



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Travel Policy

1. Effective Date

This policy, approved by the Clerk of the House of Commons, came into effect on February 1, 2021 and replaces the previous version approved in January 2019.

2. Principles

The policy is governed by the following principles:

- **Accountability:** The House of Commons Administration is accountable for the prudent use of public funds to support expenses related to House of Commons business travel and for the compliance of travel expenses with its mandate and strategic objectives.
- **Flexibility:** Decisions regarding [House of Commons business travel](#) are managed in a fair and consistent manner, while considering employees' accommodation needs and meeting operational requirements.
- **Transparency:** All travel-related authorizations and expenses must withstand public scrutiny.
- **Fiscal responsibility:** Economic and sound management practices must be applied when authorizing all travel expenses.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to outline:

- the responsibilities of House of Commons Administration managers and employees regarding travel; and
- the requirements for the reimbursement of travel expenses.

4. Application

This policy applies to all House of Commons Administration employees who are on authorized business travel, including those who travel in support of activities for committees, as well as parliamentary associations and exchanges.

Employees who travel in support of such parliamentary activities must also refer to the following guides for further direction:

- *Financial Management and Policy Guide for Committees;*
- *Financial Management and Policy Guide for Parliamentary Associations;* and
- *Financial Management and Policy Guide for Parliamentary Exchanges.*

Should any provision of this policy conflict with or differ from any applicable collective agreement or employment contract (both referred to as an employment agreement), the terms

and conditions of such an employment agreement shall take precedence to the extent necessary to resolve any conflict or discrepancy.

External candidates for employment

Candidates are responsible for travel and relocation expenses incurred during a recruitment and selection process at the House of Commons.

5. Requirements

Managers must ensure that travel is cost efficient and may therefore need to limit the number of employees travelling to attend the same event on behalf of the House of Commons.

Furthermore, the number of employees travelling to attend the same training event, conference or seminar must be restricted to three employees per service area. Any business requirements of a service area that exceed this limit must be approved by the Clerk of the House of Commons, the Deputy Clerks or the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel overseeing the service area, before any travel arrangements are made.

Travel expenses are subject to proactive disclosure under *An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*.

5.1 Alternatives to travel

Before authorizing travel, managers should consider alternatives such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing. When alternative options are not possible or retained, managers and employees must select the most economical means of transportation and the most reasonably priced accommodations.

5.2 Travel authorization and advances

Before any travel arrangements are made, the *Travel Authorization and Advance Request* must be completed, approved and signed by the manager with appropriate delegated financial signing authority.

Employee requests to travel outside Canada for training purposes or to attend a conference, a seminar or any business event must be reviewed and approved by the Clerk of the House of Commons, the Deputy Clerks or the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel overseeing the service area, before any travel arrangements are made.

Employees may either personally cover their expected travel expenses (using their preferred method of payment), or they may request a travel advance through the *Travel Authorization and Advance Request*.

All travel advances are issued by direct deposit, and employees must ensure that advances are received in due time.

5.2.1 Blanket travel authorization

The *Blanket Travel Authorization* (BTA) can be used to pre-authorize travel for the Clerk of the House of Commons, the Deputy Clerks and services area heads, when obtaining pre-authorization for every individual trip is not administratively efficient.

The BTA is valid for one fiscal year only, and the following criteria must be met:

- travel is within Canada and the continental United States;

- travel is frequent or repetitive and for a specific purpose; and
- travel takes place during the same fiscal year.

Once the travel limit of the BTA has been reached, a separate travel authorization or a new BTA must be submitted for approval before making any travel arrangements.

5.3 Travel arrangements

Employees are responsible for planning and organizing their own travel itinerary. In some cases, assistance may be available from a designated travel planner in their work team.

With respect to airline or train tickets, employees are required to use the House Travel Services (HTS) in order to book, reschedule or cancel their travel arrangements.

Employees who are unable to travel as arranged must inform their manager and HTS (for airline or train tickets) as soon as possible so that reservations can be rescheduled promptly.

Employees who must make other travel arrangements while in [travel status](#) and who are unable to contact HTS directly (for airline or train tickets) may use their [travel card](#) to pay for other travel arrangements.

5.3.1 Combining authorized business travel with personal leave

Employees can combine authorized business travel with personal leave provided that:

- alternative travel arrangements are authorized by the manager with delegated financial signing authority; and
- there is no operational or financial impact that would incur any extra cost to the organization.

Reimbursement for the cost of accommodations, meals and incidentals, as well as other related expenses, are limited to the cost of maintaining the employee at the authorized travel location for business purposes.

Employees travelling at a lower class of travel to reach their authorized travel location for business purposes may not use the cost savings to subsidize their personal travel during their personal leave. Employees must select the same class of travel and the most direct route to reach their travel location during their personal leave.

Employees are personally responsible for making alternative travel arrangements during their personal leave and assume all personal liability as they are no longer in travel status.

5.4 Travel expense reimbursement

Employees must complete the *Travel Expense Claim* and submit it to their manager within 15 business days of returning to work, along with all relevant receipts (including those for transportation expenses). The manager must ensure that the expenses claimed are related to House of Commons business and substantiated, and must then approve the claim before submitting it to Financial Management Operations for processing.

In exceptional cases where an employee loses a receipt, the employee must complete and sign the *Missing Receipt Declaration* so that the related expenses can be reimbursed.

A travel expense claim must be submitted when travel is cancelled in order to account for non-refundable deposits, reservation fees, travel advances, etc.

If two or more employees travel together, expenses for shared transportation may only be claimed by one employee.

Employees are responsible for reimbursing any unspent or overpaid portion of their travel advances, and must enclose a cheque payable to the Receiver General for Canada when submitting their travel expense claims.

Amounts reimbursed or paid to employees that are not in accordance with this policy may be recovered by the House of Commons Administration. In some cases, the House Administration may require consultations with the Office of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel and/or Labour Relations.

The House of Commons Administration will reimburse travel expenses, but it will not reimburse any administrative fees incurred on employees' personal credit cards (e.g. charges or penalties for cash advances or late interest payments).

5.5 Loyalty programs

Provided that there are no additional costs to the House of Commons Administration, employees travelling on authorized House of Commons business are allowed to use their personal loyalty programs to accumulate points for personal and/or business use.

Employees making group travel arrangements may only accumulate personal loyalty points for their respective portion of the travel arrangements.

Employees are responsible for obtaining professional tax advice and, if applicable, for reporting on their Income Tax and Benefit Return any benefit received through a loyalty program.

5.6 Travel insurance and liability

5.6.1 Travel insurance

Travel insurance is provided to employees who book their travel arrangements with HTS or pay with their travel card. More information is provided in the *Travel Insurance* document.

Employees who opt for additional travel insurance will not be reimbursed for the additional premiums.

5.6.2 Medical and health insurance

Beyond what is normally covered under the provincial health care plan, employees travelling on authorized House of Commons business are provided with medical and health insurance under their employment health care plan.

Employees who opt for additional medical insurance will not be reimbursed for the additional premiums.

5.7 Travel expenses

5.7.1 Transportation

Managers should always consider cost, duration, convenience, health, safety and practicality when authorizing means of transportation. The cost of the selected means of transportation should not exceed the cost for economy class airfare, unless otherwise specified in this policy.

Air travel

Economy class is the standard for air travel within Canada and the continental United States. Air travel class above business or executive class is prohibited.

Business or executive class is only permitted under specific conditions related to continuous air travel time to the final destination, as explained in the table below.

Positions	Conditions
Managers in the HCX category (levels 1 to 5) and HLA category (level 3A) Governor-in-Council appointees (GIC) and equivalents	If continuous air travel time* is over two hours.
All employees	For international travel outside Canada and the continental U.S. where continuous air travel* exceeds nine hours.
* Continuous air travel starts at the scheduled flight departure time and ends at the arrival time at the destination terminal (inclusive of layovers).	

Rail travel

The standard for rail travel is the lowest tier within business class. Rail travel class above business class is prohibited.

Rental vehicles

The standard for rental vehicles is a mid-size or an intermediate vehicle. Managers may authorize rental vehicles beyond the standard based on factors such as the number of employees travelling, the equipment being transported, weather conditions, and employee needs.

Employees will be reimbursed for necessary tolls (for ferries, bridges and highways), as well as gasoline and parking costs.

Employees using rental vehicles for their road travel must use the safest, most direct and practical routes.

Insurance for rental vehicles

Employees who are renting vehicles for House of Commons business travel must accept all insurance coverages offered by rental companies (e.g. collision, loss and damage waiver, public liability and property damage) and must ensure that coverages are adequate for all passengers. The House of Commons Administration will reimburse these expenses, but it will not reimburse personal accident insurance premiums.

This provision does not apply to employees who pay for rental vehicles with their travel card.

Privately owned vehicles

Employees using their own vehicles for their road travel must use the safest, most direct and practical routes. Employees will be reimbursed at the applicable kilometric rate set out in the *Rates and Allowances*.

Employees will be reimbursed for necessary tolls (for ferries, bridges and highways) and parking costs.

Insurance for privately owned vehicles

Employees are responsible for having basic vehicle insurance for business-related travel, including public liability and property damage insurance, as required by the province or territory in which their vehicle is registered. The House of Commons Administration will, subject to managerial approval, reimburse the cost of additional insurance for business-related travel for one privately owned vehicle.

The House of Commons Administration assumes no financial responsibility for privately owned vehicles beyond the kilometric rate, or beyond any applicable additional insurance for business-related travel. In the event of an accident, the House Administration will not reimburse:

- deductible amounts related to insurance coverage, and increases to the employee's personal insurance premiums;
- expenses incurred for repairs and physical damage to the vehicle; and
- any incidental expenses related to the accident.

Taxis, public transportation, and ride-sharing services

Employees will be reimbursed for the cost of transportation from:

- home or the office to the airport or the train/bus station;
- the airport or the train/bus station to the accommodation at the destination; and
- the accommodation to the business office/site at the destination.

The use of [ride-sharing services](#) must meet the necessary regulatory, legal, insurance and safety requirements, as well as any other requirements that may apply.

If employees are using their own vehicles to drive from home or the office to the airport or train/bus station, then back home or to the office, they will be reimbursed at the applicable kilometric rate and for the cost of parking.

Employees may not use taxi vouchers to pay for taxi fares while in travel status.

5.7.2 Accommodations

The standard for accommodations is a single room that is reserved in reasonably priced [commercial accommodations](#) or through [accommodation-sharing services](#), and that is located in a safe and convenient location. Employees must refer to the City rate limit (Canada, USA, foreign) section in the Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) Accommodation and Car Rental Directory as a guide to help them determine reasonable accommodation costs when selecting any type of commercial accommodations.

The use of accommodation-sharing services must meet the necessary regulatory, legal, insurance and safety requirements, as well as any other requirements that may apply.

Unless otherwise authorized by the manager, when accommodations are required due to activities held at an establishment (e.g. live-in conferences, meetings and training courses), employees must stay in the accommodations provided by the establishment.

Employees may choose to stay in private non-commercial accommodations. If they choose to do so, they will be reimbursed in accordance with the *Rates and Allowances*.

5.7.3 Meals and incidentals

Employees in travel status will be paid the applicable per diem allowance, which includes meal allowances for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and an [incidental expense allowance](#) that covers miscellaneous expenses. The per diem allowances will be paid in accordance with the *Rates and Allowances*.

The meal allowance will not be paid when meals are provided at no charge (e.g. a meal included during a conference). In exceptional cases where an employee incurs out-of-pocket expenses to replace that meal due to food allergies, medical conditions or any reason outside the employee's control, these expenses will be reimbursed up to the applicable per diem allowance.

For House of Commons business travel of less than a day, the meal allowance is adjusted to reflect the period in travel status.

For House of Commons business travel with an overnight stay, the incidental expense allowance is paid in full for each day the employee spends in travel status, regardless of whether it was a full or partial day. When an employee visits different countries during the same day, the allowance will be calculated based on the employee's location when the day begins.

For travel within the workplace area, meal expenses will not normally be reimbursed unless it is reasonable, justifiable and is a direct result of an employee's responsibilities. Meal expenses based on receipts may be reimbursed up to the applicable per diem allowance.

5.7.4 Other travel expenses

Currency exchange

Costs incurred to convert reasonable sums into foreign currencies and reconvert any unused balances into Canadian currency will be reimbursed.

Travel expenses incurred in a foreign currency will be reimbursed in Canadian dollars. For the exchange of travel expenses not supported by [receipts](#) (e.g. meal allowances), the average currency exchange rate set by the Bank of Canada will apply.

Where the Bank of Canada does not provide an exchange rate, an alternative exchange rate from an established institution, as determined by the House of Commons Administration, will apply. The applicable rate is the average rate applicable from the date of entry into the country to the date of departure from the country.

Home communication

Employees will be reimbursed for the cost of a reasonable number of long-distance phone calls home (i.e. the cost and frequency relative to the time away from home) while in travel status.

Before travelling, employees should contact Telecommunications Services for advice on the best method for calling home from their particular travel destination.

Dependant care

An employee who is required to travel on House of Commons business will be reimbursed actual and reasonable [dependant](#) care expenses, supported by a receipt, up to a daily maximum of \$75 per household, when the employee:

- is the sole caregiver of a dependant who is under 18 years of age, or who, regardless of age has a mental or physical disability; or

- is one of the two working parents who, living in the same household, are the sole caregivers of a dependant under 18 years of age or, regardless of age, with a mental or physical disability, and who are both required to travel on business at the same time.

The dependant care allowance applies only to incremental expenses incurred due to related House of Commons business travel.

Miscellaneous travel expenses

Provided that such expenses are necessary for the performance of their duties, employees will be reimbursed for travel-related expenses not otherwise covered, such as expenses for business calls, photocopies, word-processing services, faxes, Internet connections, and the rental and transportation of necessary office equipment.

Employees may also be reimbursed for actual and reasonable charges or fees associated with, but not limited to:

- the use of a safety deposit box;
- health requirements (e.g. inoculations, vaccinations, x-rays, and health certificates); and
- applicable passports, visas, and Nexus cards when required for business-related travel.

Employees will also be reimbursed for the cost of reasonable amounts of bottled water, except when water is included with meals.

All travel expenses must be supported by receipts.

5.7.5 Non-reimbursable travel expenses

Expenses for the following are not eligible for reimbursement:

- alcoholic beverages;
- entertainment (e.g. movies in a hotel room);
- gasoline when the kilometric rate is claimed;
- kennels or boarding for pets;
- magazines or newspapers;
- costs incurred by family, friends or colleagues travelling with the employee; and
- fees related to driving offences and parking violations.

Any other expenses not directly related to House of Commons business travel are also not eligible for reimbursement.

5.8 Policy non-compliance

Managers and employees who fail to comply with the policy may have some or all of their delegated financial signing authorities revoked.

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance by the Clerk of the House of Commons.

6. Responsibilities

Position	Responsibilities
Clerk of the House of Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish policies pertaining to expenses and claims by House of Commons Administration employees in consultation with the Deputy Clerk, Administration.• Approve this policy.
Chief Financial Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve any supporting documents such as guidelines and procedures in consultation with the Deputy Clerk, Administration.
Deputy Chief Financial Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement or update business processes related to travel advance requests or travel expense claims to meet the requirements of this policy.

7. Supporting References

7.1 Related acts and policies

- *An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*
- *Delegation of Financial Signing Authorities Policy*
- *Standard on the Use of Travel Cards*
- *Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy*
- *Financial Management and Policy Guide for Committees*
- *Financial Management and Policy Guide for Parliamentary Associations*
- *Financial Management and Policy Guide for Parliamentary Exchanges*

7.2 Related documents

- *Travel Insurance*
- *Best practices for Mobile Technologies in International Travel*
- *Rates and Allowances*

7.3 Related guidelines and forms

- *Guidelines on Travel for the House Administration*

8. Definitions

Accommodations:

Accommodation-sharing services: Lawful alternative commercial accommodation services provided by organizations that connect travellers with individuals or businesses renting out their residences or other residential spaces, or parts thereof, for short periods of time through non-traditional and/or online platforms, such as AirBnB, HomeAway, and Vacation Rentals by Owners (VRBO).

Commercial accommodations: Rooms in conventional establishments (e.g. hotels and motels) and corporate residences or apartments (including residential spaces rented out by businesses through accommodation-sharing services).

Private non-commercial accommodations: Rooms in non-commercial establishments, or private dwellings where the traveller does not normally reside.

Dependant: A person who resides full-time with the employee at the employee's residence and who is:

- the spouse or common-law partner of that employee; or
- the biological child, stepchild, or adopted child (including a child adopted by Aboriginal people under the custom adoption practice), or legal ward of that employee or of the employee's spouse, who is dependent on the employee for support and:
 - under 18 years of age; or
 - dependent on the employee by reason of mental or physical disability; or
 - in full-time attendance at a school or other institution that provides training or instruction of an educational, professional, vocational or technical nature; or
- the parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew or grandchild of that employee, or of the employee's spouse, who is dependent on the employee for support and:
 - under 18 years of age; or
 - dependent on the employee by reason of mental or physical disability; or
 - in full-time attendance at a school or other institution that provides training or instruction of an educational, professional, vocational or technical nature.

House of Commons business travel: Travel relating to the business of the House of Commons authorized by the employer and to the circumstances in which the expenses covered under this policy may be paid or reimbursed out of public funds.

Incidental expense allowance: An allowance to cover the costs related to a specific travel period, but for which no other reimbursement or allowance is provided in this policy, and to offset some of the expenses incurred as a result of having to travel. It covers costs for gratuities (except for taxis), laundry, dry cleaning, grass cutting, snow removal, home security checks, plant watering, mail services, pet care, etc.

Missing Receipt Declaration: A written statement signed by the employee attesting to and listing the travel expenses for reimbursement without the appropriate receipts.

Receipt: An original or electronic copy of a document showing the date and amount of the expense paid by the employee.

Service area heads: Members of the Clerk's Management Group.

Spouse: A person who is married to the employee, is cohabiting with the employee in a conjugal relationship having so cohabited for a period of at least one year, or is cohabiting with the employee in a conjugal relationship and is the parent of a child whose other parent is the employee.

Transportation:

Economy class: Economy class is the lowest travel class of seating in air travel, rail travel, and sometimes ferry or maritime travel.

Ride-sharing services: Lawful alternative commercial transportation services provided by organizations that connect travellers with drivers using their personal, non-commercial vehicles through non-traditional and/or online platforms, such as Uber and Lyft.

Travel card: A corporate credit card provided as a convenient and practical method to pay for authorized business travel expenses.

Travel status: Any authorized absence from the National Capital Region due to House of Commons business travel.

Traveller: A person authorized to travel on House of Commons business.

9. Contacts

For general enquiries, please contact Heather Bradley, Director of Communications, Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons, by email at heather.bradley@parl.gc.ca.