

Highlights of Municipal Travel and Expense Law

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the MTAS website ([mtas.tennessee.edu](https://www.mtas.tennessee.edu)). This website is maintained daily by MTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee municipal government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with municipal government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other MTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Reference Number:
MTAS-1161

- This law does not apply to municipalities and metropolitan governments above 100,000 in population.
- It includes all cities with populations below 100,000.
- It covers city boards, city utility boards, boards of education and other boards or committees.
- MTAS is required to write a model travel and expense policy to guide municipalities. This policy and any amendments are subject to comptroller approval.
- Any city can write its own travel policy and file it with the comptroller. A travel policy written and adopted by a city does not need comptroller approval; it just has to be filed.
- If a city wants different travel policies or reimbursement rates for different boards, board members or employees, it apparently can do that. But the city must write its own policy and file it with the comptroller.
- If a city adopts the MTAS model, it must decide which travel reimbursement rate schedule (federal or state) to follow and complete the blank line, pass the ordinance and notify the comptroller in writing.
- Municipalities may provide vehicles for city officials. This sample travel policy does not cover the requirement that “a written policy shall be adopted by the municipal legislative body. The written policy for vehicle use shall be separate from the travel and expense policy provided for in the previous sections and shall contain no other subject matter.”
- Travel allowances not supported by adequate documentation are considered compensation. If statute, charter or private act limits an official’s pay, undocumented travel could cause the salary to exceed that limit.

DISCLAIMER: The letters and publications written by the MTAS consultants were written based upon the law at the time and/or a specific sets of facts. The laws referenced in the letters and publications may have changed and/or the technical advice provided may not be applicable to your city or circumstances. Always consult with your city attorney or an MTAS consultant before taking any action based on information contained in this website.

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