

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

POLICY MANUAL

SECTION	Financial Management and Administration
POLICY	3015 – Employee Travel

Objective

The objective of this policy is to establish standards to ensure that travel expenses are economical, efficient, proper, reasonable, approved, and accountable.

Application

This policy applies to all travel by employees of the Legislative Assembly and any other travel that may be facilitated by the Assembly on behalf of program participants and staff or vendors performing work for the Assembly. Caucus staff are encouraged to follow the provisions of the policy to the extent practicable.

Authority

Legislative Assembly operational policies are approved by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, as per *Policy 1100 – Creating and Updating Policies*.

Key Definitions

“Business Trip” means a trip undertaken by an Assembly employee as part of their occupational responsibilities, in pursuit of professional development, and/or to officially represent the Assembly at an event;

“Claimant” means an employee of the Legislative Assembly that has, or will be, taking a Business Trip;

“Economical” means the lowest cost to the Legislative Assembly having incorporated considerations such as operational requirements, departure/arrival times, meeting(s) times, overall trip duration, additional travel costs associated with alternative travel options, employee productivity, capability to work in transit, schedule coordination, equipment logistics, etc.;

“International Travel” means travel undertaken by an Assembly employee outside of Canada;

“In-Province Travel” means travel undertaken by an Assembly employee within British Columbia but outside of the employee’s Standard Occupational Area;

“Out-of-Province Travel” means travel undertaken by an Assembly employee within Canada but outside of British Columbia;

“Personal Travel” means non-reimbursable travel undertaken by an Assembly employee that is not directly required for the completion of authorized Assembly business or that extends a Business Trip for personal reasons;

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“**Standard Occupational Area**” means the area within which an employee routinely performs their duties. For employees that work within the Legislative Precinct, this would be the Capital Regional District.

1. General

- .01 Assembly employees are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses when:

- Approval for the trip is obtained from the employee’s supervisor, with adequate Expense Authority (in accordance with *Policy 3000 – General Expenditure*), before travel expenses are incurred;
- The expenses are paid by the employee while away from their Standard Occupational Area; and
- The claims are reasonable, properly reported, supported by sufficient backup documentation, and comply with established rates and this policy.

Expenses incurred relating to an employee’s attendance at a meeting within their Standard Occupational Area may be considered a business expense and would be subject to the general expenditure approval provisions as detailed within *Policy 3000 – General Expenditure*.

- .02 Employees must choose the most Economical form of transportation and accommodation that meets operational needs when making travel arrangements.

The employee’s supervisor maintains discretion to designate the employee’s mode of transportation and accommodation. Considerations must include the cost and efficiency of alternative transportation modes (such as time required to reach the destination, operational requirements, and productivity) and additional costs associated with the alternative (such as meals and overtime costs).

- .03 Travel that combines Personal Travel with a Business Trip will be subject to reimbursement at the lesser of:

- Actual travel expenses; or
- An estimate of the minimum acceptable travel expenses that would have been incurred if the Personal Travel had not taken place.

Additional expenses arising from personal extensions to a Business Trip are the employee’s responsibility.

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- .04 To simplify accountability and reporting, Claimants should endeavour to pay and seek reimbursement for their own travel costs unless operationally impractical. For example, having one employee pay for a group taxi fare, and group bookings or bookings made by an assistant are acceptable.
- .05 Travel loyalty program benefits, such as airline frequent flyer points that are accumulated by employees while travelling at public expense, should not be used for personal benefit. Such benefits or discounts should be applied only against future business travel or donated to a charity associated with the program. Benefits accumulated while travelling at public expense should not be used beyond the term of employment.
- .06 For security reasons, when planning to undertake a Business Trip outside of Canada and the United States, employees or their supervisors should advise the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms and/or Intelligence Sergeant prior to making any definitive arrangements.
- .07 In the case of travel incurred by an employee to attend an event, conference, or professional development training, an *Employee Post-Travel Benefits Summary Report* must be submitted to the employee's director and to Human Resource Operations to help inform the Assembly's training and development strategy.
- .08 To the extent possible, all International Travel and Out-of-Province Travel should be specifically identified within the department's annual budget submission.

2. Assembly Travel Card

- .01 Assembly employees are eligible to apply for the issuance of a travel card, for the payment of travel related expenditures. The card provides several benefits including access to credit, an internationally recognized and accepted card, and also carries several supplementary insurance provisions including but not limited to:
 - a) Collision Damage Waiver (CDW);
 - b) car rental accidental death and dismemberment;
 - c) unexpected return home; and
 - d) baggage delay.

Employees who travel regularly are encouraged to apply for and use an Assembly-issued travel card.

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- .02 Employees that have been issued a travel card are personally responsible for all purchases. Accordingly, it is incumbent on travel card holders to request reimbursement as soon as possible to eliminate any outstanding balance in advance of the next billing cycle.

3. Pre-Approval

- .01 All In-Province Business Trips must be pre-approved by the employee's director (or equivalent), with adequate Expense Authority, before expenditures are incurred. This pre-approval must be documented either in writing or via email.
- .02 In the case of travel incurred by employees to attend an In-Province or Out-of-Province meeting of a parliamentary committee, pre-approval for the travel is deemed to occur by virtue of the employee's role supporting the related committee. No further pre-approval is required.
- .03 All International and Out-of-Province Business Trips must be pre-approved by the Executive staff member responsible for overseeing the employee's department using the Legislative Assembly's enterprise resource planning system, and include the purpose of the trip, itinerary/agenda, and cost estimates. Pre-approval is not required if the employee is traveling to support the work of a parliamentary committee as pre-approval for the travel is deemed to occur by virtue of the employee's role supporting the related committee.
- .04 Travel must not be approved by a subordinate of the Claimant, regardless of the dollar value or destination of the trip.
- .05 All non-parliamentary committee related travel pertaining to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly must be pre-approved by the Speaker, with the exception of unforeseen travel where attempts to reach the Speaker within a reasonable time frame have proven unsuccessful. In such a case, pre-approval may be sought from the Deputy Speaker.

In the case of Out-of-Province and International Travel, this pre-approval must be documented within the Legislative Assembly's enterprise resource planning system and the Executive Financial Officer or Director, Financial Services must review to reasonably assess compliance with the provisions of this policy.

4. Travel Claims

- .01 Travel claims must be submitted expeditiously upon the claimant's return to ensure the accuracy of travel reporting.
- .02 Claimants may only request the reimbursement of net expenditures incurred (i.e. less any discounts, special offers, credits received,

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amounts paid by other organizations, etc.).

- .03 No reimbursement will be provided for costs incurred for any accompanying person(s), such as a spouse or family member traveling with a Claimant.
- .04 To be reimbursed, Claimants must submit a travel claim using the Legislative Assembly's enterprise resource planning system. Itemized receipts, including proof of payment, and conference agendas/itineraries (where applicable) must be submitted for each expenditure that is included within the travel claim.
- .05 In the event that a receipt is not available, the Claimant must provide a copy of proof of payment (e.g. bank or credit card statement excerpt) for the specific transaction.
- .06 The Claimant must certify on the travel claim that their travel expenses are correct, complete, and comply with policy.
- .07 The Claimant's supervisor, with adequate Expense Authority, is responsible for:
 - certifying that travel expense claims are for business purposes, appear reasonable, and comply with policy;
 - certifying that there are sufficient funds in the budget against which the expenses will be charged; and
 - certifying that travel-related goods and services have been received.

Where the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly is the Claimant, the Speaker is the supervisor.

5. Accommodation

- .01 Employees should use the Government of British Columbia's Business Travel Accommodation Listing, where possible. To ensure the most competitive rate, listed properties have undergone a competitive selection process and have also agreed to a variety of terms and conditions established by the Government.
- .02 When booking outside of the aforementioned Business Travel Accommodation Listing, employees should reserve Economical, standard accommodations. Consideration may also be given to obtaining accommodation at or near a hotel at which the event that the employee is attending is being hosted.

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The Assembly may, subject to supervisory approval, reimburse for upgraded accommodations if required for medical purposes or if the property and surrounding properties have no standard accommodations available.

- .03 Employees may elect to stay at a friend's or family member's residence while on a Business Trip. Where such private accommodation is used, employees will be eligible for a daily Private Accommodation Allowance. The up-to-date Private Accommodation Allowance is available on the Financial Services Intranet page.
- .04 In the event a Claimant must cancel a stay, the Assembly may reimburse the Claimant for a cancellation charge levied by the property, subject to supervisory approval. For properties identified in section 5.01, the cancellation policy appears on the property listing and employees should strive to comply, to the extent possible. No-show charges may be reimbursed where the Claimant is not at fault, subject to supervisory approval.

6. Transportation by Vehicle

- .01 Employees must select the most Economical rental vehicle available factoring in operational and logistical requirements.
- .02 Employees must use the Government of British Columbia's Daily Vehicle Rentals Supply Arrangements where possible when renting a vehicle. To ensure the most competitive rate, participating service providers have undergone a competitive selection process and have agreed to a variety of terms and conditions (including insurance provisions) established by the Government.
- .03 When renting a vehicle, employees must purchase a Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or collision insurance from the rental agency unless:
 - a) the employee is using their Assembly-issued travel card; or
 - b) the rental agency was selected from the Daily Vehicle Rentals Supply Arrangements noted in section 6.01.
- .04 Employees may use their own private vehicle when it is Economical to do so. In such situations, employees are entitled to claim a per kilometer amount for the distance travelled for business purposes. All claims for mileage must be supported by a detailed log including destination, starting location, and trip purpose. The current mileage reimbursement rate and a standard mileage reimbursement form are available on the Financial Services Intranet page.

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Claimants may also claim mileage when they are driven to the departure location (i.e. airport, ferry terminal) and picked up upon return.

- .05 Ancillary costs incurred while using a Claimant's vehicle (e.g. fees to jump start vehicle, change a tire, etc.) are reimbursable as long as they are reasonable in the circumstances.
- .06 Private vehicle owners are responsible for purchasing and maintaining all requisite insurance including valid third-party liability insurance in an amount not less than \$2 million. If the private vehicle will be used for Business Trips more than six (6) days per month, the vehicle must be rated for business purposes.
- .07 Where an employee's private vehicle is damaged while in use on pre-approved Assembly business, the Assembly shall reimburse the lesser of the actual vehicle damage repair cost or the employee's vehicle insurance deductible to a maximum of \$612 per occurrence, for:
 - damage caused to the vehicle by vandalism that results from employment; and/or
 - damage as a result of an accident.

This section will not apply where a court holds that the employee or driver of the vehicle is guilty of willful, wanton or gross negligence.

The Assembly is not responsible for any increases in the employee's insurance premiums resulting from use of a private vehicle for Assembly business.

- .08 Tolls and parking charges incurred as a result of a Business Trip will be reimbursed provided that a corresponding receipt or proof of payment is provided. Fuel expenses incurred by employees using rental vehicles will similarly be reimbursed if supported by a receipt or proof of payment.
- .09 Taxi fares incurred as a result of a Business Trip, including gratuities to a maximum of 10% of the fare, are reimbursable provided that a corresponding receipt is provided. In exceptional circumstances, a higher gratuity may be reimbursed if justification is given and the department director (or equivalent) approves the reimbursement.

7. Airfare

- .01 Employees are required to book the most Economical airfare available that meets their operational requirements. Accordingly, airfare is

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limited to economy class unless the:

- a) claimant has a medical condition or disability; or
- b) the in-flight travel time is four (4) consecutive hours or more and the upgrade has been pre-approved by the applicable Executive staff member, or by the Speaker if the Claimant is the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

.02 Supplementary air travel costs, including one piece of personal luggage and seat selection fees, are eligible for reimbursement. All requisite business-related luggage will be eligible for reimbursement.

8. Other Transportation

.01 Employees are entitled to reimbursement for costs associated with travelling on a British Columbia Ferry Services Inc. (B.C. Ferries) vessel, including standard vehicle reservation fees.

.02 The Assembly may elect to maintain one or more Assured Loading Card that will be administered by the Office of the Clerk or as otherwise delegated by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. Those tasked with administering an Assured Loading Card must submit a quarterly reconciliation to Financial Services documenting its use over each respective quarter.

The Assured Loading Card should only be used if necessary (e.g. when not using an Assured Loading Card would result in missing an important impromptu in-person meeting), as they cost more than regular fares. They must not be used where paying the regular fare will maintain the employee's business schedule.

.03 Employees are encouraged to use public transportation (e.g. B.C. Transit, TransLink, etc.) where practical to do so, and are similarly entitled to reimbursement for any public transportation fares incurred while on a Business Trip.

9. Meals and Per Diems

.01 Employees on a Business Trip may claim a per diem reimbursement to cover the cost of meals and other out of pocket incidental travel expenses, in accordance with the current rates listed on the Financial Services Intranet page.

.02 To claim a meal per diem, a Claimant must:

- a) begin traveling (i.e. leave home) before 7:00 a.m. on the departure date to claim breakfast;
- b) begin traveling before 12:00 noon on the departure date

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- to claim lunch; and
- c) end traveling after 6:00 p.m. on the return date to claim dinner.

- .03 Per diems outside of the timelines noted in section 9.02 may be approved by the respective director (or equivalent) if the Claimant's travel day is in excess of 12 consecutive hours.
- .04 When an employee travels for a partial day, only meals that are applicable to the portion of the day spent on travel status may be claimed. When the Claimant consumes a meal which has been provided without charge or paid for from public funds, no per diem for that meal may be claimed.
- .05 Incidentals (e.g. telephone calls, portorage, gratuities) may only be claimed when a per diem that includes incidentals has not been claimed (i.e. breakfast, lunch, dinner only).

10. Miscellaneous Expenses

- .01 The Assembly will reimburse immunization costs and visa costs where international travel is required as part of the Claimant's occupational responsibilities.
- .02 Laundry, dry cleaning, and other similar services will be reimbursed when a Claimant has travelled for seven (7) or more consecutive days. In such case, the services must be rendered while the Claimant is traveling and not when they return.

11. Ineligible Expenses

- .01 There are several travel related expenses that the Assembly will not reimburse, including but not limited to:
 - a) alcoholic beverages;
 - b) fines, penalties, or any other payments for infractions (e.g. parking tickets, traffic fines, late payment fees);
 - c) costs associated with in-flight comfort goods and services (e.g. earphones, blankets), with the exception of Wi-Fi fees when required in the performance of the Claimant's occupational duties while travelling;
 - d) entertainment charges (e.g. in-flight/hotel movies) incurred while travelling;
 - e) fees levied by the Government of Canada for the issuance of a Canadian passport; and
 - f) any charges levied for traveling with a pet. Assistance animals are not considered pets and should not incur any incremental fees while traveling.

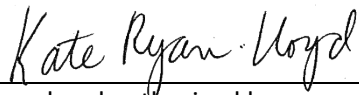
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12. Templates and Forms

- .01 All templates, forms, and resources referenced throughout this policy are available through the Financial Services Intranet page.

Contact	Questions regarding this policy may be directed to Financial Services at financialservices@leg.bc.ca .
Procedures	<i>Post Employee Travel – Benefits Summary Report</i>
References	<i>Policy 3000 – General Expenditure</i>



Approved and authorized by
Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

September 9, 2019
Date

POLICY HISTORY

Version 1	July 3, 2019
Version 2	September 9, 2019

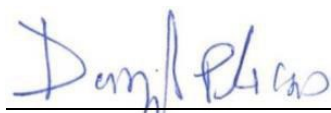
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POLICY APPLICABILITY – OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

The provisions of this policy apply to employees in the Office of the Speaker. For greater certainty, the following clarifications are made with respect to policy provisions relating to the Office of the Speaker:

Section	Clarification
1.07, 3.01, 9.02	Approval contemplated by a supervisor is provided by the Speaker
3.03, 7.01	Approval contemplated by an Executive staff member is provided by the Speaker

In the event of the Speaker's extended absence from British Columbia or incapacity, or if the Office of Speaker is vacant, approvals required by this policy may be provided by the Deputy Speaker.



Authorized by the Honourable Darryl Plecas,
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

September 9, 2019

Date