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# 

# SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this document is to provide helpful information and tips for those traveling to NPDN related workshops or meetings using funds administered through Cornell University and the Northeast Plant Diagnostic Network (NEPDN) Regional Center. Frequently asked questions and situations that arise frequently have been described or used as examples throughout this document. We understand that this seems like a very long document to provide travelers, but our hope is that understanding past workshop participant experiences is beneficial and will make your experience of planning, attending and getting reimbursed a smooth process.

Please educate yourself on the rules and regulations related to reimbursable expenses. We do not want to be the bearer of bad news when an expense is rejected by a Business Service Center Representative. **Please read the entire document before making your travel arrangements!**

**WHO GETS REIMBURSED and HOW:**

Cornell University will reimburse the travel expenses of approved meeting participants using **one**  method; they will provide reimbursement of travel expenses…

**1) To the employer or institution**

**Reimbursing the institution.**  These fees may be quite expensive, and Cornell University cannot provide reimbursement for these items before a meeting occurs. Therefore, it is recommended that the traveler request reimbursements throughout the planning process through their employer. **After the meeting concludes**, the traveler or an employer representative will simply **create an invoice on institution letterhead**. The invoice must list each reimbursement item and the amount of the expense, but **no receipts are required** in this situation. A link to an example invoice/template is provide in Section III. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST SUBMISSION.

# SECTION II. TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

# Each traveler is responsible to making their own arrangements and for paying the charges for travel related services. The workshop meeting planners will often make arrangements to receive special group rates. Be sure to use the group code supplied to receive the prearranged rate. If you are not given the rate indicated in the travel arrangements announcement, contact Barb Riker, or Karen Snover-Clift so they can correct the problem. Their contact information is provided at the end of this document.

# LODGING ARRANGEMENTS:

* If supplied, be sure to use the group code to receive any special, prearranged lodging charge.
* Check your rate at check-in to confirm the charge is accurate.
* At check out, review your receipt to again ensure the rate is accurate.

# AIRFARE ARRANGEMENTS:

# NOTE: AIRFARE EXPENSE POLICY:

In hopes of keeping expense down, which in turn will allow more participants to attend meetings and workshops, an airfare policy has been established. Typically airfare costs range between $300.00 and $750.00. Therefore, if you receive a quote of $750 or more for airfare you must contact Karen Snover-Clift for approval. Because of this policy, failure to receive prior approval risks this expense not being reimbursed.

* Your employer/institution will be reimbursed for airline costs to travel to and from the workshop location.
* Use of an alternate airport: If you use an airport that in not the closest airport to your workplace/home location, you will need to supply supporting documentation in the form of a comparison airfare quote, to prove it did not cost more money than flying from you home airport.
* Combining personal travel and/or time off: If you plan to combine personal travel or time off before or after your trip, as above, you will need to obtain a comparison airfare quote prior to your travel, using the dates of the actual meeting.
* Justification for alternate airport use: Using an alternate airport may provide a less expensive ticket cost, unavailable flights to get to the meeting location on time, etc.
* The date of comparison quote needs to be before you traveled to the meeting.
* How to obtain a comparison quote (also see the Frequently Ask Question (FAQ) document):
  + Internet searches that clearly show the charge of a ticket is sufficient documentation. Print or save the quote for submission with your travel reimbursement request.
  + If the comparison quote is for using an alternate airport, the quote must clearly show the cost of a ticket from your workplace/home location to the meeting location.
  + If the cost of the alternate airport or alternate dates ticket is **LESS** than the workplace/home airport quote, **it will be reimbursed to the full amount of you alternate airport ticket**.
  + If the cost of the alternate airport or alternate date’s ticket is **MORE** than the workplace/home airport quote, then **it will be reimbursed for the amount of the workplace/home airport ticket**.

# TRAVEL INSURANCE

Any type of travel Insurance is **NOT** a reimbursable expense. If you prefer to purchase travel insurance for personal reasons, you will not be reimbursed under any conditions. It is your own choice; the traveler will pay for this expense.

# FLIGHT CHANGE FEES

If you need to change your flight due to anemergency, **the change fee and difference in airfare is reimbursable.** To ensure the reason for the change fits our reasonable definition of an emergency, contact Karen Snover-Clift ([kls13@cornell.edu](mailto:kls13@cornell.edu) or 607-227-0397) before making any changes and incurring a change fee.

# MORE ON JUSTIFYING THE USE OF AN ALTERNATE AIRPORT AND PERSONAL DAYS

As described in the “Airfare” section above, Cornell University requires documentation if you are using an airport that is not considered your home base or local airport and if you incorporate additional days within the timeframe of your travel to and from the meeting.

* If you choose to use an alternate airport, you must supply documentation that shows the alternate airport flight cost is less expensive than a similar flight from your home airport in order to be fully reimbursed for your alternate airport flight. The cost of the flight plus items such as mileage and tolls to reach the alternate airport will be calculated to determine if the use of the alternate flight airport was truly less expensive, therefore justifying this choice. Obtaining a comparison quote will ensure you are fully reimbursed for the cost of your flight.
* If you choose an alternate airport because there are no flights available from your home base or the available flight times will not allow arrival on site for the meeting when needed, a comparison quote showing the only available flights with arrival times after the start of the meeting, or a screen shot showing a “no flights available” message will justify this decision and ensure full reimbursement of your flight.
* If you choose to combine this meeting with personal or vacation days, you need to obtain a comparison quote using the travel dates for the meeting. Often flights that have a longer interval between departure and return are less expensive. If this is the case and the airfare you purchase is less expensive than the comparison quoted price, it will be reimbursed for the full purchase price of your flight even though it includes a few extra days. Otherwise, if your actual flight is more expensive, you will be responsible for the difference in the fees. Expenses and per diem that occurred on the personal days CAN NOT be submitted for reimbursement. Fees that would have occurred minus the vacation time such as baggage fees, shuttle, or taxi to the airport, etc., are reimbursable.

# ONSITE TRANSPORTSATION ARRANGEMENTS

It is the responsibility of the traveler to make arrangements to travel from the airport to the hotel and vice versa. Examples of acceptable (reimbursable) methods of transportation includetaxi, rideshare, airport shuttle service, metro/subway/train, or shuttle bus.

# RENTAL CAR ARRANGEMENTS

Rental cars are allowed but need approval from meeting planners. Meeting planners allow this expense when other onsite transportation is not readily accessible and/or when transporting workshop participants between the hotel, meeting site and to access meals optimizes the time available to focus on the meeting topic. At times, meeting planners may restrict the number of rental cars if other transportation is readily available to allow more people to attend the workshop. For certain workshops (such as the Beltsville Workshops), the meeting planners typically request 2-3 participant volunteers that are willing to transport other participants between the hotel and meeting site and to meals.

If you are renting a car, you are responsible to make the reservations and for payment.

* Reimbursable expenses associated with rental cars include parking fees, fuel, and tolls.
* Items such as GPS, Sirius XM radio, child car seats and other additions will not be reimbursed through Cornell University.
* Only TWO types of insurance is allowable…
  + Collision (CDW)
  + Loss Damage Waiver (LDW)

NOTE: If the insurance code differs from those listed (CDW, LDW) it will NOT be reimbursable. Do not let an attendant tell you their code is the same because IT IS NOT and past travelers have been burned.

* Consider that many travelers do not need to purchase car insurance through the rental car company. They may already be insured through a personal car insurance provider, a credit card company or through a university/employer-rental car company arrangement.

# IMPORTANT: RENTAL CAR EXPENSE POLICY:

In hopes of keeping expense down, which in turn will allow more participants to attend meetings and workshops, a rental car policy has been established. Typically, rental cars range between $200 and $400 for 3-5 day rentals. Therefore, if you receive a quote over $500, the meeting planners may want to research other less expensive options. If you receive a quote of $500 or more for a rental car, you must contact Karen Snover-Clift for approval or guidance for alternative rental. Because of this policy, failure to receive prior approval risks this expense not being reimbursed.

**RENTAL CAR FUEL**

Fuel for rental cars is reimbursable. Include on invoice within travel expense reimbursement letter.

# PERSONAL VEHICLE OR BUSINESS VEHICLE- MILEAGE COVERAGE RATE

Mileage expenses will be reimbursed to all those traveling to the workshop using a personal vehicle and to those using their personal vehicle to drive to the airport, train station or other method of transportation. The current mileage rate can be found at the GSA travel website, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715>

* Drivers need to record mileage from their home base to the meeting site and back.
* It is Cornell University policy to calculated mileage starting at your workplace (not from your home) and to the workshop location or to the airport/train station, regardless if your home is closer to or further from the destination.
* In addition, if the traveler is using his/her personal vehicle at the workshop location, be sure to include the mileage driven while onsite, from the hotel to the meeting site and transporting participants to restaurants for meals.
* Drivers will submit the number of miles driven with the travel reimbursement request.
* Mileage reimbursement does not apply to those renting cars.
* Fuel is not a reimbursable expense for personal vehicles because it is calculated as part of the mileage rate.

# TOLLS AND PARKING

All tolls and parking fees are reimbursable. Include the amount in travel reimbursement invoice letter.

# MEALS

All meals are covered using the GSA per diem rate. 75% of the rate is used for travel days. If you want to learn how much the per diem rate is prior to traveling, you can find the per diem rate information at the GSA website, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>

In some situations, a meal needs to be removed from what is claimed. If a meal needs to be removed, you can determine the value by multiplying the per diem rate for the day by following percentage for that meal…

Breakfast = 20%, Lunch = 20% and Dinner = 60%

These calculations and all of the per diem section will be completed by the reimbursement coordinator if the traveler did not complete this section on the form.

# NOTE: A per diem example document is available on the NPDN portal, Beltsville Workshops page. Examples of 3-day, 4-day and 5-day workshops are provided as well as a few special situations.

# SECTION III. TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST SUBMISSION-stopped review and update here-finish starting here

1. **GENERAL INFORMATION REGARDING REIMBURSEMENTS AND REIMBURSABLE ITEMS**

# LODGING REIMBURSEMENT

* The lodging fee is to be included in your travel reimbursement invoice letter.

# AIRFARE REIMBURSEMENT

* Reimbursement of airfare, is to be included in your travel reimbursement letter.
* If you chose to use an alternate airport or combined personal travel or time off before or after your trip, include the comparison airfare quote you created prior to your travel with your travel reimbursement request.
* Also include the reason or justifications for using an alternate airport or had additional days outside of the meeting dates.
* Label the comparison quote as such.

# RENTAL CAR REIMBURSEMENT

* To request reimbursement of rental car fees, include in institution/employer travel invoice.

For parking, fuel, and/or tolls, include amount on travel invoice.

* Remember Items such as GPS, Sirius XM radio, and other additions are not reimbursable expenses through Cornell University.
* As mentioned in the “Travel Arrangements” section, if you purchased rental car insurance, only two types of insurance are allowable. Be sure you list the insurance using these codes…
  + Collision (CDW)
  + Loss Damage Waiver LDW)
* If you received prior approval for a rental over $500, please indicate who you spoke with and the date the approval was given. If you have an email conversation, you may include a copy of it.

**RENTAL CAR FUEL REIMBURSEMENT**

* To request reimbursement of fuel purchased for a rental car, include in your travel expense reimbursement letter.
* Fuel costs are not reimbursable for personal vehicles claiming mileage. The mileage reimbursement rate includes fuel within the calculation.

# PERSONAL VEHICLE OR BUSINESS VEHICLE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

* To request mileage reimbursement, the traveler needs to submit the number of miles driven. This should include mileage from their home base to the meeting site and back, as well as driving onsite from the hotel to the meeting place.
* It is Cornell University policy to calculated mileage starting at whichever is closest, your workplace or your home, and to the workshop location or to the airport/train station.
* To determine the reimbursement per mile current rate, go to the GSA travel website, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715>
* Mileage reimbursement does not apply to those renting cars.
* Fuel is not a reimbursable expense for personal vehicles because it is calculated as part of the mileage rate.

# TOLLS AND PARKING REIMBURSEMENT

All tolls and parking fees are reimbursable. Please add these amounts to travel reimbursement invoice letter.

# CALCULATING PER DIEM MEAL REIMBURSEMENT

The traveler can calculate the per diem owed or they may choose to allow the reimbursement coordinator to perform the calculations. The per diem meal allowance is calculated according to the number of days traveled. The rate depends on the physical location of the hotel and the month and year. The per diem meal rate can be found at GSA website, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>

* When calculating meals, the per diem rate is broken down into 3 parts:

Breakfast =20%, Lunch = 20% and Dinner = 60%

* If any of your meals are paid for by those organizing or hosting the workshop, refer to the percentages listed above and remove that amount for the day.
* If a breakfast was included in the pre-arranged lodging group rate and utilized by the traveler, 20% will be subtracted from the daily per diem meal rate.

# An example calculation of per diem for a meeting:

You travelled to a 3-day workshop in Bowie, MD (hotel location) in March 2023. The per diem meal allowance (according to the GSA website) is $79.00/day. You arrived the evening before the workshop and returned home the day after, the entire trip was 5 days. Travel days are 75% of the daily rate. The hotel provided breakfast, therefore, the per diem is decreased by 20% on the workshop days. Breakfast is not removed on travel days because you may need to leave the hotel prior to breakfast availability. If you departed the evening of the last day of the workshop, Day 4’s per diem will be 75% of the allowable rate, or $59.25, because it is a travel day and there is no Day 5.

Day 1 (travel day) $79.00 x 0.75 = **$59.25**

Day 2 (workshop day 1) $79.00 x 0.80 = **$63.20**

Day 3 (workshop day 2) $79.00 x 0.80 = **$63.20**

Day 4 (workshop day 3) $79.00 x 0.80 = **$63.20**

Day 5 (travel day) $79.00 x 0.75 = **$59.25**

# Total per diem reimbursed= $308.10

1. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING REIMBURSEMENT REQUESTS**

**There are changes to the reimbursement process for 2023.** Only reimbursement to the employer or institution is required. This is a much easier process for everyone due to the fact that no receipts are required with this method. Cornell University will reimburse the travel expenses of approved meeting participants using **one** method; they will provide reimbursement of travel expenses…

1) Directly to the employer or institution.

1. **REIMBURSEMENT- TO THE EMPLOYER OR INSTITUTION**

**1A. STEP BY STEP PROCEDURE FOR REIMBUSEMENT TO THE EMPLOYER OR INSTITUTION:**

1. Create an invoice on letterhead,
2. Email or mail the invoice to the address listed in the contact section below.

Note: Original receipts are not required for this method of submission.

2-1. You or your employer must create and send an invoice to the reimbursement coordinator listed below, using your employer’s letterhead. Each item must be clearly listed on the invoice using a description such as “lodging” or “rental car” next to the appropriate expense amount in US dollars. A template for the invoice is available at

2-2. No receipts are needed when processing a reimbursement request using an invoice. Therefore, an electronic copy of invoice may be sent directly to the reimbursement coordinator listed below.

**CONTACTS:**

If you have ANY questions about any of these items, please contact the primary reimbursement coordinator, Barb Riker, or Karen Snover-Clift before making your arrangements or submitting your travel reimbursement to avoid delays in the reimbursement process.

Primary Reimbursement Coordinator:

Barb Riker Karen Snover-Clift

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