

CHAPTER 8: Business Operations
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NO. 8.55.1 (AP 7400)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE
San Mateo County Community College District

Subject: AP 8.55.1 Domestic Conference and Travel Expenses
Revision Date: 3/17
References: Education Code Section 87032

This administrative procedure is an integral part of the District's Board Policy 8.55 and is subject to change at the discretion of the District.

1. Purpose and Scope

It is the intent of the Board of Trustees that no employee suffer financial loss or produce personal gain as a result of being on District business.

a. International Travel

Travel outside of the 50 United States and U.S. possessions is considered international travel and is subject to the International Conference and Travel Expense Procedures.

b. Travel of Less Than 30 Days

Reimbursement for domestic travel assignments of less than 30 days shall be based on the actual and reasonable amounts incurred for lodging.

c. Travel of 30 Days or More

Long-term traveling expenses will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

2. Approval of Conference Attendance and Advance Check Request

a. All business-related travel should be pre-approved by the employee's immediate supervisor, the appropriate Business Officer and, if applicable, by the President. For Executives, business-related travel should be pre-approved by the Chancellor or his designee.

b. If an advance check is requested, the Conference Advance Form should be filled out, approved, and sent to Accounts Payable at the District Office with supporting documentation (such documentation must include the registration and agenda information) for processing 30 days prior to the conference. Only one advance check per conference per employee will be processed; the check will be either payable to the organization for the conference fees or to the employee, and it is the employee's responsibility to pay directly any necessary conference expenses covered by the advance check.

1) Advances may only be made for approved business expenses and provided to an employee within 30 days prior to the trip.

2) Travelers must provide an adequate accounting or substantiation of their actual travel related expenses within 30 days following the trip.

3) Employees must return any advance amounts in excess of substantiated expenses as soon as possible after the travel is completed.

3. Payment for Travel Expenses When No Advance Check is Provided

- a. If the employee possesses a District procurement card, he or she should use it to pay for event registration, lodging and transportation expenses related to the official business travel. A Statement of Conference Expense Form covering all event-related expenses must be prepared after the event regardless of the payment method. All reimbursements should include the detailed, itemized receipts and not just the credit card charge receipts. Even if no reimbursement is needed, the Statement of Conference Expense Form must be attached to the procurement card back-up package for the supervisor's review and approval.
- b. Any travel vouchers/credits earned due to changes in reservations remain the property of the District and should be used for future business travel within the same fiscal year whenever possible.

4. Payment of Overtime for Conference Attendance and Travel To/From Conferences

- a. If an employee attends a conference during the regular workday, the employee shall receive his/her regular compensation.
- b. If a non-exempt employee attends a conference outside of his/her regular workday, the employee is eligible to receive overtime only if attendance at the conference has been made mandatory by the employee's manager. Note, however, that even if attendance at a conference is mandatory, travel time to/from the conference shall not be eligible for overtime. In this case, a manager may, in his/her discretion, offer the employee equivalent time off to account for part of the travel time if the roundtrip travel time exceeds eight hours. For travel by car, travel time shall be calculated by using Google Maps. For travel by plane, travel time shall be calculated from one hour prior to the scheduled departure time to one hour after the scheduled arrival time.
- c. Exempt employees are not eligible to be paid overtime for time spent at a conference or for travel time to/from a conference.

5. Transportation

- a. **Air Travel**
Economy class or any discounted class airfare shall be used for all reservations. Upgrading to a more expensive class of service is allowed but only at the employee's expense. Any special accommodations require pre-approval by the supervisor in order to be reimbursed by the District. The Chancellor or his designee may decide to pay a higher fare only if it is in the best interests of the District.

If a trip is cancelled, every effort must be made to recover a refund or credit. The following situations describe the factors to consider when reimbursing for cancellations:

- 1) When the cancellation of the trip was within the traveler's control and:
 - i. No credit is issued, the traveler must reimburse the District for the cost of the ticket.
 - ii. A credit is issued – the credit must be used for SMCCCD business travel or the traveler must reimburse the District.

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- 2) When the cancellation of the trip was outside of the traveler's control and:
 - i. No credit is issued – the District will cover the cost of the ticket.
 - ii. A credit is issued – the credit must be used for SMCCCD business travel or the traveler can 'buy' the credit from the District for personal use. If the credit cannot be used, the District will absorb the cost of the ticket.

b. Automobile Travel

1) Mileage Calculation

Under usual conditions, mileage shall be computed between the traveler's office and the common carrier or destination. However, mileage expenses may be allowed between the traveler's residence and the common carrier or destination if the business travel originates or terminates before or after the traveler's working hours, or during a regularly scheduled day off. Under all circumstances, the shortest route should be chosen for mileage reimbursement purpose.

Employees receiving mileage stipend should not claim mileage expenses reimbursements for business travel, unless the business travel is outside the county.

The maximum mileage reimbursement should not exceed the equivalent of market airfare cost (reference to other attendees' flight cost, if available).

2) Mileage Reimbursement Rate

Mileage reimbursement will be approved per current mileage reimbursement rate published by the Internal Revenue Service.

3) Types of Vehicles

Travelers may use their private vehicle for business purposes if it is less expensive than renting a car, taking a taxi, or using alternative transportation.

A vehicle may be rented when renting would be more advantageous to the District than other means of commercial transportation, such as using a taxi. Advance reservations should be made whenever possible and a compact or economy model should be requested. The traveler is responsible for obtaining the best available rate commensurate with the requirements of the trip.

The vehicle rental contract should include Supplemental Liability Insurance (SLI) and Loss Damage Waiver (LDW).

4) Miscellaneous Automobile-Related Expenses

Charges for ferries, bridges, tunnels, or toll roads may be claimed by the traveler. Reasonable charges for parking while an employee is on travel status or on business away from regular duties will be allowed.

6. Lodging

a. Local Travel

An overnight stay is not allowed if the destination is within a **100** mile radius from the traveler's work or home address. An exception to the overnight stay requirement will be allowed if the need for the overnight stay was **preapproved** by supervising administrator.

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b. Lodging Expenses

All lodging expenses must be supported by original itemized receipts and the lodging should only cover the period of the conference. Employees must always book at the lowest, single occupancy room rate available, provided, however, that employees are permitted to book rooms at a hotel where a conference is located even if it is not the lowest cost, single occupancy room. Any extra days prior to or after the conference will be at employee's expense.

Charges for failure to cancel hotel reservations in a timely manner should not be reimbursed to the employee, or if paid on a procurement card, should be reimbursed promptly by the employee.

**Please note that it is prohibited to rent via AIRBNB due to limited insurance coverage and potential liabilities.

c. Hotel/Motel Transient Occupancy Tax Waiver

San Mateo County Community College District is an agency of the California government. The law allows State government agency workers who travel and must stay in hotels while on agency business to be exempt from local transient tax. To obtain this tax exemption, you must present the tax waiver form to the registration desk at the time of check in. Note that some hotels will not accept the tax waiver form and some hotels will request that the employee complete a form specific to the hotel.

7. Meals and Incidentals

a. Meals

1.) A per-diem is allowed for meals during approved travel. The current per-diem rate is up to \$60.00 at the maximum for each day of the trip – please note that taxes, tips and room service charges are included in the per-diem calculation. For partial per-diem reimbursements please use the following breakdown as reference.

Per-diem meal allowance:

Breakfast	\$10.00
Lunch	\$20.00
Dinner	\$30.00

Depending on the travel start and end times, the employees may be entitled to the whole per-diem or just part of it – breakfast, lunch or dinner. For local conferences, the event start and end time will be used to determine the meal per diem reimbursement.

Event or Flight time starts...employee can claim	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Before 12 noon	X	X	X
Between 12 noon and 6pm		X	X
After 6pm			X

Event or Return flight time ends... employee can claim	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Before 12 noon	X		
Between 12 noon and 6pm	X	X	
After 6pm	X	X	X

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2) Meals included as part of conference registration fees should be noted on the Statement of Conference Expense Form and should be deducted from the per-diem. The employee will not be reimbursed a per diem for any meals that are included in the cost of registration regardless of whether or not the employee eats the meal. In rare cases when the employee requires special meals due to health conditions, the employee will be reimbursed only if adequate receipts are provided for any extra meals purchased in lieu of the meals included in the registration fee. When dining with another District employee or agent who receives reimbursement for his/her expenses, if one of the employees covers the cost of the other, the employee who did not pay will have his/her reimbursement adjusted by the per diem portion of that meal.

b. Incidentals

All other reasonable miscellaneous expenses are reimbursable when they are ordinary and necessary to accomplish the official business purpose of a trip. Miscellaneous expenses may include: parking, tolls and other miscellaneous charges. The Statement of Conference Expense Form must include an explanation of why such expenditures are being claimed.

c. Meal Reimbursement Options

1) **Actual receipts reimbursement:** All restaurant receipts must be included. It is not enough to just include the credit card portion – the detailed receipt of items ordered must also be attached. When the itemized receipt is not available, an explanation must be provided and this expense specifically acknowledged by the authorized approval signature. Tips and room service charges need to be reasonable and necessary.

2) **Per Diem:** Per Diem is a daily allowance for expenses - a specific amount of money the District allows an employee, per day to cover meal expenses when traveling for work. Fixed per diem rate eliminates the need for employees to prepare a detailed expenses report with supporting receipts to document amounts spent while travelling on business. Instead, employers pay employees a standard daily rate without regard to actual expenditure. No receipts are required to be submitted when claiming per diem.

8. Insurance for Travelers

a. Employees

District employees eligible for benefits are routinely covered 24 hours a day, worldwide, against accidental death or dismemberment and other accidents and incidents while on an official business trip. District provided medical insurance covers international traveling, therefore check with Human Resources prior to purchasing any additional medical travel insurance. If coverage is provided through the District medical insurance, purchase of any additional travel and medical insurance coverage is considered an out-of-pocket, non-reimbursable expense. If a procurement card is used for these expenses, the employee should reimburse the District promptly.

b. Vehicles

When private vehicles are used on District business, the employees are responsible for maintaining adequate liability insurance coverage. Travelers using rental cars should include Supplemental Liability Insurance (SLI) and Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) when renting.

9. Reporting Procedures and Forms

a. Required Documentation

Employees must keep a record of and substantiate their travel expenses by completing a Statement of Conference Expense Form (along with all required documentation). If the employee is due a reimbursement, the form must be submitted to the Accounts Payable Office within 30 days of completing the travel. The Statement of Conference Expense Form should be supported by sufficient information to establish the business purpose of the travel, the dates and location of the travel as well as detailed, itemized, original receipts for all reimbursable expenses as well as any expenses charged to the purchasing card. The following documentation should be provided along with the Statement of Conference Expense form:

- Itemized receipts for all travel related expenses (meals, hotels, transportation, etc.)
- Conference/event agenda/schedule
- Hotel and flight reservations

Hotel, restaurant and other vendor invoices must contain itemized details. Proof of payments, receipts or statements without a detailed breakdown of expense are not considered proper supporting documents and will not be reimbursed.

Whenever personal credit cards are used for purchases, sufficient proof of payment such as credit card receipt/statement showing the type of credit card and last four digits of the credit card number should be presented. For check payments, a copy of the cashed check or the bank statement showing the posted charge should be provided as proof of payment.

When advance reservations are made with procurement cards (registration, travel and lodging) for events happening in the following fiscal year, the information must be forwarded to Accounts Payable prior to June 30, so it can be set as a prepayment for the following fiscal year.

When the procurement card is used, the complete Statement of Conference Expense Form with all required approvals should be scanned and attached to the procurement card statement. In case of any discrepancies or departures from the District Travel and Conference Expense Procedures, the Accounts Payable staff is required to complete an Audit Findings Form. The Audit Findings Form requires the acknowledgment and approval of the employee and their supervisor prior to processing any reimbursement and may require the employee to reimburse the District for unallowable costs.

b. Forms and Deadlines:

The conference expense related forms can be found online at the [District forms download site](#).

[Conference Advance Form](#) – This form must be completed 30 days prior to conference date.

[Statement of Conference Expense Form](#) – This form must be submitted within 30 days after the conference date.

[Transient Tax Form](#) – This form must be used to claim sales tax exemption from hotel whenever applicable. Procurement card user's guide (use of Procurement card for business trip expense payments must be strictly followed).

10. **Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

The following are examples of personal expenses that are not eligible for reimbursement as business expenses:

- Amenities such as movies, in-room bars, saunas, massages, etc.
- With the exception of religious or dietary needs, meals purchased in lieu of those included in the conference package are considered personal expenses
- Child care costs, babysitting, or house sitting costs
- Any personal clothing or accessories
- Laundry for trips of less than 5 days
- Grooming expenses such as haircuts, toiletries, etc.
- Prescriptions, over-the-counter medication, supplements, or other medical expenses
- Fees for boarding pets or other animal care
- Magazines, books, newspapers, or other personal reading material
- Outlays for personal recreation or entertainment such as golf course green fees, sightseeing fares, theater tickets, entry fees, lift tickets, etc.
- Expenses related to non-College activities or personal time off taken before, during, or after a business trip, such as extended stays before or after the event dates
- Travel expenses incurred by others than District employee
- Loss of cash advances, airline tickets, or personal funds or property
- Airline travel insurance and medical insurance costs
- Incremental costs for first, business class or upgrade tickets without specific approval
- Fines for automobile or parking violations
- Charges for failure to cancel hotel reservations in a timely manner
- Credit card interest or delinquency fees
- Fees for personal credit cards
- Tips for concierge, maid service, valet parking and other personal preference services

11. **Business Meal Expenses and Alcoholic Beverages Special Rules**

Unless otherwise specified, it is the District's policy to follow the guidelines, rules and regulations set by the Federal and State Government in managing its conference, travel and entertainment spending:

a. **Business Meals**

Business meals are defined by the IRS as the cost of food and beverage (including taxes and tips) consumed in-town or away from home with other business-affiliated individuals, or consumed alone while traveling on District and or College business.

Lavish or Extravagant Spending

Meals that are lavish or extravagant are not allowed. A meal is not considered lavish or extravagant if it is reasonable based on the facts and circumstances. Meal expenses will not be disallowed merely because they are more than a fixed dollar amount or take place at deluxe restaurants, hotels, nightclubs, or resorts.

b. Alcoholic Beverages

When employees dine with business partners, vendors, donors, or potential donors, the District will reimburse for alcohol chosen as beverage with a meal. Employees must, however, use prudence in these circumstances and must not purchase an unreasonable amount of alcohol nor at an unreasonable cost as compared to the overall cost of the meal. It is anticipated that only senior administrators (Vice Presidents, Vice Chancellors, Presidents and Chancellor) will have this sort of business meal. Any others must be preapproved by the appropriate senior administrator.

Please note that if you purchase an alcoholic drink with your meal it must be counted as part of your meal allowance when travelling. However, alcoholic beverages consumed by travelers between or after mealtimes are not considered part of the meal allowance and are not reimbursable, except when they qualify as necessary entertainment for donor solicitation, or college or District business promotional events. Receipts submitted to substantiate such purchases should note the name of the guests and the nature of the meeting, unless the employee selects Per Diem rate reimbursement method. In that case no receipts are required.

The federal government has mandated that no alcohol may be charged as either a direct or indirect expense of federally sponsored projects. This mandate means that under no circumstances should alcohol be charged directly to a federal grant or contract.