



## **Travel and Accommodations Policy**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide appropriate and cost-effective management of the travel and accommodations required by the Association's leadership team and Secretariat while conducting Association business.

### **DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE OF POLICY**

For the purposes of this policy, the Association's leadership team is defined as members of the Board of Directors and members of Association committees. This policy applies to members of the Association's Secretariat as well as its leadership team.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Association is committed to providing travel and accommodation to individuals conducting the Association's business that demonstrates common-sense and is cost-effective but, at the same time, does not create physical, mental or financial hardship for the individual travelling.

Travel and overnight accommodation are often required by the Association's leadership team while conducting the business of the Association. Members are always encouraged to use less expensive options for conducting business, such as the Association's teleconference services, rather than travelling. However, travel and overnight accommodation are sometimes unavoidable and in many ways routine for the Association. For example, Board and committee members typically travel to the Association's biannual planning and priorities meetings that take place in the spring and fall, and members of the Secretariat travel to provide support during the Association's conference. Although some travel is routine, there are instances where "special" and unscheduled travel by committees or individual Board members is necessary, and travel under these circumstances must be approved by a majority of the directors in advance of the travel.

Travel should not be a physical, mental or financial hardship for those required by Association business to do so. In cases where travel and accommodation are required, members of the Board of Directors, the Secretariat and members of committees travelling on Association business are not expected to pay their own expenses but are expected to travel as inexpensively as possible. All travel and accommodation expenses borne directly by members of the Leadership Team are reimbursed subject to the submission of expense claim forms supported by receipts where required. A meal per diem is available and does not require receipts to support expenses within the per diem rates.

The Association coordinates as much of its travel and accommodations as possible through the Secretariat. This principle allows the Association to prepay the travel and accommodations for individuals travelling on Association business so that the individual is not out of pocket for the largest of the expenses. In addition, in the event of a cancellation, the Association can repurpose any refund to future travel or accommodation. The process used by the Association to book the



travel and accommodation includes an insurance package (flight accident, flight interruption and lost baggage) which covers costs in these situations, which protects the Association and the individual travelling.

The Association also directs its travel bookings to one agency that specializes in serving the Association's needs. The Secretariat initiates the booking of all airfares. When directed by the Secretariat, members of the leadership team contact that agency to book the travel required. The Association provides the agency with a list of guidelines for booking travel to ensure consistency in the travel arrangements of the leadership team.

In addition to the guidelines provided to the agency, the Association uses the following considerations in assessing the cost-effectiveness of travel and accommodation:

#### *Travel*

- Volunteers are not expected to travel on "red eye specials" simply to save the cost of a night's lodging; however, given the logistics of travel within Canada, this may be the only option available.
- As a cost saving measure, Association travel should be combined with travel paid for by others, if possible, and is encouraged. "Others" may be associations or employers. However, travel for Association business should not be cancelled because no other organization will pay for it.
- Travel over Saturday night and long term pre-booking is encouraged, as this may cut airfare by as much as 50%.
- Trip cancellation insurance will not be reimbursed.
- Public ground transportation when available and convenient should be used for travel the duration of which is less than four hours.
- Common sense as well as convenience should be the rule when using ground transportation. Airport bus services may be practical for travel into the city, but the return may not be as convenient by bus. Public transportation is preferred over more expensive options, such as taxis.

#### *Accommodation*

- Staying with family or friends while on Association business is acceptable if desired by the traveler but is not required.
- The Association provides hotel accommodation to meeting participants at its expense. At the time the meeting is organized, the Secretariat will ask if any meeting participants are willing to share hotel accommodations with another meeting participant as a means of



- reducing the overall cost of the meeting. While the Association appreciates those participants who choose to share rooms, sharing is encouraged but not required.

## **POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

In order to achieve the goals of this policy, the Association will:

- Define, approve and, when necessary, revise the guiding principles surrounding Association travel and accommodation;
- Coordinate all travel and accommodation through the Secretariat wherever possible;
- Through the Secretariat, designate a single agency as a provider for Association travel and accommodation; and
- Define, approve and, when necessary, revise a schedule of reimbursement for expenses borne by the traveler and expense claim form.

## **ACCOUNTABILITIES**

### **General Principles**

Association members are bound by the Volunteer Code of Conduct when participating in Association business, declaring conflicts of interest, and maintaining confidentiality of information. Employees and contractors of the Association are bound by the terms of their job descriptions or contracts regarding the handling of their duties; in the absence of any specific terms, this policy and the Volunteer Code of Conduct will apply as best practices documents.

Additional general principles are that any individuals accessing Association funds for travel costs will be directed to use the designated travel agency. Purchase approval from the Board of Directors will be required for any exceptions to stated Association travel policies.

### **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors approves all policies pertaining to travel and accommodation undertaken while an individual is travelling on Association business, including the reimbursement rates (Annex 1), the format of the travel expense claim form, and the guiding principles provided to the designated provider for Association travel (Annex 2).

Through the system of Board liaisons to Association committees and other subordinate bodies, the Board also has oversight over the travel and accommodation requests of committees and subordinate bodies. The Board also receives requests for, discusses, and, if appropriate, approves in advance of the travel any "special" and unscheduled travel by committees, individual Board members, and other individuals conducting Association business. At its sole discretion, the Board may approve exceptions to the approved travel policies and reimbursement rates but only with well-documented justifications.

The Board provides oversight to all Association travel.



### **Leadership Team**

When a member of the leadership team determines that a meeting is required that involves travel and accommodation, that member contacts his/her Board liaison and the Secretariat. If another option, such as teleconferencing, is not suitable, then the Secretariat begins to plan the travel, accommodation and any other requirements for the meeting. The member of the leadership team provides a list of travelers, including names, contact coordinates (e.g. e-mail or phone), cities of origin, the event dates, start and end times for the event (e.g. Friday from 7:00 pm, Sunday until 12:00 noon) to the Secretariat, which passes them on to the designated travel agency.

### **Secretariat**

The Secretariat adheres to all principles and practices outlined in this policy.

At the start of the planning process for any Association travel or accommodation, the Secretariat provides this policy to any individuals, including members of the Leadership Team, who are travelling so that they are aware of the Association's principles and practices regarding travel and accommodation.

The Secretariat coordinates all meetings involving travel and accommodation for the Leadership Team. The Secretariat chooses the designated agency to coordinate travel based on that agency's quality of service and cost-effective approaches to booking travel. Based on the information provided by the member of the leadership team coordinating the meeting, the Secretariat provides a list of meeting attendees to the designated travel agency and provides the agency's contact information to each attendee so that they can make their individual arrangements. The Secretariat then receives copies of all bookings from the designated travel agency. The Secretariat books any necessary meeting room(s) and accommodation for the meeting, keeping in mind any technological or other requirements specific to that meeting.

The Secretariat develops a travel expense claim form for use by the Leadership Team. Once completed forms have been submitted, the Secretariat then receives and reviews travel claims, paying claims only according to the approved travel reimbursement rates. Any exceptions to the standard reimbursement claims must be reviewed with the Board of Directors.

### **Members**

As primary stakeholders of the Association, members are encouraged to review this policy and determine whether it meets the travel and accommodation needs of the Association. After receiving this policy from the Secretariat prior to travelling, members are expected to be familiar with the principles and practices of this policy.



## **Annex 1: Schedule of Travel Reimbursement Rates (revised January 21, 2015)**

- The use of personal vehicles is reimbursed at the rate of \$0.45/km but will not exceed the minimum possible airfare for the same distance.
- The meal allowance is \$65 per day. The breakdown is as follows: breakfast \$12; lunch \$15; supper \$35. Meal amounts will be deducted if provided by the carrier, the ACA, or other.



**Annex 2: Guidelines provided to the Association's designated agency regarding travelers**

- a. Excursion fares & discount carriers are first choice for all travelers.
- b. Rail or other cost saving alternatives to be recommended whenever appropriate.
- c. Travelers are authorized to use bus, rail or rental auto rather than air travel for distances under 300 kilometers.
- d. Travelers are encouraged to maximize the use of lower rate and advance purchase tickets (e.g. 7, 10, 14 and 21 days in advance).
- e. Travelers contacting the 800-emergency travel assistance (24 hour, 365 days/year) service will provide a personal credit card to pay any costs related to ticket or flight changes.
- f. The Association's convention number is to be included for all Annual Conference bookings.
- g. The most direct flight connections are to be provided as the first option for travelers.
- h. Travelers are encouraged to consider an overnight stay, if practical, in order to use a low-cost restricted fare and avoid the high cost of a full-fare, non-restricted ticket.
- i. Prior to canceling a meeting or individual travel on a restricted ticket, travelers must identify the next meeting or travel date so that the ticket(s) can be re-issued for the future activity (a change fee will be incurred).