

Policy Overview

Administrative Policy No:	CAP - ##
Policy:	Council and Committee Travel and Education Expense Policy
Effective:	
Revised:	
Current Legislation:	
Applicable to:	Mayor & Council

PURPOSE

XX.1 PURPOSE

The Council and Committee Travel and Education Expense Policy outlines the eligibility requirements and expense reimbursement practices in a way that allows members of Council to meet their responsibilities as elected officials serving the City of Port Colborne (the City).

XX.2 SCOPE

This policy applies to all Members of Council and addresses City approved travel, conference attendance, and education undertaken in the role of Mayor and Councillor for the City of Port Colborne. Further, this policy extends to City Committee Members including, but not limited to, the Library Board, Museum Board, and Committee of Adjustment.

Companion travel will not be paid for by the City, with the exception of a disabled representative who requires personal assistance. In these instances, the companion is entitled to the same expense reimbursement limits as the Member, for expenses actually incurred.

XX.3 DEFINITIONS

City: shall mean The Corporation of the City of Port Colborne.

Committee: shall mean a Committee of Council. This may be a standing committee, a statutory committee, or an advisory committee.

Conference/Training: shall include, but not be limited to, conferences, seminars, workshops, training sessions, courses, and/or other functions of a municipal nature.

Delegate: shall mean a representative of the City such as members of Council, Board and Committee members, and other representatives sent on behalf of the City – including the Mayor unless otherwise stipulated in this policy.

Guest/Companion: shall include, but not be limited to, non-employees of the City and friends and family members of a delegate.

Member: shall include, but not be limited to, a person elected or appointed to Council or a Committee of Council.

XX.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The City recognizes that life-long learning is a key element in the delivery of services and is committed to providing the necessary education, training, and professional development to ensure effective service delivery and continuous improvement based on best practices.

The following principles are established for managing the reimbursement of expenses to Members in a fair and reasonable manner.

1. Expenses must:

- be properly authorized prior to commitment
- be within approved budgeted funds
- be work-related
- be modest and cost-effective, and
- strike a balance among economy, health and safety, and efficiency of operations.

2. Procedures for reimbursement must be efficient and easy to administer.

3. Procedures should ensure that:

- appropriate insurance coverage is in place to protect the City and authorized travelling companion
- itineraries are documented in advance in case of an emergency
- appropriate internal controls are in place to limit payment to authorized expenses, actually incurred.

XX.5 AUTHORIZATION OF TRAVEL

Conference attendance is limited to Canada and the United States. Attendance at professional development opportunities outside of Canada or the United States must be authorized by resolution of Council.

XX.5.1 ELECTED OFFICIALS

Any member of Council is authorized to attend the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conference, the Ontario Good Roads Association, and the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) conference, as well as training seminars and workshops that do not require overnight accommodation, provided sufficient funds are available within the current year's Council budget for the desired

number of members to attend.

Some City representation is expected at all four events; however, reimbursement will be provided by the City for only one of those four conferences for each individual member of Council.

The Mayor may attend more than one conference at his or her discretion in the execution of the duties of Mayor. The Mayor shall make an expense claim to the Region of Niagara, in his or her role as a Regional Councillor, prior to claiming expenses from the City for a conference subsequent to the first conference attended in a calendar year.

It is understood that, in addition to conferences, seminars, and one-day training sessions, Council Members may undertake enrolment in municipal courses and training. In these cases, the City will reimburse the Council Member for the cost of tuition and course materials upon successful completion of the course. Transportation costs will be the sole expense of the Council Member, with no reimbursement of mileage, parking, or any other cost associated with regular attendance at a course.

XX.5.1. BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Attendance at professional development opportunities is permitted but must be authorized in advance by the board or committee, subject to the established budget for the corresponding board or committee.

XX.6 BUDGET APPROVAL

The Director of Corporate Services shall include an amount for professional development of members in each annual budget for Council approval.

The expense allowances provided for under this policy are the maximum amounts or rates that may be paid in respect of any expense for which payment is authorized. The Member and approval authority may agree in advance of any travel to negotiate reimbursements which are less than provided is this policy.

XX.7 ELIGIBLE EXPENSES AND RECEIPTS

Eligible expenditures include registration fees, transportation, accommodations, meals, and per diems as provided in this section. Additional eligible expenditures for business telephone calls, internet, photocopy, fax, and other office support are included. No accommodation or per diems will be paid for travel within 100km of the City unless prior approval is obtained by resolution of Council or the appropriate board or committee.

Ineligible expenditures that will not be reimbursed are expenses of a personal



nature, which include recreational purposes (e.g. video rentals, pay per view TV, facility use fees, mini-bars, room service), personal items, personal telephone calls, traffic and parking violations, social events which are not part of the conference registration fee, or expenses of friends or family members.

XX.7.1 REGISTRATION FEES

Where possible, registration fees for conferences, professional development seminars and municipal meetings shall be paid in advance on behalf of the delegate using the City's Corporate credit card.

Fees payable at the time of registration for social events such as welcome receptions and banquets are acceptable, but a reduction from the per diem at the rate specified in this policy must be made.

Fees for golf tournaments associated with conferences are not eligible expenses.

XX.7.2 ELECTED OFFICIAL ALLOWANCES FOR TRAVEL WITHIN THE CITY

The Mayor and members of Council will be reimbursed for eligible mileage claims for travel outside the City in accordance with the City's Mileage Reimbursement Policy. In the event that reimbursement is made by another body (e.g. the Region of Niagara), the City will not provide compensation.

XX.7.3 TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES

For travel on municipal business the most economical and practical means of transportation – air, train, or automobile should be chosen, taking into consideration travel cost as well as time away from the office.

XX.7.3 a) ROAD TRANSPORTATION

i) City Supplied Vehicle

Where circumstances permit, the Corporation may provide a vehicle for transportation. Only Members with a valid driver's licence are authorized to drive City-owned vehicles, however, non-City Members or employees can be passengers on approved out of City travel.

City vehicles are insured under the City's insurance policy.

No representative of the City shall operate a motor vehicle owned by the City following the consumption of any amount of intoxicants.

The operator will be reimbursed other operational expenses such as fuel, oil and tire repairs while travelling in a City-owned vehicle.

Accidents must be reported immediately to the City Clerk.

ii) Rental Vehicle

The size and features of the rental car must be economical and practical considering the business task and number of occupants. Rentals for luxury and sports car vehicles will not be reimbursed. However, upgrades by the rental company at no additional expense are acceptable.

For rental vehicles, the Member will be reimbursed other operational expenses such as fuel, oil, and tire repairs. The purchase of loss damage and collision damage waiver coverage from the rental car company is reimbursable. Accidents must be reported immediately to the City Clerk, as well as the rental car agency.

iii) Use of Personal Vehicle

If an individual decides to use their own vehicle, they shall be reimbursed at a per kilometre rate from the lesser of home or the municipal workplace to the respective destination and return. Mileage will be paid in accordance with the City's Mileage Reimbursement Policy.

Employees choosing to use their privately-owned vehicle on City business do so on the basis that their own personal automobile insurance is the principal insurance policy for all circumstances, i.e. liability, comprehensive, deductibility, etc. Coverage should be equal to or greater than the minimum liability specified in the Insurance Act.

Drivers must satisfy themselves whether their motor vehicle insurance coverage includes business use of their vehicles or not. The City will not reimburse costs of business use coverage.

In the event of an accident, depending on the circumstances, the Director of Corporate Services/Treasurer may authorize the reimbursement of the deductible amount paid by the employee for vehicle repairs for an accident occurring while on authorized City business.

The City's insurance policy will only come into effect when the limits of private insurance have been exceeded in the event of an accident.

XX.7.3 b) AIR/RAIL TRANSPORTATION

When air or rail travel is the most practical and economical way to travel:

- The Member is expected to obtain the most economical fare available. All travel must be Economy Class except in emergencies where other options

are not available.

- Air/Rail travel must be booked with a City credit card whenever possible. Exceptions may be made when the Member has a personal credit card that offers travel benefits that exceed those available on the City's corporate credit card but not in the event of an increase in the cost of travel.
- When possible, fares should be booked far enough in advance to obtain the most economical fare.
- If conference-related excursion fare requires the Member to extend the trip by a day or two (usually on a weekend), the Corporation will pay the additional per diem and hotel expenses, provided the additional cost does not exceed the fare savings.
- In the event that a fare increase results from a Member choosing to extend his/her stay for non-business related reasons the Member will be responsible for any additional costs.
- Any cost savings in fare resulting from travel dates, frequent flyer miles, etc. earned by the Member shall be reallocated to the City.
- Frequent Flyer Points – Members may accumulate frequent flyer points for booking business travel, provided the lowest airfare for a direct flight to/from the destination is chosen.
- Members will be reimbursed for ground transportation to or from the airport/train station.
- Where use of a personal vehicle is more economical/practical than ground transportation, mileage, and parking expenses will be reimbursed.

XX.7.4 ACCOMMODATIONS

Travel accommodations will be based on single occupancy in a standard room and be booked at the lowest rate (preferred, government, special conference) available. Upgrades will not be reimbursed. Travel accommodation should be booked at or as close as possible to the business conference/function.

Travel accommodation should be booked in the Member's name. Detailed hotel bills must be submitted to support the claim.

Extended stays of a personal nature prior or subsequent to the conference/function shall be paid at the expense of the conference/function delegate.

An allowance is included in the per diem rate to cover the incidental costs incurred as a result of travelling away from home. Where ineligible expenses are



included on the hotel bill as a matter of convenience, they should be paid directly by the employee, or reimbursed to the municipality upon settlement of the final claim, if a corporate credit card is utilized for payment of the bill.

XX.7.5 REIMBURSEMENT FOR MEAL COSTS

XX.7.5 a) TRAVEL WITHIN 100 KM OF THE CITY OR TRAVEL NOT REQUIRING OVERNIGHT STAY

Reasonable and appropriate meal costs will be reimbursed for actual costs incurred, upon submission of receipts. The travel claim form is not required for these.

Reasonable and appropriate expenses are those that are incurred for an official duty or function, and are modest, representing a prudent use of public funds.

XX.7.5 b) PER DIEM EXPENSE FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS AND BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A specified per diem rate exclusive of transportation and accommodation allowances will be paid for each day away from the City for Members, when travelling 100 kilometres or more from City Hall, and only when overnight stay is required. The per diem rate is to cover the cost of meals, gratuities, personal telephone charges and other incidentals and is the maximum to be reimbursed for such costs.

The daily per diem rate for is established annually by the Corporate Services Department. The per diem rate includes a meal component. No receipts are required for the per diem rate. The per diem must be reduced for any meals provided as part of the conference/function.

At conferences/functions where two or more delegates are in attendance the Mayor may use his/her discretion to provide a meal, at the City's expense, for attending delegates and their guests for one occasion during the conference/function. Delegates will not receive a per diem for meals that are paid for by the Mayor.

In the event that restaurant meals are charged to the City credit card during a conference/function, the per diem shall be reduced accordingly.



XX.8 INTERNAL CONTROL: SUBMISSION OF TRAVEL CLAIMS

AND PROCESSING OF PAYMENTS

Advances and reimbursements are to be paid by cheque or direct deposit, in Canadian dollars for events within Canada, and in U.S. dollars for events outside Canada. Members may request a travel advance no earlier than 30 calendar days prior to departure and no later than 14 calendar days prior to departure to ensure appropriate time for claim processing.

Completed travel claim forms detailing actual costs for eligible expenditures, supported by all receipts, and authorized by the approval authority must be submitted to the Corporate Services Department for verification and reconciliation within 15 business days of return from travel.

Original receipts must be submitted for all eligible expenditures, with the following exceptions: per kilometre and per diem rates and receipts for parking, tolls, and taxis which may not be available due to the nature of these items. In the event receipts for parking, tolls and taxis are not available, the specifics of the location and/or route should be noted on the travel claim form.

When travel expenses have been charged to a corporate credit card, original receipts must be attached to the credit card monthly statement, and copies of the receipts must be attached to the travel claim form. If a receipt has been lost and a duplicate cannot be obtained, the Member must provide a written explanation, noted and signed by the approval authority.

XX.9 PERSONAL SAFETY

A delegate travelling on City business must practice safe driving practices.

This includes:

- Safe vehicle operation (i.e., seat belts, obeying traffic laws)
- Becoming familiar with the vehicle controls and other operating features before leaving
- Learning and understanding the protocol for accidents and mechanical breakdowns
- Mapping out the route ahead of time
- Not picking up any hitchhiker
- Safe storage of valuables and personal effects

While travelling outside of the City, a delegate should employ safe personal safety practices. This includes:

- Not sharing a taxi with a stranger
- Parking in well-lit areas
- Using discretion when providing others with room number



- Having one hand free when carrying equipment, luggage, or business materials
- Avoiding high crime areas
- Using the “buddy system” when travelling in unfamiliar locations/neighbourhood

The City shall not be held liable for lost or stolen personal effects. It is the responsibility of the delegates to secure City and personal property at all times. City delegates must conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner as agents and representatives of the City while attending functions/conferences.

The legislation that this policy is guided by may be changed or updated. The policy will be updated to reflect such changes whenever is necessary.

Document No:	Revision Date:	City of Port Colborne
Document Name:	Revision No: (uncontrolled when printed)	Authorized by: Scott Luey, CAO