

Frio County, Texas
Travel Policy
Effective 10/11/2016

Overview:

This policy, as adopted by Commissioners Court, is meant to establish procedures that will ensure efficient and effective use of travel funds, provide accountability and guidance for proper travel methods and reimbursable expenses while traveling on official County business.

County employees will utilize the most economical and effective means of transportation and lodging that are available. Officials should make every effort to limit both in-county and out-of-county travel when other alternatives are available (conference calls, video conferencing, webinars, carpooling, use of county-owned vehicles, etc.). Travel expenditures from County funds requires that the travel must benefit the County.

Frio County will follow the State of Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts per diem rates and current IRS mileage rate at time of travel. IRS rules apply to all travel reimbursement. All travel is subject to the availability of adequate funds. No travel advance will be issued without an available budget.

All travel advances must be cleared in the Auditor's office within two (2) business days of return, this includes submitting the original itemized hotel receipt, parking receipt, copy of certificate or proof of hours, etc. No further travel advances will be issued if a prior travel advance request remains outstanding. In the event the county employee or official fails to attend the conference or training or fails to deliver to the County Auditor supporting documents for the advance and any excess funds to the County Auditor within two (2) business days of their return to work, the County Treasurer is authorized to deduct the advance from the county employee's salary at the next available payday.

If the trip is being paid for by another government agency, the County will not pay for the trip. If any part of the trip is being reimbursed by another agency, the reimbursement must be submitted to the County Auditor as soon as it is received.

Reimbursable expenses must be reasonable and normal for the area.

Mileage will be determined using MapQuest. (www.mapquest.com)

Any out of State travel must have prior approval by commissioners' court.

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Allowable Travel Expenses:

Frio County employees, officials, or department heads, traveling out-of-county on official county business, may request a travel advance or reimbursement for such travel by submitting the supporting documentation (registration information and confirmation, agenda, map for mileage, hotel confirmation, etc.) and travel expense form to the County Auditor. If proper documentation is not included, the submitted request will be returned, possibly resulting in a delay. The advance request must be submitted by noon on the Wednesday prior to commissioners' court. Checks will be issued in a timely manner after commissioners' court approval. All travel requests, whether in advance or as a reimbursement must be approved by the elected official or the department head prior to being submitted to the County Auditor.

Frio County will consider any trip which is less than 90 miles from the employee's or official's regular place of employment or their home, whichever is closer to the travel destination, to be local travel. Expenses that are eligible for reimbursement for local travel (does not require an overnight stay) are registration or conference fees, mileage for use of personal vehicle, tolls and parking. No per diem for meals will be provided for travel that does not require an overnight stay.

Travel which is out-of-county and more than 90 miles from the employee's or official's regular place of employment or their home, whichever is closer to the travel destination, and for more than one day is eligible for meal per diem, hotel, parking, tolls and airport parking and other expenditures as outlined on this policy.

Conference registration should be requested in advance to take advantage of early registration discounts and allow the county to pay the fee directly to the sponsor of the conference/seminar/meeting/training. If prior payment is not feasible, a check made to the sponsor will be sent with the individual traveling.

The County encourages the use of clean, comfortable and safe hotels but expects that the employee or official will be frugal in selecting a hotel. Government rates should be utilized whenever available and the use of discounted conference hotel is encouraged. The use of hotels other than discounted conference hotels should be justified.

Arrival one night before morning meetings or conferences is acceptable whenever same day travel is not reasonable. Return the same day that the meeting or conference ends is expected except when conditions will not assure safe arrival to one's destination.

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The County has determined that out-of-county meals and associated gratuities should be paid on a per diem basis and receipts to document the cost of meals are not required. Meal tips are included in the per diem rate and should not be reported separately. The per diem allowance will be prorated for partial days based on the time of departure and arrival. Travel time will be based on direct travel to and from meeting/conference/training with reasonable traffic and travel breaks considered.

Travel by air is acceptable whenever air travel is cheaper than travel by car. Employees and officials are encouraged to book flights at least two (2) weeks in advance so as to be able to take advantage of early flight discounts. Travel should be scheduled to allow for the most economical fares available.

Hotel shuttle buses, airport shuttle buses, personal vehicles, taxis (when justified) are acceptable means of transportation when traveling out-of-county on official County business. When these options are impractical or uneconomical, use of a rental car may be justified. The employee or official should ensure that the most economical car is rented and the vehicle is returned with a full tank of gas. Fuel and other receipts should be retained along with the vehicle receipt for reimbursement or justification of advance.

Unallowable Travel Expenses:

Travel reimbursement for meal per diem rates do not apply for day travel, it only applies to travel that includes a justified overnight stay out of the county.

Frio County will not provide advance or reimbursement for the following:

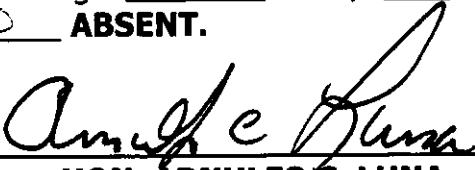
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Dry Cleaning
- Entertainment Expense
- Health Club Charges
- Limousines or Luxury Rental Cars
- Long Distance Phone Calls from Hotel
- Movie Rentals / Charges
- Optional Insurance on Rental Cars
- Parking Fines
- Personal Items
- Refueling Charges by Rental Car Companies
- Room Service
- Room Bar, Water and Snacks
- Spa Service
- Towing Charges
- Valet parking – Except when hotel confirms they offer no other parking options


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Conflict with Employee Handbook:

To the extent that any provisions of this travel policy conflict with the terms of the Frio County Employee Handbook, the terms of this travel policy will prevail.

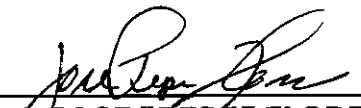
The above travel policy is **APPROVED, PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Commissioners Court of Frio County, Texas, on this 11th day of October, 2016, with the following members of the court voting: 5 **AYE**, 0 **NAY**, with 0 **ABSTAINING**, and 0 **ABSENT**.


HON. ARNULFO C. LUNA
County Judge



HON. JESUS "CHUY" SALINAS
Commissioner, Precinct No. 1


HON. RICHARD GRAF
Commissioner, Precinct No. 2

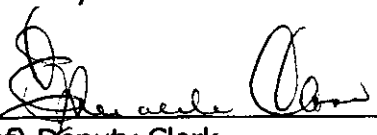

HON. RUBEN MALDONADO
Commissioner, Precinct No. 3


HON. JOSE "PEPE" FLORES
Commissioner, Precinct No. 4

ATTEST:


HON. ANGIE TULLIS
Frio County Clerk
Ex officio Clerk of the
Frio County Commissioners Court



By: 
(Chief) Deputy Clerk