



JUN 26 2023

TRAVEL POLICY OF JOHNSON COUNTY
Effective 10/01/2023

No Action

Travel Required By Law & Same Day Travel

Commissioners Court does not require Court approval for travel to seminars, conferences, or training that is **required by law** or for any travel that will be **completed within the same day**, i.e., a destination that is close enough that there is no overnight stay needed. In this case, "required" travel would be that which is incurred to meet the legal education requirements of an individual's position with the County as set by Texas statute or required to maintain a license required for the position. All other education-related travel must be placed on the agenda for approval by the Commissioners Court.

Travel Reimbursement – Per Diem

Johnson County will reimburse for travel expenses, including meals, using a per diem rate when employees are traveling on official County business.

The per diem rates will be published by the County Auditor's Office each fiscal year or whenever the rates change. The Auditor will determine the rate by adding the breakfast, lunch, and dinner reimbursement rate published by United States General Services Administration's Standard Rate for Texas (as utilized by the Texas Comptroller) but excluding the additional allowance for incidental travel expenses.

Reimbursement for the first and last days of travel will be set to a rate equal to 75% of the full day travel rate. Per Diem or reimbursement of meals for same-day trips (there and back in the same day) will be permitted at a flat rate of 50% of the full day per diem rate. **As of the effective date of this policy, the rates are: \$54.00 for each full day of travel, \$40.50 for the first and last days of an overnight trip, and \$27.00 for same-day travel.**

Same-day travel per diem is a taxable fringe benefit under IRS rules, so same-day travel per diem will be reimbursed through payroll in the first regular pay period following the approval of the reimbursement. All other per diem and travel reimbursements will be handled by the Accounts Payable Division of the County Auditor.

Receipts are NOT required for the reimbursement of the per diem at the rates above.

Advancement of Per Diem

In order to alleviate any financial hardship associated with mandatory travel, the Commissioners Court has authorized the advancement of per diem. An employee seeking such an advancement must complete the Per Diem Advance Form indicating 1) the number of days of full and partial days of travel and 2) that failure to receive an advancement would create a financial hardship. Advances will be paid following the Commissioners Court meeting immediately before the scheduled departure date.

A person receiving a travel advancement must complete a travel reimbursement form no later than ten (10) days after returning from travel. Failure to complete the travel reimbursement form in a timely manner will result in taxes being withheld on the amount advanced in accordance with IRS regulations. If an advancement exceeds the total amount of travel reimbursement to which the employee was entitled, the excess shall be repaid to the County via payroll deduction.

The travel Advance and Reimbursement forms [EXHIBITs B & C] can be obtained from the **County website (<http://joconet/>) under EMPLOYEE RESOURCES/AUDITOR.**

A requisition for travel reimbursements and advances must be submitted to a Purchasing Agent to obtain a purchase order [see EXHIBIT A]. The signed and approved reimbursements and advances will then be receipted against the appropriate purchase order(s) [see EXHIBIT D] and processed through the Accounts Payable Division of the Auditor's Office.

Mileage Reimbursement

Mileage reimbursement will be paid at the same rate as is allowed by the IRS. The current rate can be found on the Travel Reimbursement Form [EXHIBIT C] **found on the County website (<http://joconet/>) under EMPLOYEE RESOURCES/AUDITOR.**

When traveling by motor vehicle, the distance traveled will be determined by Google Maps, MapQuest, or other electronic navigational program showing the miles from departure to destination location. Use your normal work location as the departure address. The same method will be used for travel from your hotel to your meeting location. Employees are encouraged to use the form of travel that is the most economical.

Air Travel – If travel is by airplane, the travel costs associated with the air travel will be reimbursed so long as the difference between the air travel costs and the mileage calculation for traveling by a motor vehicle do not exceed ten percent (10%). Airport parking and travel within the destination city (such as a car rental, taxi, or Uber) are also reimbursable subject to the above cap. For example, if the mileage calculation for travel by motor vehicle is \$300, the County will reimburse up to \$330 dollars for air travel. Under no circumstances will the maximum travel reimbursement exceed the calculated mileage reimbursement plus ten percent (10%).

Parking and Tolls – Parking fees and tolls actually paid by the traveler may be reimbursed with sufficient backup documentation. The traveler should not seek reimbursement of valet parking unless no self-parking option was available at the location. Tips and gratuities will not be reimbursed by the County.

Intra-County Mileage Reimbursement

Employees and Officials who receive a travel allowance as part of their compensation are not eligible for intra-county mileage reimbursements.

If the employee reports to a location other than their normal workplace for work or training and does not report to their normal workplace at all that day, no mileage reimbursement will be made.

If the alternative work location represents a significantly longer distance to travel than the normal workplace, then the mileage will be reimbursed.

If the employee reports to their normal workplace during their regular work hours and must travel to another location (midday travel) for work purposes and return, mileage may be claimed from the normal workplace to the other location and back (ROUND TRIP).

If the employee reports to the normal workplace during regular work hours with midday travel to another location with no return that day, mileage may be claimed (ONE WAY).

Local Overnight Travel

Unless necessary, overnight stays should be avoided within Johnson or the following counties: Tarrant, Parker, Hood, Somervell, Bosque, Hill, and Ellis. The traveler must show that such a trip is beneficial to the County. These requests will not be placed on the Commissioners Court Consent Agenda.

Out-Of-State Travel

Any out-of-state travel must be approved by the Commissioners Court. The traveler must show that such a trip is beneficial to the County. Out-of-state travel should be avoided if possible. These requests will not be placed on the Commissioners Court Consent Agenda.



Item No. WS 3

Workshop: Travel Policy Revisions



Per Diem Rates

- Move to a flat per diem rate instead of meal reimbursements
- Increase Rates to Comptroller Rates for meal reimbursement

Current Rates

Full Day - \$37
Breakfast - \$10
Lunch - \$12
Dinner - \$15

Proposed Rates

Full Day - \$54
Partial Day – 75% of Full Day
Same Day – 50% of Full Day

- “Partial Day” travel would be the first and last day of an overnight trip
- “Same Day” travel is a trip where you leave from home in the morning and return to home after the trip
- Total cost of increasing reimbursement:
Approximately \$10,000/year



Other Highlights of Proposed Policy

- Simplify per diem advancement process
- Clarify what incidental expenses are reimbursable (e.g. when parking and Uber/Taxi travel is or is not reimbursable)
- Make it clear when the IRS taxes per diem
- Requires Court Approval for overnight stays in Johnson and Contiguous Counties (including Tarrant County) – Similar to out of state travel

Questions or Suggestions for Final Draft of Policy?