

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY, TEXAS  
EMPLOYEE POLICY MANUAL  
2. EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

**2.6 TRAVEL AND AUTO EXPENSES**

**PURPOSE**

**2.6-1** The Commissioners' Court allocates funds annually for the payment of travel expenditures for county employees and officials within the individual departmental budgets. Travel expenditures paid from these budgets must serve a public purpose for Montgomery County. These expenditures may be paid directly to the vendor or provided as a per diem to the employee/official upon completion of their travel. Advance payments to vendors may be accommodated by issuance of a check or use of a County procurement card. Eligible expenditure categories under this policy include: Lodging, transportation, registration fees, and other fees (with justification). Each category is further defined below.

**CONTRACT RATES**

**2.6-2** Montgomery County is a "Cooperative Purchasing Participating Entity" with the State of Texas. This program is also known as TPASS (Texas Procurement and Support Services) State Travel Management Program (STMP). This gives County employees and officials access to the contract rates negotiated by the State for hotels and rental cars. Procurement procedures for these contract services are explained within the categories below.

**LODGING (In and Out of State)**

**2.6-3** Hotel: These sites are provided as guidelines only: Hotel reimbursements are limited to the Federal Travel Regulations set forth by U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) by location, not including taxes. The rates are set annually and vary by month and location. Based on the traveler's destination the maximum rates for lodging per day can be found at the following:  
[http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877?utm\\_source=OGP&utm\\_medium=print-radio&utm\\_term=perdiem&utm\\_campaign=shortcuts](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877?utm_source=OGP&utm_medium=print-radio&utm_term=perdiem&utm_campaign=shortcuts)

Montgomery County's membership as a "Cooperative Purchasing Entity" gives County employees and officials access to the contract rates negotiated by the State for hotels. Participating hotels can be found at the following website: [http://portal.cpa.state.tx.us/hotel/hotel\\_directory/index.cfm](http://portal.cpa.state.tx.us/hotel/hotel_directory/index.cfm) (be sure to check the correct fiscal year). **When making a reservation the traveler must ask for the State of Texas Contract rate (not the government rate) and be prepared to provide the County's agency #: C1702.**

If the organizer of a conference/seminar has negotiated discount rates with a hotel(s), the traveler may choose these lodgings and the traveler may reserve the room at the group rate.

While Montgomery County intends for all employees to stay at safe and comfortable lodging environments, travelers are expected to make every effort to procure the best and lowest rates available for that area.

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\*\*Travel websites including but not limited to Expedia and Travelocity **shall not** be used for booking lodging.

**Travel Days:** Employees should minimize overnight stays. An additional night's lodging is allowable before and/or after the event only if the driving distance and event start/end times make it unreasonable to travel the day of the event.

**Additional fees allowable:** Parking

**Fees not allowable:** Internet (except for County business), phone charges, laundry, safe fees, Texas state sales tax.

**Gratuities:** Gratuities are not reimbursable for any lodging services.

**Prepaid Lodging:** Prepaid lodging services should be accurately calculated to prevent delays in processing travel reimbursements.

**Procurement Card:** The traveler may use the procurement card to make lodging reservations. Contact Purchasing to arrange to use the procurement card assigned to the department or traveler.

**Documentation:** **A final hotel bill with a zero balance is required even if lodging is paid by the procurement card.** The hotel bill should be scrutinized before traveler departs to make sure all charges are valid, and notify hotel of any invalid charges and resolve issues before departing. Any invalid charges will be the responsibility of the traveler. A copy of the itemized hotel statement must be submitted with the travel requisition claim, even if the traveler used a County procurement card to purchase lodging services or prepaid by County check. Event agenda/documentation or a letter from the traveler describing the event/meeting is required.

**Changes/Modifications to Reservations:** In the event of modifications including cancellation of reservation, the traveler must obtain a confirmation number and note the name of the person they spoke with in case the hotel charges the traveler. Expenses resulting from changes or modifications to travel reservations will be paid by the County if the traveler produces documentation that a family emergency exists or if County business prevented travel.

**MEALS**

**2.6-4 Per Diem Rate:** A flat meal rate of \$51/day will be paid to the traveler. The traveler's per diem on the departure day and final day of travel will be at 75% of the per diem.

**Day Trips:** Meals will not be reimbursed for trips that do not require an overnight stay.

**Procurement Card:** No meal purchases are allowed on any County procurement card.

**Documentation:** No meal receipts are required. Event agenda/documentation or a letter from the traveler describing the event/meeting is required.

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**TRANSPORTATION** **2.6-5 Personal Vehicle:** Use of personal vehicle will be reimbursed at the current rate/mile set by Commissioners' Court. Mileage should be calculated using the shortest distance of either the County office location or the traveler's home address and the event location. Mileage should be calculated using a readily available online mapping service. A printout of the route detailing the mileage must be provided in lieu of the mileage report page of the Travel Payment Requisition. Employees receiving an auto supplement may not be reimbursed for mileage.

**Allowable Expenses:** Parking and tolls with documentation.

**Travel within Montgomery County:** Mileage-only travel forms (i.e., regular office errands) should be completed and submitted by the end of each month. In-county travel does not require the use of an online mapping service. The mileage report page of the travel requisition must be appropriately filled out and submitted.

**County Vehicle:** County vehicles are to be used **only** for County business. Under no circumstances will family members be allowed to drive County vehicles. Employees' actions in County vehicles are observed by the public; this necessitates good conduct and driving habits by employees. Authorized Driver forms must be completed and on file in Risk Management.

**Accident:** In case of an accident, however minor, a full report must be made to the Risk Management Department. Failure to observe this rule could result in disciplinary action.

**Fuel Purchases:** Fuel purchases when using a County vehicle should be made with the County procurement card if available. Original receipts will accompany the procurement card statement.

**Withholding Taxes:** To the extent required by I.R.S. laws, rules and regulations, when County vehicles are assigned to the exclusive use of individual employees, \$3.00 per day will be declared as salary, subject to withholding taxes.

**Allowable Expenses:** Parking and tolls with documentation required.

**Airfare:** Airfare is reimbursable only for coach/economy full-service seat based on the required arrival of the event. The payment confirmation and itinerary must be presented with the travel reimbursement form. The traveler will be responsible for the excess charges of an airline ticket purchase other than a coach/economy seat.

**Allowable Expenses:** Bag fees. Fare changes are allowable if business related or due to family emergency with appropriate documentation of such.

**Unallowable Expenses/Fees:** Any upgrades from the base coach/economy full-service ticket, all fees/fares for changes made for personal reasons (i.e., extra legroom).

**Rental Car: These sites are provided as guidelines only.**

Rental cars are limited to the negotiated TPASS rates listed at: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-rental-car-contract/vendor-comparison/>. The contact information for Enterprise is listed here: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/procurement/prog/stmp/stmp-rental-car-contract/Enterprise/>. It is recommended to make your reservations at least 14 days

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in advance and provided the County's agency # **TXC1702**. The traveler should select a value priced vehicle comparable in size to the number of County travelers. The traveler may use a non-contract vendor at an overall rate lower than the contract rates with no penalty. The original contract/receipt must be presented with the travel reimbursement form or a copy if a County procurement card is used. The traveler will be responsible for any excess charges not included in the TPASS rates or for choosing a vehicle size not comparable with the number of travelers on the trip. Insurance is included in the negotiated TPASS rates, if a traveler chooses to take out additional insurance the cost of that insurance is the responsibility of the traveler.

**Enterprise:**

- Optional customer, coupon or corporate number is **06E1410**
- Enterprise will automatically bill Montgomery County when the reservations is made so the department will need to process a blanket release before departure.

**Unallowable Fees/Charges:** GPS, premium radio, child safety seats, additional insurance, one way rentals.

**Allowable Expenses:** Parking and tolls allowed with documentation.

**Other Transportation:** Other forms of transit (bus, taxi, train) are reimbursable with an original receipt.

**Gratuities:** Gratuities are not reimbursable for any transportation services.

**Procurement Card:** The traveler may use a County procurement card to make transportation reservations for air travel and rental car services. Contact Purchasing to arrange to use the procurement card assigned to the department or traveler.

**Documentation:** Original receipts are required for all transportation reimbursements paid by the traveler. Transportation services obtained with a County procurement card require a copy of the receipt. Additional requirements are noted within each category above. Event/agenda documentation or a letter from the traveler describing the event/meeting is required.

**REGISTRATION**

**2.6-6 Registration Fees:** Registration fees are reimbursable for events that serve a County purpose. Registration fees for golf tournaments, tours, spouse attendance guest fees, and other recreational events are not reimbursable.

**Procurement Card:** The traveler may use a County procurement card to register for an event. Contact Purchasing to arrange to use the procurement card assigned to the department or traveler.

**Documentation:** An original receipt must be obtained upon registration and submitted with the reimbursement request if paid by the traveler. A copy of the receipt must be provided if registration is paid on a County procurement card with the original receipt being submitted with procurement card statement. Acceptable receipts must detail the amount of the fee and type of payment used. Event agenda/documentation or a letter from the traveler describing the event/meeting is required.

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- GRANTS:**                   **2.6-7** Travel expenditures from Federal and State grants must also conform to the granting agency's funding requirements as well as those of the Montgomery County Travel Policy.
- TRAVEL PAYMENT  
REQUISITION:**       **2.6-8** The traveler must use the current travel payment requisition attached for all travel related services addressed in this policy. Only travel related expenditures may be submitted for reimbursement on the travel reimbursement form. After completing all required information, including any prepaid travel expenses, the travel form must be signed/dated by the traveler and the department head/elected official. Travel reimbursement request must be submitted to the County Auditor within 60 days of the last date of travel.
- TRAVEL OUTSIDE  
OF THE UNITED  
STATES:**               **2.6-9** All costs associated with travel outside of the U.S. must be converted to U.S. dollars before submission for reimbursement.