

**COURT ORDER  
2018-0585**



Travel Policy Update

On a motion made by Commissioner Mike Cantrell, District 2, and seconded by Commissioner John Wiley Price, District 3, the following order was passed and adopted by the Commissioners Court of Dallas County, State of Texas:

BRIEFING DATE: 5/15/2018  
FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

Be it resolved and ordered that the Dallas County Commissioners Court does hereby approve and codify into the Dallas County Code the proposed changes to the Travel Policy.

Done in open court May 15, 2018, by the following vote:

IN FAVOR: Commissioner Dr. Theresa M. Daniel, District 1  
Commissioner Mike Cantrell, District 2  
Commissioner John Wiley Price, District 3  
OPPOSED: Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia, District 4  
ABSTAINED: Honorable Clay Lewis Jenkins, County Judge  
ABSENT: None

Recommended by: Darryl Martin  
Originating Department: Commissioners Court Administration

# COMMISSIONERS COURT BRIEFING



**DATE:** 5/15/2018

**SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT:** Commissioners Court Administration

**THROUGH:**

**SUBJECT:** Travel Policy Update

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## BACKGROUND:

The Dallas County Travel Policy, Chapter 86, Article V of the Dallas County Code, details all county policies related to employee travel. This policy has been in place since July 11, 2000 and has not been substantially updated since.

## OPERATIONAL IMPACT:

Commissioners Court Administration originally proposed several changes to the Travel Policy listed below:

- All references to specific forms have been removed to give the Auditor's Office and Office of Budget and Evaluation more flexibility to streamline the request processes.
- A provision has been added allowing for out-of-county travel with no cost to not require commissioners court approval.
- Removed the stay-over provision requiring employees to stay at the traveled location on Saturday if it is less costly and removed a provision requiring the calculation of the employee's salary cost when making this determination.
- Removed a provision encouraging double-occupancy by employees.
- Removed language requiring less direct flights under certain circumstances.
- Added a requirement that travel occur as close to the start and end date of an event as practicable.
- Added a restriction to vehicle rental reimbursement if an exception to hotel rate cap is granted.
- Added ride-sharing to allowable transportation expenses.
- Changed hotel/lodging rates to be capped at U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) rates and included an exception for hotel stays in Austin during legislative session when rates are at a premium due to high demand.
- Changed meal reimbursement to GSA per diem with half reimbursement on travel days and full reimbursement on full days spent at the traveled location with an exception for the Assistant County Administrator for Governmental Affairs who will receive half-day reimbursement on all days during a legislative session.
- Clarified that grant requirements supersede the requirements of the County travel policy.

<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>	Commissioners Court Administration	<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Charles Reed
		<b>APPROVED BY DEPT HEAD:</b>	Darryl Martin

- Removed outdated language related to purchasing, refunds, coupons, and discounts of airline tickets.
- Added language clarifying that auto allowances are approved for a position and not an employee. If an employee receiving auto allowance moves into a position that is not approved for an auto allowance, then the auto allowance does not transfer.
- Removed language requiring positions to move from auto allowance to mileage after the position is vacated.
- Cleaned up mileage reimbursement language for those with auto allowances traveling outside the county in a personal vehicle.

Since these proposed changes will have an organizational wide impact, Chapter 74 Division 4 required these amendments be circulated by Commissioners Court Administration to all county officials and department heads for comments for a minimum of thirty days. The thirty-day comment period started on March 7, 2018 and ended April 6, 2018. All comments received are listed below by those that have been incorporated into the proposed changes and those that have not.

Comments from department heads and elected officials that have been incorporated into the proposed policy include:

- The Office of Budget and Evaluation requested that hotel/lodging expenses in adjacent counties not be eligible for reimbursement.
- Road and Bridge District 4 requested all travel requests be approved by the Office of Budget and Evaluation before being added to the agenda for Commissioners Court Approval. A similar provision has been added to require department heads and elected officials to approve and sign off on travel before being placed on the Commissioners Court's agenda.

Comments from department heads and elected officials that have not been incorporated into the proposed policy include:

- Road and Bridge District 4
- Leave in the provision encouraging hotel room double-occupancy by employees.
- Continue requiring receipts for meal reimbursement.

Attached to this item are clean and red-lined versions of the proposed changes to the Travel Policy.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

N/A

**LEGAL IMPACT:**

N/A

**PROJECT SCHEDULE:**

N/A

**SBE PARTICIPATION:**

N/A

**ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE:**

This proposal follows Dallas County's vision to be a model governmental entity as defined by the 2017-2021 Administrative Plan. Objective Six of the Administrative Plan is to update, improve, maintain, and make readily available an online collection of all county policies. This proposed update to the Travel Policy will streamline our processes for approving and reimbursing travel expenses.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve and codify into the Dallas County Code the proposed changes to the Travel Policy.

## **ARTICLE V. - TRAVEL POLICY<sup>1</sup>**

Sec. 86-711. - Travel and mileage reimbursement policy.

- (a) Travel funds will be allocated to departments annually based on need and with general approval through the budget process, with grant awards or through department discretionary account (DDA) guidelines. If possible, attendance at local offerings is encouraged, out-of-state and out-of-county seminars and technical meetings shall be kept to a minimum. Where practical, attendance should be limited to one individual per department, per seminar or trip.
- (b) Even though travel funds have been appropriated in the fiscal budget, prior approval of the commissioners court must be obtained for conference and out-of-county business travel including travel paid from DDA, but not paid from legislative travel, subsection (j) of this section. See subsection (i) of this section. All requests for travel including DDA funds must receive prior approval by the commissioners court before the date of travel. A travel request form, as provided by the office of budget and evaluation, must indicate a business justification for the requested travel. The request must be submitted to the office of budget and evaluation with the signoff of the department head or elected official in order to be placed on the Commissioners Court's agenda. The office of budget and evaluation shall provide notice to the Commissioners Court of all travel requests approved by department heads and elected officials.
- (c) DDA funded travel for conference or business meetings is reimbursed by submitting requests for payment and expense reports to the auditor's office with appropriate receipts attached. Appropriate signoff in the department is required.
- (d) Travel funds will be allocated annually in the accounts as provided in subsections (e) through (j) of this section for stated purposes only. Any other use of such funds will require approval and transfer by the commissioners court into the appropriate line item for which travel expenditures are requested. Object codes for travel expenditures are as provided in subsections (e) through (j) of this section. Mileage reimbursements for use of personal automobiles will be allowed under these conditions:
  - (1) Official county business only;
  - (2) Must be of benefit to the citizens of the county;
  - (3) Must not be for political, commuting or personal reasons;
  - (4) Employee or official does not receive a car allowance.Officials' and employees' compensation and mileage reimbursement is provided to cover the cost of using their personal vehicle on county business. This reimbursement is specifically intended to cover the officials' or employees' cost to ensure their personal and third party liability. Each official or employee shall contact their vehicle insurance provider to ensure that they are properly insured.
- (e) 1070 auto mileage: To reimburse county employees on a per mile basis (current rate equivalent to the maximum rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service) incurred as a requirement of their job and as a result of driving a personal automobile daily for county business. These positions are designated by the human resources/civil service department as "daily job-required" use of a personal vehicle. The mileage rate method provides reimbursement for actual expenses such as gasoline, oil, repairs, insurance, tires, license plates or similar items. Reimbursements are paid through the payroll system on paychecks coded as nontaxable earnings. Expenditures from this account are excluded for any out-of-county travel, unless out-of-county travel is normal and routine business activity for a department.
- (f) 2230-DDA spendable balance: To reimburse county employees for travel funded through the department's DDA account for out-of-pocket expenses such as hotel bills, meals, tips and conference

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<sup>1</sup> **State Law reference**— Travel and per diem, V.T.C.A., [Local Government Code § 152.001](#) et seq.

registration fees associated with professional development. DDA travel is dependent on funds available and does require approval by the commissioners court (see DDA guidelines).

- (g) 2980 auto expense incidental: To reimburse county employees for mileage (current rate is maximum rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service), plus parking and toll charges that result from driving a personal automobile occasionally for county business. Incidental travel is dependent on funds available and does not require specific approval by the commissioners court. The mileage rate method provides reimbursement for actual expenses such as gasoline, oil, repairs, insurance, tires, license plates or similar items. Reimbursements are made to individuals on an as-approved basis.
- (h) 4010 business travel: To reimburse county employees for out-of-pocket expenses such as hotel bills, meals, tips and other non-transportation related expenditures incurred while performing direct county business of a routine nature, limited department allocations are approved by the budget process. Use for charges appropriated in the department budget, specifically approved by the commissioners court through the budget process (not DDA funded) or other funding sources such as grants. Charges not included are legislative travel, mileage and DDA. Business and grant-funded travel requires preapproval by the commissioners court on form 251 and is subject to funds available. Fraudulent requests for reimbursement will result in disciplinary action and/or prosecution.
- (i) 4210 conference travel: To reimburse county employees for direct and out-of-pocket expenses incurred while attending a conference, professional development seminar, trade school or college which has received prior approval and will enhance the employee's capability to fulfill their job function. This account will pay for transportation, registration, and tuition fees, hotel charges, meals, tips and other related reimbursable expenses associated with professional development activity. Use for charges appropriated in the department budget, specifically approved by commissioners court through the budget process (not DDA funded). Charges not included are legislative travel, mileage and DDA.
- (j) 4110 legislative travel: To reimburse county employees for direct and out-of-pocket expenses for commissioners court requested travel required on legislative matters. This would include appearances before any committee or other related activity including, but not limited to, sessions of the state legislature, meetings for the legislative agenda, meetings of the county judges and Commissioners Association of Texas, Conference of Urban Counties, Texas Association of Counties and National Association of Counties.
- (k) Out of County travel without any cost is not required to be briefed to the Commissioners Court.
- (l) The auditor's office will review all transactions submitted in the form of detailed vouchers and receipts for reimbursements during the normal audit process. Receipts for lodging and air transportation are required as part of the reimbursement document. Acknowledgment of county-paid air transportation is also required.
- (m) Guidelines for travel arrangements are as follows:
  - (1) All travel will be planned with maximum economy and efficiency.
  - (2) All travel arrangements should be made at least seven days and when possible, 21 days in advance.
  - (3) Travel must be for official county business only.
  - (4) Travel must be to the benefit of the citizens of the county.
  - (5) Under no condition will travel be for personal reasons.
  - (6) The county may prepay conference registration fees upon the commissioners court approval. When fees are paid out of DDA funds, commissioners court approval is not required. Payment is made to the sponsoring organization, not to the employee. Request for payment of conference fees should be made on request for payment form as provided by the auditor's office. Lodging charges may be prepaid with copy of itinerary and confirmation from the hotel. Payment is made to the hotel.
  - (7) Travel must occur as close to the start and end of event as practicable.

(n) Guidelines for travel reimbursements. Actual charges (within established limits) while on county business will be reimbursed when the request is approved by the employee's elected official or department head. In order to be reimbursed for expenses incurred while on official county business, a report of travel expenses form, as provided by the auditor's office, must be submitted to the auditor's office within 30 days following the travel period. Exceptions must be submitted to the commissioners court for approval.

(1) *Transportation.*

- a. *Mileage:* Reimbursement rate maximum rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage is calculated from the first business stop. Payments are treated as nontaxable reimbursements when fully documented and submitted to the county. The appropriate form, either report of travel expenses form for out-of-county travel or the report of personal automobile mileage used in county business form for in-county travel must be prepared by the traveler, approved by the department head and submitted to the auditor. The total miles subject to reimbursement shall be calculated from the first business stop after leaving home to the last business stop before returning home, less any personal nonbusiness miles driven during the course of the day. If the total miles driven to the first business stop exceed the total miles from the employee's residence to the official station of duty, reimbursement shall be calculated from the station of duty to the business stop.
- b. *Parking:* Actual parking expenses incurred while on county business will be reimbursed when the request is approved on the report of travel expenses form by the employee's elected official or department head and submitted with a receipt. Parking expenses incurred in lots operated with drop boxes where no receipt is available or using parking meters will be reimbursed to a maximum of \$7.00 a day.
- c. *Vehicle rental:* Rental cars will only be authorized when it is operationally required, or when the cost of public transportation would exceed the cost of a rental vehicle. The maximum reimbursement will be based on a sub-compact for up to two county approved travelers, compact for three county approved travelers, and midsize for four county approved travelers. Full size will be used for over four travelers. If an exception is granted under section (n)(2)(a), vehicle rental will not be reimbursable.
- d. *Taxi, ride-sharing, subway, bus, etc.:* No receipts are required for reimbursement of expenses up to \$5.00, otherwise receipts are required.

(2) *Hotel/lodging.* An itemized receipt for lodging must accompany any request for reimbursement. Hotel/lodging reimbursements will be capped at the rate set by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for the city traveled to. Hotel/lodging expenses in adjacent counties will not be reimbursed.

An exception to maximum room rate will be granted for:

- a. Annual conferences or court required if the elected official/department head certifies that the rate paid was the lowest available rate as provided by the sponsoring group's housing policy for assignment of rooms.
- b. Fugitive officers in the sheriff's office will refer to the federal IRS hotel rates as updated annually for maximum reimbursement amount.
- c. Hotel/lodging expenses incurred as a result of legislative travel to Austin, Texas during a legislative session.

(3) *Meals and Incidental Expenses:* Reimbursement for meals is based on the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) rate as set by GSA for the city traveled to. For travel requiring an overnight stay, the full M&IE per diem reimbursement may be requested for each full day spent. Half of the allowable per diem may be requested on a day in which the employee traveled to or from the destination. For example, a three-day trip in which the employee traveled on the first and third

day would qualify for half of the allowable M&IE reimbursement on the first and third day (travel days) and the full M&IE reimbursement on the second day (full day).

- (4) *Miscellaneous.*
- a. Reimbursements for faxes are authorized. Receipts or itemized statements are required.
  - b. Reimbursements for long distance business telephone calls are authorized. Personal long distance charges on the hotel/motel bills are not eligible for reimbursement.
  - c. Charges for personal items on hotel/motel bills are not eligible for reimbursement.
  - d. The Assistant County Administrator for Governmental Affairs will receive half day reimbursements under section (n)(3) for both travel and full days during a Texas Legislative Session.
- (o) The commissioners court may approve requests to allow exceptions to the travel policy if these policies impose an unreasonable hardship on the traveler.
- (p) Expenses incurred by or as a result of an accompanying spouse or other individual not employed by the county will not be reimbursed.
- (q) If, in the course of official county business or business travel, an individual or individuals provide valuable assistance to the county at no cost, reimbursement of a reasonable amount will be allowed for the purchase of a meal for the assisting individual or individuals. The name, title and affiliation of the assisting individuals must be specified on the travel expense report submitted to the auditor in order to be reimbursed.
- (r) Department heads and elected officials who have employees that require a county credit card for business travel must submit a request to the commissioners court. If approved, the purchasing director will submit an application, receive and issue the card to the employee. The employee will be required to sign a statement acknowledging the limitations/responsibilities of use of the card. Employees shall ensure the card is only used for the specific purposes approved by the commissioners court and will develop a control ledger that is reconciled to monthly statements. The reconciliations, along with receipts for the purchases, must be forwarded to the county auditor monthly, along with a request for payment, which has been approved by the department head or elected official. Under no circumstances shall the county credit card be used for noncounty business. Any misuse of the county credit card shall result in immediate cancellation of the card as well disciplinary action, up to and including termination of the employee. Cards used by employees who are terminating their employment must be returned to the purchasing department. The card may be assigned to an individual, but is the responsibility of both the employee and the department head.
- (s) The request for reimbursement form (as provided by the Auditor's Office) must include the following:
- (1) Points of origin and destination;
  - (2) Reason for travel;
  - (3) Dates of travel;
  - (4) All reimbursable expenses including transportation costs, lodging costs, meals and incidental expenses, mileage, registration fees, etc.;
  - (5) Time of departure and return to home station;
  - (6) Names of accompanying county employee travelers;
  - (7) Funding source and court approval reference, if applicable.
- (t) Any additional requirements for grant funded travel will supersede the requirements of this policy.

(Ord. No. 2000-1342, §§ 1.00—1.20, 7-11-2000; Ord. No. 2008-567, 3-18-2008; Ord. No. 2008-742, 4-15-2008; Ord. No. 2008-1287, 6-8-2008; Ord. No. 2008-2150, 11-11-2008; 2009-0876, 5-12-2009; Ord. No. 2010-0780, 5-4-2010; Ord. No. 2012-0972, 6-5-2012; Ord. No. 2012-0235, 2-7-2012)

Sec. 86-712. - Reserved.

(Ord. No. 2000-1342, §§ 1.21—1.23, 7-11-2000)

Sec. 86-713. - Reserved.

(Ord. No. 2000-1342, §§ 1.24—1.26, 7-11-2000)

Sec. 86-714. - Auto allowances.

- (a) Based on specific business requirements, the commissioners court may authorize a position to receive a monthly auto allowance.
- (b) Those positions receiving auto allowances will not receive any additional allowance or reimbursement except for other expenses incurred while on official business outside of the county.
- (c) Employees who receive a monthly auto allowance and travel out of the county for county business shall deduct 30 miles from their mileage reimbursement request for each one-way trip when using their personal auto for county business. This stipulation affects only employees who receive a monthly auto allowance.
- (d) Any employee with an auto allowance may agree to eliminate their auto allowance and receive instead the per mile reimbursement.
- (e) An employee's auto allowance will not be maintained in the case of a position change if the position change is to a position that is not authorized an auto allowance. Officials' and employees' compensation and auto allowance are provided to cover the cost of using their personal vehicle on county business. This reimbursement is specifically intended to cover the officials' or employees' cost to ensure their personal and third party liability. Each official or employee shall contact their vehicle insurance provider to ensure that they are properly insured.

(Ord. No. 2000-1342, §§ 2.00—2.05, 7-11-2000)

Secs. 86-715—86-750. - Reserved.

## ARTICLE V. - TRAVEL POLICY<sup>1</sup>

Sec. 86-711. - Travel and mileage reimbursement policy.

- (a) Travel funds will be allocated to departments annually based on need and with general approval through the budget process, with grant awards or through department discretionary account (DDA) guidelines. If possible, attendance at local offerings is encouraged, out-of-state and out-of-county seminars and technical meetings shall be kept to a minimum. Where practical, attendance should be limited to one individual per department, per seminar or trip.
- (b) Even though travel funds have been appropriated in the fiscal budget, prior approval of the commissioners court must be obtained for conference and out-of-county business travel including travel paid from DDA, but not paid from legislative travel, subsection (j) of this section. See subsection (i) of this section. All requests for travel including DDA funds must receive prior approval by the commissioners court before the date of travel. A travel request form, as provided by the office of budget and evaluation, must indicate a business justification for the requested travel. The request must be on 254 (exhibit CA) must be completed and submitted to and recommended by the office of budget and evaluation with the signoff of the department head or elected official prior to noon Tuesday in order to be considered for approval placed on the following Tuesday Commissioners Court's agenda. The office of budget and evaluation shall also provide notice to the Commissioners Court of all travel requests submitted approved by department heads and elected officials but not recommended for approval.
- (c) DDA funded travel for conference or business meetings is reimbursed by submitting requests for payment and expense reports to the auditor's office with appropriate receipts attached. Appropriate signoff in the department is required.
- (d) Travel funds will be allocated annually in the accounts as provided in subsections (e) through (j) of this section for stated purposes only. Any other use of such funds will require approval and transfer by the commissioners court into the appropriate line item for which travel expenditures are requested. Object codes for travel expenditures are as provided in subsections (e) through (j) of this section. Mileage reimbursements for use of personal automobiles will be allowed under these conditions:
  - (1) Official county business only;
  - (2) Must be of benefit to the citizens of the county;
  - (3) Must not be for political, commuting or personal reasons;
  - (4) Employee or official does not receive a car allowance.

Officials' and employees' compensation and mileage reimbursement is provided to cover the cost of using their personal vehicle on county business. This reimbursement is specifically intended to cover the officials' or employees' cost to ensure their personal and third party liability. Each official or employee shall contact their vehicle insurance provider to ensure that they are properly insured.

- (e) 1070 auto mileage: To reimburse county employees on a per mile basis (current rate equivalent to the maximum rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service) incurred as a requirement of their job and as a result of driving a personal automobile daily for county business. These positions are designated by the human resources/civil service department as "daily job-required" use of a personal vehicle. The mileage rate method provides reimbursement for actual expenses such as gasoline, oil, repairs, insurance, tires, license plates or similar items. Reimbursements are paid through the payroll system on paychecks coded as nontaxable earnings. Expenditures from this account are excluded for any out-of-county travel, unless out-of-county travel is normal and routine business activity for a department.

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<sup>1</sup> State Law reference— Travel and per diem, V.T.C.A., [Local Government Code § 152.001](#) et seq.

- (f) 2230-DDA spendable balance: To reimburse county employees for travel funded through the department's DDA account for out-of-pocket expenses such as hotel bills, meals, tips and conference registration fees associated with professional development. DDA travel is dependent on funds available and does require approval by the commissioners court (see DDA guidelines).
- (g) 2980 auto expense incidental: To reimburse county employees for mileage (current rate is maximum rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service), plus parking and toll charges that result from driving a personal automobile occasionally for county business. Incidental travel is dependent on funds available and does not require specific approval by the commissioners court. The mileage rate method provides reimbursement for actual expenses such as gasoline, oil, repairs, insurance, tires, license plates or similar items. Reimbursements are made to individuals on an as-approved basis.
- (h) 4010 business travel: To reimburse county employees for out-of-pocket expenses such as hotel bills, meals, tips and other non-transportation related expenditures incurred while performing direct county business of a routine nature, limited department allocations are approved by the budget process. Use for charges appropriated in the department budget, specifically approved by the commissioners court through the budget process (not DDA funded) or other funding sources such as grants. Charges not included are legislative travel, mileage and DDA. Business and grant-funded travel requires preapproval by the commissioners court on form 251 and is subject to funds available. Fraudulent requests for reimbursement will result in disciplinary action and/or prosecution.
- (i) 4210 conference travel: To reimburse county employees for direct and out-of-pocket expenses incurred while attending a conference, professional development seminar, trade school or college which has received prior approval and will enhance the employee's capability to fulfill their job function. This account will pay for transportation, registration, and tuition fees, hotel charges, meals, tips and other related reimbursable expenses associated with professional development activity. Use for charges appropriated in the department budget, specifically approved by commissioners court through the budget process (not DDA funded). Charges not included are legislative travel, mileage and DDA.
- (j) 4110 legislative travel: To reimburse county employees for direct and out-of-pocket expenses for commissioners court requested travel required on legislative matters. This would include appearances before any committee or other related activity including, but not limited to, sessions of the state legislature, meetings for the legislative agenda, meetings of the county judges and Commissioners Association of Texas, Conference of Urban Counties, Texas Association of Counties and National Association of Counties.

(k) Out of County travel without any cost is not required to be briefed to the Commissioners Court.

(kl) The auditor's office will review all transactions submitted in the form of detailed vouchers and receipts for reimbursements during the normal audit process. ~~Itemized receipts are required for food with daily cap at per diem rates. If no overnight stay is incurred (i.e., two day/one overnight trip or a single day trip), partial day reimbursement may be requested with itemized receipts.~~ Receipts for lodging and air transportation are required as part of the reimbursement document. Acknowledgment of county-paid air transportation is also required.

(m) Guidelines for travel arrangements are as follows:

- (1) All travel will be planned with maximum economy and efficiency.
- (2) All travel arrangements should be made at least seven days and when possible, 21 days in advance.
- (3) Travel must be for official county business only.
- (4) Travel must be to the benefit of the citizens of the county.
- (5) Under no condition will travel be for personal reasons.
- (6) The county may prepay conference registration fees upon the commissioners court approval. When fees are paid out of DDA funds, commissioners court approval is not required. Payment is made to the sponsoring organization, not to the employee. Request for payment of conference fees should be made on request for payment form as provided by the auditor's office no. 255

~~(exhibit DN).~~ Lodging charges may be prepaid with copy of itinerary and confirmation from the hotel. Payment is made to the hotel.

~~(7) Employees are encouraged to exploit Saturday stay overs which lower the total cost of the trip. The county will pay for the additional hotel and meal expenses, based on subsection (m)(2) and (3) of this section, if these expenses are less than the airfare which is saved. Employee time spent on Saturday or Sunday will not be compensated either with overtime or compensatory leave.~~

~~(8) Employees are encouraged to book double occupancy.~~

~~(70) All routine business travel arrangements including rental cars, airline and hotel reservations should be made through the county's designated travel agency using the state airline contract for reduced fares, unless specifically authorized by the commissioners court. Nonroutine business travel is identified as conference travel.~~

~~a. Whether the county designated travel agent is used or not, only the actual cost of the lowest cost airfare will be reimbursed.~~

~~b. Travelers will be required to take less direct flights, up to a three hour total delay, if doing so will save the county \$250.00 or more per person in airfare. Sheriff's department fugitive deputies shall be exempt from this policy when transporting prisoners.~~

~~c. Travelers will abide by other cost saving arrangements which are made with the designated travel agency from time to time. Travel must occur as close to the start and end of event as practicable.~~

~~(n)~~ Guidelines for travel reimbursements. Actual charges (within established limits) while on county business will be reimbursed when the request is approved by the employee's elected official or department head. In order to be reimbursed for expenses incurred while on official county business, a report of travel expenses form, as provided by the auditor's office, no. 254 (exhibit CC) must be submitted to the auditor's office within 30 days following the travel period. Exceptions must be submitted to the commissioners court for approval.

(1) *Transportation.*

a. *Mileage:* Reimbursement rate maximum rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage is calculated from the first business stop. Payments are treated as nontaxable reimbursements when fully documented and submitted to the county. The appropriate form, either report of travel expenses form ~~no. 254 (exhibit CC)~~ for out-of-county travel or the report of personal automobile mileage used in county business form ~~no. 253 (exhibit CD)~~ for in-county travel must be prepared by the traveler, approved by the department head and submitted to the auditor. The total miles subject to reimbursement shall be calculated from the first business stop after leaving home to the last business stop before returning home, less any personal nonbusiness miles driven during the course of the day. If the total miles driven to the first business stop exceed the total miles from the employee's residence to the official station of duty, reimbursement shall be calculated from the station of duty to the business stop.

b. *Parking:* Actual parking expenses incurred while on county business will be reimbursed when the request is approved on the report of travel expenses form ~~no. 254 (exhibit CC)~~ by the employee's elected official or department head and submitted with a receipt. Parking expenses incurred in lots operated with drop boxes where no receipt is available or using parking meters will be reimbursed to a maximum of \$7.00 a day.

c. *Vehicle rental:* Rental cars will only be authorized when it is operationally required, or when the cost of public transportation would exceed the cost of a rental vehicle. The maximum reimbursement will be based on a sub-compact for up to two county approved travelers, compact for three county approved travelers, and midsize for four county approved travelers. Full size will be used for over four travelers. If an exception is granted under section (n)(2)(a), vehicle rental will not be reimbursable.

d. *Taxi, ride-sharing, subway, bus, etc.:* No receipts are required for reimbursement of expenses up to \$5.00, otherwise receipts are required.

(2) Hotel/lodging. An itemized receipt for lodging must accompany any request for reimbursement. Hotel/lodging reimbursements will be capped at the rate set by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for the city traveled to. Hotel/lodging expenses in adjacent counties will not be reimbursed. The per diem meal rate (see subsection (3) of this subsection (m)) may be used toward reimbursement for lodging. Maximum reimbursement schedule for lodging and meals while traveling on county business is as follows:

<b>OUTSIDE THE STATE OF TEXAS</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>Maximum Daily Lodging Reimbursement, not including hotel taxes and fees</b>
<b>Category 1</b>	<b>\$250.00</b>
<b>Specific Cities Outside the State of Texas</b>	
<b>(Boston, Chicago, Washington-DC Metro Area)</b>	
<b>Category 2</b>	<b>\$200.00</b>
<b>Specific Cities Outside the State of Texas</b>	
<b>(Atlanta, Baltimore, Denver, Miami, New York Metro Area, Palm Beach, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle)</b>	
<b>Category 3</b>	<b>\$150.00</b>
<b>Specific Cities Outside the State of Texas</b>	
<b>(Las Vegas, Minneapolis/S.T. Paul, New Orleans, Orlando, Tampa, Tucson)</b>	
<b>Category 4</b>	
<b>Cities Outside the State of Texas not specified in Category 1, 2 or 3 above.</b>	<b>\$125.00</b>
<b>WITHIN THE STATE OF TEXAS</b>	
<b>Category 5</b>	
<b>Specific Cities Within the State of Texas:</b>	<b>\$125.00</b>
<b>(Austin, Galveston, Houston, San Antonio, South Padre)</b>	
<b>Category 6</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Cities Within the State of Texas not specified in Category 5 above.</b>	

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An exception to maximum room rate will be granted for:

- a. Annual conferences or court required if the elected official/department head certifies that the rate paid was the lowest available rate as provided by the sponsoring group's housing policy for assignment of rooms.
- b. Fugitive officers in the sheriff's office will refer to the federal IRS hotel rates as updated annually for maximum reimbursement amount.
- c. Hotel/lodging expenses incurred as a result of legislative travel to Austin, Texas during a legislative session.

(3) Meals and Incidental Expenses: Reimbursement for meals is based on a per diem maximum with itemized receipts only the Meals and Incidental Expenses (M&IE) rate as set by GSA for the city traveled to. For travel requiring an overnight stay, the full M&IE meal per diem reimbursement may be requested with itemized receipts for each overnight stay full day spent. If no overnight stay is incurred (i.e., two day/one overnight trip or a single day trip), partial Half of the allowable per diem may be requested on a day in which the employee traveled to or from the destination. For example, a three-day trip in which the employee traveled on the first and third day would qualify for half of the allowable M&IE reimbursement on the first and third day (travel days) and the full M&IE reimbursement on the second day (full day), with itemized receipts. Any customary tip or gratuity cannot exceed 20 percent of the total cost of the meal before any discounts. Maximum daily per diem rates are as follows:

OUTSIDE THE STATE OF TAXES		
Location	Meals (including tax and tip)	
	Maximum	Partial
<b>Category 1</b>	<b>\$80.00</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
Specific Cities Outside the State of Texas		
(Boston, Chicago, Washington DC Metro Area)		
<b>Category 2</b>	<b>\$80.00</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
Specific Cities Outside the State of Texas		
(Atlanta, Baltimore, Denver, Miami, New York Metro Area, Palm Beach, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle)		
<b>Category 3</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>
Specific Cities Outside the State of Texas		
(Las Vegas, Minneapolis/ST. Paul, New Orleans, Orlando, Tampa, Tucson)		
<b>Category 4</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>
Cities Outside the State of Texas not specified in Category 1, 2 or 3 above.		
WITHIN THE STATE OF TEXAS		

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<b>Category-5</b>	<b>\$35.00</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>
<b>Specific Cities Within the State of Texas</b>		
<b>(Austin, Galveston, Houston, San Antonio, South Padre)</b>		
<b>Category-6</b>	<b>\$35.00</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>
<b>Cities Within the State of Texas not specified in Category 5 above</b>		

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(4) *Miscellaneous.*

- a. Reimbursements for faxes are authorized. Receipts or itemized statements are required.
- b. Reimbursements for long distance business telephone calls are authorized. Personal long distance charges on the hotel/motel bills are not eligible for reimbursement.
- c. Charges for personal items on hotel/motel bills are not eligible for reimbursement.
- d. The Assistant County Administrator for Governmental Affairs will receive half day reimbursements under section (n)(3) for both travel and full days during a Texas Legislative Session.

~~(on) The mileage allowance, plus meals and lodging, will not exceed the least cost airfare and airport parking, plus reasonable costs for ground transportation, meals and lodging at the destination. Mileage will be reimbursed for only the shortest, most direct route.~~

~~(e) The cost of the employee's time away from work may be considered in calculating the comparative costs in subsection (l)(7) of this section.~~

~~(p) The commissioners court may approve requests to allow exceptions to the travel policy if these policies impose an unreasonable hardship on the traveler.~~

~~(pq) Expenses incurred by or as a result of an accompanying spouse or other individual not employed by the county will not be reimbursed.~~

~~(qf) If, in the course of official county business or business travel, an individual or individuals provide valuable assistance to the county at no cost, reimbursement of a reasonable amount will be allowed for the purchase of a meal for the assisting individual or individuals. The name, title and affiliation of the assisting individuals must be specified on the travel expense report submitted to the auditor in order to be reimbursed.~~

~~(rs) Department heads and elected officials who have employees that require a county credit card for business travel must submit a request to the commissioners court. If approved, the purchasing director will submit an application, receive and issue the card to the employee. The employee will be required to sign a statement acknowledging the limitations/responsibilities of use of the card. Employees shall ensure the card is only used for the specific purposes approved by the commissioners court and will develop a control ledger that is reconciled to monthly statements. The reconciliations, along with receipts for the purchases, must be forwarded to the county auditor monthly, along with a request for payment, which has been approved by the department head or elected official. Under no circumstances shall the county credit card be used for noncounty business. Any misuse of the county credit card shall result in immediate cancellation of the card as well disciplinary action, up to and including termination of the employee. Cards used by employees who are terminating their employment must be returned to the purchasing department. The card may be assigned to an individual, but is the responsibility of both the employee and the department head.~~

~~(st) The request for reimbursement form (as provided by the Auditor's Office) ~~(form no. 254)~~ must include the following:~~

- (1) Points of origin and destination;

- (2) Reason for travel;
- (3) Dates of travel;
- (4) All reimbursable expenses including transportation costs, lodging costs, ~~lodging~~, meals and incidental expenses, mileage, registration fees, etc.;
- (5) Time of departure and return to home station;
- (6) Names of accompanying county employee travelers;
- (7) Funding source and court approval reference, if applicable.

(f) Any additional requirements for grant funded travel will supersede the requirements of this policy.

(Ord. No. 2000-1342, §§ 1.00—1.20, 7-11-2000; Ord. No. 2008-567, 3-18-2008; Ord. No. 2008-742, 4-15-2008; Ord. No. 2008-1287, 6-8-2008; Ord. No. 2008-2150, 11-11-2008; 2009-0876, 5-12-2009; Ord. No. 2010-0780, 5-4-2010; Ord. No. 2012-0972, 6-5-2012; Ord. No. 2012-0235, 2-7-2012)

~~Sec. 86-712. - Airline tickets; state contract.~~

~~(a) The county employees shall use the state airline contract to book airline flights for county business unless contract service is not available or is not cost effective to the county. If the intended destination is not covered by the contract, and it is near a contract destination, the traveler shall determine whether it is more cost effective to fly to the contract destination and then rent a car to travel to the intended destination, or to book a regular flight to the intended destination. When determining the cost, the additional time of the employee should be considered.~~

~~(b) The traveler should contact the county's designated travel agent to make travel arrangements. After identifying oneself as a county employee to the travel agent, the traveler must question whether the airline contract includes the intended destination. If so, the traveler should request the state airline contract fare. The travel agent will book the flight using the county designated travel account for the state airline contract to pay for the flight. Personal use of these contract fares is prohibited by state contract guidelines. Misuse of the program will be subject to administrative consequences up to termination as well as possible criminal penalties.~~

~~(c) The county's designated travel agent is available by telephone 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and is the only agent authorized to procure state airline contract fares for the county. However, the agents qualified to book the contract fares may only be available between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. There are no time limitations for the advance purchase of tickets, day or time of departure, length of stay, ticket cancellation or change charges, or other special purchase requirements. To obtain the name, contact person and telephone number of the county's designated travel agent, contact the county purchasing department. If there is a need to book an emergency flight outside the normal business hours, the state airline contract cannot be utilized. Reserved.~~

(Ord. No. 2000-1342, §§ 1.21—1.23, 7-11-2000)

~~Sec. 86-713. - Airfare coupons; discounts.~~

~~(a) It is county policy to account for discount fare coupons and all other promotional gratuities of air travel received by county employees as a result of county purchased travel. Under no circumstances shall discount fare coupons be used for personal travel. Official records must be documented and filed with the county auditor to show the receipt and disposition of discount fare coupons.~~

~~(b) — Each individual county employee who travels as a substantial and/or primary part of his job shall apply for frequent flyer membership or other discount opportunities with any airline on which routine travel occurs. Employees covered by this subsection are only those that earn significant and readily identifiable travel benefits such as, but not limited to, the sheriff's department fugitive officers. Employees and elected officials that travel on county business where frequent flyer benefits earned from county travels are not distinguishable from the personal travel benefits of the employee or elected official are not covered by this section. Frequent flyer membership statements and other discount opportunities will be addressed or forwarded to the employee at his county place of business. Individual employees are expected to immediately convert frequent flyer miles and other discount opportunities to tickets or ticket certificates, at the direction of departmental management. Free or discount tickets received as a result of frequent business travel shall be used as soon as legally available to offset or replace the purchase of the most expensive ticket then required for county business. Individuals who earn free or discounted tickets on county business travel must surrender all such tickets to departmental management and take whatever steps are necessary to make them available for the travel that would otherwise be taken at taxpayer expense. Departments that include frequent business travelers will report the status of all frequent flyer programs to the county auditor on a monthly basis.~~

~~(c) — Airline refunds.~~

~~(1) — Southwest ticketless travel. To obtain a credit for unused travel tickets charged through the county's designated travel agent, the employee must call the designated travel agent, provide the confirmation number and ask for a cancellation. Credits for nonrefundable tickets can be used toward the purchase of another ticket for the same traveler within one year, but the traveler must provide the confirmation number when the next reservation is made and notify the county auditor of cancellation and confirmation number to receive credit on the departmental budget.~~

~~(2) — Other airline ticketless travel. To obtain a credit for unused travel tickets charged through the county's designated travel agent, the employee must call the designated travel agent, provide the confirmation number and ask for a cancellation and provide the record locator number for nonrefundable tickets. Ticket coupons will be printed and returned to the traveler, who may use the ticket toward the purchase of another ticket on that particular airline for a \$50.00 fee, plus any air fare difference, notify the county auditor of cancellation and record locator number for tracking purposes. All costs incurred will be charged against the departmental budget.~~

~~(3) — Prepaid ticket or regular ticket. If a prepaid ticket has not been picked up, advise the designated travel agent of the cancellation. If the ticket has been picked up from the airline, return the ticket to the designated travel agent for refund. If the ticket is lost, a lost ticket application may be filed. A refund will be processed, less a \$70.00 fee. This process takes approximately three months. If the ticket was nonrefundable, the price of the ticket is lost. All costs incurred will be charged against the departmental budget. Reserved.~~

(Ord. No. 2000-1342, §§ 1.24—1.26, 7-11-2000)

Sec. 86-714. - Auto allowances.

- (a) Based on specific business requirements, the commissioners court may authorize a position to receive a monthly auto allowance.
- (b) Those persons-positions receiving auto allowances will not receive any additional allowance or reimbursement except for other expenses incurred while on official business outside of the county.

- (c) Employees who receive a monthly auto allowance and travel out of the county for county business ~~should shall~~ deduct 30 miles from their mileage reimbursement request for each one-way trip to the county line when using their personal auto for county business. This stipulation affects only employees who receive a monthly auto allowance.
- (d) Any employee with an auto allowance may agree to eliminate their auto allowance and receive instead the per mile reimbursement.
- ~~(e) When a position presently authorized to receive an auto allowance becomes vacant, the auto allowance will be eliminated, and the replacement to the vacant position will receive the mileage reimbursement, unless specifically authorized to retain the allowance by the commissioners court.~~
- ~~(f) An employee's auto allowances will only be not be maintained in the case of a promotionposition change if the position changeit is to a position that is not authorized previously had an auto allowance, and if it is necessary to allow the employee to receive the minimum promotional salary increase required by county policy.~~ Officials' and employees' compensation and auto allowance are provided to cover the cost of using their personal vehicle on county business. This reimbursement is specifically intended to cover the officials' or employees' cost to ensure their personal and third party liability. Each official or employee shall contact their vehicle insurance provider to ensure that they are properly insured.

(Ord. No. 2000-1342, §§ 2.00—2.05, 7-11-2000)

Secs. 86-715—86-750. - Reserved.