

SOP: Travel and Accommodation Expense Guidelines

This SOP provides comprehensive **travel and accommodation expense guidelines**, detailing the procedures for planning, approving, and reimbursing expenses related to business travel. It includes rules for booking transportation and lodging, allowable expense categories, submission of receipts and documentation, per diem limits, and compliance with organizational budgets and policies. The aim is to ensure consistent, transparent, and cost-effective management of travel expenditures while supporting employee needs during official travel.

1. Purpose

To outline standardized procedures for planning, approving, and reimbursing travel and accommodation expenses, ensuring transparency, compliance, and fiscal responsibility.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees, contractors, and consultants who incur travel and accommodation expenses on behalf of the organization.

3. Definitions

- **Business Travel:** Travel undertaken for work-related purposes authorized by the organization.
- **Per Diem:** A daily allowance to cover meals and incidental expenses during travel.
- **Allowable Expenses:** Expenses deemed eligible for reimbursement as per these guidelines.

4. Procedures

4.1 Planning and Approval

- Submit a travel request form detailing travel dates, destination, purpose, and estimated costs.
- Obtain prior approval from the relevant supervisor/manager before incurring any expenses.
- Ensure the travel aligns with budgetary allocations.

4.2 Booking Transportation and Lodging

- Book transportation (e.g., airfare, train, car rental) and accommodation through preferred vendors or designated travel agencies.
- Select cost-effective options (e.g., economy class, standard hotel rooms).
- Avoid bookings in premium/luxury categories unless pre-approved and justified.

4.3 Allowable Expense Categories

Category	Examples	Notes/Limits
Transportation	Airfare, train, taxi, rental car, mileage	Economy or equivalent only
Accommodation	Hotel, lodging	Standard room, no upgrades
Meals and Incidentals	Breakfast, lunch, dinner, tips	Subject to per diem limits
Other	Parking, internet, business calls	Must be business-related, with receipts

5. Submission and Reimbursement

- Submit an expense report within 7 days of travel completion.
- Attach original, itemized receipts and supporting documentation for all expenses.
- Incomplete or late submissions may result in delayed or denied reimbursement.
- Reimbursements are processed within 14 business days of approval.

6. Per Diem and Limits

- Per diem rates are set annually and communicated to all employees.
- Expenses exceeding per diem or allowable limits require written justification and executive approval.

7. Compliance and Exceptions

- All expenses must comply with organizational policies and relevant laws.
- Non-compliance may result in non-reimbursement or disciplinary action.
- Exceptions to these guidelines require prior written approval from the Finance Department.

8. Record Keeping

- Maintain records of approved requests, receipts, and reimbursements for a minimum of 5 years.

9. Policy Review and Updates

- This SOP will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect organizational or regulatory changes.