenses, including faxes, photocopies, Internet charges, data ports and business telephone calls incurred while on travel status can be reimbursed. Original itemized receipts are required.

Parking. Original receipts are required for parking fees (including airport parking) totaling \$25 or more. The lodging bill can be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of the overnight stay.

Telephone calls. The costs of personal telephone calls are the responsibility of the individual.

Tolls. Original receipts are required for tolls totaling \$25 or more.

Miscellaneous transportation. Original receipts are required for taxi, bus, subway, metro, ferry and other modes of transportation if costs are \$25 or more for each occurrence.

Visa, passport fees and immunizations. If these items are required for international travel, their reimbursement is left to the discretion of your supervisor. If approved by the designated authority, original itemized receipts are required.



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Non-reimbursable Travel Expenses

The following items that may be associated with business travel will not be reimbursed by RTA:

- Airline club memberships.
- Airline upgrades.
- Business class for domestic flights or first class for all flights.
- Childcare, babysitting, housesitting, or pet-sitting/kennel charges.
- Commuting between home and the primary work location.
- Costs incurred by traveler's failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations in a timely fashion.
- Evening or formal wear expenses.
- Haircuts and personal grooming.
- Laundry and dry cleaning.
- Passports, vaccinations and visas when not required as a specific and necessary condition of the travel assignment.
- Personal entertainment expenses, including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theater movies, social activities and related incidental costs.
- Travel accident insurance premiums or purchase of additional travel insurance.
- Other expenses not directly related to the business travel.
- Motor vehicle violations

Travel for Non-Employees

Additional costs for travel, lodging, meal or other travel expenses for spouses or other family members will not be reimbursed unless the individual has a bona fide RTA purpose for engaging in the travel or attending the event. Such travel is generally limited to senior management and should occur infrequently.



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2.0 FLOWCHART

N/A

3.0 REFERENCES

N/A

4.0 ATTACHMENTS

RTA's Travel-Expense Reimbursement Form

5.0 PROCEDURE HISTORY

N/A

6.0 SPONSOR DEPARTMENT

General Administration



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Business Expense Reimbursement

Employee name:

Date:

Complete and submit expense reimbursement forms within 10 days of the date expenses were incurred. Attach copies of receipts for all expenses above \$20.

Date expense(s) incurred	Air / train fare	Hotel room plus tax	Meals			Local travel				Entertainment	Tips	Other	Daily Totals
			Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Taxi, bus, subway	Mileage @ \$0.____ per mile	Parking / tolls	Car rental				
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Totals	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Provide explanations of any "entertainment" or "other" expenses in box below:

Cash Advance Amount:

Balance Due to Employee

\$0.00

Balance Owed to Company

\$0.00

Purpose of Business Expenses:

I certify that all expenses represented above were incurred while on official business for the company.

Employee's Signature:

Date:

Supervisor's Signature:

Date:

