

Lathrop-Manteca Fire Protection District  
District Travel and Travel Reimbursement Policy

**Policy #: 0.19 District Travel and Travel Reimbursement Policy**

*Effective Date: 05/16/2019*

*Revision Date: 10/20/2022*

**0.19.1 PURPOSE & SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for official business-related travel on behalf of the District, for any District officials, including Board Members and employees.

0.19.1.1 Definitions

Designated Finance Officer (F.O.) – Employee designated by the Fire Chief to review travel expenditures, typically the Administrative Assistant assigned to accounts payable.

**0.19.2 POLICY**

It is the policy of the District to provide officials and employees to engage in business-related travel as needed to better enhance the functionality of the District in regards to Governance, Administration, Operations, Training, Fire Prevention, and other necessary areas of operability.

**0.19.3 TRAVEL EXPENSES**

The District recognizes the constructive value of professional conferences, seminars, meetings and training, and provides or reimburses funds for District elected and appointed officials, department managers, and other employees who attend such official events or incur such official expenses. Officials, including District Board Members, and employees shall be entitled to reimbursement for their reasonable expenses associated with travel, meals, lodging and other actual and necessary expenses associated with attending such events in a manner and in the amounts as set forth in this policy.

It is the policy of the District to reimburse officials and employees of the District only when expenses are incurred while on authorized travel.

0.19.3.1 Activities Eligible for Authorized Travel and Expenses

The following examples of travel and expenses incurred by District officials and employees while engaging and/or participating in the following activities and/or events constitute authorized travel and reimbursable expenses (as long as other requirements of this policy are also met):

1. Communicating with representatives of regional, state and national government on District adopted policy positions.
2. Serving on professional organization or governmental committees, boards or task forces
3. Attending educational seminars, conferences, training, or organized educational activities designed to improve skill levels or provide information important to District policy and operations.
4. Preparing research for District projects or implementing adopted District plans, policies, goals or programs.
5. Attending meetings involving activities or decisions important to District interests, consistent with adopted plans, policies, goals or programs.
6. Attending events where the District is a formal sponsor or participant, or in performance of official duties for the District.
7. Communicating with individuals or representatives of community groups on policy positions adopted by or under consideration by the District.
8. Engaging in other business related activities with a direct connection to the implementation of adopted District plans, policies, goals or programs.
9. Planning, designing, inspection, or modification of District structures, apparatus, or equipment at the site of manufacturer, assembly, or in direct relation to such needs.
10. Mutual aid response to an emergency need.

0.19.3.2. Types of Authorized Travel Expenses

1. Registration - Registration fees charged for any authorized convention, conference, seminar or meeting is reimbursable. District officials or employees should request direct registration payment by the District prior to attendance, since registration fees are usually due in advance.
2. Transportation
  - a. Commercial Air Carrier – Officials and employees shall strive to obtain the most economical airfare that meets the departments’ needs. Transportation costs for commercial carrier shall be paid by the District directly to the ticketing agent whenever practical. In the event payment by the District is not practical, the traveler may make their own reservations and be reimbursed for the ticket expense. Round trip tickets shall normally be purchased whenever commercial carriers are used. Travel expenses of a family member of an official or an employee are not eligible for reimbursement by the District.

For airfare consisting of air travel beyond 180 minutes flight time, employees may fly business class or economy plus (or similar), however such upgrades shall not exceed more than 25% of the cost of economy (basic) seating.

When a commercial air carrier is used, a traveler will be reimbursed for mileage to and from the airport and the actual cost of airport parking. Long-term parking may be used for travel exceeding 24 hours. If two or more travelers share transportation to and from the airport, reimbursement shall be made to the person driving their vehicle. If a van/shuttle is used to and from the airport, the traveler(s) shall be reimbursed for the actual cost of the van/shuttle.

- b. Taxi, Ride Sharing, Car Rental and Car Service - Rental Cars, Shuttle, bus, taxi, ride sharing or other public transportation shall be used between airport, hotel and conference sites whenever available. Rental Cars should be used only when no other convenient, less costly transportation is available. Reimbursement may include a 15 percent gratuity.
- c. Personal Vehicles - Personal automobiles, when approved as a mode of travel to and from destinations, will be reimbursed at the IRS established mileage rate.

Payment of mileage shall be based upon the most direct route from the point of departure to the point of destination. A District official or employee may leave from their home for a meeting, conference, seminar or training session. However, the allowable mileage from home to the destination shall not exceed the mileage from the official's or employee's District primary worksite to the destination. For purposes of Fire Board Officials, starting/ending mileage will be considered from their residence.

- d. District Vehicles - Travel in District vehicles, when applicable, may be approved by the Fire Chief when circumstances warrant it. When traveling in a District vehicle, receipts should be retained for the purchase of gas, oil, necessary repairs or service, and other supplies as necessary. All receipts for such payments must be furnished with an expense report (Attachment A) upon completion of the travel in order to obtain reimbursement or to accompany charges made with a District credit card, based on actual expenses incurred.

In the event a District Vehicle requires District funds to be expended for repairs or service while traveling, the Fire Chief shall be notified before the repairs or service is performed, if practical.

- e. Parking, Tolls and Public Transportation - Parking and public transportation expenses and bridge and road tolls shall be reimbursed, based on actual expenses incurred.
- 3. Lodging - Hotel accommodations for employees shall be reimbursed, or paid for, when travel on official District business reasonably requires an overnight stay, specifically for travel exceeding 80 miles from District boundaries or for a multi-day event. A hotel will be considered appropriate for such travel unless the employee can return to the District before 2100 hours of that travel day.

- a. When it is practical, employees/elected officials shall be discouraged from sharing a room. The District recognizes the importance of privacy while traveling and shall make attempts to provide individual rooms during travel. Due to space and availability, this may not always be possible, however the District does consider the cost of individual rooms to be appropriate.
  - b. If such lodging is in connection with a conference or exposition, lodging expenses should not exceed the group rate if such rates are available at the time of booking. If the group rate is not available, or lodging is not in connection with a conference, travelers must request government rates when available. If government rates are not available, lodging rates that do not exceed \$200.00 per night (\$300 for conferences or expositions) are presumed reasonable and reimbursable, as are rates set forth in IRS publication 463 or any successor publication, if greater.
  - c. In the event personnel assigned to a strike team (out of county mutual aid), stay in a hotel room per the assigned strike team leader, the district shall reimburse or pay the cost equal to the best rate available. Such rates are presumed reasonable and reimbursable as designated by the highest ranking District Officer in charge. In the event lodging costs exceed \$250/night per, the officer in charge shall contact a Chief Officer for authorization, if practical.
  - d. Accommodations may be arranged directly by the traveler or by the District. If reservation deposits are required, they should be requested well in advance of the travel when possible. The hotel expense shall be reimbursed at the single occupancy rate. The District shall not reimburse hotel expenses for family members in accompaniment. When feasible, hotel accommodations should be within easy walking access to the functions for which the travel was authorized.
4. Meals and Incidentals (M&IE) - The amounts for meals (including non-alcoholic beverages, taxes, and gratuities up to 20%) will be established using the GSA Per Diem rate as indicated by geographical region determined using the online tool found at: <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>.
- a. Daily meal allowances should be based on the total M&IE rate and do not have to be broken down per meal as the GSA website indicates. Additionally, the M&IE rate shall apply to all dates of travel and the “First and Last Date of Travel” rate shall not apply.
  - b. In the event daily meal costs exceed those indicated at the M&IE rate, the employee will be responsible for the overage.
  - c. The GSA meal rates should be indicated on the travel request form (highest rate) and expense form (actual rates).

- d. The District shall not pay or reimburse for the costs of any meals, beverages, or incidentals related to family members or unofficial guests traveling with the employee/official.

5. Telephone/Fax/Cellular

Officials and employees shall be reimbursed for actual telephone and fax expenses incurred on District business. Telephone bills should identify which calls were made on District business.

6. Internet

Officials and employees shall be reimbursed for Internet access connection and/or usage fees away from home, if Internet access is necessary for District-related business.

0.19.3.3 Unauthorized Expenses

The following expenditures by District officials or employees shall not be incurred or reimbursed using any District funds:

1. The personal portion of any trip;
2. Political or charitable contributions;
3. Family or unofficial guest expenses, including those of a partner when accompanying the official on official business; child or pet care;
4. Entertainment expenses, including theatre, shows, movies (either in-room or in theaters), sporting events, golf, spa treatments, etc.
5. Personal automobile expenses not necessary for business purposes, such as traffic citations, vehicle repairs and maintenance, or towing charges;
6. Personal losses incurred while on District business;
7. Alcohol, Tobacco, Cannabis, or any other psychoactive substance. The use of Alcohol, Cannabis, or any other psychoactive substance during business hours or while representing the District is strictly prohibited.
8. Upgrades to transportation or lodging.

The allowances and amounts advanced to persons traveling on official District business shall be established on the basis of specific guidelines set forth herein.

**0.19.4 PROCEDURES**

0.19.4.1 Authorization

1. All travel conducted by a Fire Board Director or Fire Chief shall be authorized in advance (when practical) by the Chairperson of the Fire Board during a regular or special public Board Meeting. Any travel conducted by any other employee shall be authorized by the Fire Chief or designee.

2. Elected Officials shall submit a travel request form (Attachment B) to the Board Secretary. The Board Secretary or designee will be responsible for developing cost estimates for the travel. Once cost estimates are established, the Board Secretary shall forward the travel request and estimates to the Board Chair for approval. In the event the Board Chair is the official requesting the travel, then the Vice-Chair shall be authorized to approve the request. In the event that the Board Chair and Vice Chair are requesting the same travel, then the Board members as a whole shall approve/deny the requests at the next scheduled open-public meeting.
3. The Fire Chief shall provide a travel request form to the Board Secretary or designee for cost estimates, and once completed, the Board Secretary will forward the request to the Board Chairperson. The Board Chair or designee shall review and agendize the travel request for the next scheduled Board meeting for authorization.

In the event the Fire Chief's request for travel must occur prior to a scheduled Board Meeting, the Chair shall confer with the Vice-Chair to approve or deny the travel. Both the Chair and Vice Chair must sign the authorization form indicating approval/denial. The approved/denied travel request will be reported by the Board Chair (or Vice Chair) at the next scheduled meeting.

4. Any Employee (other than the Fire Chief) requesting travel shall complete a travel request form and submit to their direct supervisor. The employee shall be responsible for all cost estimates relating to the travel prior to submitting the request. The employee's supervisor shall review the form for completeness, and then forward to the Fire Chief or designee for authorization.
5. An employee may submit travel requests for other employees on their behalf if needed.

#### 0.19.4.2 Travel Expense Documentation

Within ten (10) calendar days of the last day of official travel the estimated and actual expenses incurred must be submitted on the District Travel Expense Report form. All expenses reported on this form must comply with District policies relating to expenses and use of public resources. The information submitted on this form is a public record. While the expense report form may be modified from time to time, it shall include the requirement that the official identify the activity or event attended and the nature of the expenses. Actual receipts documenting each expense shall be attached to the form. In situations where no receipt can be obtained, an explanation of the charges and the reason for the lack of receipt must be included. Inability to provide such documentation within 10 days may result in the expense being borne by the official/employee.

The District's designated Financial Officer (F.O.) or designee shall be the recipient for all travel expense documentation.

1. Documentation of any expenses related to travel on behalf of the District shall be submitted within ten (10) calendar days after the completion of the travel.
  - a. Original copies of documentation/receipts shall be preferred.
  - b. In the event the F.O. is the traveler, then all documentation shall be submitted to the Fire Chief or designee.
2. The F.O. shall review the expenses to ensure they are in compliance with District policy and within budget. The review shall be submitted to the Fire Chief or designee indicating any overages or reimbursement due.
3. Any overages in travel expenses shall be calculated and the employee/official shall be provided an itemized invoice for cost recovery in accordance with applicable District policy.
4. Travel expenses generated by the Fire Chief shall be sent to the Board Chair once reviewed by the F.O. for final review.
5. In the event a traveler is on vacation, ill, or otherwise unable to provide documentation to the F.O. after a trip, the documentation may be sent electronically or mailed via USPS. Any electronic submissions will also be required to provide the original documentation as soon as possible.
6. In the event an employee is unable to provide original travel expense documentation due to loss, damage, or other reason, then the employee shall be required to complete the form regarding lost/missing receipts, and submit it to the F.O.

#### 0.19.4.3 Reimbursement for Travel Expenses

Employees/Officials traveling on behalf of the District may pay for related expenses using a District Credit Card, District Check, or personal funds.

1. District Credit Cards - District credit cards are available for authorized travel charges by District officials and employees in accordance with the District's Cal Card Policy
  - a. The Fire Chief, Directors of the Board, and designated staff, are authorized to possess and use a District credit card for official expenses during travel.
2. District Checks – In the event a check is required for District travel, an employee may request a check using the approved Check Request form (Attachment C), and submit such form to the F.O. for review. Once reviewed, the request shall be forwarded to the Fire Chief or designee for approval. Check requests should be submitted at least 10 days before the check is needed however, additional time may be needed for set-up if it is a new vendor the District has not paid before.

### **0.19.5 Cost Advantage**

When travel before or after an event or when staying over a Saturday results in a significant cost savings, additional travel days may be authorized by the Fire Board Chairperson (regarding travel by Directors or Fire Chief) or Fire Chief (regarding travel by employees).

### **0.19.6 Additional Travel Days**

Except as approved in accordance with 0.19.5 above, if any official or employee elects to travel in advance or stay longer on personal business or vacation status, the District shall be obligated only for the round trip travel costs (necessary for the event) and the costs during the event. The District shall not be obligated for additional expenses related to the additional personal travel days. If there is a difference in costs of lodging, airfare, transportation, meals, etc., then the employee will be responsible for those costs.

### **0.19.7 Audits of Expense Reports**

All expenses are subject to verification that they comply with this policy.

### **0.19.8 Reports to Legislative Body**

As required by Government Code section 53232.3(d), each Board Member who attends a meeting or activity at District expense shall briefly report on all such meetings at the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors that the Director attends. If multiple officials attended, a joint report may be made.

### **0.19.9 Compliance with Laws**

District officials should keep in mind that some expenditures may be subject to reporting under the Political Reform Act and other laws. All agency expenditures are public records subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act.

### **0.19.10 Cancellation**

Should an attendee find that they cannot attend an event for which a reservation has been made, it is the attendee's responsibility to give sufficient notice to cancel the registration and reservations in order to obtain refunds. Failure to give such notification early enough to obtain a refund may result in the attendee assuming financial responsibility for the expenditures related to the event.

Cancellation of any travel requiring District funds (deposits, airfare, etc.) should be done in ample time where possible to ensure a refund of any funds committed for said travel.



Employees/officials who cancel travel plans which are not refundable may be subject to reimburse the District, if the cancelation is due to personal reasons not attributable to illness or other approved reason as determined by the Fire Chief or Board of Directors. In the event of illness, the employee/official may be required to prove documentation from a physician regarding the inability to engage in travel.

#### **0.19.11 Violation of This Policy**

Pursuant to Government Code section 53232.4, use of public resources or falsifying expense reports in violation of this policy may result in any or all of the following:

1. Loss of reimbursement privileges
2. A demand for restitution to the District
3. Civil penalties of for misuse of public resources
4. Prosecution for misuse of public resources.
5. Disciplinary action, up to and including termination.



# Lathrop-Manteca Fire Protection District

19001 Somerston Parkway, Lathrop, CA 95330

• (209) 941-5100 • Fax (209) 941-5115 • [www.lmfire.org](http://www.lmfire.org) •

## TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT

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Within ten (10) calendar days of the last day of official travel the estimated and actual expenses incurred must be submitted on the District Travel Expense Report form. Inability to provide such documentation within 10 days may result in the expense being borne by the official/employee.

Travel Expense Details		Date						Total Costs
Description								
Lodging								
Air Fare								
Breakfast	(GSA Meal Rate: \$ )							
Lunch	(GSA Meal Rate: \$ )							
Dinner	(GSA Meal Rate: \$ )							
Fuel	(GSA Meal Rate: \$ )							
Incidentals:	(GSA Rate: \$ )							
							<b>Total</b>	

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## TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT

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Mileage Detail – Personal Vehicle		Odometer Readings	
Departure/Destination	Starting Mileage	Ending Mileage	Trip Miles

Travel Expense Summary		Total Travel Expenses	
By signing this expense report, the employee certifies that the amounts listed were incurred in conformance with the District’s travel guidelines and District policies, and that no part is claimed for reimbursement of a personal nature. Receipts shall be attached to this form for any expenses incurred using District funds or for reimbursement.		District Credit Card Purchases	
		Cash Expenses by Employee	
Employee Printed Name		Employee’s Credit Card Purchases	
Employee Signature		<b>Amount Due to Employee/Owed</b>	
Designated Financial Officer or Board Secretary Signature	Date	Authorizing Signature	Date

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## TRAVEL REQUEST FORM

*Within ten (10) calendar days of the last day of official travel the estimated and actual expenses incurred must be submitted on the District Travel Expense Report form. Inability to provide such documentation within 10 days may result in the expense being borne by the official/employee.*

Employee	Rank / Position		Today's Date			
Destination	Number of Days		Estimated Cost			
Purpose of the Travel:						
Cost Summary:						
Description		Vendor	Payment Method		Amount	
		Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses	Total per Day
GSA Meal Rate	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Itinerary:						
Departure	Date / Time		Arrival	Date / Time		
Employee Signature & Date		Fire Chief Signature & Date		Board Chair / Vice Chair (if applicable) & Date		
Filed By:			Date:			

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## REQUEST FOR CHECK

Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Issue a Check for the Following:

Payable To: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*If this is a new vendor that the District hasn't paid before, we will need a current W-9 as well.*

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(NOTE: IF THIS REQUEST IS FOR A TRAVEL EXPENSE, THE APPROPRIATE TRAVEL APPROVAL FORMS MUST BE ATTACHED TO THE REQUEST TO BE CONSIDERED)

Invoice Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Invoice Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Fund & Account: \_\_\_\_\_

Description: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Check

Give to Requestor

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Tracking: Yes / No \_\_\_\_\_

Check Requested By: \_\_\_\_\_

(Print & Sign Name)

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_

(Print & Sign Name)

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