



# TAKLA NATION

HEALTH ■ PROSPERITY ■ TRADITION

## TAKLA NATION Travel Policy

### **Policy statement**

Takla Nation will promote economy and efficiency in the use of resources by establishing standards to reimburse its elected officials, employees, and Takla Nation members for reasonable and actual expenses incurred while travelling on approved Takla Nation business. The Nation is also committed to, and will promote, safe travelling.

It is the responsibility of everyone to exercise judgement and moderation when incurring travel expenditures.

### **Purpose / Rationale**

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent policy and practice for travel standards and expenses associated with the regular work of an employee or elected official, or approved activities for Takla Nation members.

### **Principles/Guidelines**

- Elected officials and some employees incur travel expenses in their work for the Nation; the Nation will maintain systems and coverage to ensure individuals are not out-of-pocket when working on behalf of the Nation;
- Travel will be approved in advance, authorized by an administrator/Councillor with the appropriate expenditure authority and must include information regarding the purpose of the travel;
- Out of province/country travel must be approved in advance by the direct supervisor and appropriate Council member;
- All travel costs will be accounted for within an approved budget;
- Individuals must consider alternatives to travel wherever practical. Video/teleconferencing or other methods are to be used where possible to achieve savings, while meeting the goals of the Nation;
- It is recognized that sometimes travel is paid for non-employees who are engaged with Takla Nation activities: these will be treated the same as employees;
- All third-party reimbursements are paid in full to the Nation, either directly by the third-party or by transfer of the full amount, with documentation, by the individual who travelled;
- The most efficient and economical mode of transportation and accommodation shall be used;
- It is recognized that elected officials and some employees are required to travel extensively; this policy attempts to incorporate those requirements; however, some discretion may be required.

**Scope / Limits**

This policy and related procedures apply to all Takla Nation employees, elected officials, and to Takla Nation members traveling on approved Takla Nation business.

Takla Nation’s Finance Committee will review and establish travel reimbursement rates as required.

**POLICY APPROVAL SUMMARY**

Approved by: Takla Nation Council  
Original approval date: April 5, 2019  
Latest approval date:

## Travel and Expense Claim Procedures

In conjunction with the Travel Policy, these procedures outline how Takla Nation will manage travel costs and arrangements for employees, elected officials, and Takla Nation members on approved Takla Nation business.

Due to Takla Nation having staff, offices and substantial member populations in Takla Landing and Prince George, and a very large Traditional Territory with satellite communities, these procedures clarify accommodation for elected officials based on their responsibilities.

### Definitions

**Approved Takla Nation business:** travel must be directed and approved by the manager with both the responsibility for the activity and the expenditure authority.

### General Procedures

#### A. Travel budgets:

Administrators and Council must budget for known and anticipated travel costs annually as part of the Takla Nation budget process and must include justification for travel as required by Council, the Finance Committee, the Audit Committee, or a senior administrator.

#### B. Travel approval and expenditure authority:

1. Individuals travelling on Takla Nation business must receive prior documented approval from:
  - a. If an employee or manager, their supervisor;
  - b. If a senior administrator or Council member's direct supervisor is not available, any other senior administrator or Council member may countersign to provide a level of review. The senior administrator or Council member is responsible for ensuring document and budget accuracy;
2. Estimated travel costs must be within the travel budget limit for that department and cannot exceed the expenditure authority limits as established in the Purchasing & Expenditure Authority Policy and Procedures. Budget planning must include all anticipated travel costs for committee work and for community meetings;
3. Administrators are responsible for ensuring they have enough background information in advance of approving travel and must retain travel-related approvals and background information within their department as well as with Finance;
4. Expenditure (signing) authorities are responsible for ensuring travel costs are coded correctly;
5. Any travel cost more than available approved budgets or in excess of expenditure authority limits must be approved by Chief and Council in advance of the travel, and noted in the minutes of a meeting;
6. Per diem rates will be reviewed annually by the Finance Committee, and any changes approved by Council.

**C. Responsibility for coordinating travel:**

1. All hotels and air travel are arranged through Purchasing, except for Chief's and General Manager – Operations' travel which is arranged through the Executive Assistants for efficiency;
2. Last minute changes requiring hotel and air travel may be arranged by the individual or department but must be communicated with Purchasing;
3. If the traveller is a no-show for any air or hotel arrangement Finance will determine how the funds are to be recovered.

**D. Travel authorization forms:**

Individuals may use one of two processes:

1. Pay own travel expenses and claim back expenses from the Nation post-travel;
2. Request an advance on travel costs, and if necessary claim additional expenses post-travel, or repay if the travel advance was more than the final costs.

Both processes require advance approval for travel by the appropriate authority. Standard dates for Finance process times apply to all travel advances and claims.

1. An individual paying his or her own travel expenses up front must:
  - a. Apply to the appropriate administrator a minimum of three working days prior to travel, using the **Travel Authorization Form**, and provide any required documentation;
  - b. Cover all travel expenses through personal means and retain sufficient documentation and receipts of all expenses, excluding any agreed-to per diem rates.
2. An individual requesting a travel advance must:
  - c. Apply to the appropriate administrator a minimum of five working days prior to travel, using the Travel Authorization Form, identifying that an advance payment is requested, and provide any required documentation;
  - d. The administrator will submit the approved Travel Authorization Form to the Finance Department;
  - e. Finance will process travel advances on the schedule outlined in the Purchasing and Expenditure Authority Policy and Procedures;
  - f. If the Nation, employee or TN member cancels the travel arrangement for any reason, any advances received prior to cancellation or prior to travel beginning must be repaid to TN immediately.

**E. Travel Expense Claims**

When only mileage is paid as an advance, or if all travel-related costs are charged to and paid for by Takla Nation or a third party directly, no additional claim is required.

If the traveller paid costs up front, or additional reimbursement for unanticipated costs is required, a Cheque Requisition Form is used and approved by the appropriate administrator.

If an individual who received an advance does not provide enough documentation to account for the full advance, the difference must be paid back to the Nation immediately. If repayment is not immediate arrangements will be made for authorized hold-backs of pay. If repayment is not made in a timely manner discipline may result.

Any individual who is found to claim travel fraudulently or for the same expenses from multiple sources will face disciplinary action up to and including loss of job, and possibly legal action.

Any individual who causes damages while traveling (i.e. hotel room) or causes damage to the reputation of the Nation (i.e. disruptive behaviour in a hotel) will be subject to paying full costs of reparation and/or to appropriate disciplinary action by the Nation.

Finance will process reimbursement of employee paid expenses based on the Purchasing and Expenditure Authority schedule. Complete and accurate documentation and receipts are required prior to any reimbursement. It is the responsibility of the traveller to provide the necessary documents.

#### **F. Local travel expense process**

For employees required to travel within or between Prince George or Takla Landing as part of their position, this will be noted in the position description and in their employment letter. The employment letter will specify:

1. Payment on a documented kilometre basis, using the current Takla Nation standard, or;
2. Payment on a monthly stipend basis, with clear definition of what the stipend is intended to cover, and the responsibilities of the employee receiving the stipend.

A copy of the current travel policy and procedures will be provided to employees with their letter of employment.

#### **G. Expenses not permitted**

The following expenses will not typically be approved. This list is neither exclusive, nor exhaustive. Final approval is at the discretion of the authorizing individual and must be documented separately and submitted to the Finance Department for audit purposes:

- Expenses for any traveller other than the individual travelling on approved Nation business
- Interest charges on outstanding credit card balances
- Mini-bar charges, excursions or similar items
- Travel expenses for family members
- Laundry and dry cleaning
- Costs resulting from failure to cancel a guaranteed reservation
- Parking fines and traffic fines
- Excess personal baggage fees
- Any personal travel, or personal travel expenses that are an extension of a TN-related trip that are either personal or related to another business or committee meeting
- Childcare or elder care costs

When an employee for whom travel is not part of their normal job duties is required to travel, unavoidable out of pocket expenses may be paid. Such expenses could include childcare, elder care or similar services with preapproval by the expenditure authority. Receipts are required.

#### **H. Travel Subsidies offered by Hosts:**

Any reimbursement by another agency for the travel must be stated on the original Travel Authorization Form, and the employee or Takla Nation member will make the travel payment from the other agency(ies) out to Takla Nation, and not to the individual. If this is against the policy of the funding agency, documentation to that effect must be attached to the Travel Authorization Form. Failure to comply will result in discipline.

### **I. Transporting other people:**

Due to the geographical realities of Takla Nation it is recognized that employees, elected officials and individuals whose travel is being paid by the Band may at times transport other people.

Employees driving Nation-owned, their own or rental vehicles on Nation business are strongly advised not to transport individuals who are not travelling on Nation business. This is due to risk and liability. Employees who transport anyone who is not another employee or a person travelling on approved Nation business are required to carry the insurance risk of such decisions.

### **J. Travel Standards:**

1. Whenever possible flights will be booked in advance to take advantage of reduced airfares;
2. The standard for air travel is economy class;
3. Persons preferring to travel by road when air transportation is available shall be responsible for any additional travel time, accommodation and meal expenses incurred because of this choice. They will not be reimbursed more than the cost of a pre-booked economy airfare;
4. Individuals using personal vehicles will be reimbursed at a designated rate per kilometer or the equivalent economy airfare if it is lower. Mileage is calculated using the employees' regular location of business as the start and end point. Only one traveller will be reimbursed for mileage on a trip;
5. Rental vehicles may be used providing the cost is not substantially greater than that of using other means of transportation or if the car is necessary for the employee to conduct TN business effectively and efficiently. Individuals are expected to carpool where practical to minimize costs;
6. Commercial overnight accommodation will be reimbursed at the single room rate. An individual must declare that the "Single Rate Only is Claimed" in cases where the hotel/motel receipt indicates that more than one person occupied the room. The most reasonable accommodation near the meeting should be booked. Finance will provide a list of pre-approved hotels for common travel locations;
7. Meals shall be reimbursed at the established per diem rate. Receipts are not required. On the day of departure only meals for meal periods that have commenced or have not begun before the scheduled travel departure may be claimed; on the day of return only meal periods before the travel status ends may be claimed. The per diem meal allowance must be reduced for any meals which are included in registration fees or otherwise provided free of charge;
8. Travel that combines Takla Nation and personal business will be reimbursed at the lesser of actual transportation costs or an estimate of the minimum acceptable expenses that would have been incurred had the personal travel not taken place;
9. Where private lodging is used in lieu of commercial accommodation a fixed dollar allowance per night will be paid. Any additional local travel expenses incurred because of this location (compared to those that would be incurred staying at the most reasonable commercial accommodation in the vicinity of the meeting) shall be the travelers' responsibility.

**K. Reimbursement Rates for Vehicle Travel:**

**Reimbursement rates for personal vehicle travel within the region:**

Based on 0.55/km highway and 0.78/km off-highway

	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Mileage</b>	<b>Total Charge</b>
PG – Fort St. James	0.55/km	160 km	\$88.00
Fort St. James to Leo Creek turnoff	0.55/km	35 km	\$19.25
0km Leo Creek to Takla Landing	0.78/km	156.5 km	\$122.07
<b>Total PG – FSJ – Takla Landing</b>	<b>0.55/0.78</b>	<b>351 km</b>	<b>\$229.32</b>

**Reimbursement rates for personal vehicle travel outside the region:**

0.55/km

**Alternative vehicle-use reimbursement mode**

Certain positions will be required to use an alternative reimbursement model for in-region travel (inclusive of the Takla Territory) and Carrier Sekani Tribal Council communities. This alternative model must be documented in the employee’s letter of employment.

Use of a personal, suitable 4-wheel drive truck for city, highway, and gravel roads will be pre-paid at \$1,650/month, with a gas card provided by Takla Nation for the business portion of fuel and limited personal use. End-of-month documentation is required for mileage and purpose, cross-referenced with use of the gas card.

If an employee or elected official is provided with a gas credit card related to the responsibilities and location of their position:

- a. Restrictions on card use will be defined clearly, and signed off by both manager and employee or for elected officials the Chief and Senior Administrator;
- b. Copy of the signed gas credit card agreement will be provided to Finance;
- c. Defined restrictions will include:
  - i. Timing and amount of gas purchases;
  - ii. Limitation of use to the single employee;
  - iii. Defined process for weekly monitoring of card use;
  - iv. Recovery process for any unauthorized charges, including signature confirming pre-approval by employee for Nation to recover any such charges.

**L. Travel by automobile, including safety standards:**

- 2. All individuals using private vehicles for authorized travel must have a valid class five (5) driver’s license and minimum two million dollars (\$2,000,000) third party liability vehicle insurance;
- 3. Anyone driving a Nation-owned vehicle is required to provide a copy of his or her driver’s license and driver’s abstract to the Finance Department where it will be kept on file;
- 4. Employees required to use their own vehicle for work and who pay an insurance differential for this purpose may have the difference paid for by the Nation;
- 5. Travel mileage will be reimbursed at rates recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by Chief and Council. Individuals are required to keep an up-to-date log of their Nation-authorized travel, including dates and times of travel, location(s) and kilometres. This must be submitted with mileage travel claims for reimbursement;

6. If an individual on authorized business incurs unexpected costs i.e. insurance deductible due to their vehicle being hit by another driver, the Nation will generally pay those unexpected costs, pending clear documentation of the incident and costs incurred. It is the decision of senior administration and/or Chief and Council to pay such costs, with the intent of treating individuals fairly and consistently;
7. If mileage exceeds the cost of economy airfare only the lesser amount will be reimbursed;
8. Individuals travelling on approved Takla Nation business are required to adhere to the established Occupational Health & Safety requirements of the Nation, including informing others of departure and arrival, carrying first aid equipment, adhering to laws regarding proper seasonal tires;
9. Individuals travelling to and from Takla are strongly advised to carry and use a radio while on industry roads. The Nation maintains several radios for use by employees and elected officials.

### **Accommodation Information Specific to Elected Officials**

Recognizing that Takla Nation’s elected officials work in two locations on a regular basis, and recognizing that some may have homes in each of the locations (Takla Landing region and Prince George):

- a. Each elected official will identify the location of their primary residence (the location where they spend the majority of their time prior to election, and/or where their immediate family lives);
- b. When travelling on approved and documented Nation business to the other location, elected officials can:
  - i. Stay in their residence and claim the standard private accommodation rate, as per this policy, or;
  - ii. Stay in other private accommodation and claim the standard private accommodation rate as per this policy, or;
  - iii. Stay in an approved hotel, using the procedures outlined in this policy.

Recognizing that Takla Nation’s elected officials are often required to be away from home on Nation business, it is appropriate for the Nation to occasionally cover the costs of travel for a spouse accompanying an official. The Chief and the General Manager – Operations will approve such travel, taking into consideration fairness of opportunity, overall cost, and how often travel takes the elected official away from home.

<b>PROCEDURE APPROVAL SUMMARY</b>	
Approved by:	Takla Nation Council
Original approval date:	April 5, 2019
Amendments approved by:	Finance Committee
Latest approval date:	

Related documents:

Travel Authorization Form

- The Travel Authorization Form will have basic policy/procedure on the back