

Supreme Court of Nevada

Policy

Topic: Official Business Travel Policy

Policy Statement: The Supreme Court recognizes that its judicial members, staff, and others acting on the Court's behalf must travel to and from locations other than their primary work stations and outside normal working hours in order to accomplish the work of the Court and should be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred.

Part I. Purpose

A. Primary Goals and Objectives

1. The primary goals and objectives of this policy are to:
 - a. Provide the Appellate Justices and Judges, Court staff, and others performing duties for the benefit of the Court with current information and support in an effort to reduce or eliminate the use or loss of personal funds expended for business travel or business purposes.
 - b. Clearly define what expenses may be incurred in travel and the responsibilities for processing claims for reimbursement.

B. Application

1. Unless otherwise provided herein, the Travel Policy applies to members of the Supreme Court of Nevada, including the Court of Appeals Judges and Court staff, judges serving in the general jurisdiction/family and limited jurisdiction courts, judges and justices commissioned pursuant to Supreme Court Rules 10 and 12, current members of Court commissions and committees, outside contractors, and other persons designated by the Court to be traveling for Court business.
2. Current information concerning the procedure for requesting the approval to incur travel expenses for business reasons and for submitting claims for reimbursement, including all forms referenced in the procedures, may be found at: <https://nvcourts.gov> under the Administrative Office, Budgets and Accounting, Travel Documents and Forms.

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Part II. Definitions

1. *Accounting Unit:* The unit under the direction of the Manager of Budgets of the Administrative Office of the Courts responsible for processing travel documents and requests for reimbursement for payment consistent with this policy and the Travel Claim Procedures.
2. *Court per diem:* The maximum allowable reimbursement rate for lodging and meals as established by the Supreme Court of Nevada as referenced in this policy and in the Travel Claim Procedures. Court per diem may also be referred to as judicial branch per diem or per diem.
3. *Court staff:* Individuals employed by the Supreme Court of Nevada and Nevada Court of Appeals not otherwise specifically defined herein.
3. *Department head:* Appellate Justices and Judges and individuals serving as State Court Administrator and Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, Clerk of the Court, Chief Counsel, and the Supreme Court Law Librarian.
4. *Deputy Director:* Individuals serving as a Deputy Director under the supervision of the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts.
5. *Host:* A judge or court staff member who is part of a conference or training and who agrees to serve as a "host" to work with the Court in preparing, staffing or presenting the conference or training, and who is approved to serve as host by the Director or the Director's designee.
6. *Manager of Budgets:* The individual serving as Manager of Budgets for the Administrative Office of the Courts under the direction of the Director or the Director's designee.

7. *Official business travel:* Authorized travel that is necessary and required in order to conduct the business of the Court, including, but not limited to, attendance and/or participation at conferences, meetings, and job-related training. Business travel may be within the state of Nevada or out-of-state.
8. *Primary work station:* The physical location where the traveler is assigned to work on regular basis. Each employee may have only one primary work station.
9. *Travel Claim Procedures, also known as Procedures for Payment of Education, Training or Travel:* Procedures established by the Administrative Office of the Courts for processing requests for travel and requests for reimbursement of travel expenses.
10. *Travel status:* The period during which a person is traveling to and from the destination at which court business is conducted. The period normally begins upon departure from the traveler's home or office and ends upon return to the traveler's home or office.
11. *USGSA per diem:* Rates that the United States General Services Administration has established for per diem based upon the state of destination, the area within the state, and the time of year. These rates may be higher than the Court's per diem rates described in this policy. Current rates may be found at <http://www.gsa.gov>.

Part III. Official Business Travel – General Rules

A. Fiscal Responsibility

1. When making travel arrangements, the traveler *must* consider the financial cost that will be incurred by the Court.
2. The traveler should use the least expensive and most cost efficient method(s) of travel, taking into consideration the time in travel status, the number of persons traveling to the same location, overtime hours that may be incurred, safety, and the Court's Travel Policy and Travel Claim Procedures.
3. The use of videoconferencing and/or teleconferencing from the primary work station is encouraged in lieu of actual travel and must be considered when determining whether to travel to an event or not. The decision to use videoconferencing and/or teleconferencing or other similar technology should be made by considering the primary goals of this policy, and how best to effectively and efficiently accomplish Court business.

B. Rates of Reimbursement

1. Travelers will be reimbursed at the applicable per diem rates for the period of time they are in official travel status.

2. When an event is held out of state, per diem will only be paid for travel no more than 24 hours before the start of and no more than 24 hours after the completion of the training, conference, or other event for which business travel was made. The applicable time may be increased depending upon the distance or particular travel issues involved upon approval of the department head or designee. The time in travel status must be reasonable. Travelers may not be eligible for the full 24 hours depending on the destination.

C. Personal Convenience or Combination of Work and Personal Time

1. The primary work station for members of the Appellate Courts and Court -staff is the assigned office in either Carson City or Las Vegas. If a member or employee of the Court chooses to work from the Court office where he/she is not assigned, or to continue working at the alternate Court office for his/her own personal convenience, no Court per diem reimbursement will be paid during the period of personal convenience. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by a department head or designee.

2. Travelers may choose to take personal time off before or after completing Court required business travel or to have a spouse or other person accompany them on the travel. Particular care must be taken in submitting any claims under the Travel Claim Procedures to ensure that reimbursement is sought only for travel and expenses directly related to the official business of the Court.

D. Travel Claim Procedures

The traveler must follow the Travel Claim Procedures and must utilize the forms included in the Travel Claim Procedures in planning travel or requesting reimbursement in order to have the travel paid or reimbursed by the Court.

E. Non-Reimbursable Expenses

The Court will not reimburse costs or expenses that are not directly related to the Court's business. Examples of such non-reimbursable costs (not an inclusive list) are:

1. Interest charges incurred on credit cards used during travel or for travel-related expenses;
2. Losses related to theft, casualty loss, or disappearance of personal effects including cash, credit cards, luggage, and airplane tickets;
3. Fines and penalties assessed for actions or inactions that were within the control of the traveler.

F. Deadlines

In order to manage and monitor the budget, to determine available funding for all potential costs, and to charge travel expenditures to the correct fiscal period all claims for reimbursement must be submitted within 30 days after the last day in travel status. Claims submitted after 30 days may be returned unpaid unless written explanation showing good cause for the delay is submitted with the claim. Claims submitted after the fiscal period closes may be returned unpaid due to the expiration of available funding.

Part IV. Official Business Travel – Air Travel

1. Airline tickets may be purchased utilizing the Court's travel credit card accounts by the Appellate Justices and Judges or, following approval of travel by the department head or designee, if applicable, by Court staff under the Travel Claim Procedures. Extra costs for "business select," preferred coach seating or expedited check-in, or other premium services cannot be charged to the Court's travel credit card.
2. Coach fare is required for all air travel, both in-state and out-of-state. Travelers are strongly encouraged to choose the least expensive mode of travel, taking into consideration any likely potential of cancellation and the costs of such cancellation. Extra costs for "business select," preferred coach seating, or other premium fares will not be reimbursed. If an upgrade to a refundable ticket is required to enable the traveler to exchange the ticket for scheduling purposes, the traveler may seek reimbursement of the extra costs using the Travel Claim Procedures.
3. The Court will not reimburse any cancellation fees for unused or cancelled air reservations charged to a personal credit card unless the Court has caused the cancellation and that the traveler is unlikely to use the carrier's unused travel funds for future court related business trips. In any case, written explanation demonstrating good cause for the cancellation or non-use must be submitted with the claim.
4. Court staff must purchase airlines tickets using the processes identified in the Travel Claim Procedures.
5. Travelers other than Appellate Justices and Judges, and Court staff, must purchase their own air tickets and request reimbursement from the Court utilizing the Travel Claim Procedures. Extra costs for "business select," preferred coach seating or expedited check-in, or other premium services cannot be reimbursed.

Part V. Official Business Travel – Ground Travel

A. Public Ground Travel

1. Ground transportation includes travel by taxi, ride sharing, airport shuttle, or bus. In most cases, ground transportation is the most cost efficient method of travel for those attending an event where lodging is procured.
2. Whenever possible, and considering other costs such as staff time and convenience, travelers should take advantage of opportunities to share vehicles or use a low or no cost method of travel to and from the designated location, such as the airport shuttle, hotel courtesy transportation, etc.
3. When ground transportation is readily available, travelers must obtain advance approval by the department head or designee, if applicable, when utilizing a State Motor Pool vehicle or incurring the cost for a rental vehicle if the cost of the ground transportation is less than these two alternatives.
4. Gratuities (tips) paid to transportation service providers are not an allowable ground transportation expense and will not be reimbursed. See Section VIII.A.

B. State Motor Pool

1. The State Motor Pool provides vehicles to be used by State employees for official business travel in Las Vegas, Reno, and Carson City. Court staff and District Court Judges not assigned a monthly vehicle should use a motor pool vehicle whenever possible when traveling to these cities.
2. Procedures for using State Motor Pool are contained in the Travel Claim Procedures. These procedures must be followed when using a motor pool vehicle.
3. Individuals not traveling on Court business may not travel in State Motor Pool Vehicles.

C. Rental Vehicles

1. Rental vehicles are only authorized for business purposes and not for the personal convenience of the traveler. If a conference or training is located at a full-service facility (a facility with a hotel and restaurants), the traveler should utilize available ground transportation to and from the airport and the facility, unless the cost of the ground transportation is more than the cost of the rental vehicle.
2. If specified under the Travel Claim Procedures, Appellate Justices and Judges, and Court staff may utilize rental vehicles in the event ground transportation or a State Motor Pool vehicle is not available or would be more expensive. District Judges not

assigned a monthly vehicle or others traveling within the provisions of this Travel Policy may utilize rental vehicles rather than State Motor Pool for Court business purposes.

3. Only rental car companies approved by the Court and under contract with the State may be utilized. If a traveler uses any other rental car company, reimbursement will be limited to that which would have been charged by the contractual and approved agencies. Travelers are cautioned that if they utilize a rental car company not approved by the Court, they are not covered by the State comprehensive insurance policy. As insurance is included as part of the negotiated rate with the approved rental car companies, travelers will not be reimbursed for payment of additional insurance coverage offered by any rental car companies.

4. The Travel Claim Procedures must be followed when using rental vehicles or the Court will not reimburse the costs of the rental.

5. The traveler should rent either a compact or midsize vehicle. Request for reimbursement for vehicle upgrades must include an explanation that justifies the higher cost for the larger vehicle.

6. Travelers must refuel the rental car before returning it to avoid additional costs charged by the rental companies for refueling. The cost of the fuel will be reimbursed according to the Travel Claim Procedures. Except in an emergency justified under the Travel Claim Procedures, additional costs for fueling the vehicle by the rental company will not be reimbursed.

D. Mileage Reimbursement Rules

1. Travelers will be reimbursed for use of their own personal vehicle for official travel at Court mileage reimbursement rates as found in the Travel Claim Procedures, which are consistent with the IRS standard mileage rates normally followed by the USGSA. The IRS and the USGSA review the mileage reimbursement rates annually or as needed thus mileage reimbursement rates are subject to change.

2. For travel, the traveler may rely on the odometer reading. The accounting unit may rely upon mileage information obtained through either MapQuest at: <http://www.mapquest.com>; Google Maps at <http://www.maps.google.com>; or other reputable sources to verify the reasonableness of the mileage claimed. Travel to various locations within the city of destination will be reimbursed as long as sufficient written justification is provided in the Travel Claim.

3. For an employee traveling on a normal business day from home to a meeting or to an airport to continue travel by air for business purposes, his or her travel status does not begin until the employee has traveled more than the mileage they would have traveled had they had driven to work on a normal business day. If the travel to a meeting or to an airport is less than the employee's normal commute, travel status begins when the employee reaches the meeting or airport. The number of miles

traveled will be calculated from the employee's home or primary workstation, whichever is less.

E. Use of Privately Owned Vehicle; Special Rules

1. When using a privately owned vehicle for Court business purposes, mileage expense will be reimbursed based upon on the traveler's use and circumstances.

- a. Use for Court's convenience. Travelers who use their privately owned vehicles for the Court's convenience will be reimbursed at the highest allowable mileage reimbursement rate as set forth in the Travel Claim Procedures. A traveler uses his or her own vehicle at the Court's convenience in the following examples:
 - i. Business travel to and/or from a local event;
 - ii. Business travel to and/or from the Reno or Las Vegas airports;
 - iii. Carrying unwieldy or large amounts of conference materials; or
 - iv. Use of the vehicle is the least expensive means of travel.
- b. Use for Personal convenience. Travelers who use their privately owned vehicles for their personal convenience instead of air travel will be reimbursed at the lowest mileage reimbursement rate as set forth in the Travel Claim Procedures. Travelers may choose this method of travel to have more flexibility or to take advantage of the opportunity to combine personal time with business travel. A traveler uses his or her own vehicle for personal convenience in the following examples:
 - i. Business travel to and/or from an event at a destination serviced by Southwest Airlines or other airlines;
 - ii. When using a privately owned vehicle allows the traveler to combine business travel and personal time.
- c. Use of personal vehicle for multiple parties or practical reasons. If more than one traveler to an event travel in a personal vehicle and the cost of airfare for both or all travelers exceeds the cost of the full mileage rate reimbursement, the full rate will be paid. In addition, if an airline services the location but using the airline would result in significant hardship or extended travel time, the traveler may use his/her personal vehicle and be reimbursed at the full rate. Written justification and explanation must be provided in this case consistent with the Travel Claim Procedures.

2. In no event will travelers who drive a privately owned vehicle to an event for their personal convenience be reimbursed more than the maximum amount of the cost that would have been incurred using airfare, ground or other transportation (motor pool, rental vehicles, taxi, etc.), not to exceed the highest mileage reimbursement rate for the same period and consistent with this policy. Meals and lodging will only be reimbursed

in this case if such expenses would have been incurred if the traveler used available air travel. If the traveler wishes to include a claim for meals and lodging in this case, the traveler should provide sufficient justification and proof of costs that would have been incurred with air travel in order to have the claim paid.

F. Parking

Parking and vehicle storage fees associated with the use of a vehicle while traveling on Court business are reimbursable at the actual cost. Airport parking fees are reimbursable if the traveler must leave his/her vehicle at the airport while traveling on Court business. The traveler must utilize the long-term airport parking. Receipts are required.

Part VI. Official Business Travel – Meals

A. General Rules

1. Meals will be reimbursed if the traveler is in travel status during the meal periods and en route to or at a location at least 30 miles roundtrip from his/her primary work station.
2. Meals will be reimbursed consistent with and in the amounts set forth in the Travel Claim Procedures.

B. Meal Reimbursement at Court Per Diem (no receipt required)

Except as provided below in Paragraph D.2., meals claimed without a receipt will be reimbursed at the Court per diem rates, as long as the claim falls within the meal periods defined as follows:

Meal	Travel Starting Before	Travel Ending After
Breakfast	7:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.
Lunch	11:00 a.m.	1:00 p.m.
Dinner	5:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.

C. Meal Reimbursement at USGSA Rate (receipt required)

1. Travelers can seek reimbursement at a higher rate for either in-state or out-of-state meal expenses up to the maximum amount allowed and as established by the USGSA for the destination. Current rates for meal allowances at the USGSA rates may be found at <http://www.gsa.gov>.
2. When making a claim for reimbursement at a higher USGSA rate, the traveler must include an itemized receipt that clearly sets forth the specific cost(s) attributed to

him or her. Claims made by one traveler, which are unclear and/or that include meal costs incurred by more than one party, absent an explanation, will be paid at the Court's per diem rate.

D. Meal Reimbursement When Meal Provided (receipt required)

1. In some cases, the Court may provide a meal to accommodate those attending or participating in an event. If the traveler attends an event where a full breakfast, lunch, or dinner is served, the traveler may not claim reimbursement for the meal(s) unless he/she was unable to take advantage of the meals. In that case, a traveler is entitled to claim the meal(s) at the applicable per diem rate as long as the traveler includes the itemized receipt and a reasonable explanation justifying the added expense with the Travel Claim.

2. In many cases, a "continental breakfast" is served at an event. A continental breakfast usually consists of coffee, tea, pastries, and fruit. If a continental breakfast is provided as described herein, and the traveler chooses to purchase a traditional breakfast meal instead, the traveler may claim the breakfast meal at applicable per diem rate, provided that the traveler includes the itemized receipt with the Travel Claim.

E. Non-reimbursable Meal Expenses

1. Gratuities (tips) paid to servers for meals are not an allowable meal expense and are not reimbursable. See section VIII.A.

2. Costs incurred for purchase of alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable.

Part VII. Official Business Travel - Lodging

A. General Rules

1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection "F" below, overnight accommodations or lodging costs incurred for a standard room will be reimbursed if the traveler is in travel status and in route to or at a location at least 50 miles from his or her primary work station.

2. Overnight accommodations may be reimbursed for travel or expenses not fitting within the normal policy when exceptional circumstances exist [see Section XI of this policy]. Exceptions that provide sufficient justification for reimbursement outside the normal policy are subject to the advance approval of a department head or designee whenever possible and may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Pending/existing inclement weather conditions making travel difficult or unsafe;
- b. Poor road conditions making travel difficult or unsafe;

- c. Required meetings held late or early in the day;
- d. Court employee is acting as conference host;
- e. A host at a conference pre-approved as necessary for the conference presentation; or
- f. Travel time for Judges attending an AOC-sponsored annual or semi-annual judicial conference that exceeds half an hour each direction under normal driving conditions in the area.

3. Reimbursement for lodging will be paid consistent with the Travel Claim Procedures.

B. Lodging Reimbursement at USGSA Rate (receipt required)

- 1. Travelers can seek reimbursement for either in-state or out-of-state lodging expenses up to the maximum amount allowed and as established by the USGSA for the destination. Current rates for lodging allowances may be found at <http://www.gsa.gov>.
- 2. When making a claim for reimbursement of lodging expenses, the traveler must include an itemized receipt that clearly sets forth the specific lodging cost(s) attributed to him or her. Applicable taxes and non-negotiable add-on fees (e.g., resort fees) claimed will also be reimbursed.

C. Lodging at Contractual Rate for Court-Sponsored Conference or Seminar

If lodging has been arranged at an event such as a Judicial Education seminar under a contract with the Court at a set amount, the traveler will not be reimbursed more than the contracted-for rate. A receipt is required in order to be reimbursed unless otherwise stated in the brochure.

D. Lodging Reimbursement at Other Rate (receipt required)

- 1. Conference lodging rates higher than the USGSA rate: A traveler may be reimbursed for a lodging expense incurred that is higher than the maximum USGSA rate when the lodging is procured at a hotel where a Court-sponsored or organization event will be held and when documentation shows the group rate that was established for the event. A receipt is required.
- 2. Rates that are higher than USGSA rate (such as when the conference venue is sold out or GSA rates are not available nearby): In exceptional cases, a traveler may be reimbursed for a lodging expense incurred that is higher than the maximum USGSA rate. A department head or designee may authorize the higher amount when the lodging could not be obtained at or below the maximum USGSA rate and when accompanied by an explanation and cost-comparison of available rates as described in the Travel Claim Procedures.

E. Non-Reimbursable Lodging Expenses

1. Gratuities (tips) paid to lodging/hotel staff are not an allowable lodging expense and are not reimbursable. See Section VIII.A.
2. If the traveler is accompanied by a non-employee or person not traveling on court business, the Court will only reimburse the cost of single room occupancy.
3. Costs incurred because of cancellations or no-shows will not be paid by the Court unless the Court is responsible for the cancellation.
4. Charges for in-room movies, hotel facilities such as the exercise room, etc., are not reimbursable.

F. Reimbursement for Judicial Conferences

Overnight accommodations or lodging costs incurred for a standard room for Judges attending an AOC-sponsored annual or semi-annual judicial conference will be reimbursed if the traveler is in travel status and in route to or at a location at least 25 miles from his or her primary work station.

Part VIII. Official Business Travel - Incidentals and Out-of-Pocket Costs

A. Incidentals at Court Per Diem

Travelers may claim the Court per diem incidental expense in the amount set forth in the Travel Claim Procedures for each day in travel status. This reimbursement is provided to cover the traveler's costs for payment of tips, parking meters, carts, toll charges, etc. A receipt is not required.

B. Other Out-of-Pocket Costs

1. Travelers may incur other out-of-pocket expenses directly related to the purpose of the trip with justification. Receipts are required. The reimbursable costs include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Internet connectivity charges, if connection is needed for Court business and an AOC loaner air card was not available to the traveler;
 - b. Computer, fax, scanner, or printer use charges;
 - c. photocopies;
 - d. Airline baggage fees; and
 - e. Costs associated with rebooking or rescheduling flight times if delay is court or weather related and not caused because of personal reasons.

2. The traveler must obtain all prior authorizations set forth in the Travel Claim Procedures.
3. When traveling to and from the Court's offices in Carson City and Las Vegas, the traveler should take advantage of the Court's available resources, such as copiers, facsimile machines, and telephones. If the Court's own resources are convenient and readily available to the traveler, additional costs may not be reimbursed.

Part IX. Official Business Travel - Cap on Certain Expenses; Funding

A. Court Sponsored Events/Training

1. The Court may limit the amount of reimbursement for a particular expense or event when sponsoring an event or providing individual training. For example, if the Court has negotiated a special lodging rate of \$50.00 per night, the traveler may only claim up to the negotiated rate (plus taxes and applicable fees, if any). The limits on the rate of reimbursement must be applied equally to all travelers.
2. The Court will provide advance notice to attendees, participants, and staff of any limitation on the amount of reimbursement for a particular expense or event. The notice may be in the form of a letter, email, event brochure, a request to encumber funds, or other documentation distributed in connection with the event.

B. Funding; Budget Allocation

1. Court staff who will incur travel expenses in connection with a Court-sponsored event and/or training must follow the requirements set forth in the Travel Claim Procedures for advance approval. Travel expenses for Court staff that provide support for a Court-sponsored event and/or training as described herein will be paid from the same budget account that is used to fund the event and/or training if Court staff traveled for no other purpose. If Court staff traveled to the event for reasons in addition to providing event support, the cost may be charged to the budget account that funds the salary of the Court staff.
2. Travel expenses for Court staff who attend a Court-sponsored event and/or training will be paid from the budget account that is used to fund the employee's salary, if they are attending the event for education purposes.

Part X. Official Business Travel - Reimbursement of Travel Claims for Services Performed by Others

A. General Rule

Reimbursement for travel expenses incurred by outside consultants, contractors, and vendors who perform professional services for the Court will be paid if authorized.

B. Conditions for Reimbursement for Services Performed by Others

1. Reimbursement for travel expenses for outside consultants, contractors and vendors as described herein may be paid as long as all the following conditions have been met:

- a. The particular service and travel expense is specified, authorized and approved in advance under a signed contract, a professional services agreement, a letter of agreement, or an expenditure request for travel;
- b. The expenses are consistent with this Travel Policy or are otherwise specified under the Travel Claim Procedures or contract;
- c. The request for reimbursement of travel costs complies with the Travel Claim Procedures; and
- d. Receipts are provided when required.

2. If the travel expenses claimed under a contract or agreement are designated specifically and have been approved in the contract, they may be paid as part of the payment for an invoice for payment of services and expenses under the contract rather than under the requirements of the Travel Claim Procedures, as long as receipts are provided.

Part XI. Exceptions

The Court recognizes that there may be times when an expense does not fit exactly within the Travel Policies stated above. This may include times when a host is needed at a conference or when staff needs to be present at a conference or training without the travel required to place them in travel status.

Any such exceptional circumstances must, whenever possible, be approved in advance by a Department Head or Deputy Director.

All exceptions to the Travel Policy must be justified in writing, signed by a Department Head or Deputy Director, and supported by receipts. Approval will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Approved by the Executive Committee on this

25 day of October, 2017

Douglas , J.
Douglas

Cherry
Cherry

Gibbons , J.
Gibbons