

County
of
Sampson
Travel
Policy

County of Sampson Travel Policy

PURPOSE:

To provide the standard procedures and guidelines for necessary and reasonable expenses and to ensure that public funds are expended for travel only when it serves a public purpose for the County of Sampson. It is the intent to provide statements of policy to enable departments a comprehensive reference for uniform interpretation to pay or reimburse allowable expenses pertaining to official travel and subsistence.

SCOPE:

The scope of this policy should include the following: 1) the parties covered by the policy; 2) the procedures for approval; 3) the reconciliation process; and, 4) the rates of reimbursement.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

Travel is contingent upon the availability of funds in the department budget. Department heads are responsible for ensuring funds are available for travel within their departmental budgets and approving travel. Department heads are responsible for scrutinizing all travel requests to ensure that such travel is necessary and reasonable for the efficient and effective operation of the department and shall ensure that all charges and expenses are in compliance with this policy. The County Manager will approve overnight travel requests for department heads and other requests for travel will be approved by the department head.

POLICY:

The purpose of this Travel Policy is to reimburse employees and appointed officials (traveler/s) serving in various capacities on boards, commissions and committees in accordance with the County of Sampson Travel Policy for all necessary and reasonable expenses incurred while traveling on official business representing the County of Sampson.

Prior to incurring any expenditure for travel, travelers must account for all estimated costs including any travel advances needed by submitting an Overnight Travel Authorization Request (Exhibit A). Travelers must also account for all expenses upon their return by submitting a complete and accurate Travel Expense Report (Exhibit B), approved by their department head. The County Manager will approve all overnight travel requests for department heads and members of Boards or Commissions. Submission of falsified travel forms or any other violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. (See the Sampson County Personnel Resolution, Article IX.)

When two (2) or more travelers are traveling to the same destination, they should make every effort to use special group travel discounts and jointly use transportation including taxicabs and county-owned, leased or privately owned vehicles. Travel with representatives of other government units is also encouraged whenever possible.

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DEFINITIONS:

- A. Travel – Required movement to and from the normal work station to a site located inside or outside the County to conduct County business
- B. Subsistence (Meals & Incidentals) – An allowance related to lodging, meal costs, and necessary incidental expenses (i.e. gratuities)
- C. Reimbursement – Payment for previously incurred expenses to authorized parties
- D. Travel advance – An approved request for funds to be issued prior to the start date of travel
- E. Lodging – Motel/hotel costs involved in approved overnight travel
- F. Per Diem – An allowance paid for each day (in this instance, for meals and incidentals)
- G. Business meals – Meals in conjunction with meetings or fieldwork, where County business is discussed and/or conducted
- H. Agenda – Specific detailing of the name of the event, days covered, meals provided, etc.

Excessive expenditures, unnecessarily indirect travel routes, luxury accommodations, and unjustified or unnecessary services in the performance of official business are not permitted. Travelers may be personally responsible for unnecessary and unauthorized expenditures and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience.

1.0 OVERNIGHT TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

- 1.1 Travelers must request approval for all travel in advance of incurring any expenditure, including registration fees, related to the trip. For overnight travel, the traveler must complete an Overnight Travel Authorization Request (Exhibit A). No registration/reservations should be made before travel has been appropriately authorized for overnight travel.
- 1.2 All Overnight Travel Authorization Requests must include an agenda. Any exceptions must be approved by the County Manager.
- 1.3 Once all sections of the Overnight Travel Authorization Request are completed, the traveler must sign and submit it to their department head or the County Manager for approval. The department head or County Manager should assess the necessity of the trip, the reasonableness of the expenses, and that an unencumbered appropriation sufficient to cover the total estimated cost of the travel remains in the appropriate expenditure line item before approving. For department head travel, the approved form must be submitted to the Finance Department.
- 1.4 The traveler must use the Travel Expense Report (Exhibit B) to submit actual expenses once the trip is completed.

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2.0 TRAVEL ADVANCE

The County of Sampson will assist travelers who are required to travel on official business by advancing up to 100% of the estimated travel expenses. Once the Overnight Travel Authorization Request (See Section 1.0) has been approved, the traveler may receive funds for the overnight trip.

- 2.1 Travelers should complete a Request for Advance Travel (Exhibit C) and have the form approved by their department head or the County Manager to obtain a cash advance for authorized travel. Payment for advance travel is limited to the dates that the Finance Department writes checks. Travelers may pick up their checks no earlier than the workday prior to the start of a trip.
- 2.2 As noted in Section 1.1, airfare and lodging can be charged to a credit card, if available, after the travel is approved.
- 2.3 Employees that have not reconciled their advance travel within the allowed time are subject to and agree to have the entire advance withheld from their paycheck.

3.0 TRANSPORTATION

Employees are expected to hold local business travel to a minimum and travel together if at all practical. A completed monthly Travel Expense Report (Exhibit B) will be required for all local business travel. These statements will contain odometer readings, travel dates, locations traveled to and from and shall be approved by the respective department head by original signature only. No rubber stamp or designee may give approval.

- 3.1 Air Travel: Coach is the approved class of travel for all Travelers on domestic and international flights. Business class is optional for international flights greater than eight (8) hours flying time with approval of the department head. Upgrades to first class will not be reimbursed.
- 3.2 Private Aircraft: Use of private/personal aircraft is not approved and, accordingly, no reimbursement will be made for the use of such aircraft.
- 3.3 Airline Club Membership: Travelers may not be reimbursed for membership in airline clubs.
- 3.4 Rail Travel: Travelers should use coach class when traveling by rail. When an overnight stay is required on board a train, a roomette or duplex

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accommodation is permitted. The use of a private/personal rail car is not approved and, accordingly, no reimbursement will be made for its use.

3.5 Ground Transportation: Travelers should use the most economical and reasonable means of ground transportation that satisfies the traveler's business purpose and requirements. These include and are limited to taxis, airport/hotel shuttle vans, rental cars, personal cars and public transportation.

3.6 Rental Cars: Rental cars should be used only when they are clearly the most economical mode of transportation. Car rentals must be justified if the conference is in the same hotel that the traveler has selected for lodging.

3.6.1 When reserving a car, travelers should:

- . Request a compact or intermediate size car for four (4/-) travelers.
- . Refuse Loss/Collision Damage Waiver and Personal Accident Insurance for domestic business travel. Since the County provides insurance for business rentals, the traveler will not be reimbursed if they purchase this coverage.
- . Purchase available insurance coverage for business rentals outside the continental U.S., the cost of which will be reimbursed as a business expense.
- . Return the rental car with a full tank of gasoline to avoid a refueling charge by the vendor.
- . Use their County credit card to pay for rental cars, otherwise use their personal charge card and be reimbursed via the Travel Expense Report process or cash advance.

NOTE: When rental cars are used for combined personal and business travel, the traveler should consider purchasing the Loss/Collision Damage and Personal Accident Insurance at his/her expense.

Personal Cars: When public transportation is unavailable or impractical, the traveler may use a personal auto for business purposes.

3.6.2 Reimbursement for miles traveled will be at the maximum rate allowed by the IRS, which is updated annually on the first day of January.

3.6.3 Parking charges and tolls will be reimbursed. Receipts are required.

3.6.4 Fines for parking or traffic violations will NOT be reimbursed under any circumstances.

3.6.5 Travelers using a personal auto must carry minimum auto liability insurance limits as required by North Carolina law. In case of an accident while engaged in County business, County liability insurance will apply

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above personal insurance. The County does not provide physical damage coverage for personal vehicles.

3.6.6 Permission to use a personal vehicle in lieu of public transportation must have prior approval from the department head and the County Manger.

3.6.7 Travelers attending the same event must arrange carpools or common carriers whenever possible. Any exceptions must be approved by the County Manager.

3.7 County Vehicles: County vehicles may be used for any authorized travel. The requesting traveler must obey all laws of the jurisdiction in which the vehicle is being operated and will be responsible for any parking or traffic violations incurred while using the County vehicle. The vehicle should be used in conducting County business only. A minimal amount of personal use, such as driving the vehicle to and from a meal is allowed. Non-County travelers may accompany County travelers if they have a business interest in the travel. If family members accompany travelers on a business trip, their personal vehicle must be used. (See the Sampson County Personnel Policy for use and operation of County-owned vehicles.)

3.8 Fuel Credit Cards: The County has credit cards for the specific purpose of purchasing fuel for County-owned vehicles. These cards **MUST** be used. The gasoline companies offer a Federal discount per gallon, as well as, a State discount, if purchased in N.C. which saves the user department money for every gallon purchased.

4.0 **LODGING**

4.1 Lodging for travelers without a credit card must be paid to the lodging provider in advance by the County. The paid invoice from the lodging provider must be turned in to the Finance Department after the traveler's return. The department head may reserve the room with his/her County credit card. If the traveler has a County issued credit card, lodging charges should be placed on the traveler's County credit card and the traveler must attach the paid lodging invoice to his/her County credit card statement.

4.2 If paid by the traveler; room cost, including taxes, should be listed separately from parking, phone charges, etc. on the Travel Expense Report.

4.3 It is the traveler's responsibility to cancel the reservation in the event of a plan change. The traveler must request and record the cancellation number in case of billing disputes. When the traveler fails to cancel a reservation, a written

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explanation for the failure to cancel is required, and must be approved by the Finance Officer and the County Manager prior to request for reimbursement of the hotel bill. Receipts for lodging shall be obtained and submitted with the Travel Expense Report.

- 4.4 If the traveler chooses to arrive at the location of the training the night before it begins, the County will not pay for lodging expense if it is located within 60 miles of the trip's origination.

5.0 MEALS

- 5.1 Business Meals: Meals in conjunction with meetings or fieldwork where County business is discussed and/or conducted are considered business meals.

- 5.1.1 Proper documentation of the business purpose is essential.

Documentation should include:

- . Name, title and company affiliation of those attending.
- . Business topic
- . Original itemized receipts including tips.

- 5.1.2 Reciprocal entertainment among County personnel which does not involve a specific business purpose will **NOT** be reimbursed.

- 5.2 Personal Meals: A per diem allowance will be provided for meal and incidental expenses only if travel requires an overnight stay. The per diem allowance will be based on the rates set by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) (<http://www.gsa.gov>). The allowance may be requested as part of an Advance Travel Request or may be reimbursed after the employee has returned.

- 5.2.1 Meal expenses include the tip for service.

- 5.2.2 Incidentals listed in the GSA category table below include fees and tips given to porters, baggage carriers, bellhops, hotel maids, flight attendants.

- 5.2.3 The per diem allowance differs by location and the traveler is responsible for checking the GSA Meals & Incidental Expenses Breakdown (M&IE) for the specific location of travel at www.gsa.gov/perdiem. The amount listed is the daily amount that will be reimbursed for a full day. The meal breakdown is updated annually by GSA. No receipts are required for reimbursement of personal meals and incidental costs, as a Per Diem is paid to cover these costs.

- 5.2.4 In the event that the per diem allowance needs to be prorated to reflect times that the traveler is not in travel status, the per diem allowance will

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be based on the per meal allowance set by GSA. Travelers may receive a meal and incidental allowance for partial days of travel when the partial day is the day of departure or the day of return. The following schedule guidelines will be used to determine the per diem allowance for that day.

Departure prior to 12:00 noon – 75% per diem

Departure after 12:00 noon – 50% per diem

Return prior to 12:00 noon – 50% per diem

Return after 12:00 noon – 75% per diem

- 5.2.5 In the event that the traveler must travel out of the County during the work day, meals will be reimbursed according to the chart above. Travel for 12 hours or more will be paid at 100% of the per diem rate.

6.0 WEEKEND TRAVEL

Airlines may offer substantial discounts when a trip includes a Saturday night stay. Travelers may leave early or extend a business trip into a weekend to take advantage of a substantial discount.

- 6.1 The County will reimburse expenses for additional weekend nights IF THE SAVINGS IS GREATER THAN THE COST OF THE LODGING.

- 6.2 To qualify for reimbursement travelers should be aware of the following guidelines:

6.2.1 The additional lodging and meal and incidental expenses are less than the savings obtained by comparing the Saturday night stay airfare with the airfare for a non-Saturday night stay.

6.2.2 Support showing the savings must be included with the Travel Expense Report (printout from website showing the differences in airfare costs vs the cost of additional lodging, meal and incidental expenses).

- 6.3 Worker's Compensation insurance may not apply to accidents occurring during periods of extended travel for personal activities. See Section 3.6 Rental Cars. If a traveler is involved in an accident with a rental car during a weekend stay when no County business is conducted, he/she will not be covered under the County's insurance policy.

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7.0 COMBINED BUSINESS/PERSONAL TRAVEL

Under most circumstances travelers should NOT be encouraged to combine business and personal trips.

- 7.1 Only the actual documented business expenses will be reimbursable.
- 7.2 A vacationing traveler who makes a side trip to a business destination at the request of their department head or the County Manager will only be reimbursed for the business expenses incurred.
- 7.3 All the personal expenses including the airfare to and from the vacation destination are considered personal.
- 7.4 Any combination of business/personal travel should be discussed prior to the trip with the traveler's department head or the County Manager.
- 7.5 Travelers should refer to the Section 3.6 Rental Cars and Section 6.0 Weekend Travel for guidance on insurance coverage for personal portions of combined travel.

8.0 OTHER REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES RELATED TO TRAVEL

- 8.1 Specific miscellaneous or other expenses related to travel which are reimbursable and should be included on a Travel Expense Report form include:
 - 8.1.1 Reasonable dry cleaning/laundry expense for trips exceeding five (5) working days.
 - 8.1.2 Postage, photocopy, miscellaneous supplies, secretarial or business services required during a trip.
 - 8.1.3 Passports, Traveler's check fees and currency exchange fees, where applicable.
 - 8.1.4 Checked luggage fee imposed by airline for one additional bag. The Overweight fee for greater than 50 pounds is not eligible expense since the cost of an additional bag is cheaper than the Overweight fee.
 - 8.1.5 Personal phone calls home while away on overnight business trips, to the extent that they are of reasonable frequency and duration up to \$5/day.

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9.0 NON-REIMBURSEABLE EXPENSES RELATED TO TRAVEL

9.1 The following expenses are NOT reimbursable and should not be included on a Travel Expense Report:

- 9.1.1 Fees associated with any personal charge/credit cards.
- 9.1.2 Air travel insurance or other personal trip insurance.
- 9.1.3 Charges for a barber, manicurist, beautician, bootblack, masseur, etc.
- 9.1.4 Athletic, social or country club fees for personal activities.
- 9.1.5 Cost of newspapers, magazines, toiletries, cigarettes, alcohol, etc.
- 9.1.6 Fees for dependent care, elder care, pet care, home sitting, etc.
- 9.1.7 Medical expenses.
- 9.1.8 Personal articles, blankets, clothing, etc. (Except damage or theft thereto. Refer to Section 10.0 Personal Loss)
- 9.1.9 Personal entertainment such as in-room movies and mini-bars.
- 9.1.10 Purchase of luggage/briefcases.
- 9.1.11 Traffic fines.

10.0 PERSONAL LOSSES

10.1 Loss of personal property by a traveler while away on business will be reimbursed by the Finance Department provided:

- 10.1.1 The traveler took reasonable and normal precautions to protect and safeguard the property.
- 10.1.2 The loss was immediately reported to the police or other appropriate authorities.
- 10.1.3 The value of the lost, stolen or damaged items can be reasonably substantiated.
- 10.1.4 The traveler has first applied the loss to his/her personal homeowner's/renter's insurance policy.
- 10.1.5 Reimbursement will not exceed the amount of the deductible if the loss is recoverable under the personal insurance policy.

10.2 Reimbursement of personal losses requires written approval by the department head and the County Manager.

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11.0 REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

11.1 Approval: After the trip is completed, travelers must complete a Travel Expense Report to request reimbursement for all travel expenses defined in the County's travel policy to the appropriate department head for approval.

11.1.1 All receipts must be neatly provided (taped on an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper which facilitates scanning) and then stapled to the Travel Expense Report form before submitting it for approval. Improperly prepared reports may be returned to the traveler for amendment.

11.1.2 Travel expenses submitted for reimbursement by employees are to be approved by their department head (based on policy guidelines).

11.1.3 Travel expenses submitted for reimbursement by members of the Board of Commissioners are to be approved by the Assistant County Manager.

11.1.4 The approving department head is responsible for assuring that the expenses are legitimate, reasonable, properly documented and in conformance with the County's policy.

11.1.5 Exceptions to the stated policy must be specifically approved on an individual basis by the County Manager.

11.1.6 Travel Expense Reports must be submitted monthly for payment by the 20th of the following month. Travel reimbursements not submitted within 45 days after the end of the month of travel may be denied payment.

11.2 Receipt and Documentation Requirements: Original receipts (or copies that are signed by the traveler), regardless of the amount, must be obtained and submitted with the traveler's Travel Expense Report for the following expenses:

- . Lodging at a commercial establishment
- . Automobile rental
- . Airline travel
- . Bus or rail tickets

A copy of the receipt is acceptable documentation for charges placed on the County's credit card. Supporting documentation must be attached for all travel expenses of the Travel Expense Report.

11.3.3 In the case where the Travel Expense Report shows money is due back to the County the payment shall be made to the Finance Department located at 406 County Complex Road, Bldg. C. A copy of the receipt showing the traveler has settled their outstanding advance should be attached to the Travel Expense Report. At no point should cash/checks be submitted with the Travel Expense Report.

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- 11.3.4 Adherence to the County's guidelines regarding approval, receipts, and documentation is essential for prompt payment of or reimbursement for travel expenses pertaining to travel, lodging, meals and miscellaneous travel expenses.
- 11.3.5 Employee consents to the garnishment of wages to satisfy any amounts owed by virtue of completing the Overnight Travel Authorization Form and/or Advance Travel Request Form.

County of Sampson Travel Expense Report

Travel month & year: _____

Department: _____

Name: _____

Personal Car: Yes/No

Date	From To/Purpose of trip	Miles Start/End	Total Miles	Per-diem	Per-diem Time Depart/Return	Meals & Other
Total Per-diem and Other						-
Total Miles			0	\$0.575		-
Total of all Expenses						-

I hereby certify the charges claimed in this statement were incurred in the service of the County.

Traveler signature & date_____
Department Head signature & date_____
Supervisor signature & date

Sampson County
Overnight Travel Request
Department Heads

Date: _____

Department: _____

Approval is hereby requested for overnight travel to: _____

Purpose of trip: _____

Dates of travel: _____

Estimated Cost: _____

Department Head Signature Date

County Manager Approval Date

- Notes:
1. This request is to be approved **PRIOR** to any overnight travel.
 2. Any unauthorized overnight travel requests submitted to the Finance Department may not be reimbursed.
 3. Travel advances are authorized by the Finance Director and all requests must be in **writing**.
 4. Receipts are required according to the travel policy.

SAMPSON COUNTY, N.C.
REQUEST FOR ADVANCE TRAVEL

Department

Please Draw Check To: Vendor #: _____

Invoice No. _____

Vendor Name: _____

For: _____

(Include conference dates and destination)

Account Description Org. Number Object Number Amount

Account Description	Org. Number	Object Number	Amount
Travel			

Requested By: _____

Approved By: _____

Date: _____

Check Number: _____

Check Date: _____

Approved: _____

Finance Officer

Check Received By: _____

(Requires signature payee)

By signing you agree that you will reconcile your advance travel within 5 working days of your return from your conference. If it is not reconciled within 5 working days you agree that the entire amount will be deducted from your next paycheck.

Reconciliation of Advance Travel:

Advance travel check amount: _____

Amount expended (supported by receipts & mileage reimbursement form): _____

Amount returned to Finance for deposit or amount to be paid to employee as travel reimbursement (If money is due to employee a completed travel reimbursement form properly bill tabbed must accompany this form): _____

Finance Department acknowledgment of reconciliation of advance travel. _____

(Finance Personnel Signature)

Date: _____

Rates for Calendar Year 2015

The table lists the six M&IE tiers in the lower 48 continental United States (currently ranging from \$46 to \$71). If you need to deduct a meal amount, first determine the location where you will be working while on official travel. You can look up the location-specific information at www.gsa.gov/perdiem. The M&IE rate for your location will be one of the six tiers listed on this table. Find the corresponding amount on the first line of the table (M&IE Total) and then look below for each specific meal deduction amount.

The table also lists the portion of the M&IE rate that is provided for incidental expenses (currently \$5 for all tiers).

Total	Continental Breakfast/ Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	IE
\$46	\$7	\$11	\$23	\$5
\$51	\$8	\$12	\$26	\$5
\$56	\$9	\$13	\$29	\$5
\$61	\$10	\$15	\$31	\$5
\$66	\$11	\$16	\$34	\$5
\$71	\$12	\$18	\$36	\$5

This table lists the amount federal employees receive for the first and last calendar day of travel. The first and last calendar day of travel is calculated at 75 percent.

Total	First & Last Day of Travel
\$46	\$34.50
\$51	\$38.25
\$56	\$42.00
\$61	\$45.75
\$66	\$49.50
\$71	\$53.25

Mileage rate reimbursement rate is .575 per mile.