

Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive

Issued By
Management Board of Cabinet

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Government of Ontario is committed to protecting the interests of taxpayers and

Where an agreement addresses the subject matter of this directive, this directive prevails over the relevant terms of the agreement if there is any conflict or inconsistency between them⁶.

This directive does not prevail over a collective agreement between an organization and a bargaining agent representing employees of the organization.

The designated BPS organizations covered by this directive are encouraged to review the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses directive, available on the [Ministry of Government Services website](#), as they develop their expense rules.

3. PRINCIPLES

This directive is based on four key principles.

A) Accountability

Organizations are accountable for public funds used to reimburse travel, meal and hospitality expenses. All expenses support business objectives.

B) Transparency

Organizations are transparent to all stakeholders. The rules for incurring and reimbursing travel, meal and hospitality expenses are clear, easily understood, and available to the public.

C) Value for Money

Taxpayer dollars are used prudently and responsibly. Plans for travel, meals, accommodation and hospitality are necessary and economical with due regard for health and safety.

D) Fairness

Legitimate authorized expenses incurred during the course of the business of an organization are reimbursed.

4.2 Posting

The expense rules must be posted on the organization's website, so they are available to the public. The rules must be available in accessible formats.

- if leaving employment with an organization, submit any claims for expenses before leaving the organization.

4.8 Individuals Approving Claims (Approvers)

Approvers must be prohibited in the expense rules from approving their own expenses, and the rules must note that expenses for a group can only be claimed by the most senior person present – expenses cannot be claimed by an individual that are incurred by his/her approver (e.g., an executive who reports to the CEO cannot submit a claim that includes the cost of the CEO's lunch even if they were at the same event, with the result that the CEO would thereby approve his/her own expenses).

Approvers must be required in the expense rules to:

- provide approval only for expenses that were necessarily incurred in the performance of organization business;
- provide approval only for claims that include all appropriate documentation

When a situation arises and discretion needs to be exercised, approvers should consider whether the request is:

Accommodation

Expense rules addressing situations overnight accommodation should also be established.

It is recommended that a standard room is the set option for accommodation, consistent with the principle of value for money.

For information on the rules for accommodation within government ministries, see the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive, available on the [Ministry of Government Services website](#).

C. Meals

The following information is provided for consideration when developing the rules related to meal expenses.

It is recommended that rules be established to address situations where the cost for meals can be claimed and reimbursed, and also to set the maximum rates for reimbursement.

For information on the rules for meals within government ministries, see the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive, available on the [Ministry of Government Services website](#).

D. Alcohol

The following information is provided for consideration when developing the rules related to claiming and being reimbursed for expenses that include alcohol (see section 4.3).

The rules regarding alcohol should be specific with regard to:

- the circumstances in which alcohol expenses can be claimed and reimbursed,
- who can claim alcohol expenses and be reimbursed,
- the process for obtaining approval for an alcohol expense, and
- the process for approving a claim for reimbursement.

For comparison purposes, the rules for government ministries prohibit claiming and being reimbursed for alcohol expenses as part of a travel or meal expense claim. This means that a person working for a ministry cannot claim alcohol expenses when they have a business meal with a ministry colleague.

Reimbursement for the service of alcohol as part of a hospitality event is allowed under the rules for government ministries; however, there is a rigorous approval process set out to ensure that there is a strong business case (see section E in this appendix).

For more information on the rules for the service of alcohol within government ministries,

E. Hospitality

The following information is provided for consideration when developing the rules related to hospitality expenses (see section 4.4).

The rules must include the following information.

For the purposes of this directive, *hospitality* is the provision of food, beverage, accommodation, transportation and other amenities paid out of public funds to people who are not engaged to work for:
designated BPS organizations (i.e. those covered by this directive), or
any of the Ontario government ministries, agencies and public entities covered by the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive (available on the [Ministry of Government Services website](#)).

Activities involving only those people in the organizations listed above are not considered hospitality and cannot be reimbursed. This means that hospitality may never be offered solely for the benefit of anyone covered by this directive, or by the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive. Examples would be: office social events, retirement parties and holiday lunches.

Service of Alcohol as Hospitality

It is recommended that:

A high level of approval be required when alcohol will be served. Consider also the process for obtaining approval (e.g. will prior written approval be required, will there be a form for consistency, what type of business case is required, etc.).

Alcohol be provided in a responsible manner, e.g., food should always be served when alcohol is available. Preference should also be given to wine, beer and spirits produced in Ontario.

For information on the rules for hospitality within government ministries, see the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive, available on the [Ministry of Government Services website](#).

F. Expenses For Consultants And Other Contractors

The following information is provided for consideration when developing the rules related to expenses for consultants and contractors (see section 4.6).

In no circumstances can hospitality, incidental or food expenses be considered allowable expenses for consultants and contractors under the rules or in any contract between an organization and a consultant or contractor. Therefore, they cannot claim or be reimbursed for such expenses, including:

- meals, snacks and beverages

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- valet services
- dependant care
- home management
- personal telephone calls

See the Broader Public Sector Procurement Directive for information about procurement and contracts. Reimbursement for allowable expenses can be claimed and reimbursed only when the contract specifically provides for it.

For information on the rules for consultants and contractors within government ministries, see the OPS Travel, Meal and Hospitality Expenses Directive, available on the [Ministry of Government Services website](#).