

HARRISON COUNTY TRAVEL POLICY



APPROVED *icg*

The following policy is adopted by the Harrison County Commissioners Court and is to be effective January 14, 2025. This policy replaces any previous county travel policies, customs, or practices.

Section 152.011 of the Texas Local Government Code grants the Commissioners Court the authority to set travel expenses and other allowances for all county officials and employees. Harrison County Commissioners Court allows reimbursement of travel expenses for county officials and employees who travel on official county business when funds have been allocated for the specific purpose of travel in the departmental budget.

General Definitions:

- **Educational Travel:** Any travel out of county that is for official educational seminars, conferences, and meetings.
- **Actual Expense:** The actual cost of any allowable travel expense supported by proper receipts or statements.
- **Per Diem Allowance:** The approved IRS Federal per diem rate paid in lieu of actual expenses for meals and incidental expenses.
- **Authorized Signature:** The signature of a Department Head, Elected Official, or employee authorized to approve claims for a county official or employee. This authorization must be on file in the County Auditor's office.
- **Official County Business:** Business in which a county employee or official participates in an activity recognized by the County Commissioners Court as being official business of the county.
- **Travel Time:** The employee will be considered "on the clock" while traveling from Marshall to the destination site and while returning to Marshall.

RESPONSIBILITY OF OFFICIALS, DEPARTMENT HEADS, AND EMPLOYEES:

- County Elected Officials and Department Heads are expected to plan the out of county travel for themselves and their employees to achieve maximum economy and efficiency. The purpose of the travel should be the same as the travel approved in the individual departmental budgets. All county reimbursed travel must be for official county business.
- It is the responsibility of the Elected Official or Department Head to see that all Travel Expense Forms are properly completed and signed before being sent to the Purchasing Department/Treasurer's Office.
- If a travel advancement is requested via Travel Expense Form #1, it is the responsibility of the Elected Official or Department Head to ensure the form is properly completed, signed and sent to the Purchasing Department within the time restrictions set on the travel form.
- It is the responsibility of the Elected Official or Department Head to see that all reimbursement forms to the State of Texas, or any other reimbursing agency other than Harrison County, are promptly submitted to the reimbursing agency. When reimbursements are received, the Department Head or Elected Official shall see that those funds are deposited with the County Treasurer in a timely manner.

- It is the responsibility of the Elected Official or Department Head; to ensure travel arrangements have approval from the Commissioners Court prior to any out of state travel. Without proper approval, no reimbursement shall be allowed. (This does not include the Harrison County Sheriff's inmate transport division).
- It is the responsibility of the Harrison County employee traveling on official county business to keep documentation of all travel related expenses. Reimbursement will not be issued without the proper Travel Form and documentation.
- In the event an official or employee of the county receives an overpayment (through a requested travel reimbursement advance), that overpayment will immediately be reimbursed to the county upon the return of the official or employee.

MEALS:

Harrison County will reimburse the county employee for meals using the IRS Federal per diem rates. If the traveling employee elects to purchase meals for friends or other county officials, it will be at the expense of the county employee and will not be reimbursed by Harrison County. Receipts will not be required to substantiate meals and incidental expenses since Harrison County utilizes the IRS Federal per diem rates. The IRS Federal per diem rates are posted on the Harrison County website under County Auditor.

- For trips that do NOT require an overnight stay, the employee will be eligible for 1/3 the daily per diem rate for locations within 100 miles of Harrison County Courthouse, and 2/3 the daily per diem rate for locations over 100 miles from Harrison County Courthouse. Payment of non-overnight per diem expenses will be paid through payroll in accordance with Federal Law.
 - For all non-overnight travel expenses; complete the Non-Overnight Meals Expense Form
 - Include all supporting documentation
 - Submit to the Harrison County Auditor's Office- Payroll Department with your timesheet.
 - All Non-Overnight Meals will be paid through payroll.
- For trips that require an overnight stay, per diem will be paid at 1/3 the daily rate for the date of departure if the destination is 350 miles or less from Harrison County Courthouse, and 2/3 the daily rate if the destination is more than 350 miles from Harrison County Courthouse. The full per diem rate will be paid for each day the employee is at the conference, seminar or training meeting. If the conference concludes at such a time as to require an additional night of stay the travel rate will apply to the date to return.

LODGING:

Harrison County will reimburse the traveling county employee for the actual cost of lodging while traveling on official county business. If possible, Harrison County employees are encouraged to book lodging at the hotel at which the conference, seminar or training session is being held. If this is not possible the traveling employee should always obtain lodging where a "conference or government rate" is offered. The county employee will obtain a lodging statement/ receipt, which will be submitted with Travel Expense Form #2, when the employee returns to Harrison County.

If an employee's spouse or dependents are traveling with the employee, Harrison County will only pay the cost of a single room rate. Any additional charge for extra person will be at the employee's expense. If the actual

lodging charges are more than the travel advance, the employee will be reimbursed for the difference upon proper submission of Travel Expense Form #2. If the actual lodging charges are less than the travel advance, the employee will reimburse Harrison County for the difference within five (5) business days after returning to Harrison County.

Depending on travel arrangements, Harrison County will reimburse the traveling county employee for a maximum of one (1) day lodging prior to the start of a conference or seminar and lodging through and including the last day of the conference or seminar. Any additional lodging will be at the expense of the county employee unless proof is presented that the additional lodging is a result of extended county business.

Items that will be reimbursed on the hotel statement:

- Daily Room Charges (up to the maximum allowed)
- Necessary Hotel Taxes
- Business Telephone Calls
- Hotel Parking Fees

Items that will not be reimbursed on the hotel statement:

- Meals
- Personal expense items such as cleaning or laundry
- Alcoholic beverage charges
- Recreation Facilities use charges
- Movies and personal phone calls

APPROVED TYPE OF TRANSPORTATION:

- **Commercial Airlines:** Airline tickets must be paid for in advance. The Harrison County Department Head or Elected Official will need to submit a completed Travel Expense Form #1 to the Harrison County Purchasing Department. The Purchasing Department will book the flight at the lowest available airline fare for the most direct airline route.
- **Personal Aircraft:** The County will pay the traveling county employee the stated IRS rate for each mile of use of their personal aircraft while traveling in state on out-of-county business. The mileage payment will be based on the most direct route based on mileage from the county to destination. No other aircraft/automobile expense will be paid to the traveling county employee other than the fixed price per mile as approved by Harrison County Commissioners Court. All out-of-state travel on official county business will be reimbursed at GSA modes of transportation reimbursement rates for airplanes or price per mile, whichever is most economical.
- **Taxi and Bus Fares:** The traveling county employee will obtain receipts for taxis or bus fares and will be reimbursed by Harrison County. A completed Travel Expense Form #2 along with all supporting documentation will need to be submitted to the Harrison County Treasurer's Office upon the employees return to Harrison County.
- **Railroad Transportation:** The traveling county employee will be reimbursed for the actual cost of the fare as evidence by validated receipts and the latest published common carrier tariff on the date of travel. Round trip rates shall be used whenever possible.

- **Auto Rental**: Rental car leases should be done in advance through the Purchasing Department. The Commissioners Court will allow the rental of full size vehicles only (as defined by the car rental company). Copies of receipts for fuel and other expenses must be submitted to the County Treasurer on Travel Expense Form #2 for reimbursement. The County will not pay for rented vehicles at the destination site without prior approval of the Purchasing Department.
- **Personal Automobiles**: Harrison County will pay the traveling county employee the stated IRS rate for each mile of use for their personal automobile while traveling in state on official county business. The mileage payment will be based on the most direct route based on mileage from the Harrison County Courthouse to the destination where county business will take place. Any business miles driven while performing official county business should be calculated upon return to Harrison County and submitted to the Harrison County Treasurer's Office. Complete Travel Expense Form #2 along with maps to verify the mileage taken.
 - No other automobile expense will be paid to the traveling county employee, other than the fixed price per mile as approved by the IRS.
 - All out of state travel on official county business will be reimbursed at commercial airline rates or price per mile, whichever is most economical.
- **County Owned Automobiles**: Harrison County will reimburse actual expenses, such as gas, oil or other maintenance items. All employees who are assigned County owned vehicles must use that vehicle for out of county travel unless prior approval has been obtained from Commissioners Court. Receipts are required to receive reimbursement. Complete Travel Expense Form #2 and attach all supporting documentation, submit to the Harrison County Treasurer's Office for reimbursement.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT:

Several departments within Harrison County require their employees to travel within the county on official county business. When a county employee uses a personal automobile for this purpose, the employee may be reimbursed for use of their personal automobile at the stated approved IRS rate per mile.

Before an employee may be reimbursed for local travel, there must first be a department budget allocation for local travel. This allocation will be made during the budget process or by Harrison County Commissioners Court.

When there is a departmental budget allocation, the Harrison County Employee requesting reimbursement for local travel expense must complete the Local Transportation Expense Reimbursement Form for this purpose. This form is available on the Harrison County website located under County Auditor. Complete Local Transportation Expense Reimbursement Form and attach maps that verify the mileage requested for reimbursement, submit to the Harrison County Treasurer's Office for reimbursement. The mileage payment will be based on the most direct route based on mileage.

TRAVEL EXPENSE FORMS:

- **Travel Expense Form #1**: This form is used when the Elected Official, Department Head, or County employee desire to receive advance funding prior to beginning official county business or educational travel. Form #1 shall be submitted to the Harrison County Purchasing Department based on the bill cutoff schedule provided by the Purchasing Department.

- **Travel Expense Form #2**: This form is used when the Elected Official, Department Head, or County employee requests reimbursement for travel expenses upon return of official county business or educational travel. In order for reimbursements to be approved, the traveling official or employee must submit receipts, invoices, and any documentation for expenses that are being requested for reimbursement. Form #2 shall be submitted to the Harrison County Treasurer's Office based on the bill cutoff schedule provided by the Purchasing Department.
- **Local Transportation Expense Reimbursement Form**: This form is to be used when requesting reimbursement for use of a personal automobile for local official county business travel. Local Transportation Expense Reimbursement Form shall be submitted to the Harrison County Treasurer's Office based on the bill cutoff schedule provided by the Purchasing Department.
- **Non-Overnight Meals Expense Form**: This form is used for reimbursement of non-overnight per diem expenses. Payment for such expenses will be paid through payroll in accordance with Federal Law. Non-Overnight Meals Expense Form should be submitted with any supporting documentation to the Harrison County Auditor's Office- Payroll Department. The Non-Overnight Meals Expense Form should be submitted with your timesheet on the week that payroll is due.

ACTUAL EXPENSES REIMBURSED:

The traveling county employee will be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred while traveling, provided the employee keeps and submits invoices, receipts, and all other documentation supporting the actual expenditures. Expenses include Parking Garage Charges, Lodging Statements, and Taxi Fares, Conference Registration and fees and Automobile Expense Charges for County Vehicles. **Reimbursements will not be issued without the proper form and supporting documentation.**

CONTACTS:

Purchasing Agent:

Harrison County Courthouse
P.O. Box 2025
Marshall, Texas 75670
Office: 903-935-8412
Fax: 903-935-4807
Email: purchasing@co.harrison.tx.us

County Auditor:

Becky Haynes
Harrison County Courthouse
200 West Houston Suite 326
Marshall, Texas 75670
Office: 903-935-8405
Fax: 903-923-8372
Email: beckyh@co.harrison.tx.us

County Treasurer:

Sherry Rushing
200 West Houston Suite 331
Marshall, Texas 75670
Office: 903-935-8404
Fax: 903-938-2693
Email: sherryr@co.harrison.tx.us

Payroll Department:

Emma Walker
Harrison County Courthouse
200 West House Suite 326
Marshall, Texas 75670
Office: 903-935-8405
Fax: 903-923-8372
Email: emmaw@co.harrison.tx.us