

# EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS

## MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT AND AUTO ALLOWANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### BACKGROUND

*Local Government Code §152.035* empowers the County Commissioners Court to set a reasonable mileage reimbursement rate for County officials and County employees who use personal vehicles while performing County business. The Court may change this rate at its discretion. If you are uncertain of the current rate, this information may be obtained by contacting the County Auditor. This procedure does not apply to County officials or employees currently receiving approved car allowances, unless travel is outside of El Paso County.

Mileage disputes will be resolved using the State of Texas highway mileage chart, regular road map mileage figures or other services, such as Mapquest, at the discretion of the El Paso County Auditor. Furthermore, pursuant to Government Code §660, in determining the amount of reimbursement or advance payment for travel by privately owned car in the state, the county auditor shall compute all distances according to the shortest route between points.

Commuting expenses incurred in traveling between the employee's residence and County office or for mileage/expenses incurred in any other travel of a personal nature are not reimbursable. If mileage incurred in a single day to a place outside the office exceeds normal commuting mileage (commuting to the office and back), the difference between mileage incurred that day and commuting mileage is reimbursable.

### A. Mileage Reimbursement

1. Occasionally county staff may be required to use personal vehicles for County business. It is the policy of the County to reimburse employees for such mileage if it has been appropriately documented and authorized. Mileage reimbursable is payable at the County rate of \$.40 per mile for business purposes only when such travel is authorized by the department and paid provided sufficient appropriated funds are available. Mileage reimbursement is defined as transportation from a county department or one's normal place of employment, to another business related destination, or between off-premises business appointments, and back again.
2. Normally the distance traveled from the employee's home to a place of business will not be reimbursed, as this is considered a personal expense. However, if a business trip originating from home is greater than the distance from the employee's home to the county department, the supervisor may choose to reimburse the employee for the difference. In exceptional cases it may be less expensive for the County if the employee were to go directly from home to the site, rather than to come to the office first and then go to the site. In these rare situations the supervisor may elect to reimburse the full amount traveled.

Both **Starting** and **Ending Odometer Readings** shall be personally certified by the department head or their designee for each personal vehicle used for business purposes. Additionally, all mileage reimbursement reports **shall** coincide with each payroll period and must be turned in to this office by the Friday following each county payroll period. Late mileage reimbursement requests will be accepted only upon submission of

# EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS

## MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT AND AUTO ALLOWANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

explanatory documentation signed of by the department head or elected official within 15 calendar days from last mileage period logged.

Employees who are required as a function of their position, to be "on the road" more than twenty hours per week on average, could possibly be eligible for a monthly car allowance. This should be addressed to the Staffing Review Committee (SRC) for further evaluation.

To request an auto allowance, a department must submit an Auto Allowance Request along with a Budget Spreadsheet Addendum to the SRC with justification as to why the position requires a substantial amount of driving. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The auto allowance amount will be determined by the average number of hours that an employee must spend driving per month.

### **B. To Receive Reimbursement:**

1. All employees **shall** complete a mileage reimbursement certification form and have it approved by either his/her supervisor or the person with budget responsibility for the index and sub-object charged with the expense. As with all such approvals, the individual approving the expense must be in a position, at a minimum of at least one administrative level higher than the person requesting reimbursement. **Failure to provide beginning and ending odometer readings on the vehicle in use for the logged mileage period will result in rejection of the mileage reimbursement request by the county auditor's office.**
2. Once your mileage certification request is authorized by your department, submit the form to the County Auditor's Office-Accounts Payable Division. A check will be produced and mailed to you as soon as practical but in no event longer than 30 days working days. If for some reason, a question arises regarding your request, you will be immediately notified. As with all County expenses, mileage claims are subject to internal audit review.

### **C. Policy**

El Paso County will reimburse its officials and staff for the approved use of their personal automobile on official County Business that is properly authorized, reasonable and appropriately documented in compliance with these policies.

### **D. Scope**

This policy and its related procedures are applicable to all County of El Paso employees and staff of all divisions, regardless of the source of funds supporting such expenses. If such expenses are to be charged to a sponsored program, the terms of the grant or contract will take precedence if they are more restrictive than the County's requirements.

### **E. Procedures/Guidelines**

1. County of El Paso will reimburse employees at the current rate approved by the El Paso Commissioner Court for those miles incurred using an employees' personal vehicle while conducting County business, whether it be local or out-of-town. Reimbursement on a per

# EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS

## MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT AND AUTO ALLOWANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

mile rate is intended to cover all costs of operating the traveler's personal automobile including gasoline, oil, insurance, repairs etc. (exclusive of tolls and parking). If a personal vehicle is used for an out-of-County business trip, prior approval from your department head or elected official must be obtained before commencing the trip. The total mileage reimbursement amount should not exceed the coach airfare, plus ground transportation costs to/from the same destination.

2. If mileage is incurred while conducting out-of-town business, the request for reimbursement must be made on a Mileage Reimbursement Certification Form.
3. Reimbursement payment will be processed through Accounts Payable Division of the county auditor's office only upon satisfactory completion and submission of the appropriate form(s) detailing mileage, destinations, and purpose of travel. The reimbursement form **shall** be signed by both the employee and their supervisor or designee. **In order to receive mileage reimbursement from El Paso County, a copy of the employee's current Proof of Liability Insurance must be maintained on file with County Auditor's Office.** All mileage reimbursement must be turned in to this office on a bi- weekly basis with the due date being the Friday following each county payroll date. Late mileage reimbursement requests will only be accepted upon submission of explanatory documentation signed by the department head or elected official within 15 calendar days from last logged mileage date. Mileage should be recorded and reported to the nearest tenth of a mile.

### **F. Odometer Reading Requirements**

Beginning and ending odometer readings are required for each and every personal vehicle used for county business for which mileage reimbursement is being requested. These readings **shall** be recorded at the start and end of each mileage log period and **shall** be verified by designated personnel of the department. Beginning and ending odometer readings are required for each individual destination. This reading is separate and apart from the required odometer readings to be provided during the mileage log period. Under no circumstances shall a mileage reimbursement certification form contain logged mileage of more than one personal vehicle. If necessary, a log should be maintained on each personal vehicle used for County business.