**Purpose:** *This policy applies to Out of Town travel related to the fire district’s interests or business activities. To outline requirements for reimbursement by Okolona Fire Protection District for out-of-pocket expenses incurred while on official department business travel and other purchases made for approved bona fide business purposes.*

**Scope**

This is a mandatory procedure that applies to all *Okolona Fire Protection District* employees.

**Procedure:**

1. The district shall cover the costs of out of town travel for activities related to the district’s business or interests including attendance at trainings, schools, conferences, seminars, meetings and other similar activities.

The district shall not pay for or reimburse employees, consultants, or others acting on its behalf for expenses associated with the purchase, use or consumption of:

1. Potation beverages.
2. Tobacco products, medications, or controlled substances.
3. Excessive or extravagant meals.
4. Room service
5. First-class or upgraded air travel or hotel accommodations.
6. Excess baggage fees (unless required for district business)
7. Travel insurance
8. Premium, luxury, or specialty automobile rentals.
9. Traffic fines or violations, damages to employee vehicle
10. Entertainment.
11. Any other cost or expense that does not reasonably promote Okolona’s legitimate business interests.

All payable or reimbursable expenses must, in the sole judgement of Okolona Fire District, be both reasonable and necessary to promote legitimate business interests.

2. Out of town travel means travel in excess of 75 miles from Louisville and an overnight stay is necessary. If the scheduling of activities related to out of town travel would, when taking into consideration the travel time, result in less than eight (8) hours of sleep for the member, such travel would be also considered out of town travel.

3. Out of town travel with a total cost over $1,000 shall have board of trustee approval, less than $1,000 may be approved by fire chief.

4. While members are allowed to have family members accompany them on out of town travel, the district shall only pay for the member’s travel expenses. Family member expenses are the responsibility of the member.

5. Whenever practical and possible, any expenses (except for meals and incidental expenses) should be paid for directly by the district either by check, electronic transfer or credit card. Examples of these include: lodging, airline tickets, rental cars, registration and fuel.

6. In the event direct district pre-payment for travel expenses (except for meals and incidental expenses) is impractical or cannot be accomplished, the member may request travel funds advancement. Request for travel advancements must be made as earlier as practical to allow sufficient time for the approval process.

7. When travel funds advancement has been made upon return from the travel, within seven (7) calendar days the member shall submit a completed travel form. All receipts for all payments made by the member shall be attached to the travel form.

8. If the total of the receipts is greater than was advanced to the member, the district shall issue a check for the balance to the member. If the total is less than was advanced to the member, the member shall refund the excess. If the member fails to provide receipts the entire travel advance shall be reported as income on the appropriate IRS documents. If the member submits receipts, but not refund the excess, the excess shall be reported as income on the appropriate IRS documents.

9. The cost for lodging is limited to the federal GSA schedule which may be found at the following internet site:

<http://www.gsa.gov/Portal/gsa/ep/contentView.do?programId=9704&channelId=-15943&ooid=16365&contentId=17943&pageTypeId=8203&contentType=GSA_BASIC&programPage=%2Fep%2Fprogram%2FgsaBasic.jsp&P=MTT>

If the destination city cannot be found on the above site, the closest city shall be used.

10. Any lodging cost in excess of the GSA schedule requires Board of Trustee approval with appropriate justification.

11. Lodging is allowed for no more than one night in advance of, or after completion of official travel, and only when dictated necessary by start and end time of said business or transportation needs. Sometimes it is possible that an extra night’s stay may be offset by airline travel savings.

12. For meals and other incidental expenses such as tips, local telephone calls, laundry the member shall be provided with a Per Diem allowance. The allowance shall be prorated for partial days based on time of departure and time of return. The Per Diem allowance shall be paid to the member prior to the beginning of out of town travel. If the travel is cut short or does not occur, the member shall refund any excess to the district within seven (7) days, or the amount will be reported as income on appropriate IRS forms.

13. The Per Diem allowance shall be $51.00 or that which is authorized by the federal GSA Per Diem schedule, which can be found at the following internet site: <http://www.gsa.gov/mie>. This schedule also shows the prorated amounts for partial days. An employee is NOT required to maintain receipts nor report the Per Diem allowance for completed travel.

14. For out of town travel that does not involve an overnight stay, the allowance shall be that which is authorized on the GSA table for meals that occur after departure and before arrival. No incidental costs are authorized. The following shows eligibility for meals.

Breakfast: Depart before 0730 hours or return after 0830 hours.

Lunch: Depart before 1100 hours or return after 1330 hours.

Dinner: Depart before 1730 hours or return after 1900 hours.

15. A member may opt to use a receipt/reimbursement method. When this method is employed, the member shall provide receipts for all meals and incidental expenses, and the district will reimburse the member for the total of all receipts. However, it should be noted that the Per Diem allowance is preferred.

16. **Reimbursement to District**

If the class dismisses earlier than planned, the member returns earlier than planned or other changes occur during travel, the member may be responsible for reimbursement of funds to the district.

If a member fails to attend, or voluntarily withdraws, an approved course or travel event, said member may be required to reimburse the district up to the total of all monies paid to support the request.

17. When attending Federal or State sponsored training such as but not limited to

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

Emergency Management Institute (EMI)

National Emergency Training Center (NETC)

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center (EMRTC)

American Red Cross

Salvation Army

National Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (VOAD)

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)

Where expenses are prepaid, covered, or reimbursable by said agency such as but not limited to

Lodging

Airfare, other approved transportation/parking/fuel/tolls

Baggage

Meals

The member shall reimburse the district up to the total of all monies paid to support the request. If the member fails to provide said refunds the entire travel advance shall be reported as income on the appropriate IRS documents. If the member submits receipts, but not refund the excess, the excess shall be reported as income on the appropriate IRS documents. Advances outstanding 21 days after the scheduled completion of the related travel shall be reported as income on the appropriate IRS documents.

18. For Special Team deployment, the district will reimburse for meals that are not provide while assigned to a strike team. After travel, employees must provide original itemized receipts for reimbursement. For Special Team deployment, the district will pay for hotel costs when approved in advance by the Fire Chief or his/her designee. Employee must submit folio and receipt.