

A-1 TRAVEL POLICY



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1.1.0 POLICY

- 1.1.1 The Solano County Board of Supervisors is committed to the principles of integrity, dignity, excellence, and accountability. The Board is also committed to employing a workforce that is professionally competent, active in their respective professional associations, well-trained, and capable of providing the highest quality services to the residents of Solano County. It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that all persons in the service of the County will use due diligence in determining and evaluating the need for travel in carrying out the County's business. Each instance of travel should be clearly justifiable as to the cost, the value derived, and the number of individuals required to attend. Every effort should be made to assure that the key elements or results of any meetings, conferences, workshops, or other presentations obtained while in a travel status are disseminated to other staff so they may also benefit.
- 1.1.2 It is further the policy of the Board that travel expenditures, except in emergencies, will be budgeted, monitored, and controlled pursuant to the rules adopted by the Board and as administered and directed by the County Administrator and/or the Auditor-Controller, as appropriate.
- 1.1.3 As provided by state law, any elected or appointed official and all other individuals in the service of the County who are required to travel in the performance of their official duties shall be reimbursed for all authorized and necessary expenses incurred, subject to the limitations set forth in this Travel Policy. All persons in the service of the County are expected to secure transportation, lodging, meals, and other incidental expenses as economically as is reasonably possible.
- 1.1.4 This policy is intended to address costs incurred in conjunction with the travel of all persons in the service of the County. However, this policy does not supersede any contractual or other agreement between the County and any of its bargaining units, employees, or other persons in the service of the County.
- 1.1.5 All prior existing County travel policies, practices and procedures are hereby repealed and replaced by this Travel Policy. The County Administrator and the Auditor-Controller shall, periodically and as otherwise necessary, review this Travel Policy and make appropriate revisions.

1.2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 1.2.1 For the purpose of administering this policy, the following words and phrases are defined:
- A. "Authorized County Activities" as used herein include: travel within and outside of the County of Solano to conferences, meetings, presentations, seminars, workshops, training sessions, periodic field visits, and such other activities as are necessary to conduct the County's business.

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- B. "County Administrator" shall include his/her authorized representatives.
- C. "County Administrator or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate" means that for all persons in the service of the County, except the County Administrator and the members of the Board of Supervisors, the approval/appeal authority is the Department Head and/or the County Administrator. For the County Administrator and the members of the Board of Supervisors, the approval/appeal authority is the Chair of the Board of Supervisors and/or the full Board.
- D. "Primary Work Location" shall mean the location where the person in the service of the County is assigned, by the Department Head or his/her designee, to perform the routine duties of his/her office, employment, or service.
- E. "Persons in the Service of the County" shall include all employees including elected and appointed officials, County department heads, contract employees in the County payroll system, and all non-salaried persons serving on County boards, commissions, advisory agencies and committees, as well as persons donating services to the County. Independent contractors do not fall under this definition. Any reimbursement granted to contractors must be specifically provided for in their contract, and they shall not be entitled to rely on this policy as the legal basis for such reimbursement.
- F. "Travel" means an authorized work-related departure from one's primary work location. It continues until one returns, unless the travel is combined with an individual's vacation. In such a case, this policy does not apply to the time an individual is on vacation.
- G. "Budgeted Funds" means funds appropriated in a department's budget for travel, funds in a department budget that could be made available for travel, or funds provided by an entity other than the County.

1.3.0 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1.3.1 All travel shall be properly authorized and subject to this Travel Policy as adopted by the Board of Supervisors and as periodically revised by the County Administrator and the Auditor-Controller.
- 1.3.2 Reimbursement for travel expenses under this policy will only be to persons who are in the service of the County and who are not otherwise compensated for such expenses.
- 1.3.3 All claims for travel expenses shall be submitted by the Department Head to the Auditor-Controller for review and payment. The Auditor-Controller shall ensure all claims authorized for payment comply with this Travel Policy. Claims denied by the Auditor-

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Controller may be appealed to the County Administrator or to the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate.

- 1.3.4 All travel requests shall be submitted to the Department Head, or his/her designee(s) for prior approval, using the Travel Authorization Request Form, included in this policy as Attachment E.
- 1.3.5 The mode(s) of transportation selected must be consistent with economy and efficiency.
- 1.3.6 When a Department Head is out of the County on County business, he/she shall advise the most senior management individual(s) in the department of his/her travel plans so that he/she can be reached if necessary. When a Department Head is out of the State or the Country (whether on County or personal business) he/she shall advise the County Administrator or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate, as well as the most senior management individual(s) in the department of his/her travel plans so he/she can be reached if necessary.

1.4.0 AUTHORIZED TRAVEL

- 1.4.1 Persons in the service of the County are permitted to travel in-state and to the Reno/Tahoe area without prior approval from the County Administrator or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate, as long as said travel is authorized by their Department Head or designee or the Board Chair, as appropriate, is consistent with this Travel Policy, and is within the limits of appropriations.
- 1.4.2 Except for the Reno/Lake Tahoe area, all other requests for out-of-state travel require prior approval from both the Department Head and the County Administrator or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, for consideration and processing to justify the out-of-state travel, using the Travel Authorization Request Form, included in this policy as Attachment E.
- 1.4.3 Travel by members of official County committees, commissions, and boards shall be approved by the Department Head overseeing the funding for such entities. Such travel shall be within the limits of appropriations.
- 1.4.4 Travel and other expenses incurred by members of the Grand Jury, including any special Grand Jury, shall be approved by the Superior Court Executive Officer. Claims shall be submitted monthly on a Grand Jury Travel Claim Form, specifically for use by the Grand Jury, which ensures the confidentiality of the Grand Jury's activities.
- 1.4.5 Generally, for employees covered under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), time spent outside of normal work hours traveling to trainings, meetings, and/or assignments at any location is not compensable time unless addressed in the effective Memorandum of Understanding covering the individual(s) involved. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) does "not consider as work time that time spent in travel away from home

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outside of regular working hours as a passenger on an airplane, train, boat, bus, or automobile.”

1.5.0 USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLES IN THE SERVICE OF THE COUNTY

- 1.5.1 For economy and efficiency, the least expensive mode of transportation should be used by persons traveling in the service of the County. Persons in the service of the County are encouraged to use their private means of transportation when it is the most efficient and least expensive option for the County. Department Heads should monitor individual mileage to determine if a County vehicle would be more cost effective.
- 1.5.2 Private vehicles used for County business shall be equipped with seat belts and all occupants of such vehicles shall use them as required by law.
- 1.5.3 The County shall not be liable for any claim for vehicle rental, vehicle repair or restoration arising out of the use of a privately owned vehicle except reimbursement for expenses as provided by this policy and the effective Memorandum of Understanding covering the individual involved. Risk Management recommends the purchase of additional auto insurance coverage that allows for loss of use of a personal vehicle.
- 1.5.4 The County will not reimburse the unlawful operation of a vehicle including parking, moving, and equipment violations of state or local laws.

1.6.0 USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES

- 1.6.1 Persons in the service of the County who use department-assigned County vehicles or who use County Fleet Management pool vehicles typically do so when the nature of their County service requires extensive driving, client transport, and/or special equipment. County vehicles are assigned to departments based on need and available funding, and the Department Head is responsible for the assignment and monitoring of County vehicles within the Department. Low utilization of assigned County vehicles should be evaluated annually to ensure the use of each assigned vehicle is cost effective for the County.
- 1.6.2 When traveling outside of Solano County, gasoline and repair expenses incurred in the operation of a County Fleet Management vehicle or in the operation of a department-owned vehicle will be reimbursed as follows:
 - A. Gasoline Expenses for a County Fleet Management Vehicle Assigned to a Department or for a Department-Owned Vehicle. A person incurring gasoline expenses in the operation of a County Fleet Management vehicle assigned to a department or in the operation of a department-owned vehicle will be reimbursed by his or her department.

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- B. Gasoline Expenses for a County Fleet Management Daily Rental Vehicle (Pool Vehicle). A person incurring gasoline expenses in the operation of a County Fleet Management daily rental vehicle (Pool vehicle) will be reimbursed by Fleet Management.
- C. Repair Expenses for a County Fleet Management Vehicle Assigned to a Department or for a County Fleet Management Daily Rental Vehicle (Pool Vehicle). Necessary repairs under \$250 to the vehicle (i.e., flat tires, fan belts, radiator, heater hoses, etc.) by a competent dealer, repair shop, or service station shall be reimbursed by County Fleet Management. Repairs to the vehicle estimated to exceed \$250 must be pre-approved by County Fleet Management, and collect calls to County Fleet Management will be accepted for this purpose.

All requests for reimbursement for gasoline or repair expenses shall be accompanied by original receipts for the actual costs.

- 1.6.3 Persons in the service of the County may not transport individuals who are not in the service of the County in a County vehicle. In some cases the nature of an employee's work (i.e. Correctional Officer, Deputy Sheriff, Social Worker, etc.) constitutes blanket authority under this policy when their jobs require that they transport individuals (i.e. foster children, clients, prisoners, etc.) as it pertains to County provided functions. This blanket authority is not extended to friends or family members. Exceptions to this section of the policy and application of blanket authority are at the discretion of the Department Head or designee.
- 1.6.4 County vehicles may be taken home and routinely driven to and from work only if specifically authorized by the County Administrator or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate. (Refer to the Take Home Vehicle Policy for additional information.)
- 1.7.0 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
 - 1.7.1 Air (coach class), train, or other means of transportation may be authorized by the Department Head when it is in the best interests of the County. (All charter, private plane, or boat trips require prior approval from the County Administrator or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate.) Departments should schedule air and rail transportation sufficiently in advance of travel to take advantage of discount fares, whenever appropriate. In such cases, tickets should be purchased using procedures that result in the lowest cost. Common carrier expenses are reimbursable at the actual cost of tickets. Unused tickets, or portions of tickets, are to be returned to the travel agent and a credit secured.

An individual who receives a promotional item (including frequent flyer miles, upgrade, or access to carrier clubs or facilities) as a result of using travel or transportation services obtained at County expense may retain the promotion item for personal use if the

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promotional item is obtained under the same terms as those offered to the general public and at no additional cost to the County. Individuals receiving promotional items shall fully observe applicable principles of ethics in government and regulations that prevent unneeded or inefficient official travel. (Reference Public Law 107-107, December 28, 2001, Section 1116, Retention of Travel Promotional Items)

- 1.7.2 Generally, if an individual chooses to drive rather than use public transportation for out-of-County travel, mileage reimbursement shall not exceed the cost of public transportation (typically by air and/or rental car) that would otherwise reasonably meet the intended needs of the traveler and the County.
- 1.7.3 Individuals in the service of the County are encouraged to use airport shuttles, hotel courtesy vans or taxis rather than rental cars. However, with approval from the Department Head and when the expense of a rental car is less than the total cost of necessary public transportation modes or when travel away from the conference site or hotel is required, the expense of a rental car is reimbursable. Rental car reservations shall be made by the department prior to travel and shall not be modified without approval from the Department Head. In selecting a rental car, the department shall select the least costly vehicle which is reasonably appropriate for the intended needs. When retaining a vehicle for County business, individuals shall purchase the Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) in order to eliminate liability for any damage to the rental car. No other rental car insurance coverage should be purchased.
- 1.8.0 MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT
- 1.8.1 The mileage reimbursement rate shall be the rate established by the IRS. Necessary tolls and parking fees are also reimbursable. Information regarding IRS Per Diem rates can be accessed on the Internet at www.gsa.gov.
- 1.8.2 Mileage reimbursement shall be made only for necessary travel on County business, less any personal use mileage, and must be submitted on a Mileage Reimbursement claim, included in this policy as Attachment C, which includes the destination and the purpose of each trip.
- 1.8.3 Personal use mileage includes commute miles from a person's residence to or from a person's primary work location on a given day and any side trips or travel miles taken for reasons of personal business or other non-County business activities.
- 1.8.4 In those cases where a person in the service of the County drives directly from his/her residence to the site of a meeting or another official purpose that is not that person's primary work location, mileage reimbursement is allowable for the actual miles driven less any personal miles and shall be for the shortest route.

For example, a person living in Vacaville, whose primary work location is in Fairfield, who drives to Sacramento and back home on County business, would be eligible to

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receive mileage reimbursement to and from Sacramento via I-80 from Vacaville plus any connecting streets, plus any parking fees. The same person driving to San Francisco and back home would claim the round trip mileage between Fairfield and San Francisco via I-80, plus parking fees and tolls.

- 1.8.5 Persons in the service of the County cannot claim mileage for business use of private vehicles in the following instances:
- A. When the individual is riding with someone who will be claiming reimbursement for the vehicle's use from the County or some other source.
 - B. When the individual is traveling in a County or other government vehicle.
 - C. When the individual is traveling in a County reimbursed rented vehicle.
 - D. When the individual in the service of the County receives other compensation for County business travel.
- 1.8.6. Executive Management employees and all elected County officials shall be reimbursed for mileage expenses in and out of the County.

1.9.0 INSURANCE/AUTO ACCIDENTS

- 1.9.1 Persons in the service of the County shall provide evidence of auto insurance to their Department Head prior to operating a personal vehicle on County business and annually thereafter.

It is the responsibility of persons in the service of the County to confirm with their insurance company that their policy provides coverage for business use. In addition, persons submitting claims for mileage reimbursement will certify possession of adequate auto insurance coverage.

- 1.9.2 The County Risk Management Division requires the following minimum coverage for individuals driving their personal vehicles on official County business, except as otherwise provided in the Memorandum of Understanding applicable to such individual's employment:

Personal Injury:	\$100,000 per person/\$300,000 aggregate
Uninsured Motorist:	\$100,000 per person/\$300,000 aggregate
Property Damage:	\$50,000
Or	
Combined Single Limit:	\$300,000

- 1.9.3 Driving a personal vehicle in the service of the County without the required minimum insurance coverage will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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- 1.9.4 Persons in the service of the County may elect not to purchase collision coverage on their vehicle. In such instances, the County's maximum reimbursement shall be limited to a total of \$500 per accident or such amount provided in the effective Memorandum of Understanding covering the individual involved. Any non-recoverable losses because of lack of coverage are the individual's sole responsibility.
- 1.9.5 Reimbursement of deductible claims will not be allowed if an individual receives a traffic citation or if it is determined that the individual is responsible for the accident.
- 1.9.6 Claims for reimbursement will be filed with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and administered by Risk Management.
- 1.9.7 All auto accidents, whether in a County vehicle, rental vehicle, or privately owned vehicle, shall be reported immediately to local law enforcement, as required by law.

1.10.0 VALID CALIFORNIA DRIVER'S LICENSE

- 1.10.1 Persons in the service of the County shall file a photocopy of their valid California driver's license with their Department Head prior to operating a personal vehicle on County business. When the license is renewed, extended or changed for any reason, an updated photocopy of it shall be filed with the department. If the license is revoked or suspended, the person in the service of the County shall immediately advise their Department Head.

In the alternative, the department may visually confirm that the driver's license has been renewed and make a notation on a log or appropriate document. If the department has opted to visually check expiring driver's licenses to verify renewal, evidence of insurance should also be verified at the same time.

- 1.10.2 The County reserves the right to make inquiry to the Department of Motor Vehicles regarding an individual's driving record.
- 1.10.3 Driving in the service of the County without a valid California driver's license will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1.11.0 LODGING

- 1.11.1 With approval from the Department Head or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate, lodging expenses incident to authorized travel shall be reimbursed. Consistent with relevant provisions of the Government Code, when lodging is required as a part of a conference or meeting, lodging expenses shall be reimbursed up to the maximum group rate published by the conference or activity sponsor, provided that lodging at the group rate is available to persons in the service of the County. If the group rate is not available, the person in the service of the County shall use comparable lodging that is consistent with the general principles in this policy. Generally, the person

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in the service of the County will not be reimbursed at a rate higher than the IRS per diem rate for lodging in that area. Exceeding the IRS per diem rate may be allowed only when justified as necessary and with advance approval from the Department Head or Board Chair, as appropriate. Lodging expenses within Solano County will not be reimbursed unless approved in advance by the County Administrator or Board Chair, as appropriate.

- 1.11.2 Most Counties and cities in California charge a Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Rate on nightly room rates in hotels/motels. This tax can range from .25% to 15% of the room rate. Government employees may be exempt from this tax in many jurisdictions. An exemption certificate is available. All persons in the service of the County should take advantage of this exemption, whenever possible, to save the County this additional expense. The TOT Exemption Certificate is included in this policy as Attachment A.
- 1.11.3 Persons in the service of the County shall request the lowest available rates or government rates when making reservations. A person in the service of the County who is accompanied by a family member or friend is responsible for any difference between the single room rate and a double room rate. When individuals covered by this policy share a room, one person may be reimbursed at the double occupancy rate.
- 1.11.4 Reimbursement will not be provided for lodging in a private home.

1.12.0 MEALS

- 1.12.1 This section is intended to address meals obtained in conjunction with authorized travel outside of the County by all persons in the service of the County. For information on meals and/or refreshments other than in travel situations, refer to the Meal/Refreshment Policy.
- 1.12.2 Expenses for meals, including tips, shall be reimbursed at the IRS per diem rate for the area. However, when a meal is required as a part of a conference or meeting, meal expenses shall be reimbursed at the group rate published by the conference or meeting sponsor.
- 1.12.3 Under no circumstances will expenses for alcoholic beverages be reimbursed.
- 1.12.4 For the purpose of determining entitlement for meal reimbursements in the examples below, it is assumed that individuals are on an 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work schedule on travel days. Individuals on alternative work schedules should apply these examples to their work schedules.

Subject to the limitations set forth herein, when travel outside Solano County results in a person being unable to have meals where they normally have them, the County will reimburse the person for those meals.

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1.12.5 To qualify for meal reimbursement:

- A. To qualify for breakfast reimbursement, travel must begin two hours prior to the person's normal starting time.
Example: A person leaves Fairfield at 5:45 a.m. to catch an airplane in San Francisco. Breakfast is reimbursable because the travel started at least two hours before the person's normal starting time.

- B. To qualify for lunch reimbursement, travel must preclude the person from having their normal mid-work meal where they generally have this meal.

Example: A person working in Vallejo is required to attend a two-hour training session in Sacramento, which begins at 10:00 a.m. Lunch is reimbursable because the attendance precludes the person from having their normal lunch when and where they generally have this meal.

- C. To qualify for dinner reimbursement, travel must preclude the person from being within two hours travel time of their primary work location or home.

Example: A person living and working in Fairfield is required to attend a conference from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. in Sacramento. The person returns to their home in Fairfield around 6:00 p.m. Dinner reimbursement is not provided.

1.12.6 When a meal is included in the cost of a conference registration fee, the County will not provide a separate reimbursement for that meal.

1.12.7 It is understood that in special circumstances a person may be required to pay for meals in an amount in excess of the IRS Per Diem rate. To request reimbursement for such expenses, the Department Head shall submit a memorandum to the Auditor-Controller which explains the necessity for exceeding the amounts specified by the IRS per diem rates for the area. The claim shall also include receipts for the actual costs. Reimbursement will be made if the Auditor-Controller determines that the expense incurred was reasonable.

1.12.8 With prior approval from the Department Head or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate, a person in the service of the County who attends a breakfast, lunch, or dinner meeting within the County may be reimbursed up to the group rate published by the meeting sponsor only when such meeting is incident to that person's job or official duties. All claims for reimbursement of meals within the County shall include a brief description of the purpose of the meeting, its relevance to the claimant's job or official duties, and, if available, a meeting agenda or brochure.

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1.13.0 MISCELLANEOUS

1.13.1 In addition to the above, the following expenses may be claimed if necessary to the performance of official County business.

- A. Parking and vehicle storage fees. (Receipts required for fees in excess of \$10.00 per day.)
- B. Light rail, bus, taxi, and other train fares. (Receipts always required for reimbursement.)
- C. Automobile rental. (Receipts always required for reimbursement.)
- D. Ferry, bridge and road tolls. (Receipts required except for tolls within the Bay Area.)
- E. Telephone, telegraph and fax charges on County business. (Receipts always required for reimbursement.)
- F. Transportation of personal baggage. (Receipts always required for reimbursement.)
- G. Registration and conference fees. (Receipts always required for reimbursement.)
- H. Other necessary and customary travel expenditures, including tips for taxis and baggage handlers. (Receipts required if in excess of \$6.00 per day.)
- I. No claim for personal services such as cleaning, laundering, barbering, or similar expenses will be reimbursed.

1.13.2 Travel expenses will be advanced at the per diem rates and/or for estimated costs upon the timely filing with the Auditor-Controller of a request for a travel advance signed by the Department Head or designee, using the Vendor Claim Travel Form, included in this policy as Attachment B.

The minimum travel advance is \$50. In addition, the County may make pre-payments in full for the following:

- A. Lodging costs.
- B. Air, train, and bus fares.
- C. Conference registration fees.

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1.13.3 Travel advances other than at the per diem rates shall be reconciled to actual costs within 30 days of the related travel. Such reconciliation may be by personal payment of any reimbursement due to the County and/or by filing of a claim for any additional allowable costs. Advances at per diem rates shall be reimbursed to the County only in those instances where the claimant was otherwise compensated. For example, if a meal for which the claimant received an advance per diem is paid for by another person, the claimant must reimburse the County at the per diem rate for that meal.

1.13.4 If a trip is canceled, the travel advance shall be returned to the Auditor-Controller within three days of such cancellation.

1.14.0 CLAIMS

1.14.1 Claims for expenses incurred while traveling on official County business and for mileage reimbursement shall be submitted by the Department Head to the Auditor-Controller in a timely manner within the fiscal year they are incurred. Failure to complete the forms as required or to submit the proper receipts may be grounds for denying reimbursement. Claims that are denied by the Auditor-Controller may be appealed to the County Administrator or the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, as appropriate.

1.14.2 Original receipts for lodging, meals (only if in excess of the IRS per diem rate for the area), common carrier transportation, automobile rental, and conference registration fees shall accompany the claims. Unless previously submitted with a request for advanced travel expenses, the claim shall also include a brief description of the purpose of the trip, the destination, and, if available, a meeting agenda or brochure.

1.14.3 Claims for personal mileage reimbursement may be submitted neither less frequently than every three months nor more frequently than once a month.

1.14.4 Claims for special travel (i.e.; conferences, trade shows, etc.) including meals, lodging, private mileage and/or other expenses shall be submitted on a single trip basis on a Vendor Claim Travel Form provided by the Auditor-Controller, included in this policy as Attachment B. All the related expenses for each single trip are to be combined on a single form.

1.14.5 Mileage reimbursement only may be claimed on a Mileage Reimbursement Form, included in this policy as Attachment C. Such claims are to be filed separately from all other travel request/reimbursement forms.

1.14.6 All claims for expenses incurred in the use of vehicles owned by the County, including the expenses for emergency repairs, shall include the license plate number of the vehicle and/or the County vehicle number.

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1.15.0 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- 1.15.1 As required by Government Code section 53232.3(d), each member of the Board of Supervisors shall file a monthly meeting attendance report with the Clerk of the Board listing all meetings or other activities for which he/she has received an expense reimbursement or other compensation. Such lists are not intended to reflect all of the meetings and activities attended by the Supervisors, but only those for which reimbursements or stipends were received. The monthly meeting attendance report shall be filed on or before the 30th day of the following month. The Monthly Meeting Attendance Report Form is included in this policy as Attachment D.
- 1.15.2 The Clerk of the Board shall place a recommendation to accept the monthly meeting attendance reports on the agenda of at least one of the Board of Supervisors' meetings each month.