

# **SECTION 6: TRAVEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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## **6.1 POLICIES/DEFINITIONS**

### **6.11 Policy:**

- A. General Policy. The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform guidelines for the authorization and payment of travel-related expenses for elected officials, department heads, and other county employees. This policy also applies to the members of any board, commission or other agency who travel on official county business away from their designated post of duty. These policies pertain to all advances, reimbursements and use of county credit cards while on related county business.
- B. Specific Policy: It is the intent of this travel policy to reimburse only those travel expenses actually incurred in the course of travel when that travel is necessary and for the benefit of the conduct of county business.

The travel costs reimbursed shall not exceed budgeted amounts as authorized by the Board of Supervisors. To be reimbursed, the travel expenses must have been approved in advance by the department head or elected official. It is the responsibility of each department head and elected official to provide direction and information concerning these travel policies to his/her department staff and to ensure that these policies are followed with the department.

Travel is warranted only when personal contact is the most effective method of conducting official county business. The most economical method of transportation shall always be selected, within the context of both the cost of the transportation and the value of the individual's time.

Authorization to attend conferences and meetings shall be granted only to those persons professionally concerned with topics to be discussed or the business to be transacted. When several employees are traveling to the same activity, they will share transportation when reasonable to do so.

Employees traveling by privately owned vehicles must have adequate liability insurance and a valid driver's license. The insurance coverage must meet the minimum amounts specified by A.R.S. § 28-4009. In the event of an accident, the employee's insurance coverage shall be in effect.

Proof of insurance, driver's license, travel requests, claims for reimbursement and request for travel advance must be submitted on forms prescribed by the Board of Supervisors.

### **6.12 Coverage:**

*This policy applies to all classified and unclassified positions. Nothing in this policy modifies or waives the "at will" status of an unclassified employee.*

## 6.13 Definitions:

For the purposes of this manual, the following definitions shall be applied:

- A. Designated post of duty: The location where the individual spends the largest portion of regular working time, or the place the employee returns upon completion of a special assignment. The post of duty for members of boards, commissions, authorities, councils and committees who are not full time employees of the County, shall be deemed to be their place of residence (ARS §38-621B).
- B. Documentation: Copies of registration forms, meeting schedules, seminars; training and conference/convention brochures and receipts. Proper documentation shall accompany all claims submitted for reimbursement.
- C. In-county travel: In-county travel includes travel within the County or within 30 miles of county borders.
- D. In-state travel: In-state travel includes travel inside the Arizona border, into an adjoining state (USA) when necessary to reach a remote area of Arizona, and into areas of an adjoining state (USA) within 30 miles of the Arizona border.  
  
In-state travel shall also include travel by the Apache County Attorney's Office Crime Victims Compensation Coordinator or his designee to San Juan County and McKinley County, New Mexico for purposes of administering the crime victims' compensation program.
- E. Lodging: Expenditures for overnight accommodations when travel extends overnight.
- F. Out-of-county travel: Out-of-county travel shall include all travel except in-county travel as outlined above.
- G. Out-of-state travel: Out-of-state travel shall include all travel out-of-state except as outlined under in-state travel. Out-of-state travel shall be justified in the documentation submitted for travel advance or reimbursement.
- H. Per diem: Daily expenditures for food and incidentals.
- I. Transportation Expenses: Expenses for common carrier fares, private automobile or aircraft mileage allowances. It will also include emergency repairs to county-owned vehicles, bridge and road tolls, taxi, bus or streetcar fares, parking fees and all other charges essential to travel.
- K. Travel status: When a county official or employee is conducting necessary county business away from his designated duty post with supervisory approval.

**6.14 Travel Expenses of Sheriff Chargeable to County:**

This travel policy will be as provided in A.R.S. 11-444.

## **6.2 TRAVEL REQUESTS AND ADVANCES**

### **6.21 Policy:**

All travel on county business must be authorized in advance by the elected official or department head. The elected official or department head shall be responsible for managing expenses and keeping them within budgetary appropriations. If sufficient funds are not available, the Finance Department shall issue neither travel advances nor travel reimbursements without approval of the County Manager.

### **6.22 Coverage:**

*This policy applies to all classified and unclassified positions. Nothing in this policy modifies or waives the “at will” status of an unclassified employee.*

### **6.23 Processing Travel Requests:**

Travel requests shall be submitted on forms established by the Finance Department and approved by the Board of Supervisors. The elected official or department head shall review all travel requests to ensure that the employees are actually conducting county business while they are traveling.

The elected official or department head shall verify that sufficient funds are available for every travel expenditure. If sufficient funds are available, the elected official or department head shall sign and date the travel request to document approval.

### **6.24 Travel Advances:**

Travel advances may be allowed employees of Apache County under the following conditions and circumstances.

- A. Lien against wages: Travel advances shall constitute a lien against wages. When receiving an advance, the individual shall sign a statement that he/she understands that travel advances not reconciled in a timely manner (within ten days) after returning from a trip may be deducted from future salary, wages or travel expense reimbursements. (ARS § 35-192.02B). Any advances not reconciled or reimbursed within 30 days shall automatically be deducted from future salary, wages or reimbursements. If funds have been withheld from any paycheck or reimbursement check and the employee reconciles the advance subsequently, the amount withheld shall be included in the next regularly scheduled expense check run.

**(6.24 Cont.)**

- B. Procedure for requesting advance: Procedures and forms for requesting a travel advance will be established by the Finance Department and approved by the Board of Supervisors. A travel advance request must be reviewed by the employee's elected official or department head, signed and dated to document approval. The approved travel advance request will then be forwarded to Finance Department for payment. No travel advances shall be made to anyone who has not repaid or reconciled any previous travel advance.
  
- C. Travel advances and terminating employees: Prior to the final payment to any terminating employee, the elected official or department head and the Finance Department shall ensure that all travel advances have been reconciled.
  
- D. Amount of travel advance: No cash advances shall be issued for amounts less than \$50.00.

## **6.3 USE OF COUNTY GAS/MISCELLANEOUS CARDS**

### **6.31 Policy:**

Credit cards issued to department heads, elected officials and other county employees shall only be used for official County travel expenses. Credit cards shall not be used for purchase of personal items of any sort, including gasoline for private vehicles. Gas cards will be issued on an as needed basis by the Engineering Department, to be used for Apache County business only. Store credit cards, Wal-Mart, Home Depot, ect., are prohibited unless approved by the County Manager.

### **6.32 Coverage:**

*This policy applies to all classified and unclassified positions. Nothing in this policy modifies or waives the "at will" status of an unclassified employee.*

### **6.33 Lien Against Wages:**

Purchases with county credit cards shall constitute a lien against wages until properly reconciled. Upon issuance of a County credit card, the official or employee receiving the credit card shall sign a statement that he/she understands that purchases with county credit cards not reconciled or reimbursed in a timely manner (within ten days) after the employee's return from a trip, may be deducted from future salary, wages or travel expense reimbursements. (ARS §35-192.02B).

### **6.34 Reconciliation Requirement:**

Any credit card purchases not reconciled or reimbursed within 45 days shall be deducted from future salary, wages or reimbursements. If funds have been withheld from any paycheck or reimbursement check and the employee reconciles the purchases subsequently, the amount withheld shall be included in the next regularly scheduled expense check run.

Credit card privileges shall be revoked and shall not be issued to anyone who has not repaid or reconciled any travel advance or purchase using county credit cards.

### **6.35 Receipts:**

All purchases with county credit cards shall be supported with the itemized receipts and other appropriate documentation, along with the approved travel request. Any unsupported charges shall be reimbursed to the County.

### **6.36 Terminating Employees:**

Prior to final payment to any terminating employee, the elected official or department head and the Finance Department shall ensure that all credit card purchases have been reconciled (or repaid).

## **6.4 TRAVEL CLAIMS AND REIMBURSEMENT**

### **6.41 Policy:**

Apache County employees may be reimbursed for expenses of any approved travel.

### **6.42 Coverage:**

*This policy applies to all classified and unclassified positions. Nothing in this policy modifies or waives the “at will” status of an unclassified employee.*

### **6.43 Submission of Claim:**

All claims for travel reimbursement must be submitted on approved forms and supported by proper documentation, including a daily log of mileage, receipts and other required documentation. The travel claims shall be submitted to the Finance Department for reimbursement or reconciliation within six months of completion of the authorized travel in order to comply with state statutes for filing claims. After six months the claim will not be allowed.

### **6.44 Review of Claims:**

The elected official or department head shall review each claim for mathematical accuracy and review expenditures for propriety. The elected official or department head shall sign and date each travel claim to document approval, and submit it to the Finance Department for reimbursement.

### **6.45 Advance Shortage/Overage:**

If a travel advance was issued, and the travel claim is greater than the advance, the Finance Department shall prepare a warrant to reimburse the employee for expenses in excess of the advance. If the travel claim is less than the advance, the employee shall be required to remit the difference.

### **6.46 Pay During Periods of Travel:**

Travel time shall be compensable if the employee is engaged in travel as part of the employer's principal activity.

## **6.5 TRANSPORTATION**

### **6.51 Policy:**

Reimbursement for travel is limited to expense of travel by the most direct and usually traveled route, and by the most economical means of transport. An employee or official traveling by an indirect route for his own pleasure and convenience will not be reimbursed for subsistence and travel expenses in excess of those which would have been required for travel by the most direct route. When there is more than one employee traveling in the same private motor vehicle, only one claim for reimbursement of mileage expense will be submitted.

### **6.52 Coverage:**

*This policy applies to all classified and unclassified positions. Nothing in this policy modifies or waives the "at will" status of an unclassified employee.*

### **6.53 Travel Arrangements:**

The employee is responsible for making all transportation and lodging arrangements, subject to policies contained herein.

- A. Common carrier: Air travel is considered more economical in terms of time and money than other modes of transportation for long trips. Claims for transportation by scheduled airlines shall be allowed at the lowest fare available. Claims for reimbursement of higher fare or extra charges for transportation by scheduled airlines may be allowed if accompanied by a full explanation stating the facts constituting the official necessity. Employee flight coupons must be furnished with the claim for reimbursement.
- B. Railroads and buses: Railroad or bus travel may be used when convenient and economical, and when their use will not involve excessive travel time. Receipts are required for reimbursement.
- C. Rented automobiles: Rented automobiles may be used when other means of travel cannot be used economically or conveniently. Use of this means of travel, however, should be held to a minimum, and justification for such use must accompany claims for reimbursement. Receipts must be furnished with the claim for reimbursement.
- D. County-owned vehicles: County vehicles should be used for travel whenever possible. Each county department is responsible for the costs of fuel, parking and emergency repairs. Any emergency repair must be approved by department head or elected official in advance. Any reimbursement to the employee must be supported by proper receipts. Employees must have an appropriate valid Arizona driver's license when driving a county vehicle. The employee shall not be reimbursed for mileage when using a county-owned motor vehicle for travel.

**(6.53 Cont.)**

E. Privately-Owned Vehicles: The employee driving a privately-owned vehicle on county business may receive mileage reimbursement, regardless of eligibility for lodging or per diem reimbursement. When the travel begins or ends at the individual's residence, mileage shall be computed from the residence or the designated duty post, whichever is the shorter distance.

1. Use: Whenever possible, county equipment should be used in place of privately-owned vehicles. It is the responsibility of the elected official or department head, not the employee, to determine whether a county or privately-owned vehicle is to be used.

2. Two or more employees: When two or more employees travel in the same personal vehicle at the same time, only one employee will be reimbursed for mileage expense.

3. Insurance coverage and driver's license: A travel employee driving a privately-owned vehicle on county business shall have current vehicle liability insurance. The employee shall also have a valid driver's license.

Prior to beginning county travel, the employee using his/her personal vehicle shall provide evidence of automobile liability insurance. The insurance shall provide at least the minimum amount of coverage specified by A.R.S. § 28-4009. Additionally, the employee shall certify that he/she has automobile liability insurance and his/her Arizona driver's license is valid and in force. This certification will be delivered to the Finance Department on a form specified by the Board of Supervisors.

If the employee does not carry the required vehicle liability insurance, he/she will be prohibited the use of his/her privately-owned motor vehicle on county business.

Failure to provide evidence of the required insurance and driver license will result in invalidation of the official's or employee's mileage reimbursement request.

If an employee driving a privately-owned motor vehicle is involved in an accident, his/her own liability insurance carrier is responsible to the limits of the policy. If the amount exceeds his/her coverage, the County's insurance program will cover amounts over the policy limits. This coverage will take effect only if the employee was acting within the course and scope of his/her employment. In any event, the County will not reimburse the employee for any physical damage to his/her motor vehicle.

4. Mileage reimbursement rates: The current reimbursement rate for use of privately-owned vehicles is obtained by contacting the Finance Department. Mileage will be computed by using odometer readings or map mileage, whichever is more accurate. Rates may be adjusted by the Board of Supervisors to match state or federal rates.

F. Chartered, privately-owned and rented aircraft: Expenses for the use of chartered, privately-owned and rented aircraft for county travel must be justified and shown to be in the best interest of the County. The elected official or department head, not the employee, shall make this determination. Chartered aircraft travel is allowed only if a

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common carrier is not feasible or an alternate mode of travel is not practical. Any request for reimbursement shall be accompanied by a written explanation as well as a receipt.

Chartered air service may only be obtained from FAA-licensed commercial flight operators.

Individuals who pilot privately-owned or rented aircraft must maintain the proper types and amounts of insurance on the aircraft.

Use of chartered, privately-owned or rented aircraft out-of-state must be approved in advance by the Board of Supervisors.

Privately-owned or rented aircraft use will be reimbursed at the rate as per Exhibit "B". The amount reimbursed shall be based on the shortest air route from origin to destination. Landing and parking fees are allowed, except at the location where the aircraft is normally based. Rates may be adjusted to match state or federal rates.

- G. Local transportation, tolls, and parking: Taxi, bus, streetcar and other mass transit use is classified as local transportation, and reimbursement can be claimed with receipts or other documentation. The most economical means of transportation shall be used in traveling to and from airports. Reimbursement for airport storage or parking for a privately-owned motor vehicle is allowed and requires a receipt or other documentation. Bridge and road tolls are reimbursable with receipts or other documentation.

## **6.6 MEALS AND PER DIEM REIMBURSEMENT**

### **6.61 Policy:**

Employees, Elected Officials, Department Heads and members of boards and commissions shall be allowed reimbursement for meals in accordance with rules outlined in this section.

### **6.62 Coverage:**

This policy applies to all classified and unclassified positions. Nothing in this policy modifies or waives the “at will” status of an unclassified employee.

### **6.63 Meal Allowances While In Authorized Travel Status:**

Allowances and reimbursements for individual meals will be determined in accordance with the following rules.

1.) *Authorized Travel Status.* Employees are eligible for meal allowances when in authorized travel status. For purposes of this section, “authorized travel status” means that an employee is on assignment away from his/her normal workstation for purposes of attending a meeting, training, or other legitimate county business requiring overnight travel that has been authorized by the Elected Official or Department Head.

Employees are not eligible for reimbursement pursuant to this section if the nature of their routine daily work requires travel.

2.) *Overnight Travel:* For purposes of this section, “overnight travel” shall be deemed to occur whenever the nature of an employee’s required travel will require him/her to obtain lodging and sleep more than 75 miles away from his/her home overnight.

3.) *Compensation for Specific Meals:* Employees are entitled to reimbursement for specific meals under the following circumstances:

a.) *Breakfast.* An employee is entitled to reimbursement for breakfast if required to be in authorized travel status at 6:00 a.m.

b.) *Lunch.* An employee is entitled to reimbursement for lunch if required to be in authorized travel status at 12:00 noon.

c.) *Dinner.* An employee is entitled to reimbursement for dinner if required to be in authorized travel status at 7:00 p.m.

In determining whether an employee is required to be in authorized travel status pursuant to this section, reasonable judgment should be exercised by Elected Officials or Department Heads considering minimizing costs to the county, the safety of Apache County employees, and public safety.

4.) *Provided Meals.* When a meal is provided at no cost to the employee, the employee shall not be entitled to a meal allowance. This includes meals provided during conferences that are part of the normal conference or seminar registration fee. If dietary needs make it necessary for the employee to forego the provided meal, then the employee may claim the normal meal allowance.

5.) *Compensatory Time*: Compensatory time is not authorized for the time the employee spends during a reimbursed meal.

#### **6.64 Business Meals**

Compensation for business meals consumed by employees will be allowed only if the meal is directly related or associated to a substantial discussion about county business for a clear business reason in a business setting.

When business meals are required to conduct County business, the request for reimbursement will be approved by the Elected Official or Department Head. If prior approval is not obtained, the expense may not be reimbursed. A proper business meeting must be conducted prior to, during, or after the meal in order to qualify as a business expense.

Business meals within the County will be reimbursed at actual cost. The request for reimbursement must be accompanied by a receipt. Business meals while on travel outside the County may be reimbursed either at the individual meal allowance rate or the actual amount, if accompanied by proper receipt.

If the Elected Official, Department Head or employee pays for the meal of an appropriate guest or guests at the business meal, the reimbursement shall be at the actual amount and must be accompanied by proper receipts.

Business meals shall be kept to a minimum. Proper judgment should be used in selecting food establishments and meals in order to minimize the cost to the County. All business meals must be properly identified on the reimbursement form. They shall be accompanied by a justifiable explanation of the business meeting and a list of the participants.

#### **6.65 Meals to Enable Employees to Work Overtime**

When overtime work necessitates an extension of the employee's normal work schedule, the County may reimburse the employee the actual cost of the meal or provide a meal.

In order to qualify under this provision, the meal provided must be reasonable in value and cannot be provided regularly, frequently, or by policy of the County or any Department thereof. Meals provided pursuant to this section must occur at or near the end of the employee's regularly scheduled shift, and the employee must work two or more hours beyond the time he/she would normally be scheduled to leave.

Meal reimbursements or per diem for lunch during a trip not involving overnight travel will never qualify under this section.

#### **6.66 Per Diem Allowance:**

All per diem for meals shall be as set forth in the current Arizona Accounting Manual.

## 6.7 LODGING REIMBURSEMENT

### 6.71 Policy:

The employee shall be on authorized travel status overnight in order to be eligible for reimbursement of lodging expenses.

- A. Overnight travel out of county: Overnight travel shall be authorized when the duty assignment requires the individual to be away from the assigned duty station as follows:
  - 1. while attending meetings, workshops, conferences or other official county functions that cover a period of two days or more;
  - 2. while attending meetings, workshops, conferences or other official functions that require the employee to leave for the destination or return to the duty post or residence at an unreasonable time of day.
- B. Overnight travel in county: Lodging costs incurred in connection with in-county travel will not be reimbursed unless:
  - 1. An emergency or unique circumstance exists and lodging is approved by the department head or elected official; or
  - 2. The lodging costs are associated with a conference or convention, and the lodging costs have been approved in advance by the Board of Supervisors.
- C. Selection of lodging: When selecting lodging, the employee must request government or commercial rates. Lodging expense at other than a commercial establishment cannot be reimbursed.
- D. Reimbursement amounts: The reimbursement amount shall only include actual room charges and applicable taxes. Miscellaneous charges for entertainment, food, beverages, room service, valet charges, parking tips and other miscellaneous charges shall not be reimbursed. The reimbursement will not exceed the following listed amounts.

Maximum lodging cost reimbursement shall be as follows:

Have Finance Department Check

Location	Reimbursement Amount
In cities listed on the state "Lodging Cost Index" (See attached Exhibit)	Actual cost not to exceed the listed lodging cost
In other cities, in-state	Actual cost not to exceed \$52.50
In other cities, out-of-state	Actual cost not to exceed \$60.00

This schedule may be updated by the Board of Supervisors periodically.

**(6.71 Cont.)**

E. Exception to Reimbursement Limits

1. If an individual eligible to receive travel reimbursement attends a convention, conference or other formal meeting as the official representative of the department and stays at a designated conference hotel (motel), actual lodging costs may be reimbursed even if the stated maximums are exceeded. Documentation supporting hotel designations must be provided with the request for travel authorization and reimbursement.

2. Accommodations at alternate hotels in the immediate area of the event may be considered as the designated lodging when no vacancies exist at the recommended hotel or when the cost of lodging is less expensive at the alternate location. The reimbursement for lodging at an alternate hotel (motel) shall be limited to the cost of the designated hotel (motel). Reimbursement for lodging at conferences within the County must be approved in advance by the Board of Supervisors.

F. Receipts: The original itemized receipt issued by the commercial establishment shall be attached to the claim for reimbursement. If the original lodging receipt is lost or destroyed, a photocopy may be submitted with the statement, "Treat as an Original". The photocopy must be signed by the employee and the department head or elected official.

If the original receipt is lost, a photocopy is not available, and a copy cannot be obtained from the lodging establishment, a copy of the canceled check or of the credit card receipt is required to substantiate the employee paid for the lodging. A letter from the department head or elected official shall accompany the canceled check or credit card receipt. The letter shall include the name of employee, the dates of the travel, the name, address and telephone number of the lodging establishment, cost per night and the total cost of the lodging. The letter should also explain why an original or photocopy of the lodging receipt is not available.

G. Sharing: When two or more employees share a room, only one lodging reimbursement will be approved. The amount of the reimbursement shall not exceed the maximum amount allowed multiplied by the number sharing the room.

H. Miscellaneous expenses: County business-related communication charges for telephone, telegram, and telexes are fully reimbursable if documented by receipt and explanation.

## **6.8 COUNTY LIABILITY AND PROPERTY INSURANCE**

### **6.81 Policy:**

The County has established the following procedures to handle all claims for property damage, public liability and workers' compensation claims involving the County, its property and employees.

### **6.82 Coverage:**

*This policy applies to all classified and unclassified positions. Nothing in this policy modifies or waives the "at will" status of an unclassified employee.*

### **6.83 In the Event of an Accident:**

Should an employee become involved in an accident that results in damage to County property, damage to property of others or bodily injury, the situation should immediately be reported by telephone to the County Manager's office. A full written report must be submitted as soon as possible and should include the following information:

- A. the date, time and place of the accident
- B. county employees involved in the accident
- C. a brief description of the accident
- D. a list of any individuals who might be witnesses to the accident
- E. a description of injuries to individuals or of damage to property
- F. a list of those local or state enforcement agencies investigating the accident
- G. the name and relevant personal data that the employee has been able to obtain about any injured parties and about the owner of any damaged property

In addition, the employee shall not discuss the accident with anyone unrelated to the County, other than the investigating law enforcement officer.

## **6.9 COMMUTER USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES**

### **6.91 Policy:**

The County will make only Internal Revenue Service tax deductions on commuter use of county vehicles if requested by the employee. The County will include the value of the employee's personal use in gross pay and record it on the W2 form. Social Security taxes will be withheld on an annual basis. No county vehicle will be used for any personal use except for commuting purposes.

### **6.92 Coverage:**

*This policy applies to all classified and unclassified positions. Nothing in this policy modifies or waives the "at will" status of an unclassified employee.*