

Chapter Travel Policy

Changes to this policy can only be made by the Chapter Board of Officers, as defined in the Chapter Bylaws.

PURPOSE

This policy is designed to ensure all travel is cost-effective, efficient, and aligned with our organizational goals. It provides clear guidelines for planning, authorizing, and reimbursing travel expenses while prioritizing the safety and well-being of our travelers. We emphasize transparency, accountability, and sustainability, ensuring that our resources are used responsibly to support our mission.

POLICY

Section 1 – General Travel Requirements

- 1.1 Advanced Approval. Unless established in the Chapter's budget, all trips involving air travel or at least one overnight stay must be approved in advance by the Chapter President and Chapter Treasurer. The Chapter's Executive Committee must approve any out-of-state travel, not previously established in the existing operating budget.
- 1.2 Local Agency Support: This policy outlines the Chapter's commitment to supporting Board Members who incur travel expenses not covered by their respective agencies.
- 1.3 Personal and Spousal Travel Expenses. Individuals traveling on behalf of the Chapter may incorporate personal travel or business with their Chapter-related trips; however, individuals shall not arrange Chapter travel at a time that is less than advantageous to the Chapter or involving greater expense to the Chapter in order to accommodate personal travel plans. Any additional expenses incurred as a result of personal travel, including but not limited to extra hotel nights, additional stopovers, meals or transportation, are the sole responsibility of the individual and will not be funded by the Chapter. Expenses associated with travel of an individual's spouse, family, or friends will not be reimbursed by the Chapter.

Section 2 – Regularly Scheduled Travel

- 2.1 The Chapter will automatically budget and approve registration fees, transportation, lodging, and meal expenses for the following annual events:
 - 2.1.1 APCO International Conference: attendees include the Chapter President, First Vice President, and Executive Council Representative.
 - 2.1.2 NC Public Safety Communications Conference: attendees include the Conference Committee, Executive Committee, and other Board Members upon approval by written request to the Chapter President and Treasurer.
 - 2.1.3 NC Telecommunicator Training Symposium: attendees include Symposium Staff and the First Vice President.

Section 3 – Air Travel

- 3.1 General. Air travel reservations should be made as far in advance as possible to take advantage of reduced fares. The Chapter will reimburse or pay only the cost of the lowest coach class fare available for direct, non-stop flights from the airport nearest the individual's home or office to the airport nearest the destination. Flights from an airport further away from the individual's home or

office can be considered if there is a significant difference in flight costs compared to the closest airport. Confirmation must be sent to the Treasurer when airfare is booked.

- 3.2 Luggage Allowance: Each traveler is authorized to check one piece of luggage which does not exceed the airline's size limitations or are not considered "oversized" by the operating air carrier, and which weigh up to 50 pounds per piece.
- 3.3 Frequent Flyer Miles Individuals traveling on behalf of the Chapter may accept and retain frequent flyer miles and compensation for denied boarding for their personal use. Individuals may not deliberately patronize a single airline to accumulate frequent flyer miles if less expensive, comparable tickets are available on another airline.

Section 4 – Lodging

- 4.1 Individuals traveling on behalf of the Chapter may be reimbursed at the single room rate for the reasonable cost of hotel accommodation. Utilization of Government Employee and/or AAA discounted rates are required, if available. Convenience, the cost of staying in the city which the hotel is located, and proximity to other venues on the individual's itinerary shall be considered in determining reasonableness. Any type of deluxe, luxury, or upgraded hotel rates will not be reimbursed.

Section 5 – Meal Reimbursement

- 5.1 Chapter members traveling on official Chapter business may be reimbursed for reasonable meal expenses. Reimbursements will not exceed the IRS-approved per diem rate for the travel location. All reimbursements should meet the following guidelines:
 - 5.1.1 Chapter Debit Card Use. When a Chapter debit card is used for meals exceeding the per diem rate, the cardholder is responsible for the overage.
 - 5.1.2 Tips. Tips of up to 20% may be reimbursed when customary and appropriate.
 - 5.1.3 Included Meals. Meals included in conference registration fees, lodging rates, or other reimbursable expenses are not eligible for reimbursement.
 - 5.1.4 Alcoholic Beverages. Chapter funds may not be used to reimburse expenses for alcoholic beverages.
- 5.2 The President, in conjunction with the Treasurer, may authorize meal reimbursements for individuals not affiliated with the Chapter when such expenses are directly related to Chapter business.

Section 6 – Ground Transportation

- 6.1 Individuals are expected to use the most economical ground transportation appropriate under the circumstances, and should generally use one of the following:
 - 6.1.1 Public Transportation. Many major airports are linked to their respective cities by public transportation options, including light rail, medium rail, underground rail, etc.
 - 6.1.2 Airport Shuttle or Bus. Airport shuttles or busses generally travel to and from all major hotels for a nominal fee. At major airports such services are as quick as a taxi and considerably less expensive.

- 6.1.3 Ride Sharing Services. When courtesy cars and airport shuttles are not available, utilization of a ride sharing or taxi service is often the most economical and convenient form of transportation when the trip is for a limited time and minimal mileage is involved. A tip of 15% to 20% may be included, when appropriate.
- 6.1.4 Rental Cars. Car rentals are expensive; all other forms of transportation should be considered when practical. Individuals will be allowed to rent a car while out of town, provided that advance approval has been given by the Chapter President and Treasurer, and the cost is less than alternate methods of transportation.

Section 7 – Use of Personal Vehicles

- 7.1 Board members using their personal vehicles for Chapter business may be reimbursed for mileage. Reimbursement is available for trips of 50 miles or more, calculated from the member's home or office. The reimbursement rate will be the current IRS mileage rate, and meet the following requirements:
 - 7.1.1 Travel Mileage Reimbursement Form. To request mileage reimbursement, members must complete a Travel Mileage Reimbursement Request form, providing details such as starting and ending points, odometer readings, total mileage, and a brief trip description. The completed form must be approved by the Chapter President. The Chapter President's mileage reimbursement requests require approval from the Chapter Treasurer, or their designee.
 - 7.1.2 Long Distance Travel. For long-distance trips, typically made by air (e.g., Charlotte to Orlando), mileage reimbursement may be claimed at the current IRS rate, but the total reimbursement cannot exceed the cost of the lowest available round-trip coach airfare.
 - 7.1.3 Limited Liability. The Chapter is not responsible for vehicle damage incurred during authorized travel. Members must maintain the minimum insurance coverage required by the state of operation of the vehicle.
 - 7.1.4 Travel to Chapter Meetings. Mileage reimbursement regularly scheduled Chapter meetings may be approved by written request to the Executive Committee. This does not apply to lodging expenses.

Section 8 – Parking / Toll Expenses

- 8.1 Parking and Toll Expenses. Parking and toll expenses, including charges for hotel parking, incurred by individuals traveling on Chapter business will be reimbursed.
- 8.2 Parking Tickets and Other Expenses. The cost of parking tickets, fines, car washes, etc., are the responsibility of the individual and will not be reimbursed by the Chapter.
- 8.3 Valet Services. Valet services will only be covered when no other self-parking options are available.
- 8.4 Airport Parking. On site airport parking is permitted for short business trips. For extended trips, individuals should use off-site airport facilities when the costs would be less than staying on site.

Section 9 – Non-Reimbursable Expenses

- 9.1 The Chapter will not reimburse expenses deemed lavish or excessive. Such expenditures are inconsistent with the Chapter's mission. Examples of non-reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Travel insurance.
- First class tickets, upgrades, or excessive luggage fees.
- When lodging accommodations have been arranged by the Chapter and the individual stays elsewhere, reimbursement is made at the amount no higher than the rate negotiated by the Chapter. Reimbursement shall not be made for transportation between the alternate lodging and the meeting site.
- Limousine travel.
- Movies, liquor, or bar costs.
- Participating in or attendance at golf, tennis, or other sporting events, without the advance approval of the Executive Committee.
- Spa or exercise charges.
- Clothing purchases.
- Telephone, including cell phone charges, unless approved by the Executive Board.
- Car washes.
- Toiletry articles.
- Expenses for spouses, friends, or relatives. If a spouse, friend, or relative accompanies the individual on a trip, it is the responsibility of the individual to determine any added cost for double occupancy and related expenses and to make the appropriate adjustment in the reimbursement request.

Section 10 – Limitations and Review of Policy

- 10.1 This policy offers guidelines for travel related to Chapter business and should not be considered all-inclusive.
- 10.2 Exceptions to this policy can be made at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee.
- 10.3 Any expenses incurred on a Chapter debit card outside of this policy will be invoiced by the Treasurer to be reimbursed to the Chapter within 30 days.
- 10.4 This policy should be reviewed at least annually. Any portions of this policy may be modified using the procedures outlined in the Chapter Bylaws at any time.