

Travel, Meals, and Lodging

1037.1 POLICY

It is the Sheriff's Office policy to ensure sheriff's office personnel are reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in carrying out preauthorized travel and other sheriff's office business-related assignments. As explained within this chapter, sheriff's office personnel shall be reimbursed, or partially reimbursed, for the following:

- (a) Travel mileage;
- (b) Travel time;
- (c) Meals;
- (d) Lodging; and
- (e) Miscellaneous expenses related to preauthorized travel or other sheriff's office business-related assignments.

1037.2 TRAVEL APPROVAL AND PROCESSING

Expenditure for official travel will only be approved if it is incurred in accordance with these policies:

- (a) Training of more than one day or where an overnight stay is required:
 - 1. Processing: The Travel/Training/Education Assistance form (SMCG Form #P20) and the Training Request form (SMCSO Form #218) must be submitted and approved prior to the anticipated departure. The request shall contain all supporting documentation including cost estimates for hotel, air fare, conference/seminar registration, tolls, meals, mileage and reason for travel.
 - 2. Coordination: Prior to final approval, requests incurring costs shall be coordinated with the sheriff's office personnel in the SMCSO Fiscal Section and the SMCG Department of Finance to ensure funding is available.
 - 3. Final Approval: All requests for official training or travel for more than one day or involving an overnight stay must be approved by the sheriff or assistant sheriff on a Travel/Training/Education Assistance form (Form #P20) and the Training Request form (SMCSO Form #218).
 - 4. It is the responsibility of sheriff's office personnel to register for the training and make reservations for the accommodations and other travel arrangements. Approved Travel Training Request Forms along with supporting documentation and required receipts must be provided to the SMCSO Fiscal Section personnel in order for payment to be processed in a timely manner.
 - 5. It is the responsibility of sheriff's office personnel to submit the Travel Training Expense Account Reconciliation (F-1) Form to SMCSO Fiscal Section personnel upon completion of the training.
- (b) Training of one day or less where no overnight stay is required:
 - 1. Processing: The Travel/Training/Education Assistance form (Form #P20) and the Training Request form (SMCSO Form #218) must be submitted and

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approved prior to the anticipated departure. The request shall contain all supporting documentation including cost estimates for conference/seminar registration, tolls, meals, mileage and reason for travel.

2. Coordination: Prior to final approval, request having cost estimates shall be coordinated with the sheriff's office personnel in the SMCSO Fiscal Section to ensure funding is available.
3. Final Approval: The sheriff or assistant sheriff may verbally approve all official training of less than one day and not involving an overnight stay.
4. Once final approval is received, it is the responsibility of sheriff's office personnel to register for the training, make travel arrangements and submit all relevant paperwork for processing of payment. Approved Travel Training Request Forms along with supporting documentation and required receipts must be submitted to the SMCSO Fiscal Section personnel for payment to be processed in a timely manner.
5. It is the responsibility of sheriff's office personnel to submit the Travel Training Expense Account Reconciliation (F-1) Form to SMCSO Fiscal Section personnel upon completion of the training.

1037.3 MODE OF TRAVEL

Sheriff Owned Vehicles

- (a) Use: Sheriff's office vehicles should be used to the maximum extent where practical in the event of official travel.
- (b) Mileage Reimbursement: Employees who use a sheriff's office vehicles are not entitled to mileage reimbursement.
- (c) Traffic Violations: The settlement of any fine or penalty imposed for traffic or other violations with respect to the use or operation of sheriff's office vehicles is the responsibility of the individual employee. Except as provided herein, the Sheriff shall not pay or reimburse any cost involved or take any action for the abatement of such fines or penalties. Equipment repair order violations will normally be the responsibility of the county; therefore, the county will pay costs associated with such.
- (d) Travel Time and Sheriff's Office Vehicle: The use of or non-use of a sheriff's office vehicle does not change the entitlement of an employee to have travel time counted as hours worked, if appropriate.

Privately Owned Vehicles (POVs)

- (a) Authorization: The sheriff or assistant sheriff may authorize the payment of mileage for the use of a privately owned vehicle in the conduct of official business, provided travel funds have been budgeted and are available.
- (b) Mileage Reimbursement: A mileage allowance shall be paid for the authorized use of a privately owned vehicle in the conduct of official business. Choosing to travel in a privately- owned vehicle when a sheriff's office vehicle is available will result in reduced mileage reimbursement. The employee shall be reimbursed at a rate per mile as established and amended by the Federal Travel Regulation (reference 41

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CFR 301-10.303). The current mileage rate can be located at www.gsa.gov. Excluding the commute to and from work, employees shall normally be reimbursed for mileage incurred in the conduct of official sheriff's office business.

- (c) **Passengers:** No mileage allowance is authorized for the travel of passengers.
- (d) **Distance:** Mileage shall be computed from the employee's starting point to their destination and return.
- (e) **Other Expenses:** In addition to mileage, the employee may be reimbursed for other actual required expenses such as: parking fees, ferry, bridge and road tolls. Receipts and proper documentation must be provided for reimbursement in accordance with established policies and procedures of the SMCG Department of Finance and/or grantor requirements, if travel costs are being paid by grant funds.
- (f) **Insurance:** Employees who use their personal vehicle for official Sheriff's Office business must have automobile insurance in the amount required under existing Maryland Motor Vehicle laws.
- (g) **Maximum Mileage Reimbursement:** Employees who request to use their privately owned vehicles shall receive mileage reimbursement but it shall not exceed the cost of the most economical type of public transportation available or mileage for the most direct route of travel.
- (h) **Traffic Violations:** The settlement of any fine or penalty imposed for traffic or other violations is the responsibility of the employee operating the vehicle. The Sheriff shall not pay or reimburse any cost involved, or take any action for the abatement of such fine or penalty.

1037.4 TRAVEL / TRAINING HOURS WORKED

When determining if travel/training hours are to be credited as hours worked, it is immaterial whether the employee utilizes their privately owned vehicle or a sheriff's office vehicle.

- (a) **Home to Work:** Employees shall not be compensated for ordinary commute time whether it is to a fixed location or different local job sites. This includes travel to local conferences, seminars, meetings, etc.
- (b) **Travel/Training Away from Home:** During an employee's regularly scheduled hours and during corresponding working hours on non-working days, employees shall be compensated for travel time if travel is outside of the local area.
- (c) **Travel/Training During Work Day:** After an employee has arrived at their first work site, all time spent in traveling during the work day, except travel from last work site to home, is considered as hours worked.
- (d) **Call Back Travel/Training:** If a nonexempt employee is called out for nonscheduled work, they will be compensated in accordance with the Call Back Pay policy (A3.17 Rates of Pay).

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1037.5 USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Subject to approval, the following modes of public transportation may be used, in accordance with the following limitations and restrictions:

- (a) **Direct Route:** Travel must be by the most direct route, and reimbursement may be claimed only for the actual fare, including taxes and surcharges, for transportation by public carrier. Round trip tickets shall be used when they result in a savings.
- (b) **Rail Travel:** When traveling by rail, reimbursement shall be at coach rates unless the trip involves overnight travel; in which case, the employee may be reimbursed at the Pullman fare, provided it does not exceed the actual fare charged.
- (c) **Miscellaneous:** Travel to and from terminals, parking fees, reasonable tips (not to exceed 15%), and local public transportation fares may be reimbursed in accordance with policy.
- (d) **Rental Vehicles:** Rental vehicles may be used in accordance with policy in cases of emergencies, when no other means of public transportation is available, or when the overall cost will be less than other modes of transportation.
- (e) **Public Transportation:** Local transportation such as taxicabs, airport limousines, and buses may be used when justified.

1037.6 LODGING

Lodging costs may be reimbursed in accordance with the following:

- (a) **Category of Room:** The actual hotel room expenses for a single room (or double occupancy if a single room is not available) will be reimbursed when proper receipts are provided.
- (b) **Individual Rate:** Reimbursement will be made on the basis of actual cost for the expenses incurred by the employee for a single room (or double occupancy room if a single room is not available) and not for the employee's family or other persons provided that itemized receipted bills are submitted with the request for reimbursement.
- (c) **Discounts:** Discounts for government officials and employees are frequently available and should be sought; the travel authorization may be produced for the purpose of identification.
- (d) **Expenses Not Reimbursable:** The sheriff's office shall not reimburse for the following services:
 - 1. Room charges within the local region for conferences or meetings;
 - 2. Room charges when an overnight stay is not required;
 - 3. Room service or other courtesy charges; and
 - 4. Extra optional charges placed on the room bill, such as room movies, use of athletic facilities, special services, etc.

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- (e) Documentation: Receipts and proper documentation must be provided for reimbursement in accordance with established policies and procedures outlined in this policy.

1037.7 MEALS

Costs for meals shall be reimbursed in accordance with the following:

- (a) Travel with no overnight stay
 - 1. Employees will not normally be reimbursed for meals in the local area (see Appendix A for local area travel map). Meals for employees who travel outside of the local area (with no overnight stay) will receive a flat rate equal to 75% of the eligible GSA meals and incidentals expense (M&IE). Eligible meals for such trainings are those that occur during the hours of training, if a meal is not provided and if purchased at the employee's expense. For example, lunch is the only meal eligible for reimbursement when attending training from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and would be reimbursed at 75% of the GSA lunch rate for area of training.
- (b) Travel with overnight stay
 - 1. Employees shall be reimbursed for meals while on sheriff's office business-related travel. The following shall apply:
 - (a) Reimbursement Rate
 - 1. Employees shall be reimbursed a flat rate per diem commensurate with the Meals and Incidental Expense (M&IE) rate set forth by the Federal Travel Regulation (reference 41 CFR 301-11.6). Per diem rates can be located at www.gsa.gov.
 - 2. Meals for the first and last day of travel will be reimbursed at 75% of the M&IE rate.
 - 3. If a formal meal is included in a conference, the M&IE rate will be adjusted accordingly by deducting the appropriate amount shown in the M&IE chart. The M&IE chart can be located at www.gsa.gov.
- (c) Documentation: Receipts for non-local meals are not required as the sheriff's office reimburses employees for meals on a per diem basis. However, employees may not request reimbursement for meals not actually consumed. When training is paid for using grant funds, follow grant requirements.
- (d) Alcoholic Beverages: No claim will be allowed for the cost of alcoholic beverages.
- (e) Non-employees: Meal costs incurred by non-employee personnel shall not be reimbursed.

1037.8 VEHICLE RENTAL

The use of vehicles obtained from commercial vehicle rental firms will be limited to those instances set forth in this policy. Use of a rental vehicle at the travel destination will comply with the following:

- (a) Advance Approval: Use of rental vehicle at destination should be approved in advance by the sheriff or assistant sheriff. When the need for a rental vehicle is impossible to

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forecast and becomes a necessity, written justification for the use must be submitted with the request for reimbursement.

- (b) **Size:** Employees must rent the most economic vehicle to meet the needs of their sheriff's office related business. Luxury cars shall not be authorized.
- (c) **Discounts:** Employees shall ensure that all reasonably available discounts are applied against the vehicle charge.
- (d) **Additional Days:** Employees shall observe the hours of use schedule identified by the company in order to preclude payment for additional days.
- (e) **Mileage:** If mileage is charged, employees shall use the vehicle only for sheriff's office business related purposes.

1037.9 PARKING AND TOLLS

Parking: When parking expenses are incurred, a receipt is to be obtained. The receipt is to be attached to the request for reimbursement.

Tolls: Tolls are reimbursable without receipts but may be required when training is paid for using grant funds.

1037.10 REGISTRATION FEES

Documentation to substantiate payment of registration fees must be attached to the request for reimbursement.

1037.11 CONFERENCES

For approved conferences, employees will normally be reimbursed as follows:

- (a) **Local – Refer to Appendix A-Local Travel Map Area (attached)**
 - 1. **Reimbursable Expenses:**
 - (a) Registration and tuition;
 - (b) Cost of required publications and materials; and
 - (c) Mileage to and from the event in accordance with policy
 - 2. **Non-reimbursable Expenses:**
 - (a) Meals, unless included in the stated registration;
 - (b) Lodging; and
 - (c) Gratuities or tips
- (b) **Non-local**
 - 1. **Reimbursable Expenses:**
 - (a) Registration and tuition;
 - (b) Cost of required publications and materials;

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- (c) Transportation costs or mileage to and from the event in accordance with this policy;
 - (d) Meals, unless included in the registration fee;
 - (e) Lodging costs if overnight stay is required; and
 - (f) Miscellaneous expenses in accordance with this policy
2. Non-reimbursable Expenses: Lodging, if overnight stay is not required.

1037.12 TELEPHONE

All required official calls are reimbursable with proper documentation of: date of call, reason for call, name of whom called, length of call, and cost.

1037.13 MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES

Tips and Gratuities: The sheriff's office will reimburse for reasonable amounts when specifically identified, except for those tips rendered for meal service that is considered as part of the overall cost of the meals and included within the amounts set forth in this policy.

Laundry: When an official or employee is required to be in travel status for periods exceeding seven (7) calendar days, the reasonable cost of laundry, cleaning and pressing will be allowed.

Other Expenses: Other expenses not approved in this chapter shall be reviewed for reimbursement approval.

1037.14 ADVANCE PAYMENTS

Requests for Advances - Requests for advances should be submitted through sheriff's office personnel in the fiscal section with approval of the sheriff or assistant sheriff to the SMCG Department of Finance by completion of the forms required in accordance with the policies and procedures of the SMCG Department of Finance.

Amount of Advances - If an employee finds it necessary to request a travel advance for approved travel, the SMCG Finance Office will advance monies to cover travel expenses as follows:

- (a) Meals – Per diem in accordance with Federal Guidelines in effect at the time of the request but may be updated should the guidelines change by time of actual travel.
- (b) Mileage – At rate per mile in effect at the time of the request but may be updated should the guidelines change by time of actual travel.

Other Fees - Requests for payment of other expenses such as registration fees, tickets for public transportation, motels, etc., should be submitted to SMCSO Fiscal Section for direct payment to the vendor.

1037.15 OVERPAYMENTS

Employees are required to reimburse the sheriff's office for all overpayments received as follows:

- (a) Cancelled Trip: In accordance with the paragraph "Cancellation of Trip" below.

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- (b) Completion of Trip: If an advance payment was received, excess monies received must be returned to the SMCG Department of Finance along with the SMCG Expense Account form F-1.
- (c) Penalties: Payment may not be dispersed for failure to submit necessary receipts to the SMCSO Fiscal Section until the travel payment is settled and the amount advanced is satisfied.

1037.16 CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

Requests for reimbursement shall be made as soon as possible, but no later than the next calendar month after the travel is completed. Accumulated mileage claims shall be submitted on a monthly basis.

1037.17 CANCELLATION OF TRIP

If it becomes necessary to cancel a trip that has already been approved, the employee shall:

- (a) Notify their supervisor and the SMCSO Fiscal Section.
- (b) If advance payments were received, the employee will reimburse the sheriff's office for all advance payments received. In the event the employee has obligated funds (reservations, registration fees, etc.) that cannot be recovered, the employee may submit a request through their chain of command for relief of repayment.

All requests for relief of repayment must:

- (a) Completely justify the reason that the trip must be cancelled;
- (b) Indicate if other employees are available that could substitute;
- (c) Be approved by the sheriff or assistant sheriff.

1037.18 RETURN TO WORK

Sheriff's office personnel completing travel are responsible for returning to work at the time and date specified. Requests for extension of return to work must be made sufficiently in advance to allow for orderly processing. In emergency situations where circumstances preclude an employee's return to duty as required, the fact shall be made known to the sheriff or assistant sheriff by the most expeditious means available.