

ROTARY TRAVEL AND EXPENSE POLICY

I. General Policy

II. Travel

III. Business Expenses

IV. Resources

I. GENERAL POLICY

This policy applies to all Rotarian Volunteers (“Volunteers”) who travel and/or incur expenses on Rotary International or The Rotary Foundation (“Rotary”) business.

Volunteers are responsible for adhering to this policy and taking an active role in being good stewards of the organization’s resources while on Rotary assignments.

Rotary will reimburse funded travelers for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred while traveling on authorized Rotary business. Only authorized travel expenses in the service of Rotary will be paid for or reimbursed. Non-funded travel arrangements are the responsibility of the individual traveler.

In order to be reimbursed for expenses, volunteers whose attendance at a meeting, event, or other activity is funded by Rotary must fulfill their associated duties and obligations as described in the RI constitutional documents, the Rotary/Rotary Foundation Codes of Policies, or the official program of the meeting, event, or activity. Funded travelers who fail to fulfill their duties and responsibilities will not be reimbursed and must return the entire sum paid to them or on their behalf in connection with the travel. Persons who travel at RI expense may be subject to income taxes on the value of the travel if the travel is not for bona fide business purposes. All invitations to participate in travel funded by Rotary will include reference to these requirements.

Rotary assumes no obligation to reimburse volunteers for expenses that do not comply with this policy.

All monetary amounts stated in this policy are in U.S. dollars.

II. TRAVEL

Air Travel:

Rotary Travel Services’ authorized agents/agencies book reasonable routes at the lowest available cost in the entitled class of service, taking into account all en route travel costs, the length of travel time, and Rotary’s negotiated contracts with certain airline partners. **To secure the lowest cost, you should request airline tickets at least 16 days before domestic travel and at least 24 days before international travel.** In addition:

- Travelers are strongly encouraged to use preferred carriers and routings whenever possible, if such achieves lowest total cost of travel and recognizes the value of the traveler’s time.
- Travelers should accept flights with up to one additional connection if that will significantly reduce the total cost of travel, while recognizing the value of the traveler’s time.
- Flights are booked through the most economical airports so long as the cost of ground transportation does not increase the total cost of travel nor substantially increase the total travel time. A change of airport for flight connections shall be avoided if possible.

Class of Service:

The length of total travel time is defined here as the scheduled departure of the first flight to the scheduled arrival of the last flight.

Rotary-funded travelers must make use of the lowest reasonable economy airfare which will serve the RI or The Rotary Foundation purposes of the journey while providing reasonable comfort and taking into account all en route travel costs and the value of the travelers' time.

Rotary Senior Leaders may make use of upgrades to the class of service for which they are eligible, as listed below, but may always elect to travel at a less expensive class.

First class, if business class sleeper seats are not offered:

- President
- President-elect
- Trustee chair
- Spouses of the above when traveling at Rotary's expense

Business class or premium cabin equivalent on flights with a total travel time of longer than four hours:

- Rotary International directors
- Rotary Foundation trustees
- President-nominee
- Past Presidents
- Past Trustee Chairs
- General Secretary
- Directors-elect, in conjunction with the Rotary International Convention and Board meetings scheduled around it
- Incoming Trustees in conjunction with their preparation **beginning 1 Jan of the year preceding*
- Aides to the President, President-elect, Trustee Chair, and Trustee Chair-Elect
- Convention speakers invited by the Rotary International President
- Major award recipients invited by the Rotary International President
- Spouses of the above when traveling at Rotary's expense

* Exception: Candidates invited to the Nominating Committee for RI President shall be funded to travel in economy class.

Past Directors, Trustees, General Secretaries** and their spouses when traveling at Rotary's expense, are eligible for:

- Upgradeable coach class on flights with a total travel time of longer than four hours; Rotary will fund up to 175 percent of the lowest-cost coach ticket as long as the past Director or Trustee pays the additional cost, if any, for the next-highest class of service at the time of booking
- Business class or premium cabin equivalent on flights with a total travel time of longer than eight hours

** Past General Secretaries when serving as an official representative of Rotary International at the request of the President

Note: *In emergency situations, the general secretary is permitted to authorize purchase of any class of service to secure the safe evacuation of Rotary-funded travelers.*

Arrival and Departure:

Generally, travelers arriving for official meetings may book their travel so they arrive one day before the first meeting date. However, there are several exceptions:

- Those traveling 4,000 km or 2,500 miles or further, or whose total travel time is eight hours or more, and whose Rotary-scheduled flight cannot arrive before 15:00 the day before a meeting scheduled to begin at 09:00 or earlier may arrive two days before.
- Travelers arriving from destinations 8,000 km or 5,000 miles or further, or whose total travel time is fourteen hours or more, may arrive two days prior to the first meeting date.
- Committee chairs may arrive two days before.
- Past presidents traveling more than 4,000 km or 2,500 miles, or whose total travel time is eight hours or more, for the Council on Legislation, International Assembly, or Rotary International Convention may arrive two days before the start unless required to arrive earlier for other meetings.

The costs of lodging, meals, and general travel expenses for travelers observing these arrival requirements are the responsibility of Rotary. Travelers who arrive earlier than provided in these guidelines or who stay longer than one night after their last official meeting must pay their own expenses.¹

Note: *If a committee meeting ends on Friday and a significant amount can be saved on the airfare if the traveler stays until Sunday, Saturday night's lodging, meal, and general expenses will be Rotary's responsibility. The same rule applies to a Saturday arrival for a meeting that begins on Monday.*

Day Rooms/Overnights:

- If your international travel itinerary requires a connection time exceeding seven daytime hours, Rotary's authorized agents/agency will book a day room for you, and the expense is reimbursable.
- If your travel itinerary requires an overnight stay, Rotary's authorized agents/agency will book a reasonably priced hotel room for you, and the expense is reimbursable.

A forced overnight becomes necessary if flight schedules make it impossible for a traveler to arrive or depart at a reasonable date or time before or after the assignment. Also, depending on flight schedules, a forced overnight may occur in a city other than the one where the assignment is located. Forced overnight accommodations do not apply for personal travel before or after the assignment. Certain meetings may have their own policy regarding forced overnights.

Local Purchase:

Travelers may submit a request for local purchase authorization if they believe they can purchase a lower-cost airfare, hotel, or rental car through a non-Rotary-designated travel agency. For air transportation, the authorization request must include a travel request form and an official travel itinerary indicating flight numbers, flight times, airline, and total cost. The traveler will be authorized for local purchase if the airfare offered by a non-Rotary-designated agency is at least \$300 lower than the Rotary-designated agency airfare. The traveler will be reimbursed for the authorized amount after completing the trip and submitting applicable receipts with a Rotary expense statement.

¹ These guidelines do not apply to travel to the International Assembly, International Convention, and Council on Legislation, as travel policy may be modified to best meet the objectives of those meetings.

Note: Rotary Travel Services reserves the right to deny a local purchase request based on its evaluation of the routing, seat availability, and airline selected by the non-Rotary-designated agency.

Frequent-Flyer Programs:

Rotary-funded travelers who use frequent-flyer miles to purchase tickets or upgrades are not eligible for reimbursement by Rotary, except for their out-of-pocket costs (e.g., taxes and service fees). Any frequent-flyer miles earned through tickets purchased by Rotary will be credited to the account(s) of the individual traveler.

Personal Travel:

Travelers are responsible for the cost of any personal travel booked in conjunction with authorized Rotary travel.

Other Forms of Transportation:

- When commercial air service is available, transportation by other means must be authorized. Alternate transportation may not receive authorization if the cost exceeds the round-trip airfare calculated by Rotary Travel Services. Full reimbursement will not be provided for unauthorized travel.
- If air service is not available, travelers should select the most economical form of transportation (e.g., personal vehicle, train, bus, ferry).
 - If anticipated round-trip travel costs exceed \$350, Rotary Travel Services authorization is required. To determine your travel costs, include parking fees, mileage, tolls, ferry crossing fees, etc.
- Travelers should select the most economical mode of transportation to and from airports. If it is anticipated that round-trip airport transportation will exceed US\$150, prior approval is required.
- Authorized travel by personal automobile will be reimbursed for the distance driven on a per mile/kilometer rate as set by Rotary on a country-by-country basis. This rate covers the cost of fuel; therefore, fuel costs should not be listed as a separate expense. Round-trip mileage costs exceeding \$350 require Rotary Travel Services authorization. If air or train service is not available but the traveler drives without prior Rotary Travel Services authorization, the round-trip reimbursement will be capped at \$350.

Note: Mileage rates are subject to change. Please use the [most recent rates](#) listed on the Rotary website (see link under Resources below) before requesting authorization.

- Air travelers will be reimbursed for a car rental at their destination if using a rental car is less expensive than other transportation, such as taxis, airport limousines, and airport shuttles. Rental car reservations must be made through Rotary-designated agents/agencies.

Note: For more information about using rental cars or personal vehicles during your assignment, please review the [Car Rental & Personal Vehicle Information Sheet](#).

III. BUSINESS EXPENSES

Rotary will reimburse volunteers for legitimate and reasonable business expenses incurred on authorized Rotary business assignments. To obtain reimbursement for business expenses, volunteers must submit an expense statement, using the official Rotary Expense Report form, to Rotary Accounts Payable as soon as possible (within 60 days) of completing their Rotary-funded assignment and/or incurring the expense. Exceptions will be made only if there is an acceptable, documented explanation for the delay and authorization from the General Secretary. Expenses cannot be reimbursed until after the completion of the assignment for which they were incurred. Expense reports must explain the business purpose of each entry and include all required documentation in order to be reimbursed.

Documentation is required for any expenses of \$75 or more and for all hotel expenses (refer to the documentation guidelines for more information). Please note, some countries may have stricter documentation requirements. Please follow your country's requirements for documentation of expenses if stricter than Rotary's. Documentation for expenses should be legible and should show the amount, date, place, general character of each expense, and include valid proof of payment.

Eligible Expenses:

Volunteers should use their best judgment to ensure that expenses are as economical as possible.

Some examples of reimbursable expenses are listed below. This list is not exhaustive. Please also refer to the Rotary Code of Policies as some expenses which may generally be considered as ineligible may be eligible depending upon your role or circumstances. If you're not sure whether something is eligible for reimbursement, please ask your Rotary staff liaison or Rotary's Accounts Payable team before incurring the expense.

Transportation-related Expenses:

- **Airline tickets: Volunteer airfare should be booked through Rotary Travel Service-designated agents/agencies.** *See prior Travel section for details related to air travel.*
- **Baggage fees:** Fees for a maximum of two bags at standard airline weight limit will be reimbursed, with applicable receipts. *Note: Charges for overweight and excess baggage will not be reimbursed.*
- **Visa fees** (if required for travel assignment)
- **Transportation to and from airport (or other terminal):** The most economical transportation (personal automobile, train, bus, taxi) will be reimbursed. Limousines, hired drivers, etc., typically would not be the most economical. If driving a personal car is the most economical option for getting to the airport/bus/rail terminal, you can request reimbursement for mileage expenses, tolls, and parking fees in a long-term lot.
- **Taxis, shuttle busses, parking, tolls**
- **Rental cars** when less expensive than other transportation modes (e.g., taxis, airport limousines, airport shuttles). See [Car Rental & Personal Vehicle Information Sheet for more information](#) on rental cars. Rotary will not reimburse Collision Damage Waiver or Personal Accident Insurance on rental cars. When renting vehicles in the U.S., its territories and possessions, and in Canada, insurance coverage is provided through Rotary's auto insurance, when travel is funded.

- **Mileage:** Authorized travel by personal automobile will be reimbursed for the distance driven on a per mile/kilometer rate as set by Rotary on a country-by-country basis. This rate covers the cost of fuel; therefore, fuel costs should not be listed as a separate expense. Round-trip mileage costs exceeding \$350 require Rotary Travel Services authorization. If air or train service is not available but the traveler drives without prior Rotary Travel Services authorization, the round-trip reimbursement will be capped at \$350.

Note: Mileage rates are subject to change. Please use the [most recent rates](#) listed on the Rotary website (see link under Resources below).

Other Expenses:

- **Meals:**² The cost of reasonably priced meals will be reimbursed. It is recommended that meal costs not exceed \$75 per person per day. See section 69.020.13 in the Rotary Code of Policies for more information. If paying for a meal for other individuals, all individuals present must be listed on the expense statement. **Note:** *If attendance at an official function is mandatory and meals are served at that function, Rotary will not reimburse the costs of any other food or beverage.*
- **Hotels:** The cost of moderately priced, standard hotel rooms will be reimbursed at a level appropriate to the area, provided that the rooms are booked by Rotary-designated agents/agencies. Itemized hotel bills are required to document the expense. Refer to the policy above for information about forced overnights/day rooms.
- **Laundry/dry cleaning:** Reasonable expenses for laundry or dry cleaning. Refer to laundry/cleaning item under the ineligible expenses list for more specifics.
- **Tips/gratuities:** Tips for wait staff and taxi drivers are allowable when appropriate and customary. Normally, tips will be no more than 15 percent to 20 percent of the bill, excluding sales tax. Tips for housekeeping, skycaps, bellhops, and valet services are allowable only when necessary.
- **Telephone/Internet fees:** To avoid high internet charges, please use the free Wi-Fi available at many hotels and other venues.

² These guidelines may not apply to meals at the International Assembly, International Convention, or Council on Legislation, as policy may be modified to best meet the objectives of those meetings.

Ineligible Expenses:

The following are examples of expenses that are not reimbursable. *(Note that this list is not exhaustive.)*:

- **Airline club memberships**
- **Local purchase of any airfare;** or other forms of transportation over \$350 without Rotary Travel Services' pre-approval
- **Frequent-Flyer miles/upgrades:** Rotary-funded travelers who use frequent-flyer miles to purchase tickets or upgrades are not eligible for reimbursement by Rotary, except for their out-of-pocket costs (e.g., taxes and service fees). Free tickets obtained by using frequent-flyer miles are not reimbursable.
- **Travel Medical & Accident Insurance** – Rotary provides travel insurance for funded travelers (Senior leaders - Rotary International president, president-elect, president-nominee, directors, directors-elect, trustees, incoming trustees, past senior leaders, Committee or resource group members, President's representatives, Cadre of technical advisers, Fiscal agents, Rotary World Magazine Press editors, Rotarian Youth Exchange evaluators, Program planning and performance evaluation team members).
- Travel Medical & Accident Insurance is also provided to Rotarians traveling to International Assembly, COL, and to the International Convention, but only when their travel is funded.
- For any Rotary traveler not included in the above-mentioned list, Rotary provides only limited accident and baggage insurance, provided the traveler's airline ticket was issued by a Rotary-designated agent/agency. Please consult an insurance advisor regarding your travel insurance needs. The cost of any supplemental insurance coverage is the responsibility of the traveler and will not be reimbursed by Rotary.
- Overweight and excess baggage fees
- Annual fees or late fees for personal credit cards
- Auto repairs
- Child care
- Clothing
- Entertainment/recreational reading materials
- Hairdresser services
- Health club fees
- In-room/in-flight movies
- Laundry/dry cleaning
 - Before or after Rotary travel
 - During an assignment of less than five days
 - On the last day of an assignment
- Luggage purchases
- Parking tickets or traffic violations
- Personal items such as toiletries, medical supplies, personal hygiene products
- Lost or stolen cash
- Pet care
- Saunas, massages, other spa services
- Souvenirs or gifts
- Lost luggage: Rotary does not take responsibility for any lost luggage. A claim should be filed directly with the airline for reimbursement.
- Expenses submitted more than 60 days after they were incurred – will only be reimbursed with an approved exception request and explanation regarding why they were submitted late.
- Expenses submitted more than 1 year after they were incurred – will not be reimbursed.

Note: Expenses are reimbursable only to the extent that they are not lavish or extravagant under the circumstances, and in compliance with all policies mentioned in this document. Rotary reserves the right to deny or reduce reimbursement of items which do not comply with this policy. If you are unsure whether an expense is reimbursable, please contact Accounts Payable and/or your staff liaison.

Spouse Expenses:

Rotary will reimburse spouse expenses only if the spouse's travel/expenses are for legitimate Rotary business (with pre-approval from the staff liaison). Use Rotary's [Document of Reimbursable Activities of Spouse](#) to substantiate the business purpose of spouse travel, along with the reimbursement amount. Spouse expenses should be authorized by your Rotary staff liaison before they have been incurred. For spouses accompanying Rotarians on multiple travel segments, spouse travel expenses will only be eligible for reimbursement if the spouse incurred those expenses while conducting official Rotary business on approved and funded Rotary assignments. These expenses will be billed to the cost center authorizing the spouse travel. Any additional costs for spouses accompanying Rotarians on multiple travel assignments beyond the spouse funded portion will be at the personal expense of the Rotarian.

Note: Exceptions to this policy can only be approved by the General Secretary. Please send written requests to the Rotary Travel Services Manager (travel-related) or Rotary Accounts Payable Manager (expense-related) who will submit them for approval.

IV. RESOURCES

Your Rotary staff liaison is your first point of contact for questions related to your travel assignment or reimbursement of expenses. Many resource materials related to travel and expense reports are posted on Rotary.org under My Rotary > Manage > Travel and Expense section. Below are links to some helpful documents:

[Volunteer Travel Request Form](#)

[Rotary-designated affiliate agencies](#)

[Expense Statement \(Excel\) \(PDF/IPAD\)](#)

[Guidelines for Submitting Expense Statements](#)

[Documentation for Expense Reimbursements](#)

[Additional Documentation Requirements by Country](#)

[Guidelines for Using RI Exchange Rates on Expense Statements](#)

[Rotary Exchange Rates](#)

[Automobile Reimbursement Rates](#)

[Reimbursable Activities of Spouse Form](#)

[Directions for Reimbursable Activities of Spouse Form](#)

[Rotary Payee Information Form](#)

[Payment Guidelines for Rotarians](#)

[Car Rental Information Sheet](#)