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## **EXCERPT OF SCOTLAND COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICY**

### **ARTICLE V. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

#### **Section 7. Travel Expense and Reimbursement Policy**

A. Policy Statement: The intent of this policy is to make uniform provisions for reimbursement of necessary expenses of county employees, commissioners, other designated board members and officials who are required to travel within or outside the county boundaries in the performance of their duties and in the interest of county affairs.

B. Policy Administration: The respective Department Heads are responsible for the administration of the provisions of this policy and authorized to approve travel reimbursements contingent upon the availability of funds in the department budget and subject to review by the County Finance Officer and/or the County Manager except where otherwise stated. The County Manager and/or the County Finance Officer must approve any expense exceeding or anticipated to exceed \$1,000. Reimbursement will be for actual expense up to the limitation contained in this policy, except for the mileage allowance.

#### C. Definitions:

1. Necessary Expense - All reasonable charges incurred by a county employee, caused by travel in the interest of the county; including transportation, lodging, meals, and related incidental expenses. It does not include fines, illegal expenses, laundry charges, snacks, tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, movies or recreational fees for an activity not a part of the conference, or similar personal expenses.

2. Mileage Allowance - The amount authorized to be paid on a per-mile basis for travel by privately owned vehicle. The mileage allowance will be the rate established by the County Manager through Administrative Technical Bulletins, as of the date of travel. Reimbursement will be based on odometer readings. For incidental local travel, the reimbursement will be based on the standard mileage established by the County Manager through Administrative Technical Bulletins for the particular destination. (For example: from the DSS agency to the Administrative Building is X miles.)

3. Travel Statement - A form provided for the traveler to fill out monthly for travel prescribed by the Department Head; which lists all mileage, private or public transportation, lodging, meals, and other expenses which are reimbursable. Original receipts are to be attached to and made a part of the travel statement. The Travel Statement forms must bear the approving signature of the appropriate Department Head and the employee.

4. Transportation Cost of Employee - Payment of mileage allowance or actual cost of public transportation as applicable.

5. Employee - A full or part time employee of Scotland County, the County Attorney, individual, County Commissioners or a member of one of the following designated boards; Social Services Board, Board of Health, Board of Elections and Soil & Water Conservation Board.

6. Department Head - Includes all designated department heads and includes the

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Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners as the department head for County Commissioners.

D. Authorized Travel Modes:

Priority will be given to the most cost effective and efficient mode of travel.

1. County-owned Vehicle - This method of transportation is to be used whenever a county vehicle is available. The Department Head, in unusual circumstances, may authorize exact operation expenses for reimbursement, where direct credit charges cannot be made to the county and county gas, etc. are not available. If a county vehicle is available and the employee elects to drive their own personal vehicle, it would require the approval of the department head.

2. Privately owned Vehicle - When no county vehicle is available, this mode may be used if specifically authorized by the appropriate Department Head. Reimbursement for operation expenses will be limited to the mileage allowance. If no county vehicle is available and employees are traveling together in one vehicle (car pooling), the driver of the vehicle will receive the mileage reimbursement. If, in this instance, car pooling is available and an employee elects to drive their own personal vehicle rather than car pool, there will be no reimbursement.

3. Public Transportation - When no county vehicle is available, public transportation may be authorized by the Department Head. Reimbursement will be for actual cost incurred.

E. Types of Travel and Reimbursement Authorized:

1. Local Travel - County employees, who by the normal nature of their duties, are required to travel regularly within the county using their personal vehicle and are individually authorized by the appropriate Department Head, are eligible for reimbursement for transportation expense. Any Commissioner or Board member receiving a stipend shall not be paid local travel when that travel is associated with the duties of that board.

2. Special Local Travel - County employees, who, in the interest of the county, and with Department Head approval, travel to training sessions, conferences, meetings etc. within the county, may be reimbursed for:

(a) Transportation cost

(b) Note: Meals will not be reimbursed if travel is limited to the work day.

3. Travel Outside the County - Approved travel expenses outside the county for county purposes or purposes in the best interest of the county, for training, conferences, professional meetings, etc. may be reimbursed with Department Head approval to the limits of the policy, for:

(a) Transportation cost

(b) Meals (only if the travel is overnight)

(c) Lodging

If an employee chooses to take a guest with them, all the expenses of the guest will be the responsibility of the employee. When possible, pre-payment should be made (such as registration fees, etc.) When pre-payment cannot be made, guest expenses will be reimbursed to the county either through direct payment to the county, or through payroll deduction.

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Note: All overnight travel must have prior approval of the County Manager, or in case of commissioners, the Board Chair.

4. Extraordinary Travel or Cost - In instances of travel not covered by this policy, or where the actual necessary costs exceed the maximum reimbursement allowed (example - only available lodging cost caused expenses above the maximum allowance) and the travel is in the best interest of the county; the Department Head may approve reimbursement of actual cost beyond the maximums stated herein. The County Manager will approve or disapprove all other expense reimbursements not clearly defined in this policy, or which have been questioned.

5. Travel outside of North Carolina must be authorized by the department head, with approval by the County Manager. A written request for travel must describe the travel requested, the purpose of the proposed trip, and the period away from the County.

F. Travel Procedure:

1. The appropriate Department Head has the responsibility to determine, from this policy, whether the proposed travel is eligible for reimbursement of expenses.

2. The Department Head must approve or direct the travel and approve the mode of transportation. If the travel is to be overnight, the County Manager must approve.

3. If the trip is eligible for a travel advance, the employee will make a written request at least two weeks in advance, to allow the request to be processed and a check issued.

4. Department Head approves (or disapproves) travel advance request and forwards to Finance Officer for payment.

5. Travel is performed.

6. A travel expense statement is completed by employee, approved by the Department Head. The travel expense statement should be turned in with the payroll on or about the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month for reimbursement to be included with the monthly paycheck. For incidental local travel, the travel expense statement should be turned into the payroll office no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> to be reimbursed in the same budget year that the travel occurred.

G. Travel Advance:

For approved "Travel Outside the County" and "Extraordinary Travel" county employees may receive advances for travel expenses, to avoid personal inconvenience or hardships. The employee must make a request in writing, using the approved Advance Travel Request form, estimating the travel cost, to the Department Head who will approve as being proper under this policy and forward to the Finance Officer in sufficient time for processing. The Finance Officer will issue a check in the amount of the approved estimate, to the employee.

Immediately upon completion of the travel, the employee will present an approved travel statement to the Finance Officer and return any money advanced in excess of the actual expenses approved on the travel statement to the Finance Officer. Any amount advanced and subject to return to the county, which is not promptly refunded, will be deducted from the employee's next payroll. In the event that an employee does not turn in his/her receipts within two pay periods the entire travel advance will be deducted from

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their paycheck.

H. Meals:

Only meals consumed by County employees during approved overnight travel, as well as the tips thereon, will be reimbursed based upon the actual cost incurred by the employee, (excluding meals for unauthorized guests). If a meal is provided as part of the registration fee, paid by the County, no additional reimbursement will be made for that meal. The maximum limits on meal reimbursement are the simplified method for substantiating travel allowances for meals and incidental expenses, as published by the U.S. Department of Treasury. This amount is a limit and not a per diem. All travel shall be determined to be to a low-cost locality, unless the U.S. Department of Treasury has classified the destination as a high-cost locality. The County Manager has the authority to place further restrictions on the County limits for meal reimbursement by means of issuing Administrative Technical Bulletins.