



Effective Date: August 26, 2025

EMPLOYEE TRAVEL & BUSINESS EXPENSE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

This policy outlines how the Galveston Park Board will directly pay for, or reimburse, travel and business expenses incurred by employees during authorized work-related activities. It defines allowable expenses, sets procedures for approval, and establishes documentation requirements.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all authorized Park Board employees who expend public funds for work-related activities and travel. All travel requests must include a brief statement of why the trip is necessary and how it benefits the Park Board.

3. AUTHORIZATION & APPROVAL PROCESS

3.1 General Requirements

- Employees must obtain approval from their supervisor and department head before booking travel.
- If the trip is not identified in the approved budget or if the trip is international, approval from the CEO is required.
- All requests must include a business need and benefit statement to the Park Board.

3.2 Travel Advances

- May be provided with Controller approval.
- Requests must be submitted at least 14 business days before departure.
- Advances will be deducted from the final reimbursement.
- A final expense report, noting 'Travel Advance Received' on the front page, must be submitted within 30 calendar days of return.

3.3 Travel Time Compensation

- Overnight/Out-of-Town Trips: Non-exempt employees are compensated for travel during normal working hours, on scheduled and unscheduled workdays. Work during otherwise non-compensable time must be pre-approved.
- Local Travel: Time between job sites is compensable; travel home is not, unless substantially longer than the normal commute.
- Commuting: Generally non-compensable unless the worksite is significantly farther than usual.
- Overtime: Paid at 1.5x when non-exempt employee travel time pushes total weekly hours above 40.
- State Law: If state law provides greater benefits, it applies.

4. REIMBURSABLE TRAVEL EXPENSES

4.1 Accommodation & Hotels

- Employees should select reasonably priced, convenient accommodations that support the business purpose of travel.
- Use the conference housing block when available.
- “No Show” charges will not be reimbursed unless pre-approved by the Department Head.
- Employees are responsible for any additional costs resulting from personal extensions of stay.
- Any upgrades or luxury accommodations must be pre-approved and justified as necessary for the business purpose.
- Accommodation costs should be appropriate for the location, event, and duration of travel.

4.2 Air Travel

- All flights must be booked in Economy class; upgrades are at the employee’s expense and will not be reimbursed.
- Flights should be booked at the lowest reasonable fare for business travel needs.
- Reserve airfare at least 14 days in advance whenever possible.
- Baggage fees for up to two personal bags are reimbursable; excess baggage costs are the employee’s responsibility.
- Amenity fees necessary for business purposes (e.g., Wi-Fi) are reimbursable; luxury services such as airline lounge access are not.

4.3 Meals & Incidentals

- Reimbursed per GSA per diem for the location; only for meals not provided by the event.
- International/other non-GSA locations reimbursed at reasonable actual cost.
- When paying for multiple employees, list all names on the expense report. The highest-ranking employee should pay for any expenses that include other employees.

4.4 Gratuities

- Reasonable gratuities ($\leq 20\%$) reimbursable when business-related.
- No extra tips where an automatic gratuity is already applied.
- Tips for hotel staff, valets, etc., are part of the incidental per diem.

4.5 Internet Access

- Use Park Board VPN on public networks.
- Contact IT for VPN installation if needed.

4.6 Rental Cars & Vehicle-for-Hire

- Must be cost-effective and pre-approved.
- Rental Cars can be up to intermediate class. No luxury cars or limousines.
- Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) insurance is reimbursable.
- Liability Insurance Supplement (LIS) is reimbursable only when not otherwise covered.
- Personal injury insurance not reimbursed.
- Refill fuel before returning rental.
- Vehicle-for-hire fares reimbursable; tips $\leq 20\%$.

4.7 Personal Vehicles

- Pre-approval required.
- Reimbursed at the IRS mileage rate.
- Employee responsible for insurance, citations, and damages.
- Not for commuting.

4.8 Combined Business & Personal Travel

- Personal days must be disclosed in advance.
- Employee pays any cost increase due to personal travel.

- No reimbursement for personal days.

4.9 Alcohol Consumption

- Park Board funds may only be used for the purchase of alcoholic beverages when entertaining clients and where there is a clear, documented business purpose.
- Employees are limited to one alcoholic drink when entertaining clients. Based on the nature and importance of the client relationship and meeting, clients may be served additional drinks at the discretion of the hosting employee.
- Corporate cards may only be used for alcohol purchases when entertaining clients. Alcohol purchases outside of client entertainment are not reimbursable.
- Employees must not operate Park Board-owned, rented, or personal vehicles after consuming alcohol on Park Board business. Safe transportation (taxi, rideshare, shuttle) must be used if alcohol has been consumed.
- The Park Board maintains a zero-tolerance policy for intoxication or impairment while on duty or representing the organization.

4.10 Personal Services While Entertaining Clients

- Park Board funds may be used for personal services for clients only, and only in limited, pre-approved circumstances, where the service is directly connected to legitimate business entertainment.
- Employees may not receive any personal services while on Park Board business.
- Personal services may include, but are not limited to spa treatments, massages, salon or grooming services, personal shopping or styling, and wellness treatments (e.g., float therapy, cryotherapy, IV therapy).
- All such expenditures require pre-approval by the Department Head.
- Tips on approved personal services are permitted $\leq 20\%$.
- All receipts must be itemized and must include the names of the clients and the specific business purpose of the expenditure.
- The following are strictly prohibited: adult entertainment, sexually oriented services, escort services, gambling, medical procedures, cannabis products, and controlled substances.
- Business-hosted recreational activities such as golf green fees, driving range fees, or bowling lane rental are permitted for both clients and employees when pre-approved by the Department Head, provided the activity is business-related and excludes personal services listed above.