

New England Fishery Management Council

Travel Guidelines * – Effective 7/1/2019

***These guidelines are a summary of key travel rules. Refer to the Travel Authorization and Reimbursement policy section of the Council's Operations Handbook and SOPPS for additional rules and guidelines. Council Staff are available to answer any questions.**

Travel Arrangements: All travel arrangements should be made through El Sol at 1-888-380-1583 and Council Members are encouraged to establish a traveler profile with El Sol. The Council Travel Agency can book air travel and rental cars, and lodging if not contracted for directly by the Council Administrative Team through the rooming list process.

Flights: All airline reservations must be made through El Sol. Travelers must use the least expensive coach fare available, and travelers are expected to purchase flight tickets 2 weeks prior to the meeting travel date. Tickets in excess of \$500 (RT) require Executive Director approval. The following charges are not reimbursed:

- Costs or fees associated with upgraded seating (extra legroom), early/priority boarding charges, or cabin/different class of service upgrades. Seat assignment fees (now common) are reimbursable.
- Change fees incurred as a consequence of personal travel; exception is made for en-route changes as a consequence of Council business such as early meeting adjournment facilitating an earlier return flight are reimbursable.
- Baggage fees beyond 1 checked bag) unless authorized by the Executive Director in advance.
- Other fees such as travel insurance, TSA "known traveler/Fast Pass" or similar program fees.

Flight Times: Travelers are strongly encouraged to use off peak travel times when possible. Travelers are not expected to depart earlier than 6am or arrive later than 10pm, unless it is the traveler's preference.

Car Rentals: Car rentals can be utilized only when other local transportation options (such as taxis, ride services) are not cost effective. Travelers must use the least expensive compact car rate available from the rental agency selected, unless an exception for another class of vehicle is approved by the Executive Director. The **rental receipt** (no reservation confirmation) obtained from the rental agency at vehicle return reflecting the total cost must be attached to the travel reimbursement form. Gas receipts are also required. The following costs are not reimbursed:

- Vehicle class upgrade fees
- Fuel purchase (FPO) or refuel service options, or mileage fees
- Extra hours fees – typically it is more cost effective to rent for a full extra day and return early
- Drop charges for the privilege of returning the auto to a location other than the original rental office
- Frequent traveler number recovery fees, and fees associated with additional drivers who are not Council employees or Council Members

The Council's insurance policies do not cover Council Members auto rentals; Members are encouraged to utilize CDW/LDW coverage associated with their personal credit cards. Council Staff may decline rental agency offered insurance when travelling on Council business exclusively; collision damage and loss damage (CDW/LDW) waiver insurance provided by the Council's automobile insurance policy.

Privately Owned Vehicles (POV): Reimbursement for travel is limited to the least expensive means of transportation appropriate to the nature and purpose of the travel. *(Example is provided on reverse.)* If the individual elects to use a more expensive mode of transportation, reimbursement will be limited to the least expensive transportation available. Exceptions to this policy may only be authorized by the Executive Director. Use of POVs will be reimbursed based upon mileage incurred for the most direct routing at the current IRS approved rate.

New England Fishery Management Council

Travel Guidelines * – Effective 7/1/2019

Hotels: Travelers must make their reservations by the date specified on the meeting memo to obtain the contracted price. Reimbursement for reservations made after the block period ends will be limited to the contracted price specified in the meeting notice. Hotel reservations for meetings not coordinated by the Council Administrative Team can be booked through El Sol directly. Third party hotel booking fees are not reimbursable, and actual hotel receipts are required for reimbursement (not reservation confirmation notices.)

Meals and Incidentals: Meals, incidental expenses and all gratuities will be reimbursed for **actual expenses** up to a maximum allowable per diem rate as indicated on the travel authorization. Receipts are not required for meals and incidentals. Alcoholic beverages are never reimbursable.

Local Transportation: Receipts are required for contract local transportation expenditures (e.g. airport shuttle/bus/taxi fares, Lyft/Uber, parking charges etc.). Receipts are not required for local public transportation fares or highway tolls.

Combined Council and Personal Travel: Combining or extending Council authorized travel with personal travel requires Executive Director approval. When combining personal and business travel, all travel details must be reviewed with the Administrative Officer in advance of finalizing travel plans so that the traveler is clear on what expenses the Council can reimburse. The Council will not reimburse additional costs that are the result of a traveler's choice to combine business and personal travel.

Council Member Stipends: Council Members may only claim a single daily stipend (either a meeting or travel day) within a single 24-hour period. Council members are only eligible for a stipend for, at most, one travel day on each side of the meeting.

Lowest Cost-Effective Travel Example

Your home is Newburyport, and the meeting is in Atlantic City, NJ.

- Alternative A: The RT nonstop direct flight with 2 weeks advanced purchase is \$192, and you will need a rental car to drive from Philly to Atlantic city (62 miles each way) for 2 days at \$125 per day, plus bus transportation to Logan at \$44. Your total travel will be \$486.
- Alternative B: You could drive your personal auto to and from Newburyport to Atlantic City and incur \$40 in tolls. This alternative cost would be \$477.32. (754 miles RT at .58 per mile plus tolls)
- Alternative C: Take Amtrak (\$310) and rent a car at Philadelphia (\$125 per day), plus the cost of bus transportation to South Station (\$44). This alternative would cost a total of \$560.
- Alternative D: You preferred a different set of flights or you purchased your flight tickets less than 2 weeks ahead of the meeting which resulted in Airfare of \$542. Since the \$542 airfare is above \$500, your airfare would need approval prior to ticketing to be reimbursed.

Alternative B is the cheapest, but it may not be the most expeditious form of travel appropriate for a two-day meeting, but you could be reimbursed since it is less than the other Alternatives. If the mileage were greater than 770 miles round trip, Alternative B would exceed Alternative A, and any excess would not be reimbursable.

If you elected Alternative A, you could be reimbursed as well. But if you took Alternative C, your maximum transportation reimbursement would be limited to Alternative A (\$486). Alternative D could only be reimbursed if you obtained approval prior to ticketing. If no approval, your reimbursement would be limited to Alternative A's \$192 airfare.