

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**Agenda Item**



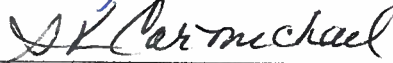
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	June 05, 2012
<b>Title:</b>	Authorize Changes to the Employee Travel Policy
<b>Department:</b>	Human Resources
<b>Staff Contact:</b>	Mike Neuhard
<b>Board Committee/ Other BACC:</b>	Finance, Audit and Budget Committee
<b>Staff Recommendation:</b>	Deferral to 6/19/12
<b>Budget Impact:</b>	N/A
<b>Time Sensitivity:</b>	N/A

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1.	Background Report		
2.	Draft Employee Travel Policy		
3.	Proposed Resolution R12-168		

	<b>Consent Agenda</b>		<b>Other Business</b>	X	<b>Unfinished Business</b>
	<b>Discussion</b>		<b>Presentation</b>		<b>Work Session</b>
	<b>New Business</b>		<b>Public Hearing</b>		<b>Add-On</b>

**REVIEW:**

X	County Administrator	
X	Director of Communications	
X	Finance and Budget	

<b>DISTRICT:</b>	N/A
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### **BACKGROUND REPORT**

The Employee Travel Policy was last revised as part of the Personnel Policy Manual updates in September, 2008.

Upon review by the Employee Advisory Committee (EAC), it became apparent that changes were needed to the "reimbursement for travel expenses" portion of the policy. The revised policy (Attachment 2) includes the EAC's recommendations. Proposed changes were also discussed by the Board's Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee.

The change made to Section 2H (1) County Vehicles, indicates that "County vehicles can be used only for in-state travel except with the approval of the department director." Section 2Q adds, "In the event an employee chooses a voluntary separation of employment and the County has provided professional development, training or seminars, with a total cost, including travel, of \$1,000 or more in the preceding 6-month period, the employee will be required to repay the portion of the total cost that exceeds \$1,000."

While staff recommends approval of proposed Resolution R12-168, we request a deferral until June 19<sup>th</sup> to allow sufficient time for the policy to be reviewed and considered by County employees prior to Board adoption.

	<b>STAFFORD COUNTY</b> <b>DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	
	<b>SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE TRAVEL POLICY- DRAFT</b>	
		<b>Approved by</b> <b>Board of</b> <b>Supervisors</b>

**I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this section is to explain and establish guidelines for employee travel expenses.

**II. GUIDELINES:**

**A. Employee Travel Expenses:**

1. This policy is established to provide consistent guidelines and procedures pertaining to the authorization for business travel and the advance payment or reimbursement of actual, reasonable, and necessary expenses incurred by County officials and employees while conducting official County business.
2. Responsibility for legitimacy and supporting documentation of reimbursable expenses rests with the traveler. The County relies on the honesty and integrity of those traveling to prevent excessive expenditures and reimbursements. Any falsification of expenditures constitutes fraud and shall be treated as such. Possible penalties include but are not limited to termination of employment and/or criminal prosecution.
3. Individuals are expected to exercise prudent judgment when making travel arrangements and expenditures. Travel expense reports are open to the public and should be able to sustain the test of public review.
4. All travel expenditures involving County funds must comply with the provisions of this policy.

**B. Scope:**

It is County policy to advance or reimburse County employees, Constitutional Officers and their employees, Fire & Rescue Volunteers, the County Administrator, and Board Members for necessary and reasonable travel expenses incurred while conducting official County business or representing the County at authorized activities.

C. General County Guidelines:

The County Shall:

1. Require approval of all travel related expenses by the department head, assistant department head, County Administrator or Constitutional Officer/designee as appropriate and as specified in this policy.
2. Provide reimbursement to County employees with proper documentation for travel expenses incurred only while on approved, official County business.
3. Require travel by the most direct, practical route with the amount claimed not to exceed that for tourist class common carrier accommodations.
4. Require travelers to seek the most cost-effective rates including government rates or promotional rates for hotels, airlines, rental cars, etc.

D. Action Prior to Travel:

1. Even though travel costs may have been included in the County budget, County officials and employees shall obtain advance authorization, as outlined, to attend the specific meeting, training program or other County required activity prior to making any commitment to paying registration fees, to purchasing transportation tickets or to incurring any other costs.
2. Travel related to position requirements or as part of a committee, task force, organization or business meeting, must be approved in advance by the department head in accordance with this policy and departmental procedures. Meetings and departmental activities designated by a department head, as described herein, do not require the use of the Application for Specialized Training Form; all other provisions for reimbursement apply.
3. Application for Specialized Training Form:
  - a. In no event shall an Application for Specialized Training be approved unless funds for payment of the proposed travel are available.
  - b. The following activities require completion of the Application for Specialized Training form with advance authorization. Once approved, the Application for Specialized Training shall be copied and submitted to the Human Resources Department to be included in the employee's file.

- 1) Professional conferences and seminars;
- 2) Workshops and short courses; and
- 3) Eligible continuing education

c. Required Authorizations:

1) Department Authorization:

- a) Employees below the department head level shall obtain approval from their department head.
- b) Department heads shall seek approval from the County Administrator.
- c) Approval is not required for Constitutional Officers.

2) Finance Department Authorization:

- a) Upon authorization, the traveler may initiate payment of registration fees, allowance for meals and incidentals (Per Diem), and reimbursement of lodging and airline tickets, as applicable.
- b) Advance funds for expenses, other than meals and incidentals, may be requested by submitting a "Cash Advance Request" to the Finance Department. The cash advance request must be signed by the employee and by his/her department head, or by the County Administrator, as appropriate.

E. Per Diem:

1. An allowance for meals and incidentals (M & I E) is paid when an employee is traveling overnight conducting non-routine official County business away from his/her work site.
2. The allowance is paid in accordance with guidelines established by the Federal Government, at [www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287). Under M&I E, the website provides the Per Diem amounts for a full day of travel as well as the breakdown for breakfast, lunch, dinner and incidentals. First & last day of travel are reimbursed at 75% (see website). Per Diem should be requested at least three weeks prior to travel. Under the Per Diem plan, employees incurring meal expenses would be allocated the allowable amounts, and would not be required to provide documentation or receipts.

The amount of Per Diem depends on which meals are included in the seminar/conference. The itinerary/conference brochure is required with the specialized training form when requesting Per Diem.

Per Diem is paid for overnight travel only. The exception is a one-day travel outside of a 75 mile radius from your workplace or home, whichever is closest to the destination.

Some County Department's training programs may not be covered by all conditions of this policy. Please check with specific departments for applicability to the Per Diem guidelines.

F. Cancellation of Travel:

In the event the proposed travel is cancelled, either because the event is cancelled or the employee is unable to attend the event, it will be necessary to notify the immediate supervisor and the Department of Human Resources. If the employee received a cash advance for the travel, the employee will also have to contact the Finance Department to arrange for the repayment of County funds.

G. Action upon Completion of Travel:

1. If reimbursement of expenses other than meals is applicable, an expense report and original receipts are required. The reimbursement shall be entered as a "Field Purchase Order" in the HTE system. The expense report, including a copy of the training form as well as the event brochure should be submitted to the Department of Finance within **ten working days** of completed travel.
2. Constitutional Officers, the County Administrator, and the Board of Supervisors shall submit expenses directly to the Finance Department.
3. Any traveler who received a cash advance and does not submit the required expense report within 30 days from the date of return may have the entire advance deducted from his/her paycheck by the Finance Department.

H. Reimbursable Travel Expenses:

1. Transportation:
  - a. Employees shall carpool whenever possible, either by private or County vehicles.
  - b. Local travel shall be defined as travel within a 75-mile radius, which includes the Washington D.C. metropolitan area and the Richmond area.

The origin of travel shall be the traveler's regular County work site or residence, whichever is most cost-effective for the County.

**1) County Vehicles:**

A County motor pool vehicle shall be assigned, when possible, and in accordance with the motor pool policy, to employees requiring transportation for approved local activities. County vehicles can be used only for in-state travel except with the approval of the department director. In cases where vehicles are assigned to specific employees or departments, these must be used in preference to private vehicles or motor pool vehicles.

**2) Personal Vehicles:**

A mileage reimbursement rate, not to exceed the authorized amount according to the IRS rates, see [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), shall be used to calculate reimbursement for use of personal automobiles in the event a County vehicle is not available. Employees using personal vehicles for business purposes are not covered by County insurance.

Rideshare is required when several employees are traveling to the same location. Only one person is eligible for mileage reimbursement.

**3) Other reimbursable expenses related to vehicle travel may include:**

- a) Parking fees - with receipts when possible
- b) Tolls - with receipts when possible
- c) Gas - if a Quarles gas station is not available for refueling

**4) Expenses which are not reimbursable include:**

- a) Fines for traffic violations or parking tickets
- b) Costs incurred because of accidents or repairs or breakdowns while traveling by personal vehicle. The County is not responsible for any damage to personal automobiles.

**5) Mileage reimbursement request:**

- a) Only mileage that is incurred as a result of travel on County business may be shown on the Expense Report to

claim mileage reimbursement. Travel to and from an employee's residence or to the place of employment or meeting, including mileage for transportation to evening and non-workday meetings, which are part of an employee's job, is not reimbursable. Mileage reimbursement is paid after the travel is completed, along with any other reimbursements, such as parking and tolls. (Expense report can be found on iStafford, document center, HR, weekly expense report.)

- b) An employee who travels frequently shall submit the expense report at the first of each month following activities for the preceding month.
- c) If the employee chooses to drive his or her personal vehicle to an out-of-state conference location when common carrier is more expeditious, he/she will be reimbursed for the lesser of the roundtrip ticket or the mileage. Any costs related to the extra traveling time will be at the expense of the employee.

#### **I. Other Transportation:**

##### **1. Air, Train, or Bus (Common Carrier):**

Reimbursement shall be allowed for coach/tourist accommodations, or other promotional fares, which would be more cost-effective for the County.

##### **2. Taxicabs, Commuter Rail, or Subways:**

Reimbursement to and from transportation terminals shall be made only when that is the most economical way to travel.

##### **3. Rental:**

Use of a rental car shall be approved in advance and only when it is cost beneficial to the County to do so. Since motor pool vehicles are not to be driven to out-of-state conferences, due to logistics for repair and retrieval, vehicle rental is preferred.

#### **J. Meals:**

When a County official takes an individual(s) with whom he/she is conducting County business to a meal and is continuing or completing the discussion during the meal, reimbursement of the meal expense for the other individual(s) may be warranted. Discretion must be used in these cases and the department head shall determine if it is a permissible use. The expenditure must be charged against the specific travel account of the department.

K. Lodging:

1. Government rates or other promotional discount rates shall be requested on all County travel to provide the most cost-effective rates.
2. Actual, reasonable expenses for lodging, at the single occupancy rate, are reimbursable based on itemized receipts submitted by the traveler.
3. If family members accompany the employee, the employee must pay the difference between the double occupancy rate and the single occupancy rate, if any.

L. Registration Fees:

With appropriate documentation, registration fees may be submitted to be paid prior to the approved travel. Otherwise, fees for seminars, conferences, workshops, and short courses are reimbursable upon presentation of the approved Application for Specialized Training. A registration form, receipt and/or invoice from the sponsor must be submitted with the reimbursement request.

M. Incidental Expenses:

Incidental expenses are reimbursable for the following items as documented, with receipts, on the expense report.

1. Official business communications. These include business phone calls and Internet connection fees
2. Miscellaneous items such as supplies and photocopying

N. Personal Travel:

Employees wishing to combine a vacation or personal travel with a County-authorized trip must have prior approval by the department head. Employees traveling under such circumstances shall be reimbursed at the coach/tourist rate for only the employee, or direct auto mileage rate whichever is less, and only for the portion of such travel as is required for official County business. Reimbursement for other County business expenses is allowable only for travel costs to the employee as outlined in this policy.

O. Non-Reimbursable Expenses:

Expenses, which are not eligible for reimbursement, include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Unauthorized travel expenses incurred to obtain or maintain training and certificates, unless specifically authorized;

2. Personal travel insurance premiums;
  3. Lost or stolen articles and personal belongings;
  4. Self-entertainment activities i.e. movies, Pay-TV, health clubs, travel tours, golf, tennis, bowling, theaters;
  5. Alcoholic beverages;
  6. Mileage or transportation expenses when another traveler who is eligible for mileage or transportation reimbursement, transports the employee;
  7. Personal expenses such as haircuts, personal telephone calls, valet, shoe-shines, and laundry; and
  8. Any additional charges for accommodations (any additional cost of lodging per night), meals, and travel for any individual accompanying the traveler on an official business trip.
- P. Submitting travel or expense reports, requests for advance payment or reimbursements with fraudulent information is the equivalent of theft from the County and shall subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Failure to comply with the procedures outlined in this Policy may also be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

**Q. Voluntary Separation of Employment**

In the event an employee chooses a voluntary separation of employment and the County has provided professional development, training or seminars with a total cost, including travel of \$1,000 or more in the preceding 6-month period, the employee will be required to repay the portion of the total cost that exceeds \$1,000.

PROPOSED

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF STAFFORD  
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA

RESOLUTION

At a regular meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors (the Board) held in the Board Chambers, Stafford County Administration Center, Stafford, Virginia, on the 5th day of June, 2012:

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MEMBERS:

Susan B. Stimpson, Chairman  
Cord A. Sterling, Vice Chairman  
Jack R. Cavalier  
Paul V. Milde III  
Ty A. Schieber  
Gary F. Snellings  
Robert "Bob" Thomas, Jr.

VOTE:

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On motion of, seconded by, which carried by a vote of, the following was adopted:

A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE REVISED EMPLOYEE TRAVEL POLICY

WHEREAS, the Employee Travel Policy has not been updated since 2008; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to update and revise the current Employee Travel Policy; and

WHEREAS, the Employee Travel Policy has been reviewed by the Employee Advisory Committee (EAC) and the Finance, Audit, and Budget Committee;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 5th day of June, 2012, that the updated and revised Employee Travel Policy be and it hereby is adopted.

AJR:MJP:mak