

OPERS Proposed Travel Policy Updates

May 16, 2018

Jenny Starr, Director - Finance



Background

- Identified the need to-
 - Update for current practices
 - Clarify various items throughout the policy
- One Policy for both the Board and OPERS Staff-
 - Board adopted one policy in 2003
 - Little difference between two groups
 - Exceptions should be rare
- Last updated June 2015
- Ignore Table of Contents-
 - Removed graphic pages for tracked changes to work
 - Will update in final, published policy

Timeline

Reviewed proposed changes with OPERS Leadership Team and Mgmt
(January 2018 - March 2018)



Draft policy for Board discussion and review (May 16, 2018)



Incorporate Board feedback and submit to Ethics Commission for
consultation (by end of May)



Receive confirmation back from Ethics Commission (Summer 2018)



Send to ORSC 60 days before Board approval and adoption



Board adopts policy 60 days after ORSC has the policy

Proposed Changes/Updates

General Information Section

Cleaned up division, department and personnel titles
(universal change throughout)

Board requests for travel authorization to come to
Executive Director, or Board Executive Assistant

Group meals/beverages during Board meetings do not
count toward daily meal allowance

Fleet vehicles insurance coverage driver endorsement
process clarified (universal change throughout)

Transportation Section

Cleaned up OPERS fleet vehicle language

Clarified intent of mileage reimbursement during weekdays

Updated language around rental cars, in a few places, to reflect current practice

Transportation Section (cont.)

Added language to explain reimbursement for travel to/from an alternative city

Expanded weekend travel to include holidays (universal change throughout)

Updated language around travel days to reflect current practice

Meals Section

Group meals/beverages during Board committee and regular meetings not part of daily meal allowance

Language cleaned up for same day meals with no overnight stay

Conferences Section

Expanded language around reimbursement for meals
outside of conference meals

Telephone Internet Section

Update language to encourage usage of VPN into OPERS network

Availability of internet hotspot devices for travelers to request from IT

Procedures and Forms Section

Board submission of expenses no later than 60 days from conclusion of business trip

Clarified a couple of items already in practice:

- exceptions to policy should be briefly noted
 - the travel agent must be used for hotels and airfare
-

Removed specific deadline for submission of expense reports during the week to more generic wording, as specific deadlines are subject to change

What is staying the same?

Items Staying the Same

- ✓ Board and OPERS staff under one policy
- ✓ \$6,000 limit reimbursement and three trips, per year, for continuing education expenses (Board only)
- ✓ OPERS travel agent must be used to book airfare and hotel (Board goes through Board Executive Assistant)
- ✓ No out-of-state travel expense for Board members shall be reimbursed unless approved in advance...majority of Board at regular meeting
- ✓ Out-of-state Travel Authorization Request should be completed 30 days prior to traveling (Board Executive Assistant completes for Board)

Items Staying the Same (cont.)

- ✓ Out-of-state lodging limits remain at \$250 per night
- ✓ In-state lodging limits remain at \$150 per night
- ✓ Airline reservations should be made at least 30 days in advance of travel
- ✓ Detailed receipts are required for ALL expenses greater than \$10
- ✓ Daily meal allowance is \$60

Items Staying the Same (cont.)

- ✓ Reimbursement of alcoholic beverages is strictly prohibited
- ✓ Reimbursement of meal gratuities is authorized at actual expense not to exceed 20% of actual meal including tax
- ✓ Airport parking is limited to lesser of actual cost or \$10 per day

Items Staying the Same (cont.)

- ✓ If no free internet access, OPERS will reimburse access fees for each day of the business trip, one fee per day
- ✓ If meals provided at conference or meeting with no registration fee, employee/Board member should obtain an invoice with the cost of the meals, or other such expenses, for direct payment by OPERS

Items Staying the Same (cont.)

- ✓ A/P reserves the right to reject travel expense exceptions without appropriate approvals and documentation for exceptions to the policy
- ✓ Board members shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred for retirement business that are actual, necessary and reasonable, and incurred during attendance at meetings of the retirement board or its committees, or at meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops or sessions presented by other organizations and other group meetings **as authorized by the retirement board.**
[Rule 145-1-03]

Questions?





Ohio Public Employees Retirement System

July 13, 2018

Bethany Rhodes
Director
Ohio Retirement Study Council
30 East Broad Street, 2nd Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Re: OPERS Revised Travel Policy

Dear Ms. Rhodes:

Pursuant to R.C. Section 145.092, we are submitting the enclosed revisions to the *OPERS Travel & Expense Policy* for your review.

The OPERS Board reviewed revisions to its travel policy at its May 2018 meeting. In accordance with the provisions of R.C. 145.092, OPERS submitted the proposed revisions to the Ohio Ethics Commission ("OEC"). On June 26, 2018, the OEC shared suggestions on the revisions with OPERS. OPERS is now required to submit the revised policy to the Ohio Retirement Study Council for review at least sixty days prior to final adoption by the OPERS Board.

Several changes to the policy are needed as division, department and personnel names/titles have been updated since the last policy update in 2015. Additionally, there are several processes that have been in practice that were not specifically reflected or needed to be clarified in the policy. The following are a few items to highlight with respect to the proposed travel policy updates:

1. **Board meals** - the changes would not count group meals/snacks for the Board meetings against the allowed individual daily meal allowance of \$60, as the group meals/snacks are often billed separately by the vendor and paid a month after the meetings.
2. **Vehicle insurance coverage** - the changes clarify the annual process in place to endorse drivers for use of the OPERS fleet vehicles, as well as expectations of drivers and other processes regarding fleet vehicle usage and rental cars.
3. **Travel to/from an alternative city other than Columbus** - the changes allow for staff departing from an alternative city for OPERS business, due to vacation or out-of-town personal or business travel, to be reimbursed for the cost from the alternative city, within reason and with appropriate documentation and approvals. Additionally, changes address practice around departure from an OPERS business event to an alternative city - not previously addressed in the policy.

Please refer to the red-lined version for all the proposed changes to the policy and contact me with any questions or concerns. We have also attached the presentation given to the Board which highlights the proposed changes to the policy. We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



Eric C. Harrell
General Counsel

Enclosure

Cc: Karen Carraher, OPERS Executive Director
Jenny Starr, OPERS Director - Finance