



Title:	Meals with Meetings Policy
Number:	404
Effective:	October 15, 2020
Cancel:	Resolution No. 2014-15
Prepared by:	LeeAnn McNulty, Administrative Services Manager
Approved by:	Authority Board Resolution No. 2020-28

POL-404 MEALS WITH MEETINGS POLICY

This policy applies to all Mason Transit Authority (MTA) employees, Mason Transit Authority Board and Mason Transit Advisory Board.

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to authorize reimbursement for allowable cost of meals while attending an official business meeting or training on behalf of MTA when employees are not in travel status or for providing meals at formal meetings or trainings conducted by MTA. It also establishes guidelines for emergency events, such as natural disasters or other unplanned event, as described in the MTA Employee Handbook, Section Two and for unscheduled after-hours work events.

2.0 Appropriate Meal Reimbursement or Allowance

Reimbursement or allowance for meal cost is not to exceed applicable per diem rates as described under “per diem” on the General Services Administration (GSA) web site at <http://www.gsa.gov>. Meal cost per individual attendee for meetings and trainings conducted by MTA will not exceed applicable per diem rates.

When attending a meeting for the purpose of representing MTA that is being held or sponsored by an outside professional organization, the actual cost of the meal, as evidenced by a receipt, is eligible for reimbursement as long as the meal is in an integral part of the meeting. An example of an appropriate event would be a chamber luncheon where a registration fee includes a meal.

When an emergency or unplanned event requires that an employee must remain at his/her workstation, reimbursement of the actual cost of a meal will be allowed, with manager approval, which is to include:

- The basic cost of a meal; and
- Any applicable sales tax; and
- A reasonable (15% to 20%) tip or gratuity.

As long as the reimbursement does not exceed the per diem rates as described on the GSA website.

See Also: POL-403, POL-402, POL-401, Employee Handbook, General Services Administration website.



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3.0 Policy

Per Washington State Attorney General opinion, meals may be reimbursed for certain business meetings or trainings when not in travel status where the following requirements are met:

- The purpose of the meeting or training is to conduct MTA business;
- The meals are an integral part of the business meeting or training session. Integral is defined as: “essential to completeness; part of the curriculum; formed as a unit with another part”;
- The meeting or training session is a special situation or occasion outside of the normal daily business of MTA employees;
- Prior approval is received and documented by a properly completed Request for Approval – Light Refreshments and Meeting Meals form signed by the department manager.
- It is advantageous to MTA to conduct the meeting or training during a meal period;
- An agenda and sign-in sheet are prepared.

MTA is not required to provide meals at meetings.

4.0 Non-reimbursed Meals

Reimbursement for meal expenses incurred while the employee is at his/her official workstation or residence is prohibited, except in emergency situations or other unplanned events with prior approval.

Employees will not be reimbursed for meals where no meal expense is incurred due to the meal being furnished as part of the meeting or training.

Mason Transit Authority shall not fund “hosting” activities that are intended either to lobby a legislator or a governmental official or are to be a social rather than a governmental business event.

Meals for team meetings, welcoming new staff or other employee activities outside of the Annual All-Staff meeting would not normally be provided using MTA funds. MTA funds may not be used to provide meals for staff parties, routine staff meetings, routine departmental meetings, or any event deemed to be social in nature.

See Also: POL-403, POL-402, POL-401, Employee Handbook, General Services Administration website.



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5.0 Responsibilities

The person attending the meeting or training must fill out appropriate forms to receive approval and submit an Expense Reimbursement form to be reimbursed. If actual cost is being reimbursed, a detailed receipt must be attached. If per diem is being reimbursed, a supporting per diem document for area in which meeting or training took place must be attached to the Expense Reimbursement form as well as an agenda from the meeting or training.

For meetings or training provided by MTA, the organizer must submit the following:

- Prior approval must be obtained by filling out a Request for Approval – Light Refreshments and Meeting Meals.
- An agenda and sign in sheet must be prepared. Employees attending must sign in to show attendance.
- A receipt must be obtained for the actual costs of the meal(s).
- The purpose of the meeting must be noted on the receipt or purchase log.
- All other policies and procedures for purchasing on behalf of MTA must be followed. For example, if using an MTA credit card, a purchase log must be completed.

See Also: POL-403, POL-402, POL-401, Employee Handbook, General Services Administration website.