

HUM-001-026

Strathcona County
Municipal Policy Handbook

Employee Business Expense

Date Approved by Council: 10/19/88; 06/27/90;
02/27/91; 09/20/94; 06/29/99; 03/14/2000; 09/20/2005;
04/21/2009

Resolution No: C-116/88;C-84/90;
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120/2000; 652/2005; 255/2009

Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

Replaces: 40-44-002

Last Review Date: August 15, 2012

Next Review Date: 08/2015

Administrative Responsibility: Financial Services

Special Note: Kilometre rate changes will be set at one cent per kilometre below the CRA (Canada Revenue Agency) rate unless otherwise directed by the Chief Commissioner.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Strathcona County to reimburse business expenses necessarily incurred by employees in the performance of duties. Employees are neither asked to subsidize the cost of the County nor invited to indulge themselves at public expense. It is expected that logic and good business sense will prevail.

Guidelines

1. Scope of the Policy

The Employee Business Expense Policy applies to all authorized employees for expenses related to business activities undertaken to meet one or more of the following objectives:

- a) To conduct regular job duties as approved by the Director.
- b) To perform special functions that may include the following:
 - i) promoting, encouraging or fostering business investment in Strathcona County.
 - ii) conducting research for assigned tasks which can only occur through personal visitation, observation and discussion.
 - iii) participating on a multi-jurisdictional committee whose work will enhance Strathcona County's political and/or economic position.

The Employee Business Expense Policy applies to expenses incurred while on authorized business travel outside Strathcona County, and to expenses incurred while hosting a business activity locally.

2. Responsibilities of the Employee and Management

Employee's responsibilities:

- a) To identify and review required business expenses to ensure cost effective options for travel, accommodation, etc. are selected.
- b) To identify, when possible, estimates of business expenses as part of the annual budgeting process.
- c) To submit a completed "Staff Development Business Expenditure" form requesting training and staff development opportunities (seminars, conferences, etc.), to the appropriate Director or designate, or in the case of Directors, to the appropriate Associate Commissioner.
- d) To apply for an accountable advance, if required, identifying anticipated costs for airfares, hotel, registration, etc..
- e) To submit a claim for business expenses, accompanied by all necessary receipts and/or documentation on a monthly basis. Receipts must be detailed and show GST amount and GST registration number. A Visa/Mastercard slip is not a receipt for business expense purposes.

Director's or appropriate designate's responsibilities:

- a) To identify and incorporate estimates of business expenses into the annual budget.
- b) To review "Staff Development Business Expenditure" forms, and pre-authorize expenditures.
- c) To authorize employees to incur business expenses related to performing regular job duties, including any special functions (as per 1b).

3. Fly Edmonton First

Employees shall endeavour to fly in accordance with the principles of Fly Edmonton First. Fly Edmonton First is a program designed to influence the air service decisions of consumers to support flights that offer the most benefit to our community. To support Fly Edmonton First, employees should choose a flight based on the following criteria when planning a business trip; provided that there are no increased costs associated with the program principles.

- a) Actively choose to fly non-stop to your destination whenever possible, domestic or international.
- b) When non-stop service is not available, actively choose to fly same plane service whenever possible.
- c) When non-stop and same plane services are not available to an international destination, actively choose to connect through one of the US hubs served from the Edmonton International Airport on a non-stop basis.

4. Reimbursement of Expenses

Employees conducting authorized County business will be reimbursed for costs incurred, based on the following criteria:

- a) Travel
 - i) Where travel is authorized, the most direct, economical and time efficient mode of transportation shall be utilized.

- ii) Where an employee chooses to use a mode of transportation other than prescribed under Subsection a(i), reimbursement shall be based as though the mode of transportation prescribed under Subsection a(i) was used.
- iii) Pursuant to Subsection a(ii), if personal travel extends the period of working time required for a trip, then the additional time shall be deducted from vacation leave entitlement or may be arranged as leave without pay.
- iv) Notwithstanding Subsection a(i), an employee may select a route and mode of transportation to combine personal activities with County business, but reimbursement for travel expenses shall be paid on the basis of the expenses that would have been incurred had the trip been made using the mode prescribed under Subsection a(i).
- v) Air travel shall not exceed regular economy class rates.
- vi) Travel outside Canada shall be reimbursed in Canadian currency plus exchange for those expenses prescribed by this regulation that are supported by receipts, when required (i.e. meals), or meal allowance per diems if no receipts.

b) Accommodations

If an employee is required to travel on County business and overnight accommodation away from the employee's regular place of domicile is necessary, the employee may claim the actual receipted cost of accommodation for a single room rate, or a per diem for stays in a private residence in an amount set out in Schedule "A".

c) Meals

- i) While conducting authorized County business, an employee may claim for meals in accordance with Schedule "A".
- ii) If meals are included as part of the business activities (e.g. official openings), the employee may not claim for an alternate meal unless required to do so for medical reasons where the program meal package cannot accommodate the medical need.
- iii) In the event that an employee encounters meal expenses exceeding Schedule "A" due to location of stay or economics of the location, (such as when the employee is not in close proximity to an eating establishment that can provide a meal at a cost comparable to the meal allowance; or when County business would be disrupted by moving to an eating establishment that provides meals at a cost comparable to the meal allowance) reimbursement will be based on actual receipted expenses.
- iv) Department Directors shall have the flexibility to require meal receipts whenever deemed to be of value to the respective Department.

d) Transportation

An employee may claim the following expenses with a receipt:

- i) bus fare
- ii) railway fare and berth/roomette if applicable
- iii) limousine/taxi fare
- iv) parking charges
- v) economy air fare
- vi) economy automobile rental

e) Communication - Cell Phones and Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's)

An employee may claim the following expenses with a receipt:

- i) charges for electronic communication related to County business (copy required)
- ii) charges for "official business" long distance phone calls
- iii) charges for one phone call home for each night away for up to 5 minutes/call.
- iv) Cell phones and PDA's are provided to employees in order to conduct County business. Discretion shall be used and all personal long distance calls will be reimbursed by the employee.
- v) While traveling on County business, business related long distance calls should be made at the employee's discretion and where possible, cell phones should be used to avoid excessive charges levied through hotels.
- vi) The employee should ensure that the cell phone plan covers the location to avoid excessive roaming charges.
- vii) Employees without a County cell phone who use their personal cell phone for County business will be reimbursed based on a reasonable allowance approved by the Director of Financial Services.

f) Kilometre Rates, Insurance

- i) An employee who uses their personal vehicle for County business shall provide a driver's abstract as and when required by Human Resources.
- ii) All employees claiming kilometer rate reimbursement may be required to provide a statement from an insurance agent indicating if business insurance is or is not required when using a personal vehicle on County business (minimum \$1,000,000 liability insurance).
- iii) An employee who uses a personal automobile for business shall be reimbursed for travel and insurance as per Schedule "A".
- iv) Where more than one employee is conducting County business in the same location outside Strathcona County, transportation should be shared where possible and normally only one person would be reimbursed.
- v) If required, rental car insurance will be reimbursed for business related travel.

g) Medical Insurance and Medical Expenses

- i) An employee authorized to travel outside of Canada, but who is not covered by Extended Health Care, shall arrange for and claim the cost of medical insurance to cover costs not covered by the employee's benefit plan. The additional insurance coverage will apply only while the employee is traveling on authorized County business.
- ii) Medical costs covered by the employee's coverage are not claimable expenses.
- iii) The cost of passports for travel out of Canada and the cost of immunization for travel outside North America will be reimbursed.

- h) Hospitality Business Expenses
 - i) The Director will exercise prudent judgement when claiming or pre-approving an expense for alcohol for special events or public relations activities.
 - ii) An employee carrying out regular duties associated with authorized public relations activities shall be entitled to reimbursement of appropriate expenses.
 - iii) Official functions requiring an "official" presence entitles authorized employees participating to receive expense reimbursement.
 - iv) The Chief Commissioner shall determine "official" functions. A sample list of functions will provide guidance for the Director. (Schedule B).
- i) Special Provisions

If an employee incurs business expenses for which reimbursement is not expressly authorized by this policy, an Associate Commissioner or Director may recommend to the Chief Commissioner that the person be reimbursed for the expenses incurred. The Chief Commissioner shall then decide whether or not that expense falls within the intent of this Policy.
- j) Timing of Submission of Business Expenses

Business expenses are required to be submitted monthly or by major event.

5. **Chief Commissioner's Expenses**

In addition to expenses authorized elsewhere in this policy, the Chief Commissioner has a role similar to the Mayor and Councillors to promote the interests of Strathcona County and it may be necessary for the Chief Commissioner to meet with representatives of other municipal governments, senior levels of government or County residents to support the Council, community, committees, regional, provincial, national or other events which result in expenses which may be claimed as business expenses by the Chief Commissioner subject to availability of budget funds and approval by the Mayor or County Council.

Should the Chief Commissioner be invited to a social or fundraising event or to another event deemed to be significant by the Mayor or County Council to which the Chief Commissioner's spouse/partner is also invited where appropriate, then the ticket for the spouse/partner may be paid as a business expense subject to availability of budget funds and approval by the Mayor or County Council.

6. **Administration**

The administration of guidelines outlined in the Employee Business Expense Policy is the responsibility of the Directors, in cooperation with the Director of Financial Services. Directors are to ensure that employees remain within the Policy. Where it is determined an employee has falsified an expense claim, any overpayment by the County will be recovered and disciplinary action will be taken against the employee.

Where conflict in the interpretation of these guidelines arises, the matter shall be referred to the Director of Financial Services.

7. **Delegation**

The Chief Commissioner is delegated the authority to set compensation and reimbursement rates for business expenses covered by this Policy.

SCHEDULE "A"**Employee Business Expense Policy
EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENT RATES****PROGRAM
REGISTRATION
FEE**

Actual receipted cost, showing GST amount and GST registration number.

ACCOMMODATION

Actual receipted cost of accommodation for single room showing GST amount and GST registration number.

No receipt required for stay in private accommodations
\$40.00 per night

MEALS

For single meals, detailed receipts, showing GST amount, may not be required for costs up to the following:

Breakfast	\$10.00 (includes gratuities and GST)
Lunch	\$15.00 (includes gratuities and GST)
Dinner	\$25.00 (includes gratuities and GST)

For single meals, receipts are required for costs in excess of above meal cost limits. If more than one meal is purchased, provide name(s) of the guests including the company represented and the nature of business meal [see Page 7, 4(g) The per capita reimbursement for Christmas lunches, at the discretion of the Chief Commissioner, are for Directors, Managers, senior Administrative Assistants reporting to the Director and other direct reports to the Director; and shall be funded from the individual department budget.

TRAVEL

(Airplane, Taxi
Bus, Train and
Car Rental)

Actual receipted cost. A detailed receipt showing GST amount and GST Registration Number is required.

**PRIVATE VEHICLE
KILOMETRE RATES**

On presentation of an accounting of kilometres to, from and reasons:

- maximum **51 cents per km** (effective June 1, 2008) for all business kilometers driven, except for those employees who receive a vehicle allowance, in which case the reimbursement rate applies only to those kilometers driven outside of Strathcona County.

(On January 17, 2024, the Chief Commissioner approved a rate change to 69 cents per kilometer, effective February 1, 2024. This is in accordance with the special note at the beginning of this policy. This statement does not form a part of the policy, and is a note for users only)

INSURANCE

(Travel, Auto,
Medical, if
required)

Cost with receipt to a maximum \$250.00 per annum.

SCHEDULE "B"**Employee Business Expense Policy****OFFICIAL FUNCTIONS****Sample List - June, 1999**

Chamber of Commerce Luncheons
Prayer Breakfast for Designates
Federal/Provincial Liaison Invitations
United Way Campaigns
County Special Events (i.e. 2000 Alberta Winter Games)

N.B. #1: Directors may recommend to the Chief Commissioner additions to this list. The Chief Commissioner will consider the activities listed and issue an approved listing.