



# Travel and Expenses Policy

For:

**ROCKINGHAM COUNTY  
VIRGINIA**

*Adopted:  
October 13, 2021*

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# **TRAVEL AND EXPENSES POLICY**

**Rockingham County, Virginia**

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## **Section 1. Overview**

It is the policy of Rockingham County to reimburse staff for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with approved travel. Travelers seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses. All county-related travel paid with Rockingham County funds must comply with the Rockingham County procurement ordinance.

## **Section 2. Approval**

Staff travel must be pre-authorized by the Department Head and funds must be available in the adopted budget. The pre-authorization must be documented on a Travel Authorization Form only if the travel is outside of the state. An individual may not approve his or her own travel or reimbursement. The Travel Authorization form, if necessary, must be signed by the Department Head or County Administrator. Department head travel must be pre-authorized by the County Administrator.

## **Section 3. Vacation in conjunction with County-related travel:**

In cases in which vacation time is added to County-related travel, any cost variance in airfare, car rental or lodging must be clearly identified on the Travel Reimbursement form. Rockingham County will not prepay any personal expenses with the intention of being “repaid” at a later time, nor will any personal expenses be reimbursed.

## **Section 4. Travel Expenses/Procedures:**

### **1) Prepaid travel expenses:**

County vehicles should be used for work related travel whenever possible. There may be occasions when an employee may need to use a personal vehicle for County business. The County reimburses the employee mileage at the rate established by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Employees are expected to commute to a meeting that exceeds one day if the meeting location is less than sixty (60) miles from the City of Harrisonburg. However, if evening meeting sessions are part of the conference, meeting, or training, and such are held out of the County, lodging may be provided by the County.

Before the travel, Rockingham County may issue prepayments for airfare, rail transportation, rental vehicles, conference registration fees and cash advances. Applicable policies and methods of payments for these prepayments follow.

**2) Airfare:**

Travelers are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare that reasonably meets business travel needs. Travelers are encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium airfare pricing. First-class tickets are not reimbursable.

Coach class or economy tickets must be purchased for domestic or international flights (defined as flight time totaling less than five consecutive hours excluding layovers). A higher-priced coach ticket cannot be purchased for a subsequent upgrade in seating. Airfare may be purchased with a County-issued credit card.

**3) Rail transportation:**

Rockingham County will prepay rail transportation provided that the cost does not exceed the cost of the least expensive airfare.

**4) Rental vehicles:**

Rockingham County will pre-pay for approved use of a rental vehicle.

**5) Conference registration fees:**

Conference registration fees can be prepaid with a County-issued credit card. Business-related banquets or meals that are considered part of the conference can be paid with the registration fees; however, such meals must be deducted from the traveler's per diem allowance. See Meals (per diem) for more detail.

**6) Travel advances:**

Cash advances of per diem are authorized for specific situations that might cause undue financial hardship for travelers. These situations are limited and must be pre-approved by the Department Head and Director of Finance.

Expenses associated with the travel must be reconciled and substantiated within two weeks of the return date. The traveler must repay Rockingham County for any advances in excess of the approved reimbursable expenses. The department initiating the travel is responsible for notifying the Finance Department to deposit any excess funds into the appropriate departmental account.

Travel advances are processed by submitting a completed Travel Reimbursement form to the Finance Department.

7) **Reimbursements:**

Requests for reimbursement of travel-related expenses are submitted on a Travel Reimbursement form. This form must be accompanied by a Travel Authorization Form and supporting documentation. If the requested reimbursement exceeds 20 percent above the total pre-trip estimate, the Travel Reimbursement form must be signed by the County Administrator.

These forms must be submitted to the Finance Department within two weeks after the trip is completed. Travel Reimbursement forms not submitted within this time frame require approval from the County Administrator. All reimbursement requests will go to the County Payroll Specialist by the timesheet due date and will be added to the pay in the next scheduled direct deposit. If received after the timesheet deadline, the request will be included in the following payroll direct deposit.

Reimbursement of travel expenses is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenses supported by the original, itemized receipts where required. Under no circumstances is reimbursement made for alcoholic beverages. Reimbursements (in addition to Airfare, Rail, Rental Vehicles and Conferences) that may be paid by Rockingham County are shown below.

**Lodging (commercial):**

The cost of overnight lodging (room rate and tax only) will be reimbursed to the traveler if the authorized travel is 60 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite. Exceptions to this restriction may be approved in writing by the County Administrator.

Rockingham County will reimburse lodging expenses at reasonable, single occupancy or standard business room rates. When the hotel or motel is the conference or convention site, reimbursement will be limited to the conference rate.

**Meals:**

Per diem allowances are reimbursable for overnight travel that is 60 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary worksite:

Rockingham County per diem rates are:

Breakfast	\$15.00
Lunch	\$20.00
Dinner	\$30.00

If traveling in a high-cost area, the employee may use the IRS per diem rates. The rates must be supplied with the travel reimbursement form for verification.

If a free meal is included in a conference registration fee the per diem allowance for that meal may not be claimed. When an employee completes a travel reimbursement form, a conference/class agenda must be attached to designate which meals are provided.

Receipts are not required for per diem allowances. Per diem allowances are reimbursed after the trip is completed.

**Mileage:**

Mileage will be reimbursed at the IRS Mileage reimbursement rate as posted on the IRS website. Please provide a printout of the map that shows the starting and ending location in order to document the number of miles shown on the reimbursement form. The exception to the documentation is for Board travel around town to conduct County business.

**Parking:**

Original receipts are required for parking fees (including airport parking) totaling \$25 or more. The lodging bill can be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of the overnight stay.

**Tolls:**

Original receipts are required for tolls totaling \$25 or more.

**Miscellaneous transportation:**

Original receipts are required for taxi, bus, subway, metro, ferry and other modes of transportation.