

Pacific Fishery Management Council

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TRAVEL RULES

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AUTHORIZATION TO CLAIM EXPENSES

All nonfederal Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) members of the Council, Scientific and Statistical Committee, advisory subpanels, technical teams, work groups, ad hoc committees, staff, special consultants, and individuals of specific invitation to travel are eligible to receive reimbursement for limited per diem travel expenses when away from their home station or while away from their work location in the metropolitan area of their residence, when authorized to travel for Council-related purposes. Travel expenses for which reimbursement is allowable will be confined to those expenses essential to transacting official Council business.

Unless approved by authorized Council staff, the claimant must have a current **Photo Identification (ID) card** issued and signed by the Executive Director in order to claim travel expenses. **Photo ID cards** are issued to each nonfederal individual in the Council membership at time of appointment or interim benchmark. The claimant must also have a meeting invitation, which lists them as an attendee of the meeting and has been signed by the Executive Director or his designee. Approximately three weeks prior to every Council-funded meeting, a memorandum is sent to the appropriate Council membership inviting them to attend. This invitation, typically in memorandum form, includes the dates, times, and locations of the meeting along with the allowable per diem rates for lodging and meals and incidental expenses, and is an operational travel order.

COUNCIL TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT POLICIES

GENERAL POLICIES

The Council observes the General Service Administration (GSA) reimbursement rates for mileage, commercial transportation, and per diem rates for lodging, meals, and incidental expenses as the *per se* accounting of actual expenses; additional information may be found in 41 CFR Part 301 and will be provided by the Council office upon request. Meals and lodging will be reimbursed at the GSA meal and hotel limits unless prior approval is granted by the Executive Director for costs above the limit for the area. The table on page 10 shows the current maximum GSA meal and hotel limits in several key locations where meetings relating to Council business are expected to be held.

For locations not listed in the table on page 10, please access the Federal GSA website http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?contentId=17943&contentType=GSA_BASIC to view current maximum per diem rates or contact the Council office.

Miscellaneous travel costs submitted for reimbursement must have adequate explanation of the nature and purpose of the expenses and must show the cost is reasonable and related to the conduct of official Council business. Requests for reimbursement over \$25 per item must be submitted with a receipt or original credit card receipt.

Travel may be performed by common carrier (i.e., air, train, bus, etc.), privately owned vehicle, or other means. The Council will reimburse the method of transportation which will result in the greatest financial advantage to the Council, considering cost and other relevant factors. In general, the Council will reimburse for an amount no greater than the lowest coach advance airfare amount available to the claimant. If the mode of travel selected by the claimant incurs a higher cost, the additional cost is the responsibility of the claimant. First class travel will not be reimbursed for without prior approval from the Executive Director and will be authorized only in certain unusual instances. When first class travel is incurred at the preference of a claimant at a cost higher than the lowest advance coach airfare amount, the claimant shall provide the advance quote of the lowest advance coach airfare amount. Reimbursement of means of travel will be from the traveler's designated work station, or home in the case of no designated work station. The Council will not reimburse for companion travel without prior approval from the Executive Director and written justification of cause.

FULL AND PARTIAL TRAVEL DAYS

For each full 24-hour calendar day of travel status, authorized travelers will be reimbursed at the Federal lodging and meals and incidental expenses rates for the particular location of travel status, as shown in the table on page 11. Without prior approval from the Executive Director or Deputy Director, there will be no per diem reimbursement for travel less than 12 hours total duration. For travel exceeding 12 hours but less than 24 hours, meals and incidental expenses will be reimbursed at 75 percent of the applicable per diem rate, and lodging will be reimbursed up to the full allowance with an overnight stay. For the first and last days of multiple day travel, meals and incidental expenses will be reimbursed at 75 percent of the applicable per diem rate, regardless of the time of day the trip begins or ends. For the last day of travel, there will be no per diem reimbursement for travel that ends by 6:00 a.m.

MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

Miscellaneous expenses may include costs incurred for the conduct of Council business such as fees, service tips, transportation between lodging and meeting sites, and parking. Receipts are required for miscellaneous expenses which exceed \$25 in cost.

Baggage fees for the first piece of luggage on domestic flights will be reimbursed. Baggage fees for a second or more piece of luggage requires advance approval by the Executive Director or Deputy Director.

TELEPHONE CALLS AND INTERNET CONNECTIONS

Telecommunication and internet connection charges are generally not reimbursed, but may be judged reimbursable if necessary for direct Council business at reasonable cost, when itemized on the claim by date, length of time, and general nature of business. Judgment will be based on the necessity of Council-related purpose.

TIPS

Tips for meals are considered part of the meals and incidental expenses per diem rate and are not subject to further reimbursement. Reimbursement of tips for any other purpose will be judged reimbursable on the basis of described necessity to business travel and at a reasonable amount.

TRAVEL WITHIN A 30-MILE RADIUS

Without approval by the Executive Director, meals and lodging expenses will not be paid within a 30-mile radius of an individual's home or work station.

PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES

Mileage will be reimbursed at the designated GSA mileage rate, **55.5 cents per mile (2012 rate)**. Use of a privately owned conveyance must be justified by comparison with use of commercial transportation, with consideration being given to total distance of travel, number of destination points on the itinerary, and the number of travelers. When a privately owned conveyance is used as a matter of personal preference and such use is not determined to be advantageous to the Council, reimbursement will be limited to the lesser amount as determined by cost comparison between the mileage reimbursement cost and the use of commercial transportation, such as the 30-day advance coach airfare.

When two or more people travel together in a privately owned vehicle, the names of all travelers need to be stated on each travel claim submitted.

Mileage for Council staff will be measured from the Council office location to the point of destination and return.

RENTAL CARS

The use of rental cars is discouraged. Airport shuttles, group use of taxis, and other more economical options should be used in lieu of renting cars. Reimbursement will be made for use of rental cars when unusual circumstances justify the need. In most cases, reimbursement will not be made for the use of rental cars in excess of the individual cost of available public transportation unless cost comparisons are stated on the expense claim that demonstrate an economic advantage to the Council. When two or more people travel together in a rented vehicle, the names of all travelers must be stated on each travel claim submitted.

COMMERCIAL AIRLINES

MAKING RESERVATIONS

Make your reservations as soon as possible to avoid the extra cost associated with short advance notice or few remaining seats on a particular flight.

If one makes a reservation closer than 30 days from your flight date and only "Full Flex" or higher fare categories are available, the claimant is expected to seek a reservation through **American Express One** to explore if a lower fare is available.

Reservations may be made by contacting **American Express One** at **866-687-7857**.

- When contacting American Express One, begin by identifying yourself to the travel agent and state you are traveling as a member of the Pacific Fishery Management Council.
- The agent is to quote the government fare and lowest fare, which in most cases will be the government fare. If they do not state that it is a government fare, please ask them to look for a government fare. If the lowest fare quoted is less than the government fare, choose the lowest fare instead of the government fare for your desired flight, unless you believe there is substantial probability you will need to cancel the ticket or the price differential is less than five percent. Electronic tickets should be used because additional fees are charged for "paper" tickets. Please verify your fax number or email address with the travel agent.
- You will receive a fax or email with a copy of your invoice/itinerary attached. The email will also refer you to an internet AirWeb site for flight information; however, it is not necessary to access the site because your itinerary is already attached to the email itself.

Reservations may also be made online by using the Council's EasyBiz account with Alaska Airlines.

- Contact the Council office to enroll in this option and receive appropriate information.
- When using EasyBiz, you must select the lowest fare category available.

Reservations may also be made from the airline carrier directly or other vendors, however, reimbursement will generally be only for the lowest 30 day advance price available from American Express One or Alaska Airlines EasyBiz, unless extenuating circumstances prevail.

CHANGING AND CANCELING AIRLINE RESERVATIONS

If a change in your itinerary or cancellation of your trip is necessary, contact either the airline carrier or American Express One, whichever made your original reservations.

DELIVERY OF PAPER AIRLINE TICKETS

Tickets are sent directly to the traveler by American Express One. American Express One will issue electronic tickets unless you specifically request paper tickets at the additional cost. **Paper tickets are discouraged unless absolutely necessary.**

PAYMENT FOR AIRLINE TICKETS

The Council is billed directly for all travelers using American Express One Business Travel Services or Alaska Airline EasyBiz for Council-approved travel. Reimbursement for tickets from the airline carrier or other vendors is through the travel expense claim. In either case, the traveler is responsible for attaching the remaining stub of the ticket, a copy of the electronic ticket, or a copy of the itinerary to the travel expense claim form.

PRIVATE AIRPLANES, INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, AND MISCELLANEOUS

Private airplanes may be used with prior approval from the Executive Director, with reimbursement at the lowest non-refundable advance purchase coach ticket rate. International travel is a special category of travel and requires advance approval by the Executive Director at least 60 days in advance of anticipated travel. In the event an individual secures an unapproved travel seating upgrade from the 30 day advance coach fare for personal reasons, the Council will reimburse for no more than the 30 day advance coach fare price.

TRAVEL EXPENSE CLAIM

Travel expense claim forms can be submitted either electronically or by paper copy. The paper form and electronic form are available at <http://www.pcouncil.org/council-operations/travel-and-reimbursement/#travel>. If submitted electronically, the completed form should be emailed to Patricia Crouse at Patricia.Crouse@noaa.gov. Please return Travel Expense Claim forms and necessary receipts to the Council office within 30 days after travel is completed. Claims for travel reimbursement received over 60 days after travel is completed may not be paid.

DISALLOWANCE

A disallowance to the claim submitted may occur at the time the travel claim is processed for payment. This may occur because there is a lack of necessary receipts, lack of a cost comparison when the private mileage option is chosen over commercial travel options, claims in excess of allowed rates, or an error made in the computation of costs shown on the claim. Please review any disallowance and contact the Council office should you have any questions about the amount reimbursed. Amounts disallowed may be reconsidered for payment upon presentation of the necessary receipts or additional information.

CLAIM FORM INSTRUCTIONS

Name and **Address**, the check will be mailed to this address.

Period of Claim, fill in the month and year that the travel occurred (e.g., March 2008).

Purpose of Travel, write in the name of the meeting or event you traveled to (e.g., March Council Meeting).

Date column, list each day on a separate line that you were in travel status.

Fill in the city and time from which you left under the **Departure Location**; the city to which you are traveling under **Arrival Location**; and the reverse on the day of return, including time of return.

Private Car columns, enter the miles driven that day. Calculate the allowable cost by multiplying the number of miles by **55.5 cents per mile**.

Per Diem – enter the amount of per diem allowed column, list the allowable reimbursement amount according to the Federal limits shown in the table below or posted online at the for U.S. Government Services Administration website <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>. Reimbursement will not exceed these per diem rates without prior approval by the Executive Director.

Lodging column, list the actual costs of lodging, not including hotel taxes. Make sure a receipt is attached for such expenses. Reimbursement of lodging costs will not exceed the per diem rates listed in the Travel Rules without prior approval by the Executive Director.

Add all expenses claimed across each line and place the amount under the **Total** column.

The **Miscellaneous Costs** section provides an opportunity to claim bus and taxi fares, hotel taxes, airport parking, and charges for other Council business-related expenses. Only include air travel if not reserved through EasyBiz or American Express One. Incidental costs must have adequate explanation of the nature and purpose of the expense and show the cost is reasonable and related to the conduct of official business. A receipt needs to be provided for such costs over \$25.

All claims for reimbursement must be signed in ink by the traveler, verifying the authenticity of the charges.

MAXIMUM PER DIEM REIMBURSEMENT RATE LIMITS

The following table lists current per diem rates (**effective April 17, 2012**) for cities and counties most commonly visited for Council business. Rates for additional locations are available from the Council office.

	CALIFORNIA						OREGON										
	City	County	Lodging	Full Day Meals	75% Meals		City	County	Lodging	Full Day Meals	75% Meals						
CALIFORNIA	Costa Mesa/Los Alamitos	Orange	125	71	53.25	OREGON	Coos Bay	Coos	77	46	34.50						
	Eureka	Humboldt	Oct 1-May 31	83	61		45.75	Gladstone/Clackamas	Clackamas	88	61	45.75					
			June 1-Aug 31	96	61		45.75										
			Sept 1-30	83	61		45.75										
	Foster City/San Mateo	San Mateo	111	61	45.75		Lincoln City/Newport	Lincoln	84	56	42						
	Los Angeles	Los Angeles	125	71	53.25				105	56	42						
									Oct 1-June 30	134	71	53.25	84	56	42		
							July 1-Aug 31	149	71	53.25	Portland	Multnomah	113	66	49.50		
	Sept 1-30	134	71	53.25													
	Sacramento	Sacramento	99	61	45.75		Seaside	Clatsop	96	51						38.25	
	San Diego/La Jolla	San Diego	133	71	53.25				131	51	38.25						
									Oct 1-31	184	71	53.25	96	51	38.25		
							Nov 1-March	155	71	53.25	San Jose	Santa Clara	121	56	42.00		
	Sept 1-30	184	71	53.25													
Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara	139	66	49.50	Olympia/Tumwater	Thurston	88	61	45.75								
Oct 1-June 30										180	66	49.50	Seattle	King	137	71	53.25
July 1-Aug 31										139	66	49.50					
Sept 1-30	97	66	49.50	Spokane	Spokane	87	61	45.75									
Santa Cruz	Cruz	131	66						49.50	Tacoma	Pierce	105	61	45.75			
Oct -May	Sonoma	110	61						45.75						Vancouver	Clark	113
June-Aug																	
Santa Rosa																	
IDAHO	Boise	Ada	77	46	34.50	WASHINGTON	Westport/Ocean Shores	Grays Harbor	97	51	38.25						
	Sun Valley/Ketchum	Blaine	84	71	53.25				117	51	38.25						
									Oct 1-May 31	102	71	53.25	97	51	38.25		
									June 1-Aug 31	84	71	53.25					
Sept 1-30																	

Travel claim forms and instructions can be found on the Council website at <http://www.pcouncil.org/council-operations/travel-and-reimbursement/#travel> or call the Council office at 503-820-2280 (local) or 866-806-7204.