



# TRAVEL GUIDELINES

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Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
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## GENERAL POLICIES

All non-federal members of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council), the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee, Advisory Panels, technical teams, work groups, ad hoc committees, staff, special consultants, and other individuals with specific invitation to travel are eligible to receive reimbursement for permissible travel expenses when away from home or their work location. Persons authorized to perform travel for the Council are expected to exercise the same care when incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling for personal reasons.

## TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION

All travel must be authorized and approved in advance by a Travel Authorization (TA) before any travel reimbursements are issued. Points of travel are indicated on the TA, and deviations from these points of travel must have prior approval for payment or reimbursement.

## METHOD OF TRANSPORTATION

Travel may be performed by common carrier (i.e., air, train, bus, etc.), privately owned vehicle, or other means. The Council will reimburse the method of transportation which results in the greatest financial advantage to the Council, considering cost, travel time, convenience, and other factors. If the mode of travel selected by the claimant incurs a higher cost, the additional cost is the responsibility of the claimant.

## REQUIRED RECEIPTS

In general, travelers are required to submit receipts for any reimbursable expenses over \$50.00. However, the Council reserves the right to request receipts for unusual or questionable expenses less than \$50.00. Travelers are encouraged to keep receipts for all travel expenses (excluding meal and incidental expenses) until after the travel claim has been approved. Table 1 provides additional detail about the specific receipt requirements for various expense categories.

Table 1. Receipt requirements for various expense categories

Expense	Receipt Requirements
<b>Meals &amp; Incidental Expenses</b>	Receipts are not required, regardless of the cost of the meal.
<b>Tolls</b>	Toll receipts (or <i>E-ZPass</i> statements) are required if the <b>total</b> of all tolls on a single trip exceeds \$50.
<b>Lodging</b>	Original, itemized hotel receipts are required and must show the traveler's name, date(s) occupied, actual rate charged per room, and indication that the amount submitted for reimbursement has been paid in full (zero balance). Temporary lodging receipts issued upon registration are not valid. If the lodging receipt includes costs for parking, internet, phone, dining/room service, or other costs in addition to the room rate and associated taxes and fees, these should be deducted from the lodging total and listed in the appropriate category on the claim form.
<b>Rental Cars</b>	A rental agreement and receipt indicating a zero balance are required. Rental car self-fueling receipts should also be submitted.
<b>Air, rail, or bus fares</b>	Receipts are required for all common carrier fares exceeding \$50.
<b>Taxi/Shuttle fares</b>	Receipts are required if the <b>total</b> of all taxi/shuttle expenses on a single trip exceeds \$50.
<b>Parking</b>	Receipts are required if the <b>total</b> of all parking expenses on a single trip exceeds \$50. If parking is included on a hotel receipt, the traveler should subtract that amount from the "Lodging" total and list it as a separate line item under "Other Expenses."

## ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

*The following sections describe travel costs that can be claimed on the Travel Expense Report and provides instructions on submitting a claim for reimbursement.*

### AIRFARE

If flying, reservations should be made no less than 14 days from the scheduled date of departure to avoid excessive airfare which may not be reimbursed. In general, travelers are expected to make flight reservations directly with the airline that offers the best airfare rate. Flights are reimbursed upon receipt of a travel expense reimbursement claim at the conclusion of your travel. Coach air transportation must be utilized when available. First class travel will not be reimbursed for without prior approval from the Executive Director and will be authorized only in certain unusual instances. Any airfare over \$500 (roundtrip) must be pre-authorized by the Executive Director. The Council may grant exemptions from this requirement for certain individuals whose airfare routinely exceeds \$500 due to their distance from meeting locations, lack of access to a major airport, and other relevant factors. Requests for international travel must be pre-approved by the Executive Director.

### PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES

Use of privately owned vehicle (POV) can sometimes be more expensive than air travel or rental cars. Therefore, such use must be justified by cost or price comparison with use of common carrier, with considerations being given to total distance of travel, number of points visited, and the number of travelers. When a POV is authorized for the convenience of the traveler, the reimbursed costs should not exceed the costs of coach air fare, unless pre-approved by the Executive Director.

Reimbursement for the use of a POV will be calculated by multiplying the current GSA mileage rate (which will be listed on the TA) by the number of miles traveled and as verified by Goggle Maps. Travelers may be reimbursed for parking fees, ferry fees, and bridge, road, or tunnel fees. Travelers *will not* be reimbursed for fines pertaining to parking or traffic violations. When two or more people travel together in a privately owned vehicle, the names of all travelers should be stated on the travel claim submitted for POV mileage reimbursement.

When traveling by air, POV mileage to and from the airport and parking at the airport are reimbursable expenses. If someone drives the traveler to and/or from the common carrier terminal in a POV, the employee may be reimbursed round trip mileage, to and/or from the employee residence to and/or from the airport, to the extent it does not exceed the cost of a taxicab fare and tip.

### TAXIS, LIMOS, AND SHUTTLES

Reimbursement is allowed for taxi and hotel/airport shuttles incurred for the conduct of business. Courtesy transportation furnished by hotels should be used as a first source of transportation when practical. Reimbursement for taxi fares is allowable from the traveler's home or office to the airport on the day of departure for an official trip and from the airport to the traveler's home on the day of return from the trip.

### RENTAL CARS

The use of rental cars can be costly and is generally discouraged. When a rental car is necessary, travelers should rent a mid-size or lower class car, unless an exception for another class of vehicle is previously authorized, or if the traveler is providing transportation for two or more additional individuals who are also on official travel. The traveler may accept a free upgrade to a larger car or use a free coupon, or other promotional benefit to upgrade. Receipts and rental agreement are required for all expenses relating to the use of rental cars. When two or more people travel together in a rented vehicle, the names of all travelers must be stated on each travel claim submitted.

The Council discourages the use of pre-paid and post-return fueling options except in circumstances when it is deemed necessary due to time constraints, safety concerns, distance from a fueling station, or other factors. Written

explanation should be provided to justify pre-paid or post-return fueling. Rental car self-fueling expenses may be submitted with receipts as a separate line-item on the travel expense claim form.

## LODGING

Lodging for Council meetings and other Council functions is typically provided in a room block with a designated rate. These reservations are generally booked under the Council's master account, but it is the responsibility of the traveler to provide a form of payment at the time of lodging. Failure to cancel reservations without justification will require that the traveler pay for assessed penalties and/or cancellation fees. Paid itemized receipts for lodging must accompany the Travel Expense Claim Form, and the receipt must indicate a zero balance. Temporary lodging receipts issued upon registration and credit card payment slips are not valid receipts.

When a traveler decides, as a personal preference, to occupy lodging at a location other than the one selected by the Council, commuting costs between the meeting location and the alternate place of lodging will not be reimbursed. Unusual circumstances that prohibit use of previously assigned meeting hotel accommodations may be approved by the Executive Director for reimbursement of commuting costs on a case-by-case basis.

## MEALS AND INCIDENTAL EXPENSES (M&IE)

For each day of travel status, authorized travelers are entitled to receive the per diem allowance established by the GSA Travel Regulations for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE). Per diem rates vary by location and will be specified on the TA provided to the traveler. Rates for specific locations can be found online at <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem>.

All travelers should claim the daily M&IE per diem allowance rather than actual expenses. Claims in excess of the authorized per diem allowance will not be reimbursed, regardless of the actual cost of the meal. Tips for meals and housekeeping service are considered part of the M&IE per diem rate and are not subject to further reimbursement. Receipts are not required for meal and incidental expenses.

### M&IE for Full and Partial Days

Travel status begins when the traveler leaves their home/office and ends upon their return. For travel that extends beyond 24 hours, a new travel day begins at 12:00 a.m. each day. For a travel day of less than 12 hours, authorized travelers will be paid at 75% of the applicable per diem rate. For a travel day of 12 hours or more, travelers will be reimbursed at 100% of the applicable per diem rate.

### Tips and Gratuities

Tips for meals and housekeeping service are considered part of the meals and incidental expenses per diem rate and are not subject to further reimbursement. Reimbursement of tips for any other purpose will be judged reimbursable on the basis of the described necessity and at a reasonable amount.

## OTHER EXPENSES

Incidental travel costs submitted for reimbursement (telephone, internet service, supplies, services, etc.) should have adequate explanation of the nature and purpose of the expense and show that the cost is reasonable and related to the conduct of official business.

## TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

Travelers should submit Travel Expense Claim Forms **no later than 60 days from the last day of travel**. To avoid delays in payment of a claim, explanations should be provided for items which would appear improper or excessive to the voucher auditor. Typical remarks would explain the reason why (1) departure from origin was made earlier than expected, (2) return to origin was not made immediately upon conclusion of official business, (3) mileage claimed is unusually high, etc.

All claims must contain a certification by the traveler that expenses claimed are valid official costs and do not include personal expenses. The certification also assures that the period of travel shown is accurate and that costs claimed will not be presented for reimbursement elsewhere, which would result in a dual reimbursement.

## CLAIM FORM INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. NAME:** Enter your full name (or the name of the traveler).

*IMPORTANT: The information required for fields 2 – 7 will be provided to each traveler in a Travel Authorization. Enter the information exactly as it appears on the Traveler Authorization.*

- 2. FUNCTION:** Enter the name of the meeting or function as it is listed on the TA.
- 3. TA NUMBER:** Enter the TA number listed on the TA.
- 4. LOCATION:** Enter the location (city and state) of the meeting or function as it is listed on the TA.
- 5. TRAVEL DATES:** Enter the travel dates listed on the TA.
- 6. MEALS & INCIDENTALS PER DIEM:** Enter the per diem rate for meals and incidentals listed on the TA.
- 7. LODGING PER DIEM:** Enter the per diem rate for lodging listed on the TA.
- 8. SIGNATURE:** Sign or type your name to verify the accuracy of the expenses listed on your claim form and to certify that you will not receive compensation for those expenses from any other sources.
- 9. DEPART RESIDENCE:** Enter the date and time when you left your residence. If you voluntarily travel to a meeting location earlier than necessary, you should enter the date and time when you began official Council business.
- 10. RETURN TO RESIDENCE:** Enter the date and time when you returned to your residence. If you return later than necessary, enter the date and time when your Council business concluded.

### 11. DAILY EXPENSES

- **DATE:** List the date (mm/dd/yy) of each travel day on a separate line.
- **MEALS AND INCIDENTALS:** For each travel day of 12 hours or more, enter the full M&IE per diem rate listed on your TA. For a travel day of less than 12 hours, multiply the M&IE per diem by 75% and enter that amount.
- **LODGING:** Enter the total cost of lodging (room rate plus tax) for each day. Please note that this amount may exceed the daily lodging per diem listed on your TA. You should enter the amount reflected on your hotel invoice. Do not include additional expenses such as room service, internet, phone, parking, etc.
- **DAILY TOTAL:** Add the expenses from the MEALS & INCIDENTALS and HOTEL columns and enter the total.

### 12. TRAVEL EXPENSES

- **PRIVATE VEHICLE MILES:** Enter the total number of miles driven in a privately owned vehicle (POV). Multiply this number by the GSA mileage rate listed on the form, and enter the amount in the field below. When two or more authorized travelers travel together in a POV, all travelers' names should be listed in the EXPLANATIONS section.
- **AIR/BUS/RAIL FARES:** Enter the total amount of air, rail, and/or bus fares.
- **TAXI/LIMO/SHUTTLE:** Enter the total amount of taxi, limo, or shuttle fares.
- **RENTAL CAR:** Enter the total cost of the car rental, as it appears on the rental car agreement. Rental car self-fueling expenses should be listed as a separate line-item under OTHER EXPENSES.

- **PARKING:** Enter all parking charges, including all parking charged on your hotel bill.
- **ROAD TOLLS:** Enter the total cost of road or bridge tolls. Receipts are required if the total exceeds \$50.
- **OTHER EXPENSES:** Enter the **total** amount of all other/miscellaneous expenses. List the individual expenses in the EXPLANATIONS section.

**13. DAILY EXPENSE SUBTOTAL:** Add the expenses in the DAILY TOTAL column and enter the resulting subtotal.

**14. TRAVEL EXPENSE SUBTOTAL:** Add the expenses in the TRAVEL EXPENSES column and enter the resulting subtotal.

**15. GRAND TOTAL:** Add the DAILY EXPENSE SUBTOTAL and the TRAVEL EXPENSE SUBTOTAL and enter the final amount.

**16. EXPLANATIONS:** Use this space to provide any explanations or comments on your travel expenses.

**17. RECEIPTS:** Attach receipts for expenses exceeding \$50.00. Physical or scanned receipts are acceptable. See the Council's Travel Guidelines for more information about receipt requirements.

**18. RETURN** completed form and receipts within 60 days of travel to:

*EMAIL:*

[kcollins1@mafmc.org](mailto:kcollins1@mafmc.org)

*MAIL:*

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901

*FAX:*

(302) 674-5399

## DISALLOWANCES

Disallowances to a reimbursement claim may occur at the time the travel expenses are processed for payment. This may result because of a missing receipt, a discrepancy between a cost comparison and the expenses submitted, an error in the computation of cost shown on the Travel Expense Report, an insufficient description of a questionable item in the claim, etc. Amounts disallowed may be reconsidered for payment upon presentation of the necessary receipt, after providing the requested additional information, or after taking other necessary corrective measures. The traveler should include additional explanations on the Travel Expense Report when it is possible that any portion of the claim might appear questionable or different from the norm.

## CONTACT

For questions or further clarification, please contact:

**Kathy Collins, Operations Officer**

[kcollins1@mafmc.org](mailto:kcollins1@mafmc.org)

(302) 526-5253