Bourns College of Engineering, Dean's Office

Travel - Driving versus Flying BCOE Blanket Approval

Procedure Owner: BCoE, Dean's Office
Effective Date: November 9, 2012

Objective:

This policy defines when it is allowable to drive instead of fly to/from a business travel destination without receiving pre-approval from the Department Chair/Director or gathering cost comparison data. All trips must still be consistent with UC Business & Finance Bulletin G-28 and UCR policy 900-20: Travel – Policy, Regulations, and Procedures:
http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/3420365/BFB-G-28
http://fboapps.ucr.edu/policies/index.php?path=viewPolicies.php&policy=900-20.

Procedure:

UC travel policy states that "transportation expenses shall be reimbursed based on the most economical mode of transportation and the most commonly traveled route consistent with the authorized purpose of the trip." The BCOE Dean provides the following blanket approval to drive instead of fly for trips meeting the criteria outlined below. Additional pre-approval and cost comparison data to drive to a business destination instead of flying **is not required.** Any time a traveler wants to drive to a destination that is outside of this criteria, he/she must obtain pre-approval from the Department Chair/Head and obtain the cost comparison data. The price comparison data needs to be based on the cost of the lowest Connexxus regular coach airfare for the same time period and the cost of transportation to and from each airport. The amount of reimbursement is limited to the lower cost between actual expenses and the comparison data. The pre-approval request must be submitted at least 7 days prior to the beginning of the travel. If pre-approval is not obtained, full reimbursement cannot be guaranteed.

1. If the trip involves a **single traveler (or multiple travelers in the same vehicle) and the use of a University car rental agreement is used (**economy or compact models), the 400 mile distance from Riverside is acceptable for trips less than one week for the following reasons:
   a. The car rental plus fuel costs and additional lodging and meal expenses (if applicable per policy), due to the extension of travel time, are reasonable for this distance.
   b. The travel time may be comparable to air transport given the time needed to travel to/from the airport, security screenings, and travel to/from the meeting location as well as the timing of certain flights (e.g. UC Merced (325 miles), UC Santa Cruz (400 miles), and Phoenix, AZ (316 miles).

2. If the trip involves **a single traveler (or multiple travelers in the same vehicle) and the use of a personal vehicle for one-day business meetings**, the one-way travel distance should be no more than 100 miles from Riverside without a cost comparison (or justification), and pre-approval. The rational is as follows:

a) An argument could be made that for this distance, the use of a personal vehicle saves time over renting a vehicle.
b) The maximum roundtrip reimbursable mileage cost (at $.55/mile) is $110, which is comparable to a two-day car rental (considering the pick-up and drop-off time restraints) plus fuel cost.
c) This distance typically would not require the additional expense of an overnight stay.

3. If the trip involves a **single traveler (or multiple travelers in the same vehicle) and the use of a personal vehicle for multi-day business meetings less than one wee**k in duration, the travel distance should be no more than 250 miles from Riverside without a cost comparison (or justification), and pre-approval. The rational is as follows:
    a. This distance covers most locations that do not have a convenient airport and/or it is more practical to drive (e.g. Las Vegas) considering travel to/from airport, security screenings, and transportation to the meeting location.
    b. The maximum roundtrip reimbursable mileage cost (at $.55/mile) is $275, which is comparable to a multi-day car rental (considering the pick-up and drop-off time restraints) plus fuel cost.
    c. This distance typically would not require the additional overnight stays (similar to flying).

It is important to note:

1) When private vehicles are used on University business, the department should ensure the traveler has adequate liability insurance coverage as outlined in BFB G-28.
2) Fuel, routine repairs, tires, and other automobile expense items shall not be allowed when a private vehicle is used. Such expenses are included in the mileage reimbursement rates.
3) When a private vehicle operated by an employee on official University business is damaged by collision or sustains other accidental damage, reimbursement for repairs borne by the employee may be authorized up to $500 or the amount of the deductible (co-insurance), whichever is less. Expenses that can be recouped from insurance are not eligible for reimbursement. The amount reimbursed shall be based on receipts submitted by the employee to the individual who authorized the travel.
4) When multiple travelers are in the same vehicle, only one traveler can be reimbursed for the mileage (or car rental).