

CITY OF GLUCKSTADT TRAVEL POLICY

Mission Statement

The purpose of this Travel Policy is to outline general policies and procedures to allow reasonable guidance for travelers and administrators.

It is up to the Department Head to determine if the potential benefits of the Conference/Trip justify the time and expense involved after considering cost-effective alternatives, such as video or teleconferencing.

An employee traveling on official city business is expected to exercise the same care incurring expenses as would a prudent person traveling for personal reasons. Travel for business should be conducted at a minimum cost for achieving the success of the mission. Travelers shall request air, train, bus, hotel, and vehicle rental reservations as far in advance as possible and shall utilize the lowest logical rate available.

Whether by public transportation, privately-owned vehicle or city-owned vehicle, reimbursement shall be made for the most direct practical route. The least expensive method of transportation shall be used.

Travel Advances under MS Code 25-3-41 the Municipality has the authority to provide travel advances that can only be used for travel related purposes, under special circumstances. This money may not be used for personal expenses or for any purpose other than the actual expenses listed on the Estimated Travel Advance Form and has been approved prior to the trip, for authorized travel. **Any travel advance money not used for travel related expenses is repaid to the municipality by the traveler upon return from the trip.**

An Estimated Travel Advance Form must be filled out for each individual traveling.

Account for Travel Advances all employees must fill out a City of Gluckstadt Travel Voucher within five (5) working days after returning to work. This is to be done regardless of whether money is owed back to the city or not.

- A. All travel advance money not used for travel related expenses is repaid to the municipality.
- B. The Travel Voucher is completed and submitted. This form should account for all money not refunded.
- C. Actual receipts are provided for all travel expenses.

In-State/Out-Of-State Conferences requires an Estimated Travel Expense Form to be completed and approved by the Department Head. Then the Estimated Travel Expense Form is to be placed on the agenda for approval by the Board of Alderman and recorded in the official minutes. This must be done before an employee attends any convention, association, or meeting in order for expenses to be reimbursed.

For the Mayor and Aldermen attendance at Conferences/Meetings held within the “Greater Jackson Metropolitan Area” will be preapproved for “Registration Fees” ONLY. The “Greater Jackson Metropolitan Area” will include the municipalities of Jackson, Brandon, Clinton, Florence, Flowood, Madison, Pearl, Raymond, Richland, Ridgeland, and Terry. No meals or mileage will be authorized for reimbursement.

CITY OF GLUCKSTADT TRAVEL POLICY

City-Owned Vehicle A City of Gluckstadt vehicle shall always be used for official city business travel. Documentation is required if a city vehicle is unavailable. Actual operating expenses incurred in the use of city-owned vehicle for official travel will be reimbursed on presentation of receipts for gasoline and oil. No mileage reimbursement shall be made for city-owned vehicle use.

Private Vehicle

Reimbursement for the use of a personal vehicle for official city business travel is based on actual miles traveled and will be at the rate that the City of Gluckstadt officials have adopted. The current mileage reimbursement rate is found on the DFA travel website, and the city will follow the most up to date state rate (as of travel voucher submission). When two or more employees travel in one private vehicle, only one travel expense at the authorized reimbursement rate per mile shall be allowed. The person claiming reimbursement shall report the names of other city employee passengers.

Conference Hotels

When hotel rooms are blocked for a conference, seminar, etc., and a special discounted hotel rate provided, the employee should go directly to the hotel to obtain lodging. The employee has the responsibility to find out if prepayment and tax exemption is available. If available, the necessary information (address and any other requirement) needs to be listed on the Estimated Travel Advance Form.

As of 8/1/2023, an agency travel card may be available to prepay for flights or hotel accommodations in advance only. The travel card is not authorized for any expenses outside of the above.

General Lodging Information

Primary responsibility for the reasonableness of amounts charged rests with the Department Head or his designee. "Government rates" must always be requested by all travelers and the rate confirmed both at the time reservations are made and at check-in. If lodging is within the state of Mississippi, "state rates" should be asked for rather than "government rates." Since hotels charge for unkept reservations, changes in travel plans must be communicated to the hotel as soon as possible. These charges will **not be reimbursed** if the traveler has been negligent in canceling reservations, or if the change is due to a personal decision after the deadline for cancellations. **Exceptions may be made for emergencies beyond the employee's control. For non-conference hotel stays, if the hotel rate given is higher than the published state rate, a second quote from another hotel is required.

Conference Meals

Meals shall not be claimed as a separate item of expense on the Estimated Travel Advance Form when included in the conference registration fee. If special circumstances exist, for example, a food allergy prohibiting one from eating the meal provided, an exception will be made if noted by the employee and signed by the Department Head and reimbursement will be provided for that meal. Fees charged for attending the official meetings of a convention or seminar where the meeting includes a meal which causes the employee to exceed the daily maximum meal allowance will be reimbursed if supported by a receipt from convention officials. The meal reimbursement rate shall be paid at the rate for the conference city location.

*Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

General Meal Information

CITY OF GLUCKSTADT TRAVEL POLICY

Employees of the City of Gluckstadt shall be reimbursed the actual cost of meals as noted on itemized receipts incident to official travel. Total travel meal receipts shall not exceed the total meal reimbursement allocated for the number of travel days according to the maximums for the specific location of assignment. The amount allowed for individual meals when traveling within the continental United States (including Alaska) shall not exceed the maximum reimbursement rate listed at <https://www.dfa.ms.gov/dfa-offices/purchasing-travel-and-fleet-management/bureau-of-purchasing-and-contracting/travel/>. Meal allowances do not carry over to the next day of travel.

Meal tips should be included in the actual meal expense unless the inclusion of the tips would cause the meals to exceed the maximum daily limitations placed on meals by the Department of Finance and Administration. If the daily limitation would be exceeded, the employee is allowed to record meal tips for each day under other authorized business expenses. Total meal tips shall not exceed 20% of the maximum daily meal reimbursement.

Note: meal reimbursements are only eligible for reimbursement if overnight travel is required; meals for same day travel will not be reimbursed. If meals are paid for in cash and no receipt is submitted with travel voucher to the finance department, no reimbursement will be paid to traveler. Additionally, in limited circumstances, the finance department may accept other forms of documentation such as a credit card statement, bank statement or some similar form of documentation showing proof of qualified meal purchase.

Phone Charges, Postage, and Other Expenses

Phone calls, postage, and other expenses included in the "other authorized expenses" section must be described by the employee that they are for valid business expenses. The employee's signature on the Travel Voucher qualifies as certification. Phone calls itemized on a hotel bill should be circled and indication made if they were for business or deducted and not claimed if they were personal calls. Calls home are considered personal expenses and are not reimbursable. Calls to the office to check voice mail are reimbursable.

Taxi Fares & Ride Share

Fares for taxis, ride share, or airport transportation services are to be listed under "other expenses". If the cost is in excess of \$10.00 it is required that the receipt for that service to be attached to the Travel Voucher. The city does not reimburse taxi fares for **optional** travel to/from restaurants.

Miscellaneous Charges

- A. **Baggage Handling**
Reasonable charges will be allowed without receipt. Reasonable is usually defined as \$1 per bag for each level of handling.
Airport Counter: Charges for baggage at check-in may vary per airline. These charges are allowable and will be reimbursed. A receipt is required for charges in excess of \$10.00.
- B. **Hotel/Airport Parking**
For charges in excess of \$10.00/day, receipts are required.
Valet: The average tip for valet parking is \$2.00. The city does not reimburse for any other valet services except at a hotel.

Travel Practices not listed in the Travel Policy will be in accordance with current MS Department of Finance & Administration, State Travel Policy Rules & Regulations.

CITY OF GLUCKSTADT TRAVEL POLICY

Employee Signature

Date