



Meals and Incidentals

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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Meals and Incidentals

Reference Number: MTAS-1167

Meals

Receipts are not required for meals and incidentals. The authorized traveler may be reimbursed the daily amount based on the rate schedule and the authorized length of stay. The per diem meal amounts are expected to cover meals, tips, porters and incidental expenses. The authorized traveler will not be reimbursed more than this.

Whether meals may be claimed depends on when the traveler leaves and returns to the official station. The traveler's official station is home or work, whichever produces the least cost to the city. Under the state travel regulations, reimbursement for meals is not permitted for one-day travel status with no overnight stay.

Regardless of which reimbursement rate the city uses, the amounts include tip, gratuity, etc. The hour and date of departure and return must be shown on the expense reimbursement form.

The excess cost of an official banquet may be allowed provided proper documentation or explanation is submitted with the expense reimbursement form. If a meal is included as part of a conference or seminar registration, or is included with the air fare, then the allowance for that meal should be subtracted from the total allowance for the day. For example, if a dinner is included as part of the conference fee, the maximum meal allowance for the day should be reduced by the allowed dinner amount.

PLEASE NOTE:

The municipality has selected to reimburse travelers at the _____ [enter either federal or state] travel regulation rates. The city's rates will automatically change when the selected agency rates are adjusted.

Miscellaneous Expenses

A. Registration fees for approved conferences, conventions, seminars, meetings and other educational programs will be allowed and will generally include the cost of official banquets, meals, lodging and registration fees. Registration fees should be specified on the original travel request form and can include a request for pre-registration fee payment.

B. A \$5 allowance will be reimbursable for hotel/motel check-in and baggage handling expenses.

C. Laundry, valet service, tips and gratuities are considered personal expenses and are not reimbursable.

D. For travel outside the United States, all expenses claimed must be converted to U.S. dollars. The conversion rate and computation should be shown on each receipt.

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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