



City of Norcross
Policies

**CITY OF NORCROSS
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

TRAVEL POLICIES



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TRAVEL POLICY

I. Purpose

These provisions establish the policy governing authorized travel for employees, members of the Norcross Council, and other authorized persons who travel at the expense of the City of Norcross. In conjunction with the annual budget process, the City Council shall authorize department appropriations for travel and meal expenses consistent with the annual adopted operating budgets. Departments shall not incur travel expenditures unless an appropriation is available, or budget amendment has been completed. This policy will provide control functions, assure proper record keeping and ensure fiscal responsibility whenever training is required.

II. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy and procedure, the following words or phrases shall mean:

A. **Authorized Travelers**

- Council members. Officials serving on the City Council, including the Mayor.
- City employees. An individual filling an authorized position in the City, other than Council members.

B. **Business Client.** Any person, other than a Council member, employee, or other traveler, who receives the services of or is subject to solicitation by the City in connection with the performance of its lawful duties; and other business, financial, promotional, or other persons affiliated with the City.

C. **Common Carrier.** Train, bus, commercial airline operating scheduled flights, or rental cars of an established rental car firm.

D. **Complimentary Upgrade.** Any seat assignment arranged in advance by specific request of the traveler or by an airline employee that provides the Authorized Traveler with a class of travel in excess of the airfare paid.

E. **Daily Travel.** All travel, including conferences and seminars that does not require an overnight stay.

F. **Denied Boarding Customer.** Those Authorized Travelers that have been denied boarding a flight by the Airline because of overbooking, mechanical problems or other flight delays.

G. **Domestic Travel.** Travel within the United States, including US Territories where use of a passport is not required.

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- H. **Emergency Notice.** Notification given to a traveler less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of a travel period.
- I. **International Travel.** Travel not within the definition of Domestic Travel.
- J. **Most Economical Method of Travel.** The mode of transportation (City-owned vehicle, privately owned vehicle, common carrier, etc.) and schedule of transportation, taking into consideration the following:
- the purpose and nature of the travel;
 - the most efficient and economical means of travel (considering the time length of the trip, number of connections, time of day, cost of transportation or subsistence required, early booking of airline reservations to take advantage of discounted fares); and
 - the number of persons making the trip and the amount of equipment or material to be transported.
- K. **Official Headquarters.** The physical location to which the Council member, employee or other traveler is assigned to perform their regular duties.
- L. **Standby Seat.** A seat assigned by the airline to an Authorized Traveler when traveling in a standby mode.
- M. **Travel Services.** The City employee(s) assigned the duties and responsibilities to coordinate, perform research, and make reservations for City travel.
- N. **Travel Expenses.** The actual and reasonable costs of transportation, meals, lodging, and incidental expenses normally incurred by a traveler, which costs are defined and prescribed as hereinafter set forth.
- O. **Travel Period.** The period of time between the time of departure and time of return.



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III. Travel Principles and Objectives

Travelers should recognize they are using public funds and are expected to exercise the same care in incurring travel expenses that any prudent person exercises when traveling on business.

It is the responsibility of the traveler to comply with this policy and to be knowledgeable of the nature and extent of reimbursable expenses.

It is the general policy of the City to reimburse reasonable travel expenses, incurred during authorized travel, subject to any limitations provided for in this policy.

If an Authorized Traveler on a trip deviates from this policy for justifiable reasons, the circumstances of the deviation and the reasons therefore are to be documented and reviewed for approval by the City Manager.

Except as noted above, noncompliance with this policy will be addressed in accordance with the City’s ethical or conduct policies and reimbursement may be denied.

IV. Planning and Approval

Travel Authorization. All requests for travel (domestic and international) must be submitted on the Travel Authorization & Expense Report (Report). It should contain the dates of travel, and all other pertinent information required to process the requested travel arrangements. The approving authority must ensure that funding is available in the appropriate line item budget. The Report must include a statement of purpose for the travel and indicate the benefits to the City. A copy of any printed program or agenda shall also be submitted. If none is available, a statement to that effect must be submitted. The Report must be signed by the traveler, and approvals obtained in advance of the proposed travel, as follows:

<u>Type of Travel</u>	<u>Approval Authority</u>
Budgeted Daily	Department Heads or designee
Unbudgeted Daily	City Manager or designee
Budgeted Domestic	Department Heads or designee
Unbudgeted Domestic	City Manager or designee
International Travel	City Manager or designee

While Department Heads are authorized to delegate approval of travel to a named designee, nonetheless, the Department Head is ultimately responsible for the appropriateness and accuracy of all travel within the respective department.

All Department Heads are hired with the understanding they hold the necessary discretion and judgment to plan travel and training costs in a prudent and professional manner. Accordingly, a department head is authorized to schedule his or her travel arrangements for any budgeted daily or



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domestic travel. However, international and unbudgeted travel must be approved by the City Manager.

The City Manager is hired with the understanding he or she holds the necessary discretion and judgment to plan travel and training costs in a prudent and professional manner. Accordingly, the City Manager is authorized to schedule his or her own travel arrangements for any budgeted travel.

The Mayor and each Council member shall provide a detail listing to the City Clerk or designee of planned trips in carrying out their duties as elected officials of the City. The Mayor and Council members may utilize budgeted funds for travel and training, but are still expected to adhere to the Travel Principles & Objectives. When reasonably possible, the City Clerk or designee should be used to arrange travel arrangements for the Mayor and all Council Members. Any Council member, to include the Mayor, shall not incur travel expenditures unless an appropriation is available, or budget amendment has been completed.

Department Responsibilities. The Department Head or designee shall have the responsibility to review all travel requests and ensure their compliance with policy and procedures. The Department Head or designee will coordinate all travel that requires only mileage reimbursement up to 100 miles. The Department Head or designee shall be responsible for arranging travel plans, including Daily Travel that has conference or seminar registration, rental car or airfare, in accordance with policy and procedure. All other travel reservations will be made by the Department Head or designee, such as a local or nationally recognized travel agency, unless otherwise approved by the City Manager or designee. The Department Head or designee may provide options for lodging, airfare, and other expenses if deemed cost-effective.

Use of Internet. In accordance with the City Internet Usage, use of the internet to arrange for City travel is acceptable. Airline reservations can be made by The Department Head or designee using the internet, by accessing travel websites. Authorized Travelers may use the internet to research fares and other travel expenses for trip planning purposes.



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V. Special Conditions of Travel

Travel for Employment Interviews. Travel and transportation expenses of the City's employment applicants will be reimbursed in accordance with this policy. To the extent possible, all travel arrangements and lodging will be made by the Human Resources Manager upon approval by the City Manager.

Most Advantageous Method. Authorized Travelers are required to use the Most Advantageous Method of travel available to the City. If an Authorized Traveler departs early or returns late to take advantage of reduced airfares, lodging and meals will be reimbursed in accordance with this Policy, provided that a net savings to the City is realized and such savings are documented in advance.

Physically Disabled, Sick or Injured Travelers. Any traveler who is on authorized travel, and becomes sick or injured, to the extent they can no longer perform the City's business, may be eligible to continue receiving meal allowances, and other reasonable expenses during incapacitation. This eligibility may extend until such time as the Authorized Traveler is able to continue to perform the City's business, or return to official headquarters, whichever is earlier. In order to qualify, the traveler must notify the Department Head, City Manager or designee as soon as possible, but not later than 72 hours after incurring the illness or injury, and receive authorization for continued reimbursement. Notwithstanding any provision contained herein to the contrary, the City may reimburse or pay travel expenses incurred by the physically disabled traveler, which are in excess of the travel expenses ordinarily authorized, provided such excess travel expenses are reasonable and necessary under the circumstances for the safe travel of the physically disabled individual. Any and all reasonable and necessary expenses being claimed by the traveler must be accompanied by sufficient documentation to justify the expense(s).

Emergency Travel. The City Manager or designee may authorize travel for any employee, Council member, or other traveler pursuant to emergency notice. The requirements of this policy may be waived at the discretion of the City Manager or designee whenever travel is pursuant to emergency notice. Travel expense reports shall be submitted upon completion of travel in accordance with this policy.

VI. Rates of Payment

Reimbursement Method. Reimbursement claims for meals and lodging are to be reported on the Travel and Expense Reimbursement Form by date, location and amount. An individual taking annual leave while away from headquarters on official business is not entitled to reimbursement for the period of leave. Employees will not be reimbursed for hotel/motel tax or sales tax incurred when traveling within the State

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A consistent method of reimbursements for meals and/or lodging shall be followed for each travel request, as follows:

For domestic travel, a traveler may receive:

1. Reimbursement of meals and incidentals based on actual itemized receipts, plus reimbursement for lodging based on actual receipts.

Lodging. A traveler may be reimbursed for the actual cost of a single occupancy hotel room for travel that requires overnight absence more than 50 road miles from Official Headquarters. The City will consider, in the following order of importance, the traveler's safety, the convenience of the hotel location for the traveler's business, and the rate guidelines as outlined in the paragraph below, when making hotel reservations. Lodging expenses must be substantiated by a hotel receipt and will be made for the actual amount of the bill. A city employee on travel status, if accompanied by someone, who is not a city employee on travel status, will be entitled to reimbursement at the lowest applicable room rate (Example: Any upgrade beyond the conference rate will not be reimbursed). Reimbursement for lodging shall be limited to the minimum number of nights required to conduct the assigned city business.

1. Domestic Lodging Rates. Reimbursement or payment for domestic lodging is limited to the group rate, if available. If a group rate is not available, lodging expenses are limited to reasonable amounts for the area traveled. Primary responsibility for the reasonableness of amounts charged rests with the approving authority.
2. International Lodging Rates. International lodging expenses are limited to reasonable amounts, not to exceed the conference rate. Expenses will be reviewed by the approving authority as indicated herein for reasonableness.
3. In-State Lodging -- Tax Exemption. When reserving lodging within the State of Georgia, a City credit card payment, an advance check, or other established procedure shall be used to ensure exemption from sales tax. City employees must use the hotel/motel tax exempt status form and should obtain a copy of this form prior to departure. If forms are not available in the employee's department, they may be obtained from the Finance Department. The same requirements apply to sales tax.



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4. Taxi Service. Shuttle or taxi service will be reimbursed between the individual's departure point and the common carrier's departure point; between the common carrier's arrival point and the individual's lodging or meeting place; and between the lodging and meeting place if at difference locations. It is expected that the most economical transportation service that is feasible and available will be utilized. Receipts are necessary for such items of transportation

5. Miscellaneous Expenses. Registration fees required for participation in workshops seminars or conferences which an employee is directed and/or authorized to attend will be allowed when supported by a paid receipt or copy of the check showing payment. Tips related to services other than meals should be included under miscellaneous expenses. Expenses for official telephone messages which must be paid for by the traveler are allowable. Postage expense incurred relative to travel will be allowed. Claims for theater, and entertainment will not be reimbursed.

6. Common Carrier. Transportation by common carrier will be scheduled by plane, bus or rail. Reimbursement will be made upon presentation of a ticket stub, receipt or other documentary evidence of expenditure (reimbursement for upgrade cost will not be allowed). Officials or employees traveling by commercial air carrier will not be reimbursed for that portion of first class air fare which exceeds the amount of the regular coach fare for the flight on which such official or employee is. Every effort should be made to reserve seats far enough in advance to take advantage of any discount fares.

7. Non-reimbursable Expenses. Additional amounts charged to the room, including but not limited to movies, or, alcoholic beverages, will not be reimbursed.

Travel Meals. Receipted meals must be accompanied by a itemized receipt reflecting the amount spent on the meal. The receipt must be a machine validated cash register or credit card receipt. Stubs from guest checks are not acceptable. If a meal is not itemized, then reimbursement will not be allowed, and the authorized traveler will have to cover the expense.

For the purposes of determining meal allowances, the Travel Day shall begin two hours before departure on domestic flights and three hours before departure on International flights. Travel involving ground transportation shall commence at point and time of departure Exceptional gratuities must be documented in writing and approved by the approving authority.