



TITLE

**TRAVEL, HOSPITALITY, AND WORKING SESSION EXPENSES**

SCOPE

Provincial

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**NOTE:** The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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## OBJECTIVES

- To:
  - provide a framework of accountability and rules to guide the effective oversight of public resources for the approval, reimbursement, payment, and disclosure of travel expenses, **hospitality expenses**, and **working session expenses** (hereinafter referred to as "expenses");
  - ensure fair and reasonable practices are in place to demonstrate the expenses are necessary and cost effective;
  - ensure individuals are properly reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of Alberta Health Services (AHS);
  - set the parameters for the public disclosure of information about expenses; and
  - set out the criteria for the approval, arrangement, reimbursement, and payment of expenses that support AHS' business and clinical operations.

## PRINCIPLES

AHS is committed to ensuring that expenses incurred, benefit and enhance its clinical and business services. Processes for the approval, arrangement, reimbursement, payment, and disclosure of expenses reflect AHS' responsibility for the sound financial management of funds and ensure individuals are adequately reimbursed for their expenses. The principles supporting this policy are:

- Taxpayer dollars are used prudently and responsibly with a focus on accountability and transparency.

- Expenses for travel are necessary, provide a cost-effective means to support AHS' business and clinical objectives, and regard the health and safety of individuals.
- Only legitimate, approved expenses incurred during the course of AHS business are reimbursed or paid.
- Prior approval to incur expenses is obtained where appropriate.

Individuals incurring expenses pertaining to AHS-related business are responsible and accountable for ensuring such expenses meet the expectations of sound financial management and that, regardless of the payment mechanism (e.g., an AHS Procurement Card [P-Card], direct billed to AHS), the expenses are reasonable.

AHS is committed to enhanced transparency and accountability, and shall publicly disclose expense reports in accordance with this policy and applicable legislation. Responsibility and accountability for compliance with this policy is shared among the individuals incurring expenses, the designated signing authorities ("the **approver**"), and departments with functional responsibilities for overseeing expenses.

## APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all travel, hospitality, and working session expenses incurred and allowances claimed in relation to AHS business, regardless of how an expense has been paid or is being reimbursed.

Compliance with this policy is required by all AHS employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, Students, Volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of AHS.

Contracted service providers shall comply with this policy unless otherwise noted in their contractual agreement with AHS.

A collective agreement takes precedence over this policy and relevant provisions on matters of travel, hospitality, or working sessions in an applicable collective agreement shall be used when there is a conflict with this policy. When a collective agreement is silent on matters of travel, hospitality, or working sessions, the provisions of this policy apply. This policy does not apply with respect to any fee for service or individual employment contractual obligations to make reimbursement or allowances.

## ELEMENTS

### 1. General Requirements and Authority

- 1.1 Individuals may travel when there is a valid business reason. Consideration shall be given to the cost effectiveness of travel expenses incurred when travelling to conduct business on behalf of AHS. Cost effectiveness does not necessarily mean the most inexpensive method of travel; consideration of time, impact to service delivery, and safety should be considered when assessing cost effectiveness.

- 1.2 AHS has an approved travel vendor to provide travel management services (including booking of airfare, bus, accommodations, and vehicle rentals). Individuals who travel on approved AHS business shall make travel arrangements through the travel vendor, and only in exceptional circumstances where the travel vendor is unable to make the travel arrangement, may book through an alternate method.
- 1.3 Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy:
- a) no expense shall be reimbursed or allowance paid except under this policy;
  - b) reimbursement and allowance shall only be made in respect of expenses incurred in relation to AHS business, unless otherwise expressly stated in this policy;
  - c) a **claimant** shall not claim reimbursement and an allowance in respect of the same expense;
  - d) a claimant shall not claim reimbursement of alcohol as a part of an expense claim, except as provided for in Section 13.8; and
  - e) no individual may approve their own expense, or expense claim.
- 1.4 Individuals incurring hospitality expenses, working session expenses, travel, meals, accommodation, related incidental expenses, and other expenses expressly described in this policy with a P-Card or billed directly to AHS shall adhere to the requirements of this policy.
- 1.5 Individuals incurring expenses other than expenses described in Section 1.4 above with a P-Card or an expense billed directly to AHS shall adhere to the requirements and principles set out in this policy and any other relevant AHS governance documents.
- 1.6 All expenses shall be in compliance with this policy regardless of the payment mechanism, either reimbursed to the employee, incurred on a P-Card or directly billed to AHS.
- 1.7 Individuals undertaking travel, hospitality, or working sessions and incurring expenses shall avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest, and be in compliance with the AHS *Conflict of Interest* Bylaw.
- 1.8 Travel, working sessions, or hospitality funded by external entities shall comply with this policy, the AHS *Conflict of Interest* Bylaw, the AHS *Code of Conduct*, and any other relevant AHS governance documents.
- 1.9 Any expenses that are to be reimbursed or paid by a third party are not eligible for reimbursement or payment by AHS. In the event that the expense has been reimbursed or paid by AHS and subsequently paid by a third party, the claimant shall reimburse AHS for the amount reimbursed or paid by AHS.

- 1.10 Travel to and from educational events for which prior approval has been obtained shall be reimbursed in accordance with this policy. Approval to travel to and from an educational event does not constitute approval to attend the educational event.
- 1.11 Travel, working session, and hospitality undertaken on behalf of a research initiative, project, or grant shall be approved, funded, or reimbursed through the respective budget for that initiative, project, or grant and in accordance with this policy, unless otherwise noted in the approved terms of reference and/or grant agreement for the research initiative, project, or grant. In order to qualify for this exemption, the contract, terms of reference, and/or grant agreement shall specifically provide information on the use of funds in relation to the terms covered in this policy. For research initiatives, approved terms of reference requirements are noted in the AHS *Research Grants and Clinical Trial Funding Policy*.
- 1.12 AHS does not provide travel advances to individuals travelling on approved AHS business.
- 1.13 Expense claims may be prepared by a designate, however the individual incurring the expense shall sign and complete all required attestations prior to submitting the claim for approval.
- 1.14 Individuals required to incur expenses for travel, working sessions, or hospitality on a regular basis are eligible to apply for a P-Card in accordance with P-Card Program requirements set out in the AHS *Procurement Card Program Policy*, and the respective department's operational requirements.
- 1.15 When a claimant receives a discount, or credit, only the net expense may be claimed.
- 1.16 Requests for reimbursement of travel expenses incurred in emergent circumstances, and for which prior managerial acknowledgement is normally required, shall be considered on a case-by-case basis, and require approval to be obtained as soon as possible in accordance with the AHS *Delegation of Authority for Financial Commitments "Financial Authorization" Matrix* (hereinafter the "*Financial Authorization Matrix*").

## 2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Individual claimants are required to:
- a) acknowledge they have read and understand this policy, and attest that:
    - (i) expenses being claimed are in compliance with the principles and mandatory requirements of this policy;
    - (ii) expenses claimed are for valid business purposes for AHS; and
    - (iii) expenses claimed are cost effective.

- b) document the business reason for the expense with sufficient detail (purpose of the expense, destination, and date), so that an individual not familiar with the claim could understand the justification for the expense;
  - c) provide rationale and supporting documentation for travel expenses which are in excess of the established guideline limits;
  - d) confirm that expenses have not been previously claimed on their behalf from AHS or an external third party;
  - e) provide supporting documentation for each expense, as required; and
  - f) submit the expense claim within 30 calendar days of the end of the same fiscal quarter in which expenses were incurred or within communicated timelines for year-end (March 31).
- 2.2 Approvers are accountable for their decisions, which shall be:
- a) subject to good judgment and knowledge of the situation;
  - b) exercised in appropriate circumstances; and
  - c) compliant with the principles and mandatory requirements set out in this policy, the AHS *Delegation of Approval Authority* Policy and other applicable AHS policies.
- 2.3 Approvers are required to:
- a) ensure travel was necessary to meet desired business objectives, and attest the expenses claimed are for valid business purposes for AHS;
  - b) ensure that the business reason for the travel is adequately documented in the expense claim (in accordance with Section 2.1 b) above);
  - c) acknowledge that they have read and understand this policy, and expenses being claimed comply with the requirements of this policy;
  - d) attest that expenses claimed have been incurred using a cost-effective method;
  - e) ensure rationale and supporting analysis is provided for travel expenses which are in excess of the established guideline limits;
  - f) confirm that expenses have not been previously claimed;
  - g) ensure expenses are in accordance with internal budget(s);
  - h) ensure expense claims are accurately completed, correctly coded, and adequately supported by required documentation including pre-approvals; and

- i) approve expense claims in accordance with the *Financial Authorization Matrix*.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of both the claimant and the approver to ensure that expenses claimed meet the test of being fair and equitable.
- 2.5 The Finance Accounts Payable Department is responsible for processing approved expense claims in a timely manner.
- 2.6 The Internal Audit Department is responsible for conducting periodic compliance audits as outlined in their approved annual plan to ensure compliance with this policy and report audit results to the Executive Leadership Team and the Audit & Risk Committee.

### 3. Assessing Cost Effectiveness of Travel

- 3.1 Individuals who travel for AHS business are expected to consider the cost effectiveness of their travel expenses. Cost effectiveness does not necessarily mean the most inexpensive method of travel; consideration of time, impact to service delivery, and safety should be considered when assessing cost effectiveness.
- 3.2 Individuals are expected to minimize travel expenses by utilizing technology, such as teleconference, video conference, or Telehealth, where it meets the desired business objectives.
- 3.3 Where use of technology is not an effective means of achieving the desired business objectives, individuals shall give consideration to time, impact to service delivery, and safety when selecting a method of travel. The following is a list of options to consider:
- a) AHS fleet vehicle;
  - b) rental vehicles or bus;
  - c) personal vehicle; or
  - d) air.
- 3.4 AHS has established guideline limits for transportation and accommodation, which are considered to be cost effective. Travel expenses in excess of the guideline limits shall be explained and supported by appropriate rationale and documentation.

### 4. Travel Approval

- 4.1 Travel approval may be provided where:
- a) it is justified by an operational requirement;

- b) it is relevant to the individual's roles and responsibilities within AHS; and
  - c) an alternative method would not achieve the desired business objective.
- 4.2 All travel shall be undertaken with the approval of the Supervisor/Manager of the individual who is to travel and related expenses approved by the relevant approver as set out in the *Financial Authorization Matrix*.
- 4.3 Travel outside of Canada shall be pre-approved in accordance with the *Financial Authorization Matrix*.
- 4.4 Travel within Canada does not require formal pre-approval; however, departments may implement pre-approval processes for travel within Canada at their discretion.
- 5. Incurring Expenses**
- 5.1 Individuals incurring expenses shall consider the cost effectiveness of the expenses and ensure such expenses are reasonable, appropriate, properly explained, documented, and meet the expectations of sound financial management.
- 5.2 Expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another shall be attributed to the individual for whom those expenses were incurred.
- 5.3 Except where prohibited in this or other relevant AHS policy, a claimant may elect to personally incur and accept financial responsibility for expenses exceeding those permitted or approved under this policy. A claimant shall clearly distinguish between business and personal expenses.
- 5.4 Individuals shall reimburse AHS for any personal expenses within 30 days of the expense being incurred or billed directly to AHS. Personal expenses that have been incurred on a P-Card shall be reimbursed to AHS at the time the P-Cardholder's statement is submitted for approval.
- 5.5 A claimant cannot use a personal discount or a personal credit for booking business travel.
- 6. Eligible Expenses**
- 6.1 AHS reimburses or pays eligible expenses including, but not limited to:
- a) vehicle mileage when a personally-owned vehicle is used for travel, unless vehicle allowance is provided in accordance with Section 9.3 below;
  - b) rental vehicles (individuals shall refer to the AHS *Insurance for Rental Vehicles Procedure* to determine eligibility criteria related to insurance expenses);

- c) fuel for rental vehicles;
  - d) meals and accommodation in accordance with Section 8 below;
  - e) airfare in accordance with Section 9 below;
  - f) excess baggage charges, when extra equipment is required because of duties being performed;
  - g) charges for electronic communication related to AHS business;
  - h) charges for business-related phone calls;
  - i) one (1) personal long distance call for each consecutive 24-hour period of absence;
  - j) laundry and dry cleaning expenses incurred if travelling for four (4) or more consecutive days;
  - k) bus fares, including airport bus;
  - l) internet connectivity for AHS business purposes in hotel, airplanes, or other public places;
  - m) losses incurred due to any change in the rate of exchange for foreign currency purchased to meet eligible expenses when travel is required outside of Canada;
  - n) the expense of travel medical insurance purchased for travel outside of Canada;
  - o) in-car navigation systems and electronic toll payment (where appropriate) for rental vehicles; and
  - p) travel immunizations where travelling on AHS-approved business.
- 6.2 Eligible expenses require an original, or scanned original, itemized receipt for reimbursement, except for mileage and claims for meal allowances. Where scanned documents are provided as support for a claim, the claimant shall ensure that the scanned images are legible.
- 6.3 Gift cards are not eligible for reimbursement or payment for staff, physicians, volunteers or any other persons this policy is applicable to.
- 6.4 Gift cards shall only be reimbursed as follows:
- a) as part of a documented patient program;
  - b) as part of a research initiative (for external participants);



- c) for external guest speakers, the value of the gift card shall not exceed \$150;
- d) adequate controls shall be in place around the activities of purchasing, distributing, and securing of gift cards; and
- e) the expense description shall be clearly documented as a gift card expense.

## 7. Ineligible Expenses

- 7.1 Alcohol is an ineligible expense that cannot be claimed as part of a travel or working session expense claim. Alcohol may only be reimbursed as part of hospitality as set out in Section 13.8 of this policy.
- 7.2 AHS shall not reimburse or pay ineligible expenses including, but not limited to:
  - a) interest charges on outstanding personal credit card balances;
  - b) entertainment videos and movie channels;
  - c) spa and fitness centre fees and charges;
  - d) traffic violations and parking fines;
  - e) alcohol, except as set out in Section 13.8 below;
  - f) any expense for non-AHS individuals travelling with or accompanying an AHS representative, except as provided for in this or another applicable AHS policy (e.g., employee relocation);
  - g) in-room amenities not included in the cost of the room (e.g., mini bar);
  - h) damages to accommodation caused by the claimant;
  - i) loss of money or personal effects;
  - j) expenses resulting from failure to cancel transportation or hotel arrangements, except in extenuating circumstances;
  - k) voluntary additional days beyond the business purpose of the trip (excluding excursion flights requiring a Saturday overnight stay);
  - l) valet parking charges including gratuities, except where this is the only available parking option;
  - m) flight cancellation insurance;
  - n) flowers;

- o) prizes and gifts, including gift cards for individuals applicable under this policy; and
- p) expenses for a social gathering, except as part of a protocol for guests honoured at a hospitality event (as outlined in Section 13 below), or as part of an employee recognition or retirement event as set out in the relevant AHS policy(ies).

7.3 Individuals submitting a request for reimbursement of expenses and approvers approving expense claims shall not knowingly request reimbursement of or approve ineligible expenses.

## 8. Meal, Accommodation, and Personal Expenses

### 8.1 Meal Allowances:

- a) Individuals while travelling on AHS-approved business, may claim a meal allowance (without a receipt) as set out in Appendix A below. Meals may only be claimed through a meal allowance and cannot be claimed using the receipt method for reimbursement.
- b) Meal expenses incurred on a P-Card shall be in compliance with the meal allowances as set out in Appendix A below, and shall be supported with detailed receipts. Meal expenses in excess of the allowances shall be reimbursed to AHS in accordance with Section 5.4 above.
- c) Meal allowances may be claimed when traveling on AHS business as follows:
  - (i) breakfast, if the departure time (at the destination you are travelling from) is 7:30 am or earlier, or the return time is 7:30 am or later;
  - (ii) lunch, if the departure time is 1:00 pm or earlier, or the return time is 1:00 pm or later; or
  - (iii) dinner, if the departure time is 6:30 pm or earlier, or the return time is 6:30 pm or later.
- d) Only in exceptional circumstances may an individual claim a meal allowance within the same city/town/municipality as their **designated home site(s)**. In such cases, the rationale to support the meal expense shall be documented in the expense claim.
- e) A meal allowance cannot be claimed if a meal is included as part of another fee, event, or other expense (i.e., a working session where a meal is provided).

## 8.2 Accommodation Expenses:

- a) When travelling on AHS business and overnight accommodation away from the claimant's residence is necessary, claimants are eligible to claim an accommodation allowance set out in Appendix A below, or the actual expense of accommodation. Accommodation expenses shall be within the following guideline limits:
  - (i) \$200/day (base room rate) for all geographic areas except for North Zone; or
  - (ii) \$250/day (base room rate) for North Zone.
- b) Any accommodation expenses exceeding the guideline limits shall be explained and supported by including rationale and supporting documentation as part of the expense claim.

## 9. Transportation

### 9.1 Air Transportation:

- a) Airfare for travel (return, including fees and taxes), shall be within the following guideline limits:
  - (i) within Alberta - \$600;
  - (ii) within Canada - \$1,000;
  - (iii) within the United States - \$2,000; or
  - (iv) outside North America - \$3,000.
- b) AHS shall reimburse or pay for advance seat selection fees in order to guarantee seating for regular/economy seats. AHS shall not reimburse or pay seat selection fees for preferred seating (except for as permitted in Section 9.1 c), including but not limited to: seats in the exit row, comfort seats, bulk head seating, etc.). The total cost for the airfare including seat selection fees shall be within the guideline limits.
- c) Seat selection fees for preferred seating may be reimbursed or paid for employees that have a valid health reason.
- d) Airfare in excess of the guideline limits noted above shall be explained and be supported by rationale and supporting documentation as part of the expense claim.
- e) Advanced bookings of two (2) weeks shall be made wherever possible to leverage the best price.

- f) Economy class shall be used for all flights unless otherwise permitted in this section.
- g) Business class may be booked for flights outside of North America that are greater than six (6) hours as stated at the time of booking.

## 9.2 Third-Party Transportation:

A claimant may claim the following:

- a) base expense (rental costs excluding insurance) for vehicle rentals for short durations only (less than 30 days), if there is a valid business purpose, it is cost effective, and the size and type of the vehicle is appropriate for the number of passengers, road conditions, and nature of the travel need;
  - (i) Individuals shall refer to the AHS *Insurance for Rental Vehicles Procedure* for the mandatory requirements around insurance coverage for rental vehicles (including eligibility for reimbursement);
- b) expense of hiring a taxi, the actual expense shall be in the amount shown on the receipt, including a gratuity of up to 20 percent; and
  - (i) Taxi fares, within city limits, in excess of \$100 per trip (including a gratuity of up to 20 percent) shall include rationale and supporting documentation of cost effectiveness.
- c) the expense of hiring a town car, limousine, or similar vehicle only if this is determined to be the most economical travel choice. The expense shall include appropriate documentation of the rationale.

## 9.3 Privately-Owned Vehicle Transportation:

- a) AHS shall either reimburse use of a privately-owned vehicle for AHS business purposes:
  - (i) at the business kilometre rate set out in Appendix A below; or
  - (ii) as a vehicle allowance as set out in an employment contract or collective agreement.
- b) A claimant may only claim and be reimbursed for either:
  - (i) the business kilometre rate; or
  - (ii) a vehicle allowance.
- c) Mileage reimbursements and vehicle allowances are intended to include costs associated with the operation of a vehicle, including but not limited

to gas, wear and tear, routine maintenance, and depreciation expenses; as such, expenses of this nature are not eligible for reimbursement.

- d) Individuals using a privately-owned vehicle while on AHS-approved business are responsible for insurance deductible expenses and other expenses set out in Appendix B below, in the event of an accident.

9.4 AHS shall not reimburse for regular commuting between an employee's residence and their designated home site(s). AHS shall reimburse mileage for approved business travel as follows:

- a) when an employee travels from their residence to an alternative work site (or from an alternative work site to their place of residence). Only the portion of mileage over their normal commute is eligible for reimbursement;
- b) mileage incurred while travelling between sites is eligible for reimbursement; and
- c) mileage incurred while travelling from the employee's residence to the airport or bus terminal is eligible for reimbursement.

9.5 Where an individual is in receipt of a vehicle allowance, use of an AHS fleet vehicle is not permitted in their **home zone** location, except where use of a fleet vehicle is more economical.

9.6 Individuals using a privately-owned vehicle for AHS-approved business (including for occasional use) should notify their insurance company to ensure adequate insurance is in place.

9.7 Use of a privately-owned vehicle for AHS-approved business is considered a requirement if the use is set out in the terms of a new or amended employment contract, collective agreement, or letter of offer. In such cases, the claimant may claim the incremental expense of the increased insurance premium to the maximum set out in Appendix A below, pro-rated if the insurance is for less than a year. Additional information regarding insurance requirements is set out in Appendix B below.

## 10. Expense Claims

10.1 Expense claims shall, at a minimum, include the following components:

- a) name and position of the individual who incurred the expense, or the individual to whom the expense is attributable;
- b) date of transaction(s);
- c) destination (for travel expenses);
- d) transaction amount(s);

- e) expense category (e.g., travel, including transportation, accommodation, meals and incidentals, working session, and hospitality);
  - f) description and business reason, in accordance with Section 2.1 b) above for incurring the expense;
  - g) original documentation (detailed receipts) or scanned originals; and
  - h) required attestations, in accordance with Section 2.1 above.
- 10.2 Where scanned originals are submitted, the individual submitting the expense claim is required to ensure that the original expense claim and receipts and other supporting documentation are retained as part of their department financial records for audit and examination in accordance with the AHS *Records Management Policy*.

Detailed receipts for expenses, except as provided for in this policy, shall be included with the expense claim. If a detailed receipt is not available, the claimant shall take reasonable steps to obtain a copy of the original detailed receipt. The maximum amount of other eligible expenses that may be reimbursed through a written attestation is \$200 per claim for each travel (including multiple, consecutive days), working session, or hospitality event. Where it is not possible to obtain a copy of the detailed receipt, to claim reimbursement, the claimant shall clearly document and attest to the following:

- a) the expense was incurred and related to AHS business;
- b) the expense has not been claimed previously; and
- c) the circumstances as to why the detailed receipt is missing.

## 11. Process for Non-Compliant Expenses

- 11.1 Only the President and Chief Executive Officer or the AHS Board Chair has the authority to approve expenses which are not in compliance with this policy. The AHS Board Chair may approve any expenses of the President and Chief Executive Officer which are not in compliance with this policy; all other non-compliant expenses require the approval of the President and Chief Executive Officer.

## 12. Working Sessions

- 12.1 A claimant may claim reimbursement of working session expenses. Meal and non-alcoholic beverage expenses incurred for working sessions shall be reasonable and cost effective, and all expenses shall be in accordance with this policy and any other relevant AHS governance documents.
- 12.2 Working session events estimated to cost below \$500 do not require pre-approval and expenses shall be approved in accordance with the working

session approval limits in the *Financial Authorization Matrix* by a default Director position at minimum.

- 12.3 Working session events estimated to cost \$500 or more require written pre-approval (i.e., before any arrangements are made). Pre-approval of a working session event and approval of actual expenses shall be approved in accordance with the working session limits in the *Financial Authorization Matrix* by an Executive Director default position at minimum. A copy of the pre-approval must be submitted as part of the expense claim, or retained by the department for payments processed through Markview, for a period of two (2) years for audit purposes.
- 12.4 A working session shall not be approved by the individual planning or hosting the working session.
- 12.5 The individual in the most senior position responsible for facilitating the event is required to pay and claim the expense for a working session. The names of individuals who participated in the working session shall accompany the expense claim. Individual attendees are not eligible to claim a meal allowance in this instance.
- 12.6 Individuals are encouraged to select healthy food and drink choices for working sessions to align with the AHS *Healthy Eating Environments Policy*.

### 13. Hospitality

- 13.1 Hospitality may be undertaken to advance AHS' mission, vision, and values and is only provided when the event involves one or more participants from outside AHS, which may include but is not limited to:
- a) government officials;
  - b) dignitaries;
  - c) donors;
  - d) guests of, or visitors to AHS;
  - e) public interest groups;
  - f) foundations, auxiliaries, and trusts; and
  - g) other private, public, or non-profit entities or organizations.
- 13.2 Only the President and Chief Executive Officer, members of the Executive Leadership Team, and their direct reports are authorized to undertake hospitality events. Authorized individuals may name a designate, in writing, to host a community event on their behalf. All other hospitality events require the authorized individual to host the event.

- 13.3 Prior written approval, as set out in the *Financial Authorization Matrix* is required before any arrangements are made for hospitality events which are estimated to cost \$600 or more. Hospitality events estimated to cost less than \$600 do not require pre-approval.
- 13.4 Planning the event:
- a) Use an AHS facility if there is one available and appropriate.
  - b) If an AHS facility is not available and another is chosen, the relevant portfolio Chief Operating Officer (or equivalent) shall provide prior written approval.
  - c) Minimize costs where possible, but have due regard for the nature, size, and intended business purpose of the event.
- 13.5 The sponsor extending the invitation:
- a) shall document and justify the list of AHS representatives;
  - b) keep the number of AHS representatives to a minimum, limiting it to those who have the most direct involvement in the business purpose of the event; and
  - c) may include the partner of the host or AHS representative only when required by protocol.
- 13.6 Hospitality expenses eligible for reimbursement may include, but are not be limited to:
- a) meals;
  - b) non-alcoholic beverages;
  - c) transportation;
  - d) accommodation; and
  - e) incidental expenses.
- 13.7 Hospitality expenses for transportation and accommodation shall be subject to the limits set out in Appendix A below.
- 13.8 Reimbursement of alcohol expenses for a hospitality event is permitted only when written prior approval of the President and Chief Executive Officer, or the AHS Board Chair where the President and Chief Executive Officer sponsors or hosts an event, has been obtained. Alcohol may be consumed as part of a meal or at a reception for invitees provided there is an approved business case. Alcohol provided at a hospitality event shall be provided responsibly (e.g., food



shall always be served as accompaniment in accordance with Appendix B of the AHS *Alcohol and Drugs Policy*).

13.9 The individual in the most senior position who sponsors or hosts the event shall pay and claim the expense. The submitted claim shall include the:

- a) purpose;
- b) date;
- c) location;
- d) names of individuals who attended the event; and
- e) type of hospitality event (e.g., breakfast, lunch, dinner, reception, refreshments, etc.).

13.10 All hospitality expenses shall be itemized on the expense claim and supported by the necessary detailed receipts and supporting documentation as required in this policy, and approved in accordance with the *Financial Authorization Matrix*.

#### 14. Public Disclosure of Information

14.1 Positions for which expenses are subject to public disclosure are as directed by the AHS Board or other designated authority. For those positions, approved expense reports, P-Card statements, direct bill expenses, and supporting documentation (as set out in Section 10.1 above) shall be publicly disclosed to fulfill AHS' commitment to enhanced transparency and accountability.

14.2 The relevant reports and documentation shall be posted online to the Alberta Health Services website in a timely manner.

14.3 Information that would normally be withheld under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Alberta), such as personal information, shall be redacted from supporting documentation and shall not be publicly disclosed.

#### 15. Dispute Resolution

15.1 Disputes related to any aspect of expenses for travel, meals, hospitality, or working sessions, except as provided otherwise in this policy, shall be directed to the next highest authority of the original expense claim approver. The next highest authority shall review the dispute and make a determination within the scope of this policy. The decision is final and not subject to appeal, except where permitted by the law or legislation.

#### DEFINITIONS

**Approver** means the individual with the authority to approve reimbursements, allowances or expenses under this policy, in accordance with the designated signing authority under the *Delegation of Authority for Financial Commitments "Financial Authorization" Matrix*.

**Claimant** means any individual who seeks reimbursement of an expense or payment of an allowance under this policy.

**Designated home site(s)** means the AHS facility or office considered as an individual's primary work location(s) as determined by AHS.

**Home zone** means the geographic zone, as defined by AHS, in which an individual's designated home site(s) is situated.

**Hospitality expenses** means any expenses provided in an economical manner and incurred in respect of hospitality provided to guests of AHS or individuals otherwise not engaged in work for AHS as a matter of courtesy or protocol to facilitate AHS business including, without limitation, activities such as:

- engaging in discussion of official public matters;
- sponsoring or hosting community events on behalf of AHS;
- conducting recruitment events;
- honouring distinguished people for exceptional public service in Alberta; and
- conducting prestigious ceremonies for heads of state, government, or distinguished guests from the private sector.

**Working session expenses** means a meeting held for the purpose of facilitating business directly related to the roles and responsibilities of individuals in attendance, and for which expenses incurred include food, non-alcoholic beverages, and/or venue (travel expenses are excluded), for events which include, but may not be limited to:

- staff engagement session;
- strategy or planning session;
- staff training session;
- staff meeting;
- conference, seminar, or workshop related to the roles and responsibilities of individuals in attendance; and
- formal sponsorship of a conference.

Patient programs, employee recognition, and retirement events held as a part of approved AHS established programs are not within the scope of a working session.

## REFERENCES

- Appendix A: *Reimbursement Rates and Guideline Limits*
- Appendix B: *Insurance for Privately-Owned Vehicles*
- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - *Alcohol and Drugs Policy (#HCS-232)*
  - *Code of Conduct*
  - *Conflict of Interest Bylaw*
  - *Delegation of Approval Authority Policy (#1168)*
    - *Delegation of Authority for Financial Commitments "Financial Authorization" Matrix*
  - *Employee Relocation Expenses Directive (#HR-13-01)*
  - *Healthy Eating Environments Policy (#1138)*

- *Insurance for Rental Vehicles Procedure (#TBD)*
- *Management and Oversight of Research Expenses for Travel, Hospitality, and Working Sessions Standard (#RESEARCH-001)*
- *Mobile Wireless Devices and Services Policy (#1160)*
- *Procurement Card Program Policy (#1149)*
- *Records Management Policy (#1133)*
- *Records Retention Schedule (#1133-01)*
- *Research Grants and Clinical Trial Funding (#1150)*
- **Alberta Health Services Resources:**
  - *Policy Development Framework*
  - *Procurement Card Program User Guide*
- **Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:**
  - *Alberta Government Public Disclosure of Travel and Expenses Policy*
  - *Alberta Government Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Policy*
  - *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Alberta)*
  - *Public Service Subsistence, Travel and Moving Expenses Regulation (Alberta)*

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**APPENDIX A****Reimbursement Rates and Guideline Limits (effective June 1, 2016)**

The rates below are for management and out-of-scope individuals, and other AHS representatives as applicable. These rates may not reflect the rates set out in applicable collective agreements. When a collective agreement does not address matters of travel, hospitality, or working sessions, this policy shall be used.

Individuals while travelling on AHS-approved business may claim a meal allowance (without a receipt) as set out below. Meals may only be claimed through a meal allowance and cannot be claimed using the receipt method for reimbursement.

Expense Type	Section Reference	Allowance within Canada	Allowance outside of Canada
Meals			
Breakfast	8.1	\$10.50	\$13.70
Lunch	8.1	\$13.00	\$17.00
Dinner	8.1	\$24.00	\$31.00

Expense Type	Section Reference	Allowance without Receipt	Reimbursement with Receipt	Guideline Limits
Accommodation	8.2	\$20.15	Actual Expense*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All geographic areas (except for North Zone) - \$200 per night</li> <li>North Zone - \$250 per night</li> <li>Limits are for base room rates</li> </ul>
Airfare	9.1	N/A	Actual Expense*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within Alberta - \$600</li> <li>Within Canada - \$1,000</li> <li>Within United States - \$2,000</li> <li>Outside North America - \$3,000</li> </ul> <p>Limits are for return airfares and are inclusive of all fees, and taxes</p>
Taxi	9.2	N/A	Actual Expense*	\$100 (within City limits and including gratuity of up to 20%)
Business Kilometre Rate for Personally- Owned Vehicle	9.3	\$0.505 per km for 5,000 km/ calendar year and below  \$0.47 per km for over 5,000 km/calendar year	N/A	N/A
Private Vehicle Incremental Insurance Premium	9.6	N/A	Up to \$500.00/annum	N/A

\* Actual expenses shall be within the guideline limits; rationale and relevant supporting analysis shall be provided for any expenses which exceed the guideline limits.

**APPENDIX B****Insurance for Privately-Owned Vehicles****1. Insurance for Privately-Owned Vehicles Used for AHS Business Purposes**

- 1.1 Where use of a privately-owned vehicle is a requirement of employment which is supported in a new or amended employment contract, collective agreement, or letter of offer, individuals are eligible for reimbursement for the incremental cost of insurance premium up to a maximum of \$500.00 per year (or pro-rata if insurance is for less than a year).
- 1.2 Requests for reimbursement of the incremental amount of insurance premium shall be supported by a new or amended employment contract, collective agreement, or letter offer which includes the requirement of a personal vehicle for employment, proof of insurance coverage, and premium payment when submitting to their manager for approval.
- 1.3 Individuals shall notify Workplace Health and Safety, and AHS' Insurance Department ([insurance@albertahealthservices.ca](mailto:insurance@albertahealthservices.ca)) of any accidents resulting in injury to AHS staff, third parties, or damage to other vehicles or property which occurs during travel while on AHS-approved business.
- 1.4 Vehicle owners are responsible for any losses that may arise, including, without limitation:
  - a) the repair costs of any vehicle damage, including insurance deductible;
  - b) loss of personal property; and
  - c) any damages including liability claims resulting from accidents in privately-owned vehicles while on AHS business.