
CORE MESSAGES

October 2014

Ministry of Finance

Government Travel Policy

- **Government remains committed to maintaining fiscal discipline and finding savings in areas of discretionary and administrative spending such as travel and office expenses.**
- **In keeping with this commitment, government issued a policy directive in 2012 that ministry and elected officials should seek alternatives to travel wherever possible, such as teleconference and video-conferencing.**
- **In cases where travel is deemed necessary, expenses are to be kept to a minimum, including but not limited to, restricting the number of ministry participants travelling to a meeting.**
- **Government will not pay for business class air travel for ministry staff.**
- **Officials are permitted airfare upgrades to executive or business class where the in-flight travel is four hours or more, and the purpose of the travel is to represent the government at a business meeting.**
- **Overall, total travel costs in fiscal 2013-14 for all ministries including the Office of the Premier were \$1.1 million less compared to the previous fiscal.**

BACKGROUND

- Government's travel policy applies to all B.C. Public Service employees and elected officials.
- The policy ensures employees and elected officials are accountable to the taxpayers and travel expenses are kept to a minimum.
- Under the policy, alternatives to travel are to be considered wherever practical. Video conferencing and teleconferencing and other methods are to be used where feasible to achieve cost savings and to mitigate the production of greenhouse gas emissions.
- The most economical airfare for air travel considering operational requirements and options that mitigate the production of greenhouse gases is required. This requirement may be waived in exceptional circumstances, with the prior approval of the director. For directors and executive directors, prior approval is sought from the assistant deputy minister for the

program area. For assistant deputy ministers, it must be pre-authorized by the executive financial officer. Officials and accompanying staff are permitted airfare upgrades to executive or business class where the in-flight travel is four hours or more, and the purpose of the travel is to represent the government at a business meeting. The upgrade for staff only applies when there is a need to conference with the official during a flight.

- The use of a chartered aircraft by an official is permitted only when:
 - there is no scheduled air service available that can meet the travel requirements (timing or duration) of the minister(s); or
 - the charter cost is economical as compared to the scheduled air service; and
 - the charter aircraft and crew meet the safety, maintenance and experience standards established by Transport Canada for such operations.
- The use of chartered aircraft by employees must only be approved when there is no alternative means of transportation at a lesser cost, and within a reasonable time. The deputy minister or a delegated approval authority must approve in-province charter flights. Out-of-province charter flights require approval in advance by the respective minister.
- During the first quarterly update on September 13, 2012, Minister of Finance Michael de Jong issued a directive on ministry travel stating that only essential travel would be allowed and only with executive approval.
- That directive remains in place today.
- The directive reads as follows:

Travel (STOB 57) —

- Discretionary travel (e.g., non-essential conferences, meetings, etc.) is restricted.
- Use alternate methods to travel (e.g., teleconferencing, videoconferencing) whenever possible.
- When travel is required make all efforts to minimize costs, including but not limited to, restricting the number of ministry participants travelling to a meeting (e.g., two ministry participants). If additional ministry participants are required, use of teleconferencing or videoconferencing in addition to in-person (travelling) participants should be considered.
- **Ministries are not to pay for business-class air travel.**
- Ministries are expected to develop an approval framework that provides appropriate executive sign-off for essential travel within the province.
- Pre-approval by the Deputy Minister is required for all out-of-province travel.

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SIGN OFF:

ADM	Comm. Director	Deputy Minister	Minister's Office
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10.3.6 Chartered Aircraft

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