

Travel & Expenses

1. The Purpose

This policy sets out the Forestry Commission's position on reimbursing Travel & Expenses (T&E), UK and overseas, for anyone working on behalf of the FC on official business.

2. The Principles

The principles of the policy are to:

- reimburse costs which are necessary and additional to normal daily expenditure;
- reimburse actual costs only, within agreed limits;
- protect the health and safety of staff;
- use agreed suppliers for booking business travel and accommodation;
- ensure the FC operates efficiently and effectively whilst considering environmental impact and securing best value for public money; and
- comply with Civil Service guidelines on expenses reimbursement.

3. The Policy

Travel on official business is any journey that you undertake as part of your FC duties which requires your attendance at somewhere other than your normal place of work. You'll be reimbursed for the necessary expenses associated with business travel that represent any additional payments that you have to make when you are away from your normal or regular pattern of work.

T&E payments need to be:

- **necessary** (unavoidable expense);
- **additional** (over and above what the costs you would normally incur); and
- **actual costs** (real expense which you have personally incurred).

All T&E claims must include receipts (except where flat rates can be claimed) and will be verified via local management arrangements. The FC's audit processes will inspect T&E claims to ensure compliance with this policy and the associated T&E Procedure.

3.1 Travel & Expense Rates & Limits

There are rates and expense limits for the payment of T&E and these can be found in 'Staff Notice: T&E Rates & Limits' on eConnect. These rates and limits are reviewed on a regular basis and are subject to change.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Your responsibilities as an employee

You are expected to:

- consider whether travel is necessary, ensuring environmental issues have been taken into account, alongside other factors such as best use of official time and the alternatives available such as video/teleconferencing etc;
- keep your Manager informed on your business travel plans - discuss and agree business travel & likely associated costs in advance with your manager (where possible);
- make sure your health and safety isn't compromised in the course of official business;
- ensure that the means of T&E incurred represents best value;
- make sure you are aware of the up to date expense rates and limits;
- claim expenses which are necessary and additional to your normal daily expenditure;
- travel standard/economy class unless, in exceptional circumstances, you have a clear business reason to travel other than this class and this is approved by your manager before a booking is made;
- provide receipts when submitting expenses claims, or if receipts (or copy receipts) cannot be obtained, provide an explanation as to why this is the case;
- be aware of associated policy & guidance on travel at work, including:
 - Operational Guidance Booklet 22: Driving at work
 - Information Note for Staff Driving at Work
 - Operational Guidance Booklet 37: Cycle trail management (for info on cycling at work); and

4.2 Your responsibilities as a manager

You are expected to:

- ensure your team understands and complies with the policy and associated procedure;
- ensure that the health & safety of your team, including work-life balance, is a key factor when planning and monitoring work and travel requirements in your team;
- discuss and agree business travel and likely associated T&E costs with your staff in advance of them travelling (where possible);
- make sure travel is standard/economy class and carefully consider business reasons submitted, in exceptional circumstances, to justify a class of travel other than this;
- plan for T&E expenditure within your budget and monitor this during the year; and

- ensure local arrangements are in place for claims and receipts to be approved, retained and stored appropriately (further details in the T&E Procedure within the Staff Handbook available on eConnect).

4.3 Human Resources responsibilities

Human Resources have responsibility for:

- setting the policy, including rates and expense limits, in conjunction with Finance & Accounting Services;
- giving advice and guidance on the application of this policy and its procedure; and
- monitoring and reviewing the policy in consultation with the FC Trade Unions.