

# Travel and Business Expense Reimbursement

## 1. Introduction

Providence Health Care (PHC) is a publicly funded health care organization. Employees are responsible and will be held accountable for the judicious use of taxpayer's money. Employees shall be reimbursed for reasonable substantiated expenses when such expenses are:

- Incurred in the performance of PHC business;
- Appropriate and necessary for the conduct of PHC business;
- Out-of-pocket and are not reimbursed from another source;
- Authorized and approved by the relevant PHC authority in accordance with the PHC Signing Authority Policy.

### 1.1. Scope

This policy, unless otherwise specified under the terms of a Collective Agreement or Terms and Conditions of Employment, applies to all staff and any other person authorized by PHC for expenses incurred while on PHC business.

## 2. Policy

### 2.1. Key Objectives

- To ensure that all expenditures are being consistent with the approved purpose of the organization. These expenditures are to be reasonable and economic for publicly funded organizations and budgetary allocations are not exceeded as a result of expenditures and expenditure commitments.
- PHC assumes no obligation for reimbursing claimants for expenses incurred that are not in compliance with this Policy.
- Expenses incurred on PHC business related travel should be consistent with normal living standards. Those who are in any doubt as to the appropriateness of a specific travel or other business expense should consult with their director/leader for guidance. Alternative means to travel including video conferencing and teleconferencing should be considered where practical to achieve cost savings; and to mitigate the production of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Any credits, discounts or entitlement benefits earned and accumulated while traveling on PHC business shall be used wherever possible to reduce the travel costs to PHC.
- The appropriate cost center manager or delegate must pre-authorize all non-local travel, i.e. all travel out of the Lower Mainland, the PHC operating areas and Victoria.
- Out of the Province travel requires prior authorization by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The President and Chief Executive officer will approve the out of Province travel of all the members of the Senior Leadership Team. In the case of travel by

the President and Chief Executive Officer approval must be received from the Board Chair of PHC.

- Exceptional expenses incurred while traveling, due to a true emergency, such as medical incident or accident, will be reimbursed by PHC, for any amount not covered through PHC's extended health care plan.
- All rates to be paid under this policy will be reviewed as and when required.
- Any expense claims deemed to be excessive will be forwarded to the Executive Director, Financial Services for review.
- Claims must be made on the appropriate Business Travel Reimbursement or Mileage Claim form and approved by the employee's supervisor, in accordance with PHC's Signing Authority Policy. Expense claims of the President and Chief Executive officer will be approved by the Board Chair of PHC. Approval can be handwritten or eSignature.
- Claims must be submitted to PHSA Accounts Payable (PHSA AP) for reimbursement within 30 days of the completion of travel or receipt of the itemized bill incurred as a result of travel.
- Where a claimant has incurred expenses in relation to a research grant, and such grant has express provisions that vary from those contained in this Policy, the provisions contained in the grant will take precedence.

## 2.2. Reimbursable Expenses and Thresholds

### Air Travel

- Air travel is to be used where other, less expensive forms of transportation are not possible or reasonable for the particular trip. Where air travel is required, the most economical air fare shall be obtained.
- Flights are to be booked through the designated corporate travel agency as soon as destination and travel times are confirmed to obtain early booking discounts.
- Travelers must arrange for any modifications to the ticket due to personal reasons and such related costs are borne by the individual.
- Additional costs for upgrading the ticket will be borne by the traveler unless expressly authorized by the President and Chief Executive Officer or designate.
- Where frequent flyer points are used for business travel, they will not be reimbursed.

### Ground Transportation – Private Automobiles

- The current mileage rate (per kilometer) will be reimbursed when the employee travels from original work destination to another work destination on the same day. The Guide to Inter-Site Mileage should be used as the basis for calculating mileage when making

claims. Mileage incurred from home to work location will not be reimbursed except for Call Back Mileage.

- For travelling directly to a business destination other than the regular work location and the business destination is further than the regular work location, employees may claim all kilometers travelled which exceed the distance between their home and the regular work location.
- For employees leaving for their home at the end of the day from a business destination other than the regular work location, they may claim all kilometers travelled which exceed the distance between the regular work location and their home.
- The current mileage rate (per kilometer) will be reimbursed from point of departure for out of town travel. Costs incurred in ground transportation are not to exceed the cost of a return economy class airfare in the case of out of town travel.
- Parking charges will be reimbursed for work locations, other than normal work sites.
- Bridge tolls will be reimbursed at the toll rate in effect at the time of travel, when travelling from the original work destination to another work destination on the same day. Financial consequences of unpaid tolls will not be reimbursed.

#### **Ground Transportation – Rental Vehicles and Car Sharing**

- With pre approval, to be used where the destination is not in the immediate vicinity of the hotel/business site and taxi travel is not a reasonable or economical option.
- Costs for a sub-compact or compact car will be reimbursed for rental vehicles
- If three (3) or more employees are traveling together or bulky or heavy equipment are being transported, a mid-size car may be rented.
- Rental vehicles should be arranged through the designated corporate travel agency and a credit card (corporate or personal) will be required at pick-up time.
- The corporate/government or lowest attainable rate must be used whenever possible.
- When required, all reservations must be cancelled prior to reserved pick-up times to avoid unnecessary charges.

#### **Ground Transportation – Taxi**

- Used in town when other means of travel is not available. Designated corporate taxi company should be utilized for local travel using a taxi voucher.
- Used for out-of-town travel to and from airport, accommodation, and meetings.
- Other forms of transportation (airport buses, etc.) should be used where feasible and where distance makes taxi travel prohibitive.

**Accommodation**

- Employees will be reimbursed for actual commercial accommodation expenses during out of town business travel at the corporate/government or lowest attainable rate, at a hotel close to the business site.
- Hotel reservations should be arranged through PHC's designated corporate travel agency, when possible.
- In the event of date changes or cancellations, all reservations must be cancelled prior to check-in to avoid unnecessary charges.
- A private accommodation allowance claim of \$30.00 per day will be accepted without receipts to allow employees staying with friends or relatives to make some expression of gratitude.

**Ferry**

- Full cost of the ferry travel will be reimbursed.
- Cost of using the Reservation System or Assured Loading Tickets (ALT) will be reimbursed but should only be used when absolutely necessary.

**Meal**

Meal expenses are reimbursed for travel that exceeds 50 km each way from the employee's regular work site, based on either per diem rates or the submission of original receipts.

For meal expenses supported with receipts, the reimbursement amount cannot exceed the per diem amounts. An expense reimbursement claiming a mix of per diem rates and original receipts on the same day is not permissible.

Where an employee chooses to claim meal expenses based on per diem rates, no receipts are required. Meal per diem allowances are as follows (in Canadian funds for both national and international travel):

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Full Day
\$12.00	\$15.00	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$52.00

Employees may not claim for meals received at public expense or without charge. Meal per diem cannot be claimed if expenses were not incurred.

On the date of departure, travel status must start before:

- 7:00 a.m. to claim breakfast;

- 12:00 noon to claim lunch; and
- 6:00 p.m. to claim dinner.

On the date of return, travel status must end after:

- 7:00 a.m. to claim breakfast;
- 12:00 noon to claim lunch; and
- 6:00 p.m. to claim dinner.

### **Communications**

- Reasonable business calls, either from home or during business travel, will be reimbursed.
- Reasonable calls home from out of town will be reimbursed.

### **Insurance**

- Personal/Air Travel Insurance - Out of country medical and trip cancellation insurance expenses incurred as a result of business travel will be reimbursed. Extended health benefit plans may provide out of country travel insurance. Check with your individual plans for coverage limits prior to obtaining more insurance.
- Private Vehicle Damage Reimbursement – When an employee's private vehicle is damaged while on PHC business, PHC may reimburse the lesser of actual vehicle damage to repair costs on employee's vehicle or insurance deductible to a maximum of \$500 per occurrence. Repairs must be completed before submitting a claim. The employee shall not be entitled to reimbursement if he/she is responsible for the cause of the damage and may only be partially reimbursed if the employee is partially responsible for the damage.
- Car Rental Coverage - Rental vehicles must include 'collision damage waiver' insurance coverage in the event of a collision.

### **Non-Reimbursable Expenses**

Expenses not associated with PHC business will not be reimbursed. Examples of non-reimbursable expenses (not intended to be complete):

- Personal non-business entertainment
- Accommodations for local travel
- Medical/surgical items (except in emergent situations)
- Consumption of alcohol and purchase of alcohol and liquor as a gift unless pre-authorization is obtained from the President and Chief Executive Officer of PHC

- Personal items (cloths, dry cleaning, hair stylist, etc.)
- Additional expenses related to travelling with a spouse or other guest
- Traffic, towing and parking fines
- Fines for infraction of laws
- Side trips for personal reasons
- Office décor items
- Babysitters
- Kennel services
- Newspapers and magazines
- Movies

Meal expenses at a restaurant for meetings or entertainment where only PHC employees are present will not be reimbursed. This would include seasonal celebrations and meals.

Catered Meals including seasonal celebrations, will generally not be reimbursed. There may be rare circumstances where employee may attend meetings on PHC premises over a meal break where catering is provided to the group. In these circumstances, the catered meal must be approved by the Senior Leadership Team member and be paid by the most senior ranking staff in attendance.

Employee recognition food/meals and gifts will not be reimbursed (excludes long service awards and retirement gifts by HR department) but small, reasonable and occasional gestures of appreciation to staff will be allowed (e.g. cookies, baked goods, etc.)

Overtime: Overtime for travel on scheduled days off is not reimbursed unless specified under the terms of a Collective Agreement or Terms and Conditions of Employment

### **2.3. Arranging Travel**

- All travel that is to be paid by PHC should be booked through the designated corporate travel agent, where feasible.
- Individuals who frequently travel at the request of PHC must complete the Travel Profile form.

### **2.4. Corporate Purchasing Card Program**

- Application for Purchasing Card must be submitted to Finance with prior approval from proper signing authority.
- Each user is responsible for all charges on their card and to reconcile card statement on a timely basis.

### 2.5. Receipts

- Original receipts (itemized bill with details of the purchase and taxes) must be submitted for all reimbursable expenses. Photocopies of receipts, confirmation letters for reservations, credit card customer slips and other forms and faxes are not acceptable as original receipts. If original receipts are not available, expense claims will not be reimbursed.
- In the unusual circumstance that proof of purchase/receipt is not available; the requirement must be waived by the Executive Director, Financial Services or Executive Director, People.

### 2.6. Claiming Expenses

- Complete the Business Travel Reimbursement or Mileage Claim Form itemizing each item on a daily basis and include the current home address.
- Submit all original receipts and supporting documents. If a claim is for meal expenses incurred for multiple individuals, the names of all individuals must be listed.
- Submit to appropriate signing authority for approval within 2 weeks of business.
- Submit the Business Travel Reimbursement claim to PHSA AP and the Mileage Claim to PHSA Payroll for processing.

## 3. Responsibilities

All business travel expenses (including conference fees) must be authorized in advance by the department leader whose budget is being affected by the expenditures, and who has the appropriate level of signing authority for the expense. Employees are not permitted to sign for their own expenses.

Authorizing officers should ensure that the expenses submitted are proper and in compliance with PHC policies and procedures. Authorizing officers should print their names as well as signing the invoice or claim form to complete the expense approval process.

Every employee who is traveling on PHC business is responsible for:

- Acting as a representative of PHC at all times;
- Adhering to PHC policies and guidelines for expenses;
- Retaining all expenditure receipts.

Directors, leaders and signing authorities are responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving all submitted travel expenses for their employees;
- Providing guidance to employees on the appropriate types and levels of expenditures for travel.

PHSA Accounts Payable Department is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all expenditures are properly authorized and approved;
- Provide approved reimbursements to employees in a timely manner.

#### 4. Compliance

PHC reserves the right to refuse reimbursement of expenses that are deemed unreasonable for the circumstances. If employees are unsure as to whether an expense is reimbursable, it is best that they check with the appropriate signing authority prior to incurring the expenditure. Failure by employees to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, services or privileges.

#### 5. Supporting Documents

##### 5.1. Related Policies

[Signing Authority](#)

##### 5.2. Guidelines/Procedures/Forms

[Business Travel Reimbursement Form](#)

[Call Back and Mileage Rates \(Mileage Rates tab\)](#)

[Guide to Inter-site Mileage \(Mileage Grid tab\)](#)

[Out of Province Travel Request Form](#)

[PHC Mileage Claim Form](#)

[Purchasing Card Guidelines and Procedures](#)

[Taxi Services](#)

[Travel Profile and Eligibility Form](#)

[Travel Services](#)

#### 6. Definitions

**“Local Travel”** includes all regions within the Lower Mainland.

**“Provincial Travel”** includes accommodations, meals and transportation costs when traveling within BC, but outside of the local travel area. These expenses must be pre-approved by the Cost Centre Manager.

**“Out of Province Travel”** includes accommodations, meals and transportation when traveling outside of BC or Canada. These expenses must be pre-approved by the Senior Leadership Team.



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