



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Sections 7-8
Updated March 2023

7.0 TRAINING AND TRAVEL

7.1 GENERAL TRAINING ACTIVITIES

In the interest of effective public service, the County shall encourage and promote training opportunities for employees.

7.2 AUTHORIZED TRAVEL AND CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

All travel and conference attendance must be approved in advance by the Elected/Director. For non-exempt employees, hours worked will consist of the combination of travel time to and from the training activity/conference and the actual time of the training activity/conference. Normally, all such training will be on the County employee's work time; however, in the event that the training cannot be offered during the employee's normal work shift, the employee shall be compensated at the appropriate rate pursuant to the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Food, lodging and travel expenses shall be paid by the County to an employee according to County policy. (See section 8.0 Reimbursement for Expenses.)

(See part 3 Travel Reimbursement of ATTACHMENTS.)

7.2.1 OUT-OF-COUNTY TRAVEL AND EXPENSES

All out-of-county travel and expenses must be authorized by the Elected/Director.

7.2.2 IN COUNTY TRAVEL AND EXPENSES

Such expenses shall not be reimbursed except by prior written request to and authorization by the Elected/Director.

7.2.3 VEHICLE USE

All out-of-county travel which involves transportation by automobile shall follow the County Risk Management Policy 4.300 (Vehicle Use).

7.3 MANDATED AND REQUIRED TRAINING

New employees may be required to attend in-house training in some or all areas listed below. If required, all classes as indicated will be required on a three year cycle with the exception of employees who are required to have a First Aid-CPR card, who will be on a two year cycle or as designated. Some positions may be exempt from a course requirement when those issues do not impact their area of work. Lewis County training classes include:

- County Government 101
- Cyber Security
- Diversity

- Defensive Driving
- Employee Handbook/Workplace Violence/Active Shooter
- Ethics
- First Aid
- Outlook
- Safety Orientation
- Sexual Harassment/Diversity
- ~~Workplace Violence~~

Lewis County shall also provide specialized training to managers and supervisors, in addition to any training offered by individual offices, departments or divisions, in human resources and personnel management, customer service and communications skills and methods.

7.3.1 General Provision

The leadership of Lewis County is committed to improving employee skills through training to provide quality public service. It is the policy of Lewis County to provide the Employee Training & Development Program to be consistent with the Lewis County Strategic Plan and its vision, mission, and values.

7.3.2 Training Program Purpose

To establish and provide high quality, well trained staff for administering and operating the affairs of the County for its citizens through effective employee training and development.

7.3.3 Administration of Training Program

- Employee Orientation & Refresher Training Program will be overseen by Human Resources. Human Resources will maintain a list of classes offered, course curriculum, arrange for classrooms and instructors, maintain a master list of County employees and the classes they have completed, and compile training audits for the Departments/Offices.
- Leadership Academy will be overseen by Human Resources. Human Resources will maintain course curriculum, arrange for classes, provide for their instruction, and maintain the master list of County employees who have completed the leadership class.
- Professional Development will be overseen by the Elected Officials and/or Director for individuals of their Departments or Offices.
- Employee Technical/Job Specific Training & Development will be overseen by the Elected Officials and Directors for individual Departments or Offices.
- Departmental Orientation will be administered by the individual Department or Office.

7.3.4 Format of Employee Training

The courses for the Employee Training Program are provided in several different formats including:

1. In-house training – courses offered by the County using county or professional trainers.
2. On-the-job-training – supervisor and/or co-worker instruction or demonstration.
3. Off-the-job training – colleges, universities, or other agencies.
4. Internet training – on-line courses offered by the County or by colleges and universities, or private businesses and professional organizations.

7.3.5 Annual Performance Evaluation

The Employee Training and Development Program should be interrelated with the Annual Performance Evaluation. The need for employee training should be determined, monitored by their supervisor, and then recapped in the employee's Annual Performance Evaluation. (Employee Handbook, Sec. 10.0)

7.4 Employee Orientation & Refresher Training Program

7.4.1 Training and Development

The Employee Training and Development Program seeks to improve the County's workforce through both mandatory and voluntary courses. Employees will benefit from knowing the history, nature of local government, its operations, and its processes to ensure quality services are delivered both internally and externally, and at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayer.

Course schedules and sign-up sheets can be found on the T:/ drive. Departmental training designees listed on the monthly sign-up sheets can be contacted to register employees. Some positions may be exempt from a required course when it does not impact their area of work.

7.4.2 County Training Courses Program

- **Defensive Driving**
Required for employees who will drive a county vehicle. This is an on-line course offered through Washington Counties Risk Pool and requires renewal every three (3) years. Contact Human Resources to enroll.
(Policies related to County owned vehicles can be found in Risk Management Policies Attachment Part 4.)

- **First Aid – CPR**

Required for new employees and for primary and alternate designees in each office and all Road, Engineer, Survey crews, Sheriffs, Animal Shelter employees, and outlying Solid Waste crews on a two (2) year three (3) year renewal cycle. This is a four-hour course.

- **Personnel Employee Handbook/Workplace Violence**

Required for new employees with a three (3) year renewal cycle

- Lewis County Employee Handbook
- Workplace Violence
- Active Shooter

- **Safety Orientation**

Required for new employees with a three (3) year renewal cycle

- **Computer Outlook**

Available on the Y:/ drive at Y:/Video Training/Technology/Outlook Training

- **County Government 101**

Required for new employees

- History of Lewis County
- Organizational Structure, Responsibilities, Revenue & Special Programs

- **Ethics and Emerging Issues**

Required for new employees with a three (3) year renewal cycle

- Workplace ethics and principles
- Human relations and behaviors

- **Customer Service**

Required for new employees with a three (3) year renewal cycle

- **Sexual Harassment/Diversity**

Required for new employees with a three (3) year renewal cycle

7.5 Managers/Supervisors Training & Professional Development

7.5.1 Program Intent

It is the intent of the County to develop motivated, productive managers and supervisors who perform and make decisions consistent with the vision, mission, values, management philosophy, and guiding principles of the County. The County is committed to enhancing the leadership and professional development of its managers and supervisors to effectively lead employees and to be accountable in that leadership.

7.5.2 Professional Development

From informal learning opportunities and mentoring programs to structured coursework, seminars and conferences, Lewis County encourages professional development to ensure employees maintain and improve their professional proficiency, enhance career progression, and keep abreast of new technologies and practices.

7.5.3 Leadership Training

The Employee Training and Development Program includes a leadership program entitled, Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy provides County managers and supervisors specialized professional training. Developing leadership can provide the opportunity for County staff to become more effective managers and supervisors, and potential leaders in the community.

7.5.3.1 Leadership Academy Participants

Although the Leadership Academy is voluntary for the Elected Offices, it is highly encouraged for all current managers & supervisors, those being considered for hire, or current employees wanting to be considered for advancement to attend the Leadership Academy. Consideration is given first to managers and supervisors, and second to potential managers and supervisors.

7.5.3.2 Certificate of Completion/Advancing Employees

A Certificate of Completion is given to each manager, supervisor, or other County employee who completes the Leadership Academy. Having received a Certificate of Completion does not guarantee automatic position advancement.

Leadership Academy Program Curriculum

- **LEADERSHIP**

Leadership Concepts, Styles, Team Building, Motivation, Human Behavior

- **COMMUNICATIONS**

Consensus Building, Communications Methods, Motivation, Identifying Character and Traits, Writing For Business, County Correspondence

- **SUPERVISION**

Personnel, Policies, Employee Hiring Procedures, Progressive Discipline, Labor Laws

- **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Workforce Planning, Organizational Development

- **PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

Resource Management, Time, Materials, Financing, Staffing, Performance Management and Measurement for Leaders

- **TIME MANAGEMENT**

Conducting Orderly and Effective Meetings, Desk Habits

○ **GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES**

Supervising in a Multi-Generational Workplace

○ **BUDGET**

Governmental Budgeting Process

7.6 Employee Technical/Job Specific Training Program

7.6.1 General Provision

County Departments and Offices are encouraged to maintain an Annual Employee Training and Development Program in coordination with the County's overall Employee Training Program. Employee Technical/Job Specific Training is managed at the Office/Department level as required, and is dependent upon job specifications, educational requirements, and certification/recertification requirements.

7.7 Departmental Orientation

7.7.1 General Provision

County Departments and Offices will conduct employee orientation to assist new employees in adjusting to their jobs and work environment

8.0 REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES

Statute Authority: RCW 36.32.120

~~Resolution 13-498, 06-078, 17-331~~

8.1 Travel and Reimbursement

8.1.1 Intent

To establish compensation for travel while on county-related business.

8.1.2 Specifications

For the purpose of this policy, "county-related business" is defined as business that has been approved by the Elected Official, Department Director, or designee. "Travel status" is defined as the time spent traveling to/from county-related business.

Note: Those with travel issues not specifically addressed or fall silent in this policy shall

be referred to Chapter 10 of the Washington State Administrative and Accounting Manual (SAAM) for guidance.

8.2 **Travel Time/Hours Worked**

8.2.1 **Travel Time**

Time spent traveling for county-related business will be compensated at the employee's normal hourly rate of pay. Travel hours will be counted as hours worked as defined under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), RCW 49.12 and WAC 296-126. Commute time from an employee's home to the employee's regular workstation does not count as hours worked, unless specified by state or federal law or collective bargaining agreement. At the discretion of the employer, employees may have their work schedule adjusted for the purpose of attending training, conferences, or meetings.

- **Example 1:** An employee lives in Olympia and is required to report to a temporary work site in Seattle, a 60-minute commute. The employee's normal work site is located in Chehalis, a 30-minute commute. The employee is eligible to receive travel time pay for the roundtrip difference of time it takes to drive to/from the employee's normal work station (Chehalis) and the time it takes to drive to/from the temporary work site (Seattle). The employee is eligible to receive 60 minutes travel time pay.
- **Example 2:** An employee lives in Tacoma and is required to report to a temporary work site in Toledo. The employee's normal work site is located in Chehalis. The employee would be eligible for travel time pay for the time it takes to drive between Chehalis and Toledo only.
- **Example 3:** An employee lives in Longview and is required to report to a temporary work site in Winlock. The employee's normal work site is located in Chehalis. The employee is not eligible for travel time pay.

8.2.2 **Third Party Travel/ Traveling by Commercial Carrier**

When traveling by commercial carrier (e.g., airplane, bus, or train), the pay status will be as follows:

1. Air travel will be considered as automobile travel and will follow the FLSA guidelines for time worked during travel, and will comply with the Travel Time stated in the above section. Time traveling to and from the terminal will be treated as above.
2. Generally, travel by train or bus will take considerably longer than air travel or

automobile travel. The hours spent on the train or bus that are part of the employee's scheduled work hours will be covered as compensable hours. Those hours outside of their scheduled work hours will not be considered compensable time.

8.2.3 Travel Delays

When an employee is delayed for any reason, the delay time will comply with the FLSA travel guidelines. While the employee is in travel status and actually spends time traveling (e.g. flying on board the aircraft,) they will be paid for their travel time. However, during the delay portion, the employee will only be paid for their scheduled work hours. Any hours outside of the employee's scheduled work hours, whether it is in the airport, hotel, or in combination, will not be compensable time.

Example: An employee is traveling by car between Chehalis and Spokane. Their regular work schedule is 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Due to inclement weather, the highway is closed at 4:00 p.m. The employee is parked in a rest area until 6:00 a.m. the next day. The time from 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. is compensable. The hours from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. are not compensable.

If the employee does not travel until 8:00 a.m., the time from 5:00 p.m. the previous day until 8:00 a.m. the next day is not compensable. If the employee did not start to travel until 10:00 a.m., the time from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. would be compensable time.

8.2.4 Travel Reimbursements

Employees who purchase air, train, or other means of transportation using their own credit card, will be reimbursed after the travel has occurred. If an employee uses the county purchasing card, the county will process payment in accordance with Auditor's practices. Deviation from this policy may be at the discretion of the Director, Elected, or his/her designee.

8.3 Mileage Reimbursement for a Privately Owned Vehicle (POV)

8.3.1 Intent

To establish guidelines for the use and reimbursement of an employee's Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) for county-related business. Approved use of an employee's POV for county-related business will be granted if it is more advantageous to the county than using a county owned vehicle.

8.3.2 Rate

Authorized use of a POV in accordance with County Vehicle Use Policy 4.300 for county-related business will be at the rate specified in the current governing resolution for mileage reimbursement. Employees will be paid for all eligible travel time when driving their POV as long as the travel time is consistent with the Mileage Reimbursement Policy for Privately Owned Vehicles.

8.3.3 Distance

Mileage will be determined by the distances shown on the [mapquest.com](https://www.mapquest.com) website or odometer readings. [Mapquest.com](https://www.mapquest.com) Online mapping should be used for single destination meetings, conferences, or trainings. Odometer readings may be used in lieu of [MapQuest online maps](https://www.mapquest.com) for county-related business at multiple locations within the same day. If an employee chooses odometer readings, then the odometer start point and end point must be provided. All mileage reimbursement for POV requests should be pre-approved by the Elected Official, Department Director, or assigned designee.

8.3.3.1 Temporary Workstations to and from Home

Employees will be reimbursed for all mileage driven to attend county-related business at a temporary work station when traveling to that work station from their home, unless the temporary work station is lesser in distance than their normal work station. The employee will only be reimbursed the mileage from their normal workstation to the temporary workstation and returning from the temporary workstation.

- **Example 1:** An employee lives in Olympia and is required to report to a temporary workstation in Seattle. The employee's normal workstation is located in Chehalis. The employee is eligible to receive mileage reimbursement for the difference of miles it takes to drive to/from the employee's normal work station (Chehalis) and the miles it takes to drive to/from the temporary work site (Seattle).
- **Example 2:** An employee who lives in Tacoma is required to report to a temporary workstation in Toledo. The employee's normal workstation is located in Chehalis. The employee would be eligible for mileage reimbursement for all miles driven between Chehalis and Toledo only.
- **Example 3:** An employee who lives in Longview is required to report to a temporary workstation in Winlock. The employee's normal workstation is located in Chehalis. The employee is not eligible to receive mileage reimbursement.

8.3.3.2 Temporary Workstations to and from Normal Work Station

Employees will be reimbursed for mileage driven to attend county-related business located at a temporary workstation when traveling to and from their normal workstation.

- **Example:** An employee reports to their regular workstation located in Chehalis. They attend a meeting in Centralia during the morning and report back to their normal workstation to complete their workday. The employee is eligible to receive mileage reimbursement for all miles driven to and from the temporary workstation.

8.3.3.3 Temporary Workstations and Travel in Personal Vehicles (POV)

It is at the discretion of the Elected Official, Department Director, or assigned designee to assign an employee to a temporary workstation. It is also at the discretion of the Elected Official, Department Director, or assigned designee to require an employee to use a county vehicle to report to the temporary workstation. If an employee is required to use a county vehicle but chooses to use their POV instead, they will not be eligible for mileage reimbursement. However, if an Elected Official, Department Director, or assigned designee **approves** the use of a POV, even if a county vehicle is available, the employee will be eligible for mileage reimbursement.

- **Example 1:** An employee is directed to report to a temporary workstation in Yakima. Their normal workstation is in Chehalis. The Elected Official, Department Director, or assigned designee requires the employee use a county vehicle for the trip. The employee declines to take the county vehicle and requests to drive their POV. The employee will not be eligible for mileage reimbursement.
- **Example 2:** An employee is directed to report to a temporary workstation in Yakima. Their normal workstation is in Chehalis. The Elected Official, Department Director, or assigned designee offers the employee a county vehicle for the trip. The employee declines the offer and requests to drive their POV. The Elected Official or Department Director approves the request. The employee will be eligible for mileage reimbursement.

8.3.3.4 Mileage Reimbursement, Personal Vehicles, and Non-Employee Accompaniment

Employees on county-related business who want to have a family member or friend accompany them will need prior written approval from the Elected Official, Department Director, or assigned designee. If the request is approved, the employee will be required to drive their POV and will be eligible for mileage reimbursement. If the request is denied, the employee will have the option to

either (a) drive a county vehicle without the passenger(s), or (b) drive their POV. This policy shall be as described in the Risk & Safety – County Vehicle Use Policy-4.300. If the employee chooses to drive their POV, the mileage will not be reimbursed. For more information on the requirements of driving a POV, please refer to the County Vehicle Use Policy-4.003A-#7.

8.4 **Meal and Lodging Expense Reimbursement**

8.4.1 **Intent**

To establish reimbursement for meals and expenses while traveling both in and out of the county to conduct county-related business. When an Elected Official, Department Director, or an Appointed Official employee is invited to attend any function where they are representing Lewis County in their official capacity and it is in the best interest of the county for them to attend, their meal expenses will be reimbursed. Approved reimbursement requests must be submitted in a timely manner to the Auditor's Office.

8.4.2 **Out-of-County Reimbursement**

If meals are included in conference fees, employees will not be reimbursed for those meals. If meals are an option at an additional cost and the employee chooses not to attend the meal session, then the employee would be eligible for reimbursement.

8.4.2.1 **Rate:**

Reimbursement for meal expenses while traveling on approved county-related business will be reimbursed at the **per diem rate** as established in Chapter 10 of the Washington State Administrative and Accounting Manual (SAAM), found on their website www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/colormap.pdf. Employees may purchase their meals using the county or government credit card. Employees using the county or government card may charge the card up to the maximum per diem rate allowed for each meal. If Also, employees using the county or government credit card that charge meals that exceed the per diem rate, the employee will be required to reimburse the county for the excess expense.

8.4.2.2 **Ten-Hour Rule (Full Day Reimbursement)**

An employee will be eligible for a full day meal expense reimbursement when all meals are encompassed in a combination full day out-of-county and travel status for more than 10 hours in a work day. The 10 plus hours will not include the time it takes to stop and eat the meals.

8.4.2.3 **Breakfast Expense Reimbursement**

Breakfast reimbursement will only occur if the employee is in travel status the

night before, or their reimbursement is qualified by the Ten-Hour Rule.

- **Continental Breakfast:** It is at the discretion of the Elected Official or Department Director to determine per diem eligibility for continental breakfasts offered by hotels.

8.4.2.4 Lunch Expense Reimbursement

Employees attending approved county-related business not located within Lewis County that encompasses their normally scheduled lunch break will be eligible for a lunch expense reimbursement. This includes travel time to/from the out-of-county location.

- **Example 1:** An employee attends an approved training seminar in Olympia that starts at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 1:00 p.m. The employee's scheduled lunch is from Noon – 1:00 p.m. Therefore, the employee would be eligible for a meal expense reimbursement. If the employee has a scheduled lunch time, a scheduled meal time shift change may be considered by the Elected Official or Department Director according to policy and CBA.
- **Example 2:** An employee attends an approved training seminar or meeting in Olympia that starts at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 11:00 a.m. The employee's scheduled lunch is from 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. therefore, the employee would not be eligible for meal expense reimbursement.

8.4.2.5 Dinner Expense Reimbursement

At the discretion of the Elected Official or Department Director, employees attending approved county-related business not located within Lewis County will be eligible for a dinner expense reimbursement if the employee's hours exceed 2 hours beyond the normal courthouse hours. This includes travel time to/from the out-of-county location. This does not include the time to stop and eat the meal. This provision does not negate the Ten-Hour Rule.

*Per Diem for in-state travel will be reimbursed at the rate designated by SAAM (State Administrative & Accounting Manual) guidelines at [the Office of Financial Management's website showing the color travel map.](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/resources/travel/colormap)

*Per Diem for out-of-state travel will be reimbursed using the GSA (US General Services Administration) guidelines located at their website: www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287 by selecting the appropriate state and city.

Note: the 75% rule (first/last day of travel) does not apply to Lewis County

employee reimbursement. Each employee will be reimbursed per diem per meal or in accordance with the Ten Hour Rule at the full rate established by SAAM **Overnight Travel.**

An employee required to stay overnight while on county-related business is eligible to receive a meal expense reimbursement for dinner for each night they are away from home as well as a meal expense reimbursement for breakfast for every morning after a night away from home. The lunch meal would be reimbursable for the day of travel to the conference, training, etc. providing the travel is encompassing the lunch meal. The employee will be eligible for a meal expense reimbursement for dinner after the seminar only if the travel time home meets the **Dinner Expense Reimbursement requirement.**

- **Example:** An employee attends a seminar in Yakima and receives approval from the Elected Official, Department Director, or assigned designee to stay the night before. The employee is eligible for a meal expense reimbursement for dinner for that night and a meal expense reimbursement for breakfast the next morning. If the seminar encompasses their normal lunch break, they will also be eligible for a meal expense reimbursement for lunch. The employee leaves the seminar at 4:30 p.m. and arrives back to work or home, whichever is closest, at 7:30 p.m., after stopping for 30 minutes to eat dinner. The employee will be eligible for a meal expense reimbursement for dinner.

8.4.2.6 Hotel Expenses

Employees traveling on approved county-related business will have hotel cost reimbursed at a single occupancy rate. Employees who receive approval from the Elected Official, Department Director, or assigned designee, to travel with a family member and/or friend will be responsible for paying the difference between the single occupancy **hotel** rate and the rate for the family member and/or friend.

8.4.2.7 Incidentals

An allowance for incidental expenses, as defined by the Office of Financial Management (OFM) is included within the daily per diem rates associated with the area of travel.

8.4.2.8 Extended Stay

It is the intent of this policy to have the employees of Lewis County travel in the most convenient and economical way possible. When a convention, conference or meeting has concluded, employees will have booked the most economical next available flight, unless a safety concern (e.g., the flight arrives at 2:00 a.m. and the drive home will put the employee at risk) becomes prevalent. In that event, the employee is to return the next day on the most economical next available flight.

Hours worked will be calculated as stated above in **Section 8.2**. Travel Time/Hours Worked.

8.4.2.9 Voluntary Extended Stay

Employees who want to extend their stay at the conference city by taking vacation or personal leave, and is not on behalf or for the betterment of the county, must request authorization in writing from their Elected Official or Department Director prior to the conference. If the request is approved, the vacation or personal leave will begin as soon as the conference has concluded. The county will not incur any additional expense above and beyond the business necessity of travel. All additional expenses for a voluntary extended stay will be at the expense of the employee. Any expenses incurred while on an extended stay shall not be reimbursed by the county, including, but not limited to, mileage, meal/hotel per diem, rental car, taxis, airport commuters, charges for luggage storage, changes to airline tickets, increased cost of round trip airfare from the original ticket, airline luggage fees, or incidentals costs. If the employee wishes to retain the rental vehicle for their own personal use after the conference, a separate rental agreement/contract must be completed under the employee's name. If the round trip airfare for the extended stay costs less than the original airfare, the employee shall not be compensated for the difference.

8.4.3 In-County Reimbursement

In-county meals may be incurred for necessary and reasonable county purposes. Such meal is considered necessary when circumstances dictate this is the only reasonable time and place for the meeting or business. To receive reimbursement, pre-approval is required by the Elected Official or Department Director. Reimbursement of in-county meals will be processed in accordance with the **established per diem rate on the OFM website at www.ofm.wa.gov/policy/colormap.pdf**.

8.4.3.1 Conference and Travel Related Meals

If meals are included in conference fees, employees will not be reimbursed for those meals. If meals are an option at an additional cost and the employee chooses not to attend the meal session, then the employee would be eligible for reimbursement.

Conference meal rates are not subject to the per diem schedule. It is recognized that conference meal rates may be higher than normal per diem rates due to additional costs. Thus, the employee choosing to attend a conference meal, i.e. dinner, will have the full rate reimbursed.

- **Example 1:** An employee has paid a conference fee which includes the lunch

meal. The employee chooses to go out to lunch instead. The employee is not eligible for meal reimbursement for the lunch meal.

- **Example 2:** An employee is attending a conference in which there is a dinner meal, but the price is separate from the conference fee. The employee chooses not to attend the dinner. The employee would be eligible for dinner meal reimbursement.

Continental Breakfast: According to Section 10.40.20d outlined in SAAM (State Administrative and Accounting Manual) it is at the discretion of the employer to determine per diem eligibility for continental breakfasts offered by hotels.

8.5 Light Refreshments and Meals with Meetings

8.5.1 Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines for eligibility and payment of expenditures for light refreshments, meals, snacks and incidental expenses for county meetings, recognitions, retirements, and trainings in direct relation to county business.

8.5.2 Introduction

This policy is based on Washington State Attorney General informal article, see Eating and Drinking at Public Expense, which states, in part: "The consumption of nourishment is perhaps the classic example of what is ordinarily to be regarded as a private, personal and not public activity." And, "Thus, to pay for food and drink with public money is very much the exception rather than the rule."

This policy does not supersede applicable RCW's.

This policy does not obligate the County to provide meals under any circumstances.

8.5.3 Light Refreshments

Light refreshments are defined as "beverages and snacks that may be served between meals, for example: coffee, tea, juice, donuts, sweet rolls, cake, cookies, and pieces of fruit or cheese." Light refreshments may be provided at County expense for business meetings and formal training sessions. The BOCC will authorize department directors to approve the purchase of light refreshments up to \$40.00. An amount exceeding \$40.00 would need the pre-approval of the BOCC.

8.5.4 Meals

Payment may be authorized for the actual cost of meals for elected and appointed officials

and County employees, regardless of travel status, for business meetings or training sessions where attendance is advantageous to the County and meals provided per person must not exceed the authorized per diem amount for the location, and where ALL of the following requirements are met:

1. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct official County business or to provide training to County employees or County officials; AND
2. 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.” AND
3. The meeting or training is a special situation or occasion outside of the normal daily business of County employees. County 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; AND
4. Approval is obtained prior to the meeting, as documented by a properly completed Request for Approval – Meals with Meetings form signed by the department Director or Elected official; AND
5. The amount paid for each individual meal, including tax and gratuity, does not exceed the applicable meal allowance for the location of the meeting as provided under “per diem” on the General Services Administration web site at <http://www.gsa.gov>; AND
6. Any added tip may not exceed 15% of the cost of the food, excluding tax; AND
7. The County obtains an itemized receipt for the actual cost of the meals.

Exceptions to these guidelines must be pre-approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

Note: Under no circumstances may alcohol be provided at County expense.

The following are examples of when a meal MAY be provided using County funds:

- Cookies, coffee and tea may be provided for citizens and staff at BOCC Meetings, the Mayors Meetings, the annual Legislative Round Table and the annual flood preparedness meeting.
- An advisory committee meets quarterly for two hours. The committee is comprised of an Elected Official, county staff, community business leaders and citizens. Cookies, fruit, cheese and crackers and beverages may be provided.

- County recognition and accomplishments and or retirement of employees, the County will only pay the cost of such items as cookies or cake, fruit, cheese and crackers, and beverages.
- An employee attends a meeting of a local professional organization that meets once monthly for a seminar at a local restaurant. A registration fee is paid to the professional organization, which includes a meal.
- An office or department must work all day to complete essential work that is an integral part of county business, and due to difficulties, several hours of work remain before they are done. There is little time available in the coming week that allows for completion of the work. The Director or Elected official offers to have dinner delivered if staff remains to work through the evening in order to complete the work.
- A natural disaster occurs which results in activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Staff are required to be at the center around-the-clock. Meals are brought in to the EOC for those on duty.
- Other events, including annual employee recognitions or prolonged trainings may be approved by the County Manager on a case by case basis.

The following are examples of when meals MAY NOT be provided using County funds:

- A department has a meeting from 11:30 – 1:00 on the first Tuesday of every month. Pizza is provided to encourage all staff to attend.
- A staff member who has been with the County for 30 years is retiring and a dinner party is held in their honor.
- A Director or Elected official takes an employee to lunch at a local restaurant in order to discuss recent developments in the department and develop a plan on how to handle added responsibilities.
- A department has a staff meeting the morning of the second Thursday of each month. Donuts, fruit and juice are provided.