

Indian River County Travel Policy

Purpose

It is the intent of this policy to provide Indian River County employees a comprehensive reference for uniform interpretation of payment or reimbursement for travel expenses incurred in conjunction with official County business. This policy is applicable to all Board of County Commissioner employees and Board members. The County will follow F.S. 112.061 for purposes of travel. In the event of any conflict, Florida Statutes will govern. Any future changes to F.S. 112.061 will be automatically incorporated into this policy.

It is the policy of the County to pay applicable expenses of employees, County Commissioners, and candidates for executive and professional positions when the travel is necessary or beneficial to the County and the expenses are incurred in the pursuit of County business. County employees are often required to travel when conducting County business. The benefits of this travel fall in the areas of training, maintaining knowledge base on existing or new government regulations, exchanging ideas, or accomplishing a certain task and/or solving a particular problem on behalf of the County.

All such travel will be reviewed and approved based on the following criteria outlined in F.S. 112.061(7):

- (1) The nature of the business.
- (2) The most efficient and economical means of travel (considering time of the traveler, impact on the productivity of the traveler, cost of transportation and subsistence allowances).
- (3) The number of persons making the trip and the amount of equipment or material to be transported.
- (4) All travel arrangements should be made in a usually traveled route.

All travel must be pre-approved, based on the approval chain identified in the table on the following page.

Employee and Board Member Responsibilities

An employee or Board member traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. When making reservations, employees should ensure they are speaking directly to a hotel representative rather than a third party booking agent to avoid incurring sales tax. Excess costs, circuitous routes, luxury accommodations, and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees and Board members will be responsible for unauthorized costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience. Employees and Board members are expected to be in attendance at all meetings to which they are traveling. Willful

violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from County employment. Due to the necessity for travel, the following regulations (in accordance with *Section 112.061, Florida Statutes*) have been formulated to provide consistency in submitting and processing travel requests and to establish proper accounting procedures for travel.

Definitions

As used in this policy, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

Designated Representatives — Approval to incur payment of business related travel expenses will be granted as noted in the table below. Out of state travel requests must be approved by the County Administrator.

Traveler	Approval of Travel Request	Process
County Commissioner	Board of County Commissioners	Commissioners submit travel requests as separate agenda items, which are approved by the entire Board during an advertised County Commission meeting.
County Commission Staff	Immediate Supervisor	Travel Request form request submitted to supervisor.
County Administrator	Board of County Commissioners	The County Administrator submits travel requests as separate agenda items, which are approved by the entire Board during an advertised County Commission meeting.
County Attorney	Board of County Commissioners	The County Attorney submits travel requests as separate agenda items, which are approved by the entire Board during an advertised County Commission meeting.
County Attorney Staff Members	County Attorney	Travel Request form request submitted to County Attorney.
Assistant County Administrator and Department Heads	County Administrator	Travel Request form request submitted to County Administrator.
Departmental Staff	Department Heads	Travel Request form request submitted to Department Head.

Travel Classifications — Travel shall be classified as follows:

(1) Class A Travel: Continuous travel of 24 hours or more away from the official headquarters.

(2) Class B Travel: Continuous travel of less than 24 hours, which involves overnight absence from official headquarters or a same day travel that is

substantially longer than an ordinary days work schedule (10 or more hours away from official headquarters).

(3) Class C Travel: Travel for short or day trips where the traveler is not away from his/her official headquarters overnight and travel time does not substantially exceed an ordinary day's work schedule.

(4) OFFICIAL HEADQUARTERS.—The official headquarters of an officer or employee assigned to an office shall be the city or town in which the office is located except that:

(a) The official headquarters of a person located in the field shall be the city or town nearest to the area where the majority of the person's work is performed, or such other city, town, or area as may be designated by the agency head provided that in all cases such designation must be in the best interests of the agency and not for the convenience of the person.

(5) Lodging: For purposes of reimbursement rates and methods of calculation, per diem and subsistence allowances are provided as follows:

(a) All travelers shall be allowed for subsistence when traveling to a convention or conference or when traveling within or outside the state in order to conduct bona fide state business, which convention, conference, or business serves a direct and lawful public purpose with relation to the public agency served by the person attending such meeting or conducting such business, either of the following for each day of such travel at the option of the traveler:

1. Eighty dollars per diem as delineated in F.S. 112.061; or
2. If actual expenses exceed \$80, the amounts permitted for subsistence as outlined in the Meal Allowance section of this policy, plus actual expenses for lodging at a single-occupancy rate to be substantiated by paid bills.

Lodging Allowance:

- (1) Actual cost of lodging at a single occupancy rate or full cost for lodging at the designated seminar or conference designation.
- (2) Generally, the least expensive hotel choice is selected. Exceptions are made only with Department Director's approval.

- (3) If the selected hotel is not the "host" hotel, reasonable transportation expenses to event will be considered (i.e., taxi/rental car/shuttle) if not provided by the event sponsor.
- (4) A County credit card or County check and sales tax exemption certificate should be presented for payment at any Florida hotel. Sales taxes will not be reimbursed to the traveler should he/she pay with personal credit card, personal check or cash. Please note that the current practice of most hotels requires receipt of a check two weeks in advance of the hotel stay and will require advance planning on part of the traveler.
- (5) Employees are not required to share hotel rooms with other employees. However, employees may opt to share a room to defray travel expenses, if all employees consent to sharing a room.
- (6) Only hotel rooms and business related expenses are reimbursed by the County. Personal expenses incurred at a hotel (personal phone calls, movies, room service, etc.) are the responsibility of the traveler.

Meal Allowance:

- (1) Meal Compensation Rate: The meal compensation rate (i.e., subsistence rate) is in accordance with Florida Statutes 112.061(5)(b) and 112.061(6)(B) as detailed below:
 - (a) Breakfast: when travel begins before 6:00 a.m. and extends beyond 8:00 a.m.; the current subsistence rate (\$6) as delineated in F.S. 112.061.
 - (b) Lunch: when travel begins before 12:00 noon and extends beyond 2:00 p.m.; the current subsistence rate (\$11) as delineated in F.S. 112.061.
 - (c) Dinner: when travel begins before 6:00 p.m. and extends beyond 8:00 p.m. or when travel occurs during nighttime hours due to special assignment; the current subsistence rate (\$19) as delineated in F.S. 112.061.
 - (d) If meals are included in registration fees, standard allowances must be reduced using the meal allowance amounts noted above. No reimbursement will be made for any meal (includes continental breakfast) or lodging included in a convention, conference, or class registration fee paid by the County. Generally, subsistence reimbursements are not provided for travel confined to Vero Beach or immediate vicinity (within County).
 - (e) Meal functions sponsored by organizations such as professional associations will be paid based on support (receipt) documentation.

(f) Actual meal costs will be reimbursed for any employee who must follow a medically prescribed diet.

Approval of Travel Expenses:

- (1) All travel that is expected to result in reimbursement of eligible expenses must be pre-approved by the designated representative and authorized in writing on the appropriate travel request and/or voucher reimbursement form. A copy of the program or agenda of the convention, conference, etc. outlining registration fee, meals, lodging shall be attached to the travel authorization request.
- (2) This shall apply to out of County travel for both regular business and professional development.
- (3) All travel must be approved in advance by the appropriate approver of travel requests in accordance with the table on page 2 of this policy. In emergency situations, the travel approver may give verbal approval to travel, which must be followed by proper authorization procedures upon return from that travel. Out of state travel must be approved by the County Administrator.
- (4) No reimbursement is given for personal expenses incurred while on travel (i.e., personal phone calls/faxes, personal purchases, adding on personal travel days to business travel days, travel for anyone other than the authorized traveler, hotel/airline/rental car upgrades).

Travel Advance Policy:

- (1) Advances for anticipated travel expenses should be requested at least one week prior to the expected departure. The Finance department requires that expenses be submitted on Friday for release the following Friday. To avoid unnecessary paperwork, it is suggested that advances not be obtained for less than \$50.
- (2) Travel advances will be limited to the costs of registration fees, hotel reservations or any other expenses that must be pre-paid. Meals, mileage, tolls or other incidental travel expenses will be reimbursed upon submission of travel voucher.
- (3) Travel advances will not be granted unless sufficient funds are available in the appropriate cost center or the Department Director submits a budget line item transfer/amendment in accordance with the County's financial procedures.

(4) Any unused advances must be repaid (cash, money order, or personal check from the traveler) within 30 days and submitted with the final expense report. Direct payments to an organization, business or vendor for registration, meals, materials, travel, and the like will not be considered travel advances.

Use of County Vehicles:

A County-owned vehicle, if available, may be used for travel if usage time is not prohibitive. Any employee driving a County vehicle must have first completed the defensive driving course offered through Risk Management, as required by the County's insurance policy.

Use of Privately Owned Vehicles: A requesting party may use his own personal vehicle for travel and be reimbursed as follows:

A traveler using a private vehicle shall be entitled to a mileage allowance at a rate of 44.5 cents per mile, as delineated in F.S. 112.061. The point of origin to the point of destination is the basis for the mileage reimbursement and should be supported by documentation from a map or routing software such as Mapquest.

Reimbursements for expenditures related to the operation, maintenance, and ownership of a vehicle shall not be allowed when privately owned vehicles are used on public business.

Employees who receive a vehicle allowance will not be eligible to receive mileage reimbursement for travel within Indian River County.

Lodging and meal reimbursement will be allowed during the trip that otherwise would have been made by air carrier.

Private vehicle owners will be responsible for all insurance on their vehicles.

Car Rental

Car rental will be approved if:

- The hotel or seminar sponsor provides no regular shuttle.
- The hotel is isolated from any amenities (restaurants, taxis);
- Taxi service is not a better option.

However, if the above criteria are not met, the Department Director will decide if a rental car is needed based on the following:

- Cost and availability of parking the rental car;
- Car rental fees versus taxi fares, considering the distance and the number of trips to the seminar;
- Availability of taxi services.

Use of Commercial Airlines:

- (1) Travel by commercial airlines may be authorized in cases where use of commercial airlines is of advantage to the County. Air travel will be scheduled at coach (most economical class) rates. Pre-planning should be used to take advantage of various airline discount special rates.
- (2) Only airline tickets for authorized County travel requirements may be charged to Indian River County. All airline travel shall be substantiated by a receipt.
- (3) The County will pay for one checked bag per week of travel for each traveler (roundtrip).

Special Procedures:

- (1) When driving to an approved business meeting, conference or seminar outside the Indian River County area, but within the State of Florida, meal allowances will be allowed for normal meals in accordance with F.S. 112.061.
- (2) When reimbursement for lodging and meals is to be provided by other agencies (government or non-government), employees may be paid at the reimbursed rate if it exceeds the County's rate, subject to submittal of appropriate documentation. Prior to trip approval, the requisite travel request forms must be submitted to the Budget Office to ensure funding availability.

Inclusions and Exclusions as to Authorized Expenses:

In addition to meals and lodging, the following actual expenses incurred as a necessary part of approved travel may be claimed with submission of receipts or documentation:

- (1) Registration fees.
- (2) Reasonable commercial transportation cost actually paid by the traveler to/from commercial transportation terminals and place of lodging and to/from places of business.

- (3) Parking fees.
- (4) Mileage for approved use of private vehicle.
- (5) Rental car cost, including sales tax if paid for out of state travel.
- (6) Fuel and emergency repairs for County-owned vehicles.
- (7) Road, bridge, or tunnel toll charges or ferry fares.
- (8) Air fare, if reimbursement is requested with receipt.
- (9) One checked bag per week of travel with the airline.

Reporting Expenditure:

- (1) After returning from the trip, a travel voucher is required and must include receipts for all expenses incurred; the travel voucher must be completed by the employee and submitted within 30 days to the Budget Department.

Administrative Hardship:

- (1) If any of these provisions create undue administrative hardship on any of the departments involved, the County Administrator may grant exceptions within the limitations contained in Section 112.061, Florida Statutes, based on written requests.

Spouses:

- (1) When the spouse accompanies the employee, the spouse's expenses will not be reimbursed. The employee will pay the difference between single and double accommodations and all other expenses including transportation, meals, etc.

Fraudulent Travel Claims:

Section 112.061(10), Florida Statutes, classifies fraudulent travel claims as a misdemeanor of the second degree. The penalties prescribed in Sections 775.082 and 775.083, Florida Statutes, are a term of imprisonment not to exceed 60 days and/or a fine not to exceed \$500. In addition, the traveler shall be civilly liable for the amount of the overpayment, and subject to discipline up to and including termination.