

# VISIT FLORIDA Travel Policy Guidelines for Vendors



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This document provides guidelines and establishes procedures for all VISIT FLORIDA vendors incurring business travel expenses for the benefit of VISIT FLORIDA. All vendors are required to comply with these guidelines in order to receive reimbursement for any expense claims related to travel on VISIT FLORIDA's behalf.

The purpose of these guidelines is to:

- > Ensure all vendors have a clear and consistent understanding of policies and procedures for business travel.
- > Provide guidance regarding what expenses are, and are not, allowed while traveling for the benefit of VISIT FLORIDA.
- > Provide vendors with a reasonable level of service, comfort and security at the lowest possible cost.
- > Ensure that all authorized expenditures meet and comply with all VISIT FLORIDA requirements.

VISIT FLORIDA will reimburse vendors for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while traveling on authorized VISIT FLORIDA business. The expenses must be in compliance with these guidelines and any specific guidelines set forth in the vendor's contract.

VISIT FLORIDA assumes no obligation to reimburse vendors for expenses that are not in compliance with these guidelines or the vendor's contract. Vendors who do not comply with this policy may be subject to delay, short paying reimbursement, or withholding of reimbursement and/or cancellation of contract.

## **Alternatives to Travel**

Vendors traveling on authorized VISIT FLORIDA business are expected to use the most cost-effective options available. Prior to requesting a written travel authorization from VISIT FLORIDA, vendors should consider whether the objective of the meeting can be met through other means (e.g., teleconferencing, e-meeting, digital chat, video conferencing, etc.).

## **Travel Arrangements**

All travel must have advance approval in writing from VISIT FLORIDA with a travel authorization unless travel is outlined and set forth in the vendor's contract. Vendors should make travel arrangements 14 or more calendar days in advance of domestic travel and 21 or more days in advance of international travel. Justification must be provided for travel arrangements that are booked closer to the departure date than the guidelines suggests.

## **Airfare**

Vendors are expected to book the lowest logical airfare and to consider the following (but not limited to) alternatives in making the decision:

- > Alternate airports
- > Advance purchase fares
- > Additional night stay-over
- > Connecting and one-stop flights
- > Non-preferred carriers

All airline tickets should be purchased as non-refundable coach/economy class.

All charges incurred for airline baggage fees may be submitted for reimbursement, but the receipt must be provided.

Portage paid shall not exceed \$1 per bag or \$5 per incident. Portage charges exceeding \$5 per incident will require additional justification. The number of bags must be stated on the expense report. Receipts are not required.

Costs for lost or delayed luggage will not be reimbursed. If a vendor's luggage is lost or delayed, the airline's procedure to obtain reimbursement should be followed.

Vendors should use daily, long-term or off-site parking and provide receipts for reimbursement. Short-term parking rates are much higher and should be avoided. Airport shuttle service needs to be considered and used whenever possible.

## **Lodging**

Vendors must provide a zero-balance receipt/folio statement to VISIT FLORIDA as documentation of lodging expenses. It is VISIT FLORIDA's policy that actual, reasonable costs will be reimbursable for lodging expenses. Hotels of moderate and reasonable comfort should be sought, rather than deluxe or luxury hotels. Vendors should use their best judgment in selecting a location and hotel to stay.

Vendors are reminded that the most economical selection of hotel is required in all situations (in-state, out-of-state, and international travel). The State of Florida lodging maximum preferred daily rate is \$150. The \$150 daily rate is for the room rate only. Taxes and additional fees are not considered in this amount. This rate should be used as a benchmark for all hotel stays in the United States, however VISIT FLORIDA will reimburse for actual cost of lodging plus taxes.

When traveling on authorized VISIT FLORIDA business outside of the United States, vendors should use the current maximum lodging daily rate as specified in the federal publication "Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians, Foreign Areas)" by location. The maximum lodging daily rate includes mandatory fees and taxes. Please refer to instructions for [International Lodging and Meal Allowance](#) for details on determining the maximum daily lodging rate allowable for Foreign Travel reimbursement. This rate should be used as a benchmark for all hotel stays outside the United States.

Documentation of the hotel selection if over the \$150 daily rate for US hotel stays or the maximum daily rate for all foreign hotel stays per the federal regulation is required. Prior to booking lodging, research hotel rates in proximity of the business location and provide proof the hotel selected is a reasonable rate for the specific travel dates. A comparison to three other hotels is required, if the selected hotel is over the \$150 daily rate and is not exempt from the benchmark requirement as explained below.

The only exception to the need to benchmark against the maximum allowed daily lodging rate:

- > Attendance at a VISIT FLORIDA hosted event where a contracted rate has been negotiated with the hotel. No additional documentation is required with the expense report.

Hotel room upgrades are allowed as long as there is no additional cost to the company.

## **Ground Transportation**

Vendors are expected to make the best financial decision when securing ground transportation by considering the most cost effective, safe, and efficient ground transportation available for the situation. Examples: car service, car rentals, personal car, subway, train or bus.

Gas purchases for rental cars are reimbursable and a receipt must be provided. VISIT FLORIDA will not reimburse for additional auto insurance secured with the rental car agency. Receipts are required for all forms of ground transportation except for metered parking. VISIT FLORIDA will reimburse for parking at airport, hotel, parking garage, valet (if self parking is not an option) and metered parking.

Mileage Documentation: Cost per mile reimbursed to the vendor is 44.5 cents per mile. Documentation of the mileage must be submitted as backup for reimbursement.

Other ground transportation, i.e., cabs, Uber, Lyft, subway, train, or bus: Tips for ground transportation that do not exceed 15 percent of the transportation fare are reimbursable.

Tips paid for mandatory valet parking that do not exceed \$1 per occasion are reimbursable. Receipts are not required.

## **Meals**

VISIT FLORIDA will reimburse for meals at the rates below. If a vendor incurs (pays for) a meal cost while traveling and/or in the out of town location, then the allowance for that meal may be requested for reimbursement.

The maximum allowance rates for the meal costs will be as follows:

- > Breakfast: \$6 – (US travel only, when travel begins BEFORE 6:00 a.m. and extends BEYOND 8:00 a.m.)
- > Lunch: \$11 – (US travel only, when travel begins BEFORE noon and extends BEYOND 2:00 p.m.)
- > Dinner: \$19 – (US travel only, when travel begins BEFORE 6:00 p.m. and extends BEYOND 8:00 p.m.)

The maximum reimbursement for a full day of individual meals is \$36.

**FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL ONLY:** Please refer to Instructions for [International Lodging and Meal Allowance](#) for details on determining allowable international travel reimbursement for meals. Meal allowances for foreign travel shall not begin until the date and time of arrival in the foreign country and will end upon departure from the foreign country. If travel is delayed prior to leaving the US, meal allowances for US travel should be used. Per diem rates may be used on the day when the traveler boards the plane to return to the US or upon departure from the foreign country, with no anticipation of further hotel stays. Per diem is calculated at \$80 per day using four six-hour periods: Midnight to 6:00 a.m., 6:00 a.m. to noon, noon to 6:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. to midnight. Each period is calculated at \$20. The traveler may choose to claim per diem **or** the applicable international meal allowance, but cannot claim both for the same day. **International per diem will be calculated in the same manner as domestic travel, \$80 per day using four six-hour periods.**

### **Non-Reimbursable Costs**

The following is a list of expenses, although not all-inclusive, that are not reimbursable:

- > Personal expenses, non-work related of any kind
- > Airline membership fees/dues
- > Air travel insurance
- > Alcoholic beverages
- > Annual dues on a personal credit card
- > Any expenses resulting from obtaining airline miles for personal use
- > Barber/hairstylist expenses
- > Car washes
- > Class of service upgrades for air travel (unless under policies outlined in Air Travel section)
- > Club membership or fees
- > Credit card delinquency fees
- > Credit card rewards plan membership fees or personal credit card fees
- > Dependent care expenses
- > Donations to charity added on to final bills
- > Equipment rental/computer use or rental
- > Expenses for personal guests
- > Hotel gym fees
- > Hotel no-show/cancellation charges (unless valid business reason)
- > Hotel safe rentals
- > Housekeeping tips
- > Interest charges for credit cards
- > Internet usage
- > Lost cash
- > Lost tickets
- > Loyalty or rewards programs membership fees
- > Luggage or briefcase purchases
- > Movies (In-flight and Hotel)

- > Normal commuting costs
- > Personal articles (clothing, medicine, toiletries, magazines, umbrellas, etc.)
- > Personal entertainment
- > Purchase of formal attire
- > Routine car maintenance
- > Shoe shine, shoe repair
- > Souvenirs, personal gifts
- > Spa services
- > Tourist visa
- > Traffic tickets and parking fines
- > Travel insurance
- > Tipping/Gratuities such as bell hop, maid service, valet, or baggage clerk

Vendors are not to provide food, beverages, or gifts of any kind to VISIT FLORIDA employees.

### **Documentation**

Invoices submitted by vendors must be accompanied by valid receipts and required documentation as noted above, which will be reviewed and approved before payment. Valid receipts include:

- > Complete itinerary invoice for airfare which displays amount charged and method of payment
- > Luggage receipt provided by airline
- > Itemized hotel zero balance receipt/folio statement
- > Itemized rental car receipt (final receipt not the estimated receipt)
- > Required receipts for all other expenses except meals, parking meters under \$10