



Municipal Technical Advisory Service  
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

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## Sample Municipal Travel Policy Ordinance

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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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# Sample Municipal Travel Policy Ordinance

Reference Number: MTAS-1162

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY (TOWN) OF \_\_\_\_\_, TENNESSEE, TO ESTABLISH TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT REGULATIONS FOR CITY OFFICIALS AND CITY EMPLOYEES CONDUCTING OFFICIAL BUSINESS.**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this ordinance and referenced regulations is to bring the city into compliance with *Tennessee Code Annotated* § 6-54-901–907. This law requires Tennessee municipalities to adopt travel and expense regulations covering expenses incurred by "any mayor and any member of the local governing body and any board or committee member elected or appointed by the mayor or local governing body, and any official or employee of the municipality whose salary is set by charter or general law."

To provide consistent travel regulations and reimbursement, this ordinance is expanded to cover regular city employees. It is the intent of this policy to assure fair and equitable treatment to all individuals traveling on city business at city expense.

**ENFORCEMENT**

The chief administrative officer (CAO) of the city or his or her designee shall be responsible for the enforcement of these travel regulations.

**TRAVEL POLICY**

A. In the interpretation and application of this ordinance, the term "traveler" or "authorized traveler" means any elected or appointed municipal officer or employee, including members of municipal boards and committees appointed by the mayor or the municipal governing body, and the employees of such boards and committees who are traveling on official municipal business and whose travel was authorized in accordance with this ordinance. "Authorized traveler" shall not include the spouse, children, other relatives, friends, or companions accompanying the authorized traveler on city business, unless the person(s) otherwise qualifies as an authorized traveler under this ordinance.

B. Authorized travelers are entitled to reimbursement of certain expenditures incurred while traveling on official business for the city. Reimbursable expenses shall include expenses for transportation; lodging; meals; registration fees for conferences, conventions and seminars; and other actual and necessary expenses related to official business as determined by the CAO. Under certain conditions, entertainment expenses may be eligible for reimbursement.

C. Authorized travelers can request either a travel advance for the projected cost of authorized travel, or advance billing directly to the city for registration fees, air fares, meals, lodging, conferences and similar expenses.

Travel advance requests are not considered documentation of travel expenses. If travel advances exceed documented expenses, the traveler must immediately reimburse the city. It will be the responsibility of the CAO to initiate action to recover any undocumented travel advances.

D. Travel advances are available only for special travel and only after completion and approval of the travel authorization form.

E. The travel expense reimbursement form will be used to document all expense claims.

F. To qualify for reimbursement, travel expenses must be:

- Directly related to the conduct of the city business for which travel was authorized; and
- Actual, reasonable and necessary under the circumstances. The CAO may make exceptions for unusual circumstances.

Expenses considered excessive will not be allowed.

G. Claims of \$5 or more for travel expense reimbursement must be supported by the original paid receipt for lodging, vehicle rental, phone call, public carrier travel, conference fee and other reimbursable costs.

H. Any person attempting to defraud the city or misuse city travel funds is subject to legal action for recovery of fraudulent travel claims and/or advances.

I. Mileage and lodging expenses incurred within the city are not ordinarily considered eligible expenses for reimbursement.

**TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT RATE SCHEDULES**

Authorized travelers shall be reimbursed according to the \_\_\_\_\_ [enter either federal or state of Tennessee] travel regulation rates. The city's travel reimbursement rates will automatically change when the \_\_\_\_\_ [federal or state] rates are adjusted.

The municipality may pay directly to the provider for expenses such as meals, lodging and registration fees for conferences, conventions, seminars and other education programs.

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

The city adopts and incorporates by reference — as if fully set out herein — the administrative procedures submitted by MTAS to, and approved by letter by, the Comptroller of the Treasury, State of Tennessee. A copy of the administrative procedures is on file in the office of the city recorder.

This ordinance shall take effect upon its final reading by the municipal governing body. It shall cover all travel and expenses occurring on or after the date of adoption.

THIS ORDINANCE IS ADOPTED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

Attested: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notes:**

- **If a city decides not to adopt this model travel policy and the administrative procedures that follow, then that city must prepare and file its own travel policy with the comptroller.**
- **If your city would like a copy of the comptroller's approval letter of the MTAS policy, contact MTAS.**

*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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