



## Policy Manual

Section:	Corporate
Subject:	<b>Travel and Business Expense Policy</b>
Policy Number:	025
Approval Date:	June 2, 2014
Approved By:	Council (Resolution R14-06-290)
Prepared By:	Director of Corporate Services

### Objective

In the evolving field of municipal service delivery, it is critically important to be informed of the latest developments, opportunities and techniques and it is essential that Town employees and elected officials have access to information and training required to effectively carry out their duties. To this end, the Town of Essex is committed to providing individuals with training, learning and networking opportunities within the field of municipal government.

Learning opportunities often involve travel to seminars, conferences, conventions, symposiums, workshops, meetings and business events and the expenses associated with such travel. While recognizing the value of these opportunities, the Town also recognizes that a policy to reimburse travel and business expenses must take into consideration best value and least cost for its residents.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the methods and procedures by which expenses incurred to travel will be reimbursed, including:

- Authorizations required prior to incurring travel and business expenses;
- The types of expenses to be reimbursed, including transportation costs, the cost of meals, accommodations and other miscellaneous expenses;
- Other matters related to travel, such as telephone calls;
- Ineligible travel expenses; and
- The reconciliation of travel and business expenses.

## Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including temporary and contract employees, firefighters, elected officials, appointees to agencies, boards and committees, volunteers, and any individual retained by the Town to act on the Town's behalf.

## Definitions

In this policy:

**"Agencies, boards, and committees"** means an agency, board and committee as defined in the Municipal Act, 2001 or as otherwise appointed by Council of the Town of Essex;

**"Chair of the Finance Committee"** means the individual appointed to act as Chair of the Finance Committee and may include the Co-Chair in the absence of the Chair;

**"Chief Administrative Officer"** means the individual appointed as Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Essex, and may include a person appointed as Acting Chief Administrative Officer;

**"Director of Corporate Services"** means the person appointed as Director of Corporate Services of the Town of Essex, and may include a person appointed or designated to act on behalf of the Director of Corporate Services;

**"Department Head"** for purposes of this policy means those individuals appointed as directors, Fire Chief or Chief Administrative Officer of the Town of Essex, and may include a person appointed or designated to act on their behalf;

**"Elected Officials"** refers to those individuals who have been elected to Council of the Town of Essex;

**“Finance Committee”** means a committee appointed by Council of the Town of Essex, and comprised of members of Council, to deal with matters of a financial nature;

**“Finance and Business Services, Procurement Section”** means the person within the Finance and Business Services section of Corporate Services Department that is responsible for procurement for the Town of Essex;

**“Individual Accommodation Plan”** means a formal plan that outlines the workplace-related accommodations that will be provided to an employee with a disability in accordance with Town of Essex Policy Number 022, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation – Employment Standard Policy;

**Managers or Assistant Managers,** means those individuals appointed as managers or assistant managers of the Town of Essex, and may include a person appointed or designated to act on their behalf;

**“Per diem allowance”** means an allowance provided to compensate for the time and expense incurred by an individual to travel on behalf of the Town of Essex;

## Responsibilities

### Chair of the Finance Committee

The Chair of the Finance Committee is responsible for acting as an Approval Authority for purposes of approving Travel and Business Expense Requests of the Chief Administrative Officer, within approved budget.

### Chief Administrative Officer

The Chief Administrative Officer is responsible for:

- a) Acting as an Approval Authority for purposes of approving Travel and Business Expense Requests for all direct reports and Managers;
- b) Ensuring that all travel requests are within approved budget;
- c) Providing direction on the review of the Travel and Business Expense Policy every five years, or sooner as required;
- d) Providing final approval for Travel and Business Expense Requests greater than \$3,000 for any one travel occurrence; and

- e) Providing final approval for requests to travel outside of the Province of Ontario or outside of Canada for all individuals, except elected officials.

## **Director of Corporate Services**

The Director of Corporate Services or designate is responsible for:

- a) Reviewing Travel and Business Expense Reconciliations to ensure compliance with the Travel and Business Expense Policy and approving such reconciliations;
- b) Reviewing any areas of non-compliance with the Travel and Business Expense Policy with an individual or Director, with any unresolved issues being referred to the Chief Administrative Officer for interpretation or resolution;
- c) Communicating the Travel and Business Expense Policy and guidelines to the Senior Management Team members, agencies, boards, and committees;
- d) Updating the Travel and Business Expense Policy every five years, or sooner as required;
- e) Updating rates for per diem, per event expense limits for elected officials, meal and mileage rates and the travel allowance annually, in accordance with this policy and communicating such updates to employees, Council members, etcetera; and
- f) Collecting feedback on the policy from all users and proposing revisions and updates to the Chief Administrative Officer as appropriate.

## **Department Heads**

Department Heads are responsible for:

- a) Ensuring all employees within their department are aware of the Travel and Business Expense Policy and are provided with training on the policy;
- b) Acting as an Approval Authority for purposes of approving all Travel and Business Expense Requests within their department;
- c) Ensuring that all travel requests are within approved budget;
- d) Providing feedback to the Director of Corporate Services on issues or areas of the policy which may present an opportunity to improve the policy;

- e) Promoting the consistent application of the policy in all departments;
- f) Forwarding Travel and Business Expense Requests greater than \$3,000 for any one travel occurrence to the Chief Administrative Officer for final approval; and
- g) Forwarding requests to travel outside of the Province of Ontario or outside of Canada to the Chief Administrative Officer for final approval.

## **Managers and Assistant Manager**

Managers and Assistant Managers are responsible for:

- a) Ensuring all department employees are aware of the Travel and Business Expense Policy and are provided with training on the policy;
- b) Acting as an Approval Authority for purposes of approving Travel and Business Expense Requests of direct reports;
- c) Ensuring that all travel requests are within approved budget;
- d) Providing feedback to the Department Head of their department on issues or areas of the policy which may present an opportunity to improve the policy; and
- e) Promoting the consistent application of the policy within their area of responsibility.

## **Travel Co-ordinators**

At least one person will be appointed to act as Travel Co-ordinator for each department.

Travel co-ordinators are responsible for:

- a) Making all travel arrangements, including processing registration fees for payment, booking travel by airline, passenger train and rental vehicle and booking accommodations, in accordance with this Policy;
- b) Consulting with Finance and Business Services on eligible travel expenses as required; and
- c) Consulting with Finance and Business Services on preferred car rental agencies, where applicable.

## Individuals Incurring Travel Expenses

Individuals incurring travel or business expenses for reimbursement by the Town of Essex are responsible for:

- a) With the exception of elected officials, obtaining approval for all non-incidentaI travel and business expense requests in advance of travelling;
- b) Contacting a Travel Co-ordinator to determine eligible transportation and accommodation costs, and to obtain bookings where required under this policy;
- c) Exercising judgement when incurring travel and business expenses, with proper regard for economy; and
- d) Completing the Travel and Business Expense Reconciliation within 20 business days following return from travel.

## Eligible Travel and Business Expenses

Eligible travel and business expenses generally fall into two categories, namely:

### 1. Incidental Travel and Business Expenses

This category of travel and business expense represents costs to attend meetings and other events within a fifty-kilometre radius of the Town of Essex and typically only involves costs related to mileage and parking, where applicable.

Examples of meetings and events covered under this category include such things as:

- i) Meetings that are related to Council business, including but not limited to, regular and special meetings, meetings under the Drainage Act, meetings under the Planning Act, Town-sponsored open houses, etcetera'
- ii) Committee and board meetings and includes members of the committee or board, persons appointed as administrative support to a committee or board, a secretary for a committee or board and an individual who has been invited to attend a committee or board meeting by the chair of the committee or board;
- iii) Meetings with Federal or Provincial ministries, other local municipalities, residents, etcetera; and
- iv) Local events where an individual is requested to attend by invitation or is acting on or behalf of or in place of the Mayor.

Approval to incur incidental travel and business expenses is generally not required provided there is sufficient budget to cover the expense.

## **2. Other Travel and Business Expenses**

This category of travel and business expenses represents costs to attend training and development opportunities, including conferences, conventions, symposiums, seminars, training sessions and workshops, and travel to attend meetings or other municipal business where the distance to the event is beyond a fifty-kilometre radius of the Town of Essex. Expenses incurred under this category of travel may include such things as registration fees, other forms of transportation costs, such as airfare, train fare and vehicle rental, meals, per diem, etcetera.

All individuals, except elected officials, who may incur travel and business expenses which fall into this category must submit a Travel and Business Expense Request form to their respective Approval Authority for approval prior to travel.

## **Limits and Adherence to Other Policies**

### **Elected Officials**

Business and travel expenses that are incurred by elected officials specifically to attend conferences, conventions, symposiums, seminars, training sessions, workshops and similar training opportunities, in their capacity as elected official or as an appointee to an agency, board or committee by Council of the Town of Essex, will be subject to an annual limit per elected official, and a maximum amount per event as set out in Schedule A. Both limits include any registration fees applicable to the event. These limits will be updated annually in accordance with the section of this policy entitled "Annual Adjustment to Rates in Schedule A. Attendance at any event that will exceed the maximum amount per event as set out in Schedule A will require pre-approval by Council of the Town of Essex.

Unless otherwise approved by Council for the Town of Essex, no more than two elected officials shall attend the same event. This restriction does not apply to the Annual General Meeting and Conference hosted by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

### **Employees**

Attendance at training and development opportunities by employees, including temporary and contract employees of the Town of Essex, which includes conferences, conventions, seminars, workshops, training sessions, conferences, conventions, symposiums, seminars, training sessions, workshops, webinars, etcetera, will be subject to the provisions of the Staff Training and Development Policy.

# Types of Eligible Travel Expenses

Eligible travel expenses may include the following, where applicable:

## 1. Registration Fees

Registration fees for attendance at conferences, conventions, seminars, training sessions, or an annual meeting will be paid by the Town, by cheque or credit card, upon submission of an invoice from the appropriate organization.

## 2. Per Diem Allowance

- a) Elected Officials and Members of the Committee of Adjustment and Police Services Board

A per diem allowance as set out in Schedule "A" to this policy will be paid to elected officials and members of the Committee of Adjustment and the Police Services Board based on the per diem rates in effect at the time of travel. For purposes of per diem allowances, employees who are appointed to act as secretary of the Committee of Adjustment or Police Services Board will not be eligible for a per diem allowance under this section.

Per diem rates applicable to elected officials and members of the Committee of Adjustment and the Police Services Board will be adjusted annually in accordance with the section of this policy entitled "Annual Adjustment to Rates in Schedule A".

- b) Non-Union Employees

Non-union employees will not be paid per diem when it is necessary to travel or to attend a conference, convention, seminar, training session or other municipal business on a weekend or on a day recognized as a paid holiday by the Town of Essex. Alternatively, non-union employees will be permitted to bank this time on a straight time basis for use as time off at a later date.

## 3. Transportation Costs

Transportation costs will be reimbursed based on the method of transportation that represents the least cost to the Town. The following guidelines shall be used when determining transportation costs:

- a) Mileage

Mileage will be reimbursed based on the per-kilometre mileage rate as set out in Schedule A to this policy.

Mileage will be calculated based on the number of kilometres from an individual's home or normal workplace, whichever is applicable, to the destination and from the destination to the individual's home or normal workplace.

Mileage claims will require that the distance reported be supported by an actual odometer reading or distance information obtained through third-party websites, such as MapQuest.

Where two or more individuals attending an event are travelling in the same vehicle, only the person who incurs the expense of operating the vehicle may claim the mileage. Where more than one individual is attending the same event, it is anticipated that those individuals will car pool unless otherwise approved by an Approval Authority.

Individuals using a personal vehicle for business travel are responsible for ensuring that the insurance coverage for the vehicle is adequate.

b) Air Travel

Travel by air shall be based on economy class airfare and shall be booked a minimum of fourteen (14) days in advance of the travel date. Cancellation insurance shall be purchased for all flights.

In certain cases, air travel based on business class may be authorized by an Approval Authority if less expensive seats are not available, departure times are not acceptable, an individual is flying on a continuous flight in excess of five (5) hours, or if economy class cannot meet the needs of a person with a disability.

All bookings for air travel will be made by a Travel Co-ordinator after receiving confirmation that the Travel and Business Expense Request has been approved by the appropriate Approval Authority.

Excess baggage claims associated with the transportation of business materials such as display or print products will be reimbursed upon providing an original receipt with the Travel and Business Expense Reconciliation.

c) Passenger Train

Travel by passenger train shall be based on business class fare and shall be booked a minimum of ten (10) days in advance of the travel date.

All passenger train bookings will be made by a Travel Co-ordinator after receiving confirmation that the Travel and Business Expense Request has been approved by an Approval Authority.

d) Rental Vehicles

Travel by rental vehicle will be based on the rental of a compact or economy model. In certain cases an Approval Authority may approve the rental of a full size vehicle if three or more individuals are travelling together or a larger vehicle is required to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability.

Rental vehicles shall be booked a minimum of ten (10) days in advance of the travel date and the rental shall include collision and comprehensive automobile insurance coverage with a deductible of \$500. Fuel and insurance costs associated with a rental vehicle will be reimbursed.

All bookings of rental vehicles will be made by a Travel Co-ordinator after receiving confirmation that the Travel and Business Expense Request has been approved by the appropriate Approval Authority.

Where two or more individuals attending an event are travelling in the same vehicle, only the person who purchases fuel for the rental vehicle may submit this cost for reimbursement. Where more than one individual is attending the same event, it is anticipated that those individuals will car pool unless otherwise approved by their Approval Authority.

e) Town-Owned Vehicle

Fuel costs associated with travel using a Town-owned vehicle will only be reimbursed if such fuel costs are paid by other than a Town of Essex corporate credit card.

Where more than one individual is attending the same event, it is anticipated that those individuals will car pool unless otherwise approved by an Approval Authority.

#### **4. Accommodations**

Accommodations for attendance at an event that spans more than one day or for an event greater than six hours in length and where the distance to and from the event, from an individual's home or normal workplace, whichever is applicable, is in excess of 400 kilometres, return trip, will be considered an eligible travel expense.

Accommodations shall be selected on the basis of:

- Close proximity to the event being attended so as to avoid or minimize ground transportation from the hotel to the event;
- Accommodations offering a group rate for the event, provided it represents the most reasonable cost when compared to rates charged for accommodations of

equal but not higher class within a two-kilometre radius of the accommodations offering the group rate;

- The most reasonable cost when compared to rates charged by accommodations of equal, but not higher class within a two-kilometre radius of the accommodations selected;
- A standard room and single occupancy; and
- The most economical, preferential rate available (for example, government rates, corporate rates).

All bookings for accommodations will be made by a Travel Co-ordinator after receiving confirmation that the Travel and Business Expense Request has been approved by the appropriate Approval Authority.

The costs of staying at non-commercial accommodations (for example, home of family or friend) will not be reimbursed. The cost to upgrade a room to double occupancy will also not be reimbursed.

The cost of an additional night's accommodation may be reimbursed if the additional night's accommodation is required to take advantage of discounted airfare, provided such extra cost does not exceed savings realized from the discounted fare or as otherwise approved by an Approval Authority.

It is the responsibility of the person travelling to cancel reservations or to instruct the Travel Co-ordinator to cancel reservations, for accommodations within the time frame required by the hotel or motel in order to avoid charges for room costs.

## **5. Meal Expenses**

Meal expenses will be reimbursed based on the rates set out in Schedule A to this policy and will only be reimbursed up to the maximum meal expense in effect for the three meals, namely, Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner at the time of travel. Individual meal expenses may be exceeded provided the daily total meal expense is not exceeded. Meal expenses do not include a gratuity.

Where a meal expense is paid in accordance with the rates in effect as outlined in Schedule A, receipts for those meals are not required. Where a meal is paid based on the actual cost of the meal, a detailed receipt will be required.

The Town will not reimburse meal expenses for any meal that is provided as part of the registration fee.

Meal expense rates will be updated annually in accordance with the section of this policy entitled "Annual Adjustment to Rates in Schedule A".

## **6. Miscellaneous Travel Expenses**

The following miscellaneous costs related to travel will be reimbursed upon providing a proper receipt:

- Transfer fees to and from an airport or rail station to the accommodations that have been booked;
- Transfer fees to and from the accommodations to the event where the method of transportation to the event is by other than personal vehicle, rental vehicle or Town-owned vehicle;
- Parking fees while attending an event where the method of transportation to the event is by personal vehicle, rental vehicle or Town-owned vehicle, provided such parking is required to attend the event;
- A daily travel allowance will be provided for each eight-hour day that an individual is travelling or attending an event, in accordance with the rate set out in Schedule A. This travel allowance is intended to cover miscellaneous expenses such as gratuities, etcetera; and
- Toll highway charges.

## **7. Telephone Calls**

For those individuals travelling who do not have a company-issued mobile device, the following telephone calls will be reimbursed:

- Local or long distance telephone calls related to Town business; and
- Calls to the travelling individual's residence made on a personal mobile device once per day for each full day that an individual is required to be away from home.

## **Ineligible Travel Expenses**

The following expenses resulting from travel are deemed ineligible for reimbursement:

- Mileage or fuel costs for personal travel while attending an event (for example, shopping, visiting family or friends, etcetera);
- Alcoholic beverages;

- 1-900 premium-rate telephone calls;
- Claims for loss of personal effects;
- Entertainment;
- Gifts;
- Personal effects, such as magazines, newspapers, clothing;
- Personal messaging or download fees;
- Personal services such as shoe shines, valet, hair styling;
- Personal vehicle costs, including maintenance, repair costs, car washes;
- Movie or satellite television fees charged by hotels, airlines or rail lines;
- Leisure activities that may be associated with an event, including but limited to sightseeing tours, social activities, sporting activities, etcetera;
- Traffic and parking fines;
- Additional costs associated with combining a business trip with personal travel;
- Expenses of a spouse or companion, including additional mileage costs created when two or more individuals attending the same event cannot car pool because a spouse or companion is travelling with an individual;
- Accommodation costs incurred due to a failure to cancel a room by the time specified by the hotel; and
- Rental of luxury vehicles.

## **Travel and Business Expense Reconciliation**

The following Travel and Business Expenses, if eligible, will be reimbursed upon return from travel and submission of a Travel and Business Expense Reconciliation:

- Per diem;
- Mileage;
- Meal Expenses;

- Miscellaneous Travel Expenses; and
- Fuel Costs for a Rental Vehicle or Town-Owned Vehicle.

Travel advances will not be provided in advance of travel.

A Travel and Business Expense Reconciliation must be prepared and submitted within twenty-one (21) business days of returning from any travel in the case of elected officials and within fifteen (15) business days of returning from any travel in the case of all other individuals. Original, detailed receipts are required for all expenses, including air and rail travel (including boarding passes); car rentals, accommodations, and meals, with the exception of meals reimbursed based on the rates for meal expenses set out in Schedule A.

No reimbursements will be made for expenses without original receipts. If a receipt is lost and a duplicate receipt cannot be obtained, the individual must provide a written explanation, noted and signed by the Chief Administrative Officer.

A Travel and Business Expense Request may be denied if a Travel and Business Expense Reconciliation related to past travel has not been submitted within the required timeframe noted above.

## **Requirement to Report on Conferences, Conventions and Symposiums**

### **Elected Officials**

Within twenty-one (21) days of returning from a conference, convention, or symposium, elected officials shall prepare a brief report, verbally or written, to Council at a Regular Council Meetings that provides details of the event and the information gathered from the event.

### **All Other Individuals**

Within fifteen (15) days of returning from a conference, convention, or symposium, all other individuals shall prepare a brief written report on the details of the event and the information gathered from the event and provide such report to the Manager, Human Resources.

## **Annual Adjustment to Rates in Schedule A**

All rates as set out in Schedule A, with the exception of the mileage rate will be adjusted annually based on the year over year change in the Consumer Price Index, by Province (Ontario), All items as at December 31. Rates will be adjusted as soon as practicable following publication of the December statistics.

The mileage rate will be adjusted annually as soon as practicable following publication of the Automobile Allowance Rates by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Reimbursement of travel costs based on the rates set out in Schedule A will be based on the rates in effect at the time of travel. Changes to the rates set out in Schedule A will not be retroactively reimbursed for travel which occurred prior to the date that the rates were adjusted.

## **Persons with Disabilities**

The Town is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities who may be required to travel in accordance with this policy. Any specific needs of persons with disabilities as it relates to travel will form part of an Individual Accommodation Plan or, in the absence of such plan, will be addressed on an individual basis.

## **Policy to Supersede**

This policy will supersede any former policies of the Town of Essex related to travel and business expenses.

## **References and Related Documents**

Other applicable information includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Employee Training and Development Policy Number 001;
- Town of Essex Policy Number 022, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation – Employment Standard Policy;
- Automobile Allowance Rates as published by the Canada Revenue Agency; and
- Consumer Price Index, by Province (Ontario), All items as published by Statistics Canada.

## Acknowledgement

I, \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge that I have read and understand the Travel and Business Expense Policy

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Schedule A

(Revised effective January 1, 2022)

### Annual and per event limits

(applicable to elected officials only)

- \$8,206.00 per Elected Official per annum, including registration fees; and
- \$3,282.00 per event, including registration fees.

The annual limit applies to business and travel expenses incurred specifically to attend conferences, conventions, symposiums, seminars, training sessions, workshops and similar training opportunities.

### Per diem allowance

(applicable to elected officials and members of the Police Services Board and Committee of Adjustment only)

- \$201.00 per day, prorated for any part day thereof

### Mileage Rate

(applicable to elected officials and all other individuals)

- \$0.61 per kilometre, for the first 5,000 kilometres driven; and
- \$0.54 per kilometre driven after that.

### Meal Expenses

(applicable to elected officials and all other individuals)

Meal	Guideline for Meal Allowance	Amount
Breakfast	Individual required to leave for a day trip before 6:00 a.m. or is away overnight	\$18.00
Lunch	Individual required to leave for day trip before 12:00 noon and arrives back after 3:00 p.m.	\$23.00
Dinner	Individual could not arrive home from a trip until after 6:00 p.m. or is away overnight	\$42.00
Total Per Day		<u>\$ 83.00</u>

## **Travel Allowance**

(applicable to elected officials and all other individuals)

- \$11.00 per full day of travel