

	TRAVIS COUNTY ESD #5 <b>MANCHACA FIRE RESCUE</b> Department Policy / Best Practices	<b>X103</b>
	Authorized by: 	<b>Effective:</b> 3/3/2025
	Fire Chief Chris Barron	<b>Rescinds:</b> N/A
	<b>ESD5 Travel Policy and Procedures</b>	<b>Reference:</b> <b>Application:</b> All Personnel

## I. Purpose

To define Travis County ESD#5’s policy and procedures pertaining to travel.

## II. Background

The TCESD#5 Travel Policy and Procedure establishes policies and procedures with respect to travel of all employees or commissioners.

## III. Policy/Best Practices

- A. When an TCESD5 employee desires to attend a seminar, convention or any other function that requires time or expenses paid by the Department (not including attendance at the National Fire Academy), the request shall be made through the employee’s immediate supervisor. If the request requires any expense to the Department (other than wages) the employee should submit an Outside Training Request Form which describes the nature of the request and approximate costs.
- B. All travel must be reasonable and necessary for the conduct of official TCESD5 business. TCESD5 personnel are expected to exercise care incurring expenses.

## IV. Procedure

The Department will process all travel claims in accordance with the ESD5 Travel Policy and Procedure. Therefore, upon approval of a travel request, employees will comply with the following:

- A. The employee will submit the original Fire Department Travel Request form with appropriate signatures of approval to TCESD5 at least 30 working days prior to the trip to ensure adequate time to process a travel advance check. The employee should not make airline or hotel reservations without first consulting with the training Captain or Chief.
- B. If airline reservations are required, the Outside Training Request Form must be submitted at least 60 days in advance.
- C. If the trip is for a seminar, conference, etc., the employee should attach the registration form to the Outside Training Request Form. The training Captain or Chief will register the employee for the event.
- D. TCESD5 will forward airline tickets, hotel confirmation number, etc to employees.

E. TCESD5 employees may seek pre-payment of per diem based on GSA rates by filling out a reimbursement form and submitting it two weeks prior to the travel days.

F. Approved Expenditures

1. Transportation - The employee should select the mode of transportation which will be the most economical to the TCESD5 considering cost and time.
  - a. When feasible, TCESD5 vehicles will be utilized for in-state travel. Any fuel needed while on the trip will be at the employees expense for reimbursement by the District. A claim for reimbursement of the cost of fuel should be submitted on the Reimbursement Form. Before departing, the fuel tank should be filled at TCESD5. While out of town, the employee should use self-service facilities, if possible, and purchase only enough fuel to return to TCESD5.
  - b. If a personal vehicle is used, mileage will be paid at the rate per mile paid established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for federal employee use of personal vehicles for travel on business. Any miles driven for personal reasons must not be included in the total miles for which a mileage reimbursement is requested. At no time will the reimbursement of expenditures during travel time as a result of using one's personal vehicle (mileage, meals, and lodging) exceed the cost of airfare to the destination for the date(s) the employee is required to remain at the destination.
  - c. Claimants should limit claims for mileage reimbursement in situations in which employees can travel together. When two or more employees are aware that they have identical itineraries on the same dates and are traveling on the same TCESD5 business for which mileage in a personal vehicle is claimed, payment may be claimed and allowed for only one of the recipients.
  - d. No other costs of operating a personal vehicle beside mileage at the federal rate, the cost of airport parking or other parking fees or toll charges will be reimbursable.
  - e. All airline reservations must be made through TCESD5 a minimum of 21 days in advance. Booking early may result in lower airfares.
  - f. Employees who park at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA) should retain their parking tickets to be turned in when their travel claim is settled. TCESD5 will estimate the cost prior to travel and include it in your advance.
  - g. Rental of a vehicle may be authorized or required by the Fire Chief when it is more practical and/or less expensive than the use of taxi cabs, ride share programs or other public transportation. The cost of gasoline for the rental vehicle is reimbursable with appropriate receipts. When travel by air will be for an extended period, employees should travel to and from the airport by taxi, ride-share or similar means if the cost of same is reasonably expected to be lower than parking fees for the duration of the employee's travel away. When parking overnight for travel from ABIA, less costly remote parking must be used.
2. Lodging/Meals - In accordance with the TCESD5 Travel Policy and Procedure.
  - a. Lodging - Expenses will be allowed for reasonable room rates plus tax. These costs will be reviewed against the GSA then current applicable per diem rates. If a spouse accompanies an employee, the single occupancy rate for the room should be

obtained and noted on the hotel bill. In no case will the TCESD5 pay more than the single occupancy rate for one employee.

- b. Receipts for lodging must be provided in order to obtain reimbursement and must show a detailed breakdown of all charges incurred on a daily basis. Personal items should be marked "Personal" and deducted from the total hotel bill.
- c. Meals - The employee shall be reimbursed on a per diem method (no receipts required). The per diem amount will be based upon the destination.
- d. TCESD5 determines the meals eligible for reimbursement, according to the following schedule (assuming the claimant is based in TCESD5):

**Leave from Austin: Allowed:**

Before 7 a.m. Breakfast

Before 11 a.m. Lunch

Before 6 p.m. Dinner

**Arrive in Austin: Allowed:**

After 9 a.m. Breakfast

After 1 p.m. Lunch

After 7 p.m. Dinner

3. Miscellaneous Expenses - The following expenses will be paid in accordance with the TCESD5 Travel Policy and Procedure:

- a. Training Seminars and Conferences – The receipt must include the agenda or program and identify all activities included in the registration fee.
- b. Books and Supplies - Only if related to TCESD5 business. These become TCESD5 property.
- c. Taxi/Rideshare service in other cities - Related to approved travel for business. Transport to/from entertainment and restaurants are not reimbursable.
- d. Emergency repair of TCESD5 vehicle - Such charges should be approved in advance where circumstances allow.
- e. Parking - Actual costs reimbursed with receipts.
- g. Freight charges - To ship TCESD5 equipment or materials.
- h. Laundry/Dry Cleaning - Costs incurred after five working days on continuous travel status.

4. Ineligible Expenses- The following list contains some, but not all, of the expenses which will not be paid in accordance with the TCESD5 Travel Policy and Procedure:

- a. Loss of personal property or funds.
- b. Entertainment expenses, including alcoholic beverages or the cost of movie rental or theater tickets.
- c. Transportation to or from entertainment and restaurants.
- d. Transportation between home and airport.
- e. Flight or trip insurance.
- f. Laundry/Dry Cleaning - Unless costs are incurred after five working days on continuous travel status.
- g. Excess baggage costs for personal belongings. (PPE baggage fees are reimbursable)
- h. Gasoline or repair costs for personal vehicle.

- i. Cost of meals in excess of allowance.
  - j. Cost of lodging in excess of allowance.
  - k. Excessive mileage reimbursement.
  - l. Unauthorized expenses for car rental.
  - m. Unauthorized registration fees.
- G. When an employee has concluded travel, he or she must submit, within ten days after travel completion date, a TCESD5 Reimbursement form so that reimbursement to or from the employee may be calculated (if needed). All receipts should be attached to the reimbursement form for processing of the employee's claim. If a reimbursement is due, a check request will be processed and the employee will receive the check within five working days.
- H. If the employee owes the TCESD5 money (for example, the registration fee or similar fee paid by TCESD5 in the event the employee does not complete the course, training or other presentation), those funds must be paid to TCESD5 when the employee submits a claim for reimbursement/per diem fees. The claim cannot be processed until all owed funds are received by TCESD5.
- I. The reimbursement form and receipts will not be accepted unless funds owed to TCESD5 accompany the reimbursement.
- J. When more than one TCESD5 employee will be traveling to the same location and/or function the Command Staff may designate one employee to be the group coordinator. This employee will serve as a single point of contact with TCESD5 and will be responsible for following the procedure as outlined above. The group coordinator will distribute per diem money, airline tickets, etc., to the other employees as appropriate and collect any receipts as necessary to document the travel.
- K. If there are questions concerning this order, the employee should contact one of the Command Staff.
- L. National Fire Academy travel is looked at on a case by case basis due to most of the travel is covered by NFA.
- M. Wages for non-exempt employees will be payable for travel time to/from the location of study, up to 8 hours per calendar day, and time actually attending the class. Exempt employees will earn comp time for travel days or training days depending on schedule of class. Commissioners may be compensated as provided pursuant to Tex. Health & Safety Code Section 775.038.