

CLARENCE FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1
TRAVEL POLICY

I. SCOPE:

This policy applies to all members and employees of the Clarence Fire District No. 1 when traveling on behalf of the District and describes the procedure for: selecting representatives for training, the process for requesting offsite training, reimbursable expenses, the process for requesting reimbursement, responsibilities for the documentation of training received and outlines the responsibilities of the traveler, Chief, Secretary/Treasurer and Board of Fire Commissioners in this process.

II. OBJECTIVE:

It is anticipated and strongly urged and supported by the Clarence Fire District Board that all members and employees in good standing with the District and Company will be availed opportunities to expand their skills and abilities through professional development programs. This may be on a local, state and or national level, as such it is the intention to offer these opportunities to as many individuals as possible in the most cost effective manner. This includes the use of electronic webcasts, video presentation, professional speakers along with outside training opportunities. This policy establishes guidelines for (a) requesting approval, (b) the selection process used to determine firefighter eligibility for outside training, (c) detail which expenses may be reimbursed and (d) how to request reimbursement.

III. DISTRICT GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION CRITERIA FOR OFFSITE TRAINING:

The Fire Chief is responsible for the training of personnel. Each new firefighter is briefed on the operations of the Fire District and the necessary equipment. A drill schedule for the year is posted in the truck room each January giving each firefighter an opportunity to both reinforce skills learned previously and learn new techniques and technology as it becomes available. The following guidelines are used to select firefighters for training provided offsite at District cost. Situations not covered by these rules should be left to the judgment of the Fire Chief and Board of Fire Commissioners.

1. It is a policy not to send Chief Officers out of the District for training for an extended period if the necessary leadership to the District residents will be compromised. When Chief Officers leave the District for training, notice should be provided to the remaining firematic officers and senior firefighters may also be put on notice at the Chief's discretion.
2. Firematic officers have priority for training opportunities due to the District's officer training requirement. Also, it is expected that in their capacity as Chief, they have the best opportunity to disseminate this knowledge to the greatest number of firefighters while executing their drill instructing responsibilities.
3. It is the policy of the Chief's Office to match the available training to those that will best use the knowledge in their Fire Company responsibilities. (For example, the truck committee chairperson would use FDIC convention vendor information gathered, the EMS Captain would apply EMS conference knowledge to Fire Company operations, and an assistant chief would be a likely candidate for a course on fire ground operations.)
4. When determining eligibility for offsite training, the applicant's contributions for the past year will be reviewed. (For example, those exhibiting leadership skills by holding elected or appointed positions and those firefighters that have served the community by attending a large percentage of incidents.)
5. An individual selected for offsite training is required to document both the number of hours training and the content of the training received. (See Exhibit 2) Failure to provide such documentation may exclude the individual from any future attendance at offsite training. Training hours are used to allocate service award points. The course content will be evaluated to determine the cost to benefit ratio for future attendance. Conference attendees have a responsibility to disseminate the acquired knowledge to others since sending the whole company to every event is cost prohibitive.
6. Past attendance at out of town seminars is a consideration. For out of town seminars it is desirous to send a veteran firefighter to help others negotiate an unfamiliar city. This consideration is balanced with desire to offer training opportunities to a variety of eligible firefighters.

III. DISTRICT GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION CRITERIA FOR OFFSITE TRAINING (continued):

7. Where appropriate, sign up lists will be posted on the Chief's truck room bulletin board so that all firefighters may have an opportunity for additional training. Those unable to attend may consult the attendees upon their return about the knowledge acquired. It is expected that attendees will disseminate what they learned at training.
8. The final decision to fund and approve training attendance lies with the Board of Fire Commissioners. It will be the responsibility of the Chief to provide the District with the names of personnel recommended to attend training. This will be done with sufficient time to allow review and approval by the Board and to make travel arrangements at the most cost effective rate.
9. Firefighters who sign up for training, or are otherwise selected by the Chief and/or by the Board, will be responsible to reimburse the District for costs incurred for failure to attend. Examples of exceptions are as follows and all exceptions are granted solely at the discretion of the Board:
 - a.) The firefighter is able to find a substitute (approved by the Chief).
 - b.) The firefighter is taken ill and/or has a family emergency.
 - c.) The firefighter is called for unscheduled work.
 - d.) The firefighter is unable to attend due to an unusual circumstance.

IV. REQUESTING APPROVAL FOR AN UPCOMING TRAINING:

1. A firefighter wishing to attend outside training must first seek the approval of the Chief.
2. The Chief must then make a request to the Board of Fire Commissioners. All travel for Fire District business must be authorized by the Board and approval (with names of attendees) must be noted in the official meeting minutes. (Personnel electing to travel to and attend events at their own expense, without Board authorization, will not be considered to be on District or Company business at such events, will not be reimbursed and are not covered under Workers' Compensation or Volunteer Firefighters Benefits Law for injury or illness.)
3. Based on the total cost of the proposed training and travel expenses the following notice to the Board is required: Less than \$500 approval may be requested by the Chief at a meeting of the Board. \$500-\$2,000 notice of pending request must be delivered to the District Secretary to forward to the Board four days before the next regularly scheduled meeting. Greater than \$2,000 notice of pending request must be delivered to the District Secretary to forward to the Board at least two weeks prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting. Failure to submit a proposal with enough time to ensure the best conference and travel rates may result in denial of approval.
4. Upon approval by the Board, signup sheets will be posted on the Chief's truck room bulletin board so that all firefighters may have an opportunity for additional training. A maximum number of attendees for any given event may be set by the Board. If the number of requestors exceeds the number authorized the Chief will decide which individuals will attend based on the criteria established in the selection guidelines in section III above. (This decision can be challenged by fire personnel who are not allowed to attend training by making petition to the Board.) The Chief will submit names of the proposed attendees at a Board meeting prior to the date of the event to be recorded in the minutes.

V. REIMBURSIBLE EXPENSES:

1. General Municipal Law Section 77-b and Town Law Section 178-c provides that travel expenses incurred by fire district officers, employees and chiefs must be incurred based upon the *most cost effective and reasonable* means of travel, and mileage allowances may not exceed the Internal Revenue Service limits.
2. Any expenditure incurred that is not in compliance with this policy will be considered the personal financial responsibility of the member involved.
3. All travel arrangements must be made by the Fire District Secretary or other approved representative of the Board of Fire Commissioners. Sufficient time must be allocated in the approval process to ensure the best rates for registration; travel and lodging are available to the District. Travel approval granted may be subsequently revoked if submission of the necessary paperwork is incomplete, insufficient or not timely completed.

REIMBURSIBLE EXPENSES (continued):

4. All traveling personnel shall be required to submit a travel expense report (TER). The report must fully describe and detail the expenses incurred and must represent money actually expended on behalf of the Fire District. The report must be accompanied by all necessary receipts. (For example: lodging, transportation, tolls, etc.) TERs may not contain any personal expenditure. Only the member actually traveling and incurring the expense will be permitted to submit a travel report and claim reimbursement. TERs will not be used to obtain reimbursement for funds expended for material purchases and repair to equipment. District personnel participating in outside training must submit a TER within two weeks of their return. Failure to meet this deadline may result in denial of the claim for reimbursement at the discretion of the Board of Fire Commissioners. Expenditures must be reasonable for the occasion. All expenses will be reviewed and reconciled by the Board.
5. Meals: The amounts set for food are not meant to be a cost of living daily allowance. Because food in some cities is more expensive than in others, the interpretation should not be that the maximum will be spent in each instance.
 - a.) The Board will adopt a per diem meal rate for each event. The traveler will be reimbursed the amount specified in IRS Publication 463 for the location where the training occurs and no receipt documentation will be required.
 - b.) Time limits have been set for meal reimbursements on the first and last day of travel. The travel expense report must indicate the specific estimated times of departure and return. The amount of applicable partial day per diem will be determined at a percentage of the IRS rate.
 - Meals will be allowed when the time of departure from home at the beginning of a trip occurs before the following hours: Breakfast 7:00 AM, Lunch 11:00 AM and Dinner 6:00 PM.
 - Meals will be allowed when the time of return at the conclusion of the trip occurs after the following hours: Breakfast 8:00 AM, Lunch 12:00 PM and Dinner 7:00 PM.
 - Meal per diem for partial days will be allocated for: breakfast 25%, lunch 25% and dinner 50% of the total IRS daily rate.
 - c.) The cost of meals for fire district personnel is covered however the cost incurred by the member's family, that may also be traveling, is not reimbursable by the Fire District.
 - d.) Alcoholic beverages are not an authorized expense and will not be reimbursed.
 - e.) All Canadian travel per diem rate will be at the rate for Buffalo, NY.
5. Lodging:
 - a.) Lodging accommodations on official business are exempt from New York State and local taxes. A form should be obtained from the Fire District Secretary/Treasurer prior to travel so that it can be used by the traveling official, employee, chief or firefighter at the travel location.
 - b.) If the duration of the stay is sufficient to warrant a weekly rate efforts should be made to secure the weekly rate.
 - c.) Original hotel bills must be attached to the travel expense report.
6. Transportation:
 - a) Travel must be by the most direct route possible and undertaken by the most cost effective and reasonable means to be determined by the Board of Fire Commissioners and the district official assigned to make reservations and travel arrangements (not at the discretion of the traveler). Anyone traveling on district business at district expense seeking to change travel arrangements must contact the district office and obtain approval before making any changes to arrangements made by the district office. If the traveler fails to do so, he or she will be personally responsible for additional cost created by unauthorized changes. The decision to use air, rail, district owned, rental or personal vehicles shall be a Board decision based upon the most cost effective and reasonable means of travel. Personnel with special needs must advise the district office of those needs. However, special needs relate to the traveling district representative not to the special needs of their family members that may also be traveling. (Please note that it is not that the Board of Fire Commissioners is insensitive to such needs, but rather that district funds can only be expended on the legally reimbursable expenses incurred by the district representative.)

REIMBURSIBLE EXPENSES (continued):

- b) Travel will begin on the first day of the training and end on the last day unless the Board determines to permit travel the day before and after based upon the location and time of the event. If travel to and from the location will take in excess of two hours (portal to portal, land and air transportation combined), and the training begins before 11:00 AM or if the last training ends after 3:00 PM the Board will consider authorizing travel extended beyond the training dates. In addition, the Board will consider, on a case by case basis, an application to leave for a training early or return later if the training requires: air travel, does not require a Saturday stay over, and the inclusion of a Saturday stay over will result in a net savings to the District when airfare cost is compared to the cost of lodging/meals/rental car, etc. for the additional day(s).
 - c) Travel shall be either Coach, Economy or Business Class unless the trip is of an emergency nature and Coach, Economy Class or Business Class is not available, or unless the effect of First Class travel is an overall economy to the travel purpose.
 - d) The passenger's portion of the used tickets and any unused tickets must be attached to the TER.
 - e) If a traveler takes a traveling companion on a business trip, expenses other than those directly applicable to the authorized traveler are considered personal and are therefore non-reimbursable.
 - f) Reimbursable charges for intercity travel are authorized. The use of public mass transit is encouraged. However, if it is necessary to use taxicabs, buses, etc. efforts should be made to secure receipts and attach them to the TER.
 - g) Tolls are reimbursable when receipts are provided and attached to the TER.
 - h) **Personally owned vehicles** may be used for approved business travel unless the Board determines that travel by automobile is not the most cost effective and reasonable means of travel for the particular event. When transportation is provided by the District, mileage for personally owned vehicles will not be offered. Round trip mileage from Clarence Fire District No. 1 to the activity and required mileage at the destination are reimbursable. Odometer readings before and after the trip are required. Mileage in excess of the commute between Clarence Fire District No. 1 and the destination site must be documented to receive reimbursement. Mileage allotted will be by the "shortest" route as determined through the use of a computer mapping service such as "MapQuest". The traveler must accrue a minimum of ten miles in travel before being eligible for travel and miscellaneous expenses. Reimbursement will be at the standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service. The IRS rate includes reimbursement for wear and tear on the vehicle so there can be no reimbursement for personal vehicle repairs due to travel.
 - i) **Rental vehicle** drop off charges for one way rentals should be avoided. Full sized cars should be selected for rental. All efforts should be made to secure a weekly rate if the rental is of sufficient duration to warrant that rate. A copy of the car rental charges must be attached to the TER.
- 7) Telephone:
Actual expenditures for necessary Fire District business calls from public or private telephones is reimbursable, personal calls are not. However, a member traveling on business shall be authorized to make one call home at District expense each day that he or she is away on District business.
- 8) Other Incidentals and Emergency Expenses:
- a) Costs of a business nature for additional items such as baggage handling, parking, tolls and gratuities are allowable. Receipts should be secured when possible.
 - b) The Board of Fire Commissioners reserves the right to authorize other necessary travel expenses that relate to the business needs of the Fire District.
 - c) In the event of some unforeseen emergency or natural disaster occurring at the location of the event, the Board of Fire Commissioners reserves the authority to approve extraordinary expenses for traveling personnel unable to complete their business travel based upon normally accepted travel rules. Personnel may make arrangements to return home early if early warnings of a pending emergency or natural disaster permit, and in fact, should make every effort to do so. Personnel confronted by such a situation must make every effort to contact the District Office in order to keep the Fire District advised of their status.

REIMBURSIBLE EXPENSES (continued):

9) Expenses that cannot be Reimbursed:

- a) Clarence Fire District No. 1 is a municipality and is exempt from State taxes. The traveler's expenses must **NOT** include any New York State tax. All reimbursements will be made net of NYS taxes.
- b) Clarence Fire District No. 1 will only pay expenses for authorized personnel. No reimbursement can be made for expenses for companions traveling with a District representative.
- c) The District cannot legally reimburse a traveler for any alcohol purchases nor personal entertainment. Any such purchases will be deducted from the reimbursement requested.

10) Requesting Reimbursement:

- a) It is the responsibility of the traveler to complete the Travel Expense Report (TER) within two weeks of the return from the event. This form (see Exhibit 1) may be obtained on the District's website (www.clarencefiredistrict.org) or from the District Office. If there are any questions about the completion of the form please ask a Commissioner or the District Treasurer.
- b) SAVE ALL RECEIPTS. A traveler can only be reimbursed for documented expenses.
- c) Complete the expense report, attaching all receipts, and gives to the Chief for his review. The Chief must review this report, sign it and forward in a timely manner to the District Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible for reconciling the report and verifying all documentation and charges. This report will then be presented to the Commissioner in charge for review at the next regular meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners and the Chairman (or his designee) will countersign the check for payment. (The Audit Committee Commissioner will also review the report as part of the normal checks and balances of payments made by the District.) It is the responsibility of the traveler to submit the TER in a timely fashion to allow for the approval process.
- d) Questions regarding the completion of the proper documents should be directed to the District Treasurer for clarification.

VI. ADDITIONAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

In 2006 General Municipal Law Section 72-g, which governs sending volunteer firefighters to training schools and seminars was amended. The amendment sets new parameters when firefighters are sent out of state. The Board of Fire Commissioners must determine:

1. Is the training necessary and in the public interest, and
2. Is not available within a reasonable distance and time period in the state.

The Chief must submit a report to the Board of Fire Commissioners at an official meeting thereof when he requests the attendance of volunteer firefighters at an out of state training event detailing why the training attendance is necessary and in the public interest, and that research has revealed that the training or a suitable substitute is not available within a reasonable distance and time period in the state.

Thus, Board approvals for such training will state in the minutes of the meeting that these requirements have been met.

After completion of the training the Chief must send a report on the training to the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) on the form provided by that office and a copy of the report shall be filed with the Board of Fire Commissioners.

These rules pertain to volunteer firefighters of the rank of captain and below. Chiefs, district officers and employees may attend conferences and conventions in and out of New York State in accordance with the requirements set forth in General Municipal Law Section 77-b.

VII. BOARD RESOLUTION for Volunteer Firefighter out of State Training:

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Fire Commissioners, in accordance with General Municipal Law Section 72-g, has considered the training seminar schedule for volunteer firefighters available within New York State and reviewed the curriculum of the following training seminar: (state name and location of the training seminar), and determined that such training seminar or school of instruction is necessary and in the public interest and is not available within a reasonable distance and time period in the state. It has considered information provided relative to the personal schedule and availability of volunteer personnel to attend such training seminars. It has considered the recommendation of the Chief that the following volunteer firefighters be assigned to attend such training at district expense in accordance with the District travel expense policy: (names of firefighters) and, IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that such volunteer firefighters be authorized to attend such training program at district expense in accordance with the travel expense policy of the district, and that district staff (or Board designee) is directed to make arrangements for travel and lodging utilizing a cost-effective and reasonable method of travel, and IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief shall require such volunteer firefighters to furnish proof of attendance at such programs within two weeks of their return, and that the Chief shall thereafter provide a notification and proof of attendance at any such out of state training to the State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) in accordance with the reporting format provided by OFPC, and shall provide a copy of such report to the Board of fire commissioners. Such copy of the report shall be attached to the minutes of the next meeting of the Board after its submission.

VIII. RESOLUTION to approve District officers, employees and Chiefs' attendance at conferences (general approval made at the Annual Organizational Meeting per GML Section 77-b)

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Fire Commissioners, in accordance with General Municipal Law Section 77-b, has considered the needs of the Fire District and has approved attendance by Fire Commissioners, District Officers, District Employees and Chiefs at the following conventions, conferences and trainings: FDIC (Indianapolis, ID), Firehouse (Baltimore, MD), New York State Association of Fire Chiefs, Vital Signs, New York State Fire Academy (Montour Falls, NY), National Fire Academy (Emitsburg, MD), FASNY, Western New York Fire District Officers' Legislative Seminar (Batavia, NY), New York State Association of Fire Districts Spring and Fall Workshops, New York State Comptroller teleconferences, Fire Training Center Oakville, Canada and Niagara Regional Training (Niagara Falls, Canada).

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Fire Commissioners finds such attendance of personnel to relate to official business and to be in the public interest and directs that such travel be undertaken by such personnel at district expense in accordance with the travel expense policy of the district, and that district staff (or Board designee) is directed to make arrangements for travel and lodging utilizing a cost-effective and reasonable method of travel, and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that such personnel furnish proof to the Board of Fire Commissioners of attendance at such conferences and conventions in accordance with such proofs as provided by the organization sponsoring and conducting the conference.

IX. AUTHORITY:

The final decision to fund and approve attendance for offsite training lies with the Clarence Fire District No. 1 Board of Fire Commissioners.

X. This policy is in addition to the District Rules and Regulations Article V – Training.

XI. This policy rescinds the following policies:

Travel expense policy adopted January 7, 2008.

Chief's selection criteria for personnel offsite training adopted June 19, 2006.

Offsite Local Training and Travel Expenses adopted January 1, 2005.

XII. This policy is adopted December 15, 2009.

CLARENCE FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1
TRAVEL EXPENSE REPORT (Policy Exhibit 1)

Name: _____ Title: _____
 Trip to: _____ Trip Purpose: _____
 Dates AND Times of trip: _____ AM/PM to _____ AM/PM

Hotel Expense: (receipts attached)
 _____ nights at \$ _____ per night. \$ _____

Transportation Expense:
 Airfare, Train, Car rental, etc. (receipts attached) \$ _____
 --- OR ---
 Personal vehicle _____ miles at _____ per mile. \$ _____
 Starting mileage _____ Ending mileage _____

Meal Expense:
 _____ days at per diem of \$ _____ per day. (Partial day rates ____/____) \$ _____

Other Expenses: (List individually and attach receipts. Use reverse side if needed.)

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Amount</u> | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | |
| Total Other Expenses | | | \$ _____ |
| Total Expenses for this trip | | | \$ _____ |

Less District charge card charges:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Amount</u> | |
|---|--------------------|---------------|----------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | |
| Less Total District charge card charges | | | \$ _____ |
| Amount paid by traveler | | | \$ _____ |
| Less prepaid expenses (check numbers: _____) | | | \$ _____ |
| Amount due to/from traveler (check number: _____) | | | \$ _____ |

| <u>Signatures affirming accuracy to the best of of the signors' knowledge</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Traveler _____ | _____ |
| 2. Chief _____ | _____ |
| 3. Commissioner/Chairman _____ | _____ |
| 4. District Treasurer _____ | _____ |

Note: All course certificates must be copied to the District Office to be placed in each firefighters' personnel file. A summary of the presentation prepared by the attendee must be attached prior to reimbursement (see Exhibit 2).

Clarence Fire District No. 1
Completed Training Log
(Travel Policy Exhibit 2)

Name _____

Sign In Number _____

The Chief must approve course requests. The Chief will then recommend the District approve the course. Receipts must accompany any requests for reimbursement.

Course Title: _____

Session Dates: _____

Time in Hours: _____

Location: _____

Mileage (computed by District): _____

Other Reimbursable Expenses: _____

Total Reimbursement (by District): _____

Total Miles _____ Source used for mileage computation: _____

All candidates for nomination and appointment as a firematic officer must attend a minimum of six hours of pre-approved firematic, EMS, hazardous material or similar type training in the same calendar year and prior to the Fire Company election.

Firefighter's Signature _____

Chief's Signature _____

Treasurer's Signature _____

Commissioner's Signature _____