Travel Policy

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1 Revision History

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2 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on allowable and non-allowable expenses and give travelers a clear understanding of Vanguard Emergency Management’s (Vanguard EM) travel policies and procedures. This policy applies to all individuals traveling on Vanguard EM-related business.

For the purposes of this policy, the term “Vanguard EM Management” includes the Vanguard EM Project Manager, Deputy Project Managers, and Quality Manager.

3 Policy

3.1 General Policies

- Travelers will be reimbursed for allowable costs incurred while traveling on Vanguard EM business.
- Travelers will not be reimbursed for expenses that do not comply with this policy, federal GSA regulations, or for expenses submitted without proper documentation.
- Travelers who do not comply with this policy may be subject to delay or withholding of reimbursement, disciplinary action, termination, or removal from Vanguard EM’s eligible inspector deployment list.
- Anyone traveling on Vanguard EM business is required to notify Vanguard EM as soon as possible if he or she is involved in accident.

3.2 Policy Exceptions

Exceptions to this policy must be approved, in writing, by Vanguard EM Management. Travelers with special needs or requirements beyond what is permitted by the travel policy must have this special need or requirement approved (in writing) by Vanguard EM Management and recorded on their National Travel profile for future reference.

3.3 Travel Authorization

3.3.1 Travel Authorization for Business or Disaster Deployment

- Reservations for air travel must be done through National Travel (contact information below), unless directed otherwise by Vanguard EM Management in writing.
- Reservations for car rentals and lodging may be booked directly by the traveler.
- Vanguard EM will not reimburse travelers for expenses incurred by a spouse or other individual accompanying the traveler.

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3.3.2 Travel Authorization for Training

Approved travel expenses relating to your training will be paid, provided that you have attended the class and completed the required modules in Vanguard EM University prior to class attendance. You must also submit your electronic expense report that is accessible through the inspector portal, https://fema.myriadexchange.com/Account/Login.

Maximum allowable travel expenses for training are:

- Participant is attending closest and most cost-effective training location
- 1 night hotel stay at GSA rate per Vanguard’s travel policy & GSA rule.
- Per diem per Vanguard’s travel policy & GSA rule
- Reimbursement for mileage up to 150 miles each way
- Associated parking & toll fees (Valet parking is not reimbursable)
- All exceptions must be approved in writing by Vanguard EM Training prior to attending the class. For approval, email training@vanguardem.com
- In the event that airfare is pre-approved and is the most cost-effective method of travel, please refer to section 3.8.1 for airfare travel policy.

Lodging instructions for attending training classes will be addressed in an e-mail sent from the Training Department for that specific training class; not all attendees will qualify for lodging.

3.3.3 Travel Authorization for “e-QIP” Background Investigation

Maximum allowable travel expenses for “e-QIP” Background Investigation are:

- Standard mileage rate to and from closest, available badging and/or fingerprinting location as well as to/from “e-QIP” interview location.
- Reimbursement for one-night hotel stay at GSA rate when mileage exceeds 100 miles one way; prior approval is required in writing from accounting@vanguardem.com
- Travel per diem when mileage exceeds 100 miles one way & overnight lodging is needed
- Fingerprint fees when accompanied by a receipt
- Any travel exceeding 150 miles one way requires approval from background: background@vanguardem.com

All expenses related to the ‘e-QIP” background investigation process must be submitted using our electronic expense report system (receipts required when applicable). If the location is unable to provide a badge on date of service or if you are required to return, you may submit expenses related to each trip to obtain badge as long as you include comments in your expense report explaining the additional trips and the Background Department can confirm the logistical issues.

Additional questions related to the submission of electronic expense report must be directed to Accounting department: accounting@vanguardem.com.

In the event additional costs are incurred due to a lost badge, please contact the Background department at background@vanguardem.com. These will be handled individually in a case-by-case manner.
3.4 Reservations Procedure

Vanguard EM’s designated travel agency is National Travel. In order to make a reservation, use the contact information below. Travelers should call National Travel to make reservations as early as possible to take advantage of advance purchase discounts.

National Travel, Inc.
Reservation Number: 800-557-0842 (24 hours, 365 days per year)
Email: vipservices@nationaltravel.com
Office Address: 707 Virginia Street, E Charleston, WV 25301
Kim Brown, National Sales Director
Amanda Sproles, Director of Sales and Automation

3.5 Traveler Profiles

Travelers expecting to travel at least once per year should complete a Traveler Profile form and submit it to National Travel so that a “Traveler Profile” can be created. This profile should include their personal credit card information, address, phone number, title, emergency contacts, any medical restrictions, special meal requirements, frequent flyer memberships and seat preferences. Travelers are responsible for keeping their personal travel information current within their Traveler Profiles.

Traveler profile forms can be obtained by contacting National Travel at 1-800-557-0842 or by following this link: https://docs.google.com/a/nationaltravel.com/forms/d/1EABE8yfsSrTi9i7PR3UEHG0c5EuHGepeg8sdj9HBf/g/viewform.

3.6 Trip Cancellations

Cancellation of any travel arrangements that were originally made through National Travel should also be made through National Travel. Charges incurred due to failure to cancel travel arrangements appropriately will not be reimbursed.

Non-Refundable tickets may be applied towards future travel. Unused or partially used airline paper tickets must be returned immediately to National Travel to initiate the refund process. Unused ticket coupons must never be discarded, destroyed, sent to the airlines or included with the traveler’s expense report, as these documents may have a cash value. National Travel maintains a database for all unused non-refundable tickets.

3.7 Meals & Incidental Expenses (M&IE)

Travelers will be compensated for meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) when he or she spends more than 12 hours traveling in a single day and travels over 50 miles from their residence, or must spend the night in an overnight location that is at least 50 miles from his or her home. The amount of M&IE reimbursed will be in accordance with the prevailing federal GSA rate schedule for the location of performance. (“Location of performance” refers to the location where the traveler has been required to perform work and spend the night.)

On travel days, M&IE will be reimbursed at 75% of the GSA rate. Travel day requirements, for per diem purposes, are:
1) First or Last day of travel (start or end at home)
2) Start and end day at home, travel over 50 miles from home, and spend over 12 hours travelling. (In this case, inspector must indicate over 12 hours were spent travelling in the comment section)

Any meals provided by Vanguard EM or provided by the government must be deducted from the total allowable M&IE rate. The amount of this deduction depends on which meal was provided. The total M&IE rate for your area, along with the M&IE rate per-meal, can be obtained at www.gsa.gov.

3.8 Air Travel

3.8.1 General Guidelines for Air Travel

- Airline tickets must be purchased through National Travel.

- Air travel for training will only be reimbursable when travel has been pre-approved in writing by the Training Department and the approval must accompany the receipt when being expensed. If pre-approved for air travel, the air travel must be paid for using the traveler’s personal credit card.

- Air Travel related to a disaster deployment can be paid for using a traveler’s personal credit card. However, if the traveler confirms with Vanguard EM that he or she has an economic hardship preventing him or her from purchasing a ticket for deployment using his or her own credit card, Vanguard EM will provide an economic hardship code which should be given to the ticketing agent at time of booking. This will allow the travel to be paid directly by Vanguard EM and traveler will not be reimbursed.

- Airline travel is only authorized where it is the most cost effective and efficient means of transportation.

- The lowest logical airfare available on the dates requested must be selected (i.e., the most inexpensive ticket that is still time-efficient).

- Traveler will not be reimbursed for any class of service other than economy, unless lesser cost can be documented.

- Travelers must accept alternative flights departing within a “time window” of 2 hours before or after the original time requested.

- The time window restriction may be waived on the return portion of a trip if the traveler would land after 8:00pm local time.

- Carrier selection based purely on frequent flyer programs, and creative ticketing practices such as “back-to-back ticketing” and “hidden city ticketing” are prohibited.

- Any exceptions must be supported by written approval from Vanguard EM Management.

- When inspectors are released from the field, they are required to obtain air travel home for the following day. Same day air travel will require management approval and must show that the cost of the ticket is less than the next day ticket with lodging and per diem included.

3.8.2 Required Expense Report Documentation for Air Travel

The following documents must be submitted in order to be reimbursed for an airline ticket:
1) **Travel Itinerary** -- At the time of reservation, travelers will be given a confirmation number by the National Travel “Travel Counselor” and sent an Itinerary/Invoice via e-mail or fax. This document must be submitted to Vanguard EM for reimbursement of an airline ticket.

2) **Proof-of-payment/ receipt** – Included in the Itinerary/Invoice from National Travel; receipt must include the credit card number charged.

### 3.9 Lodging

#### 3.9.1 General Guidelines for Lodging

- Lodging is not reimbursable if the traveler resides 50 miles or less from the deployment site or training location. If the traveler incurs a hotel expense within 50 miles of their residence, they do so at their own cost.

- Lodging instructions for attending training classes will be addressed in an e-mail sent from the Training Department for that specific training class.

- Lodging related to disaster deployment should be paid using the traveler’s personal credit card. However, if the traveler confirms with Vanguard EM that he or she has an economic hardship that prevents him or her from deploying, Vanguard EM will provide an Economic Hardship code to the traveler that can be used at the time of booking. This code will allow the traveler’s lodging costs, room and tax only, to be paid directly by Vanguard EM. In this case the traveler will not be reimbursed for lodging, but will be required to comment in the expense report that VEM is paying lodging. Note that the traveler is required to provide a personal credit card for incidentals. Further instructions for economic hardship lodging will be provided at the time of deployment.

- Travelers will not be reimbursed without a legible receipt that shows the traveler’s name, itemized charges, the hotel name and address, and proof of payment.

- Expenses in excess of the prevailing GSA rate (plus tax) will not be reimbursed.

- Penalties incurred for not canceling a guaranteed hotel reservation are the responsibility of the traveler and are not reimbursable unless the cancellation was made at the request of Vanguard EM, in writing, which will need to be submitted with the expense report.

- Non-Traditional lodging must be approved, in writing, by Vanguard EM Management.

### 3.10 Car Rental or Use of a Personal Car

#### 3.10.1 General Guidelines for Car Rental

- Travelers are authorized to rent **compact cars only**. Preference or convenience does not justify using higher cost transportation.

- In the event that a compact car is not available, that fact must be noted on the traveler’s expense report. The traveler is responsible for having the rental company identify on the contract that a compact car was not available at the time of the rental. Similarly, if the traveler receives a vehicle upgrade given the use of any frequent traveler program, the rental agency must document that the costs of the rental were limited to the cost of a compact car.
• Fines for parking or moving violations, fuel charges, GPS rental, and other optional/penalty fees will not be reimbursed.

• Housing inspectors are required to provide their own automobile insurance. Costs associated with auto insurance will not be reimbursed.

• At the time of rental, the car should be inspected and any damage found should be noted on the contract before the vehicle is accepted.

• Rental cars should be returned on time to avoid additional hourly charges, and with a full tank of gas. Late return fees will not be reimbursed by Vanguard EM unless the late return resulted from direction provided by Vanguard EM in writing.

3.10.2 Personal Cars (POV mileage)

Vanguard EM will reimburse travelers for use of their personal cars on authorized, local business-related travel at the standard rate set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Travelers can obtain this rate can by visiting the website [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). This reimbursement, which is based on number of miles driven, covers all auto costs other than parking and tolls (e.g., gasoline, repairs, maintenance, insurance, deductibles depreciation, wear-and-tear, etc.).

Damage to a traveler's personal car while being used for Vanguard EM business will not be reimbursed. Mileage incurred on leased cars may also be reimbursed, but charges associated with the lease itself may not.

Travelers must select the least expensive, reasonable and available mode of transportation. On long-distance trips, i.e. over 300 miles, car rentals are usually the less costly alternative. However, a personal car may be used on such a trip if it can be shown by the traveler that use of a personal car is less expensive than renting one. Similarly, travelers may use their personal car as an alternative to air travel only if it is more economical than airfare; travelers will only be reimbursed for the most economical mode of transportation.

In order to be reimbursed for mileage on a personal car, travelers must complete Vanguard EM’s “Travel Mileage Log” or enter their mileage records into Vanguard EM's online inspector portal with their expense report. The Vanguard EM Travel Mileage Log can be downloaded from the Vanguard EM website.

3.11 Other Transportation

3.11.1 Rail Travel

Rail transportation must be booked through National Travel, and may be used when it is more cost-effective than other modes of transportation (economy or standard class only). Vanguard EM travelers do not qualify for government rates on rail transportation.

3.11.2 Taxis and Other Ground Transportation

Travelers are encouraged to use public transportation whenever feasible. For airport transfers, travelers should evaluate the use of airport and hotel courtesy vans, and utilize the most economical mode of transportation. Travelers going to the same location should share ground transportation to and from the airport, whenever possible (the same applies to contractors traveling together).

Receipts are required for all transportation expenses. Receipts should indicate departure and arrival location, date and cost of trip.
3.12 Other Expenses

3.12.1 Tolls and Parking
Travelers will be reimbursed for properly documented toll and parking charges. Properly documented in this context means the traveler has a receipt showing the cost incurred, date and location. Toll/ parking charges are only authorized if the cost is incurred while on Vanguard EM business and if the traveler is taking the most efficient route. Note that fees, such as charges for transponders, will not be reimbursed. Long-term parking is not reimbursable as taxis/Ubers/shuttles are a more economical mode of transportation.

3.12.2 Fuel
Fuel is reimbursable only if the traveler has rented a car and provides a valid receipt (i.e. a receipt indicating the amount, day, time and location the final cost was incurred.). Reimbursement for personal mileage (POV) includes the cost of gas.

3.12.3 Laundry
Traveler may be reimbursed up to $15.00 USD for laundry expenses on trips exceeding 14 continuous days, and every 14 days thereafter. A receipt is not required.

3.12.4 National Travel Transaction Fees
Transaction fees associated with National Travel will appear on the travel itinerary; these transaction fees should be invoiced as part of the item being billed. For instance, a $500.00 airline ticket with an associated travel fee of $28.00 should be invoiced as an airline ticket costing $528.00. If Vanguard EM paid for the traveler’s airfare then this fee was also paid and is not eligible for reimbursement.

3.13 Non-Reimbursable Expenses
Travelers will not be reimbursed for the following miscellaneous expenses, unless approved in writing by Vanguard EM management:

- Airline club membership
- Alcoholic beverages
- Annual fees for personal charge or credit cards
- Baby-sitting / childcare expenses
- Barbers and hairdressers
- Car rental upgrades
- Car service charges for personal stops with associated time while en route
- Car washes
- Clothing
- Corporate, or personal, card delinquency fees/finance charges
- Excess & overweight baggage charges
• Expenses for travel companions/family members
• Expenses related to vacation or personal days while on a business trip
• Health club facilities, saunas, massages, golf fees
• Helicopter services for airport transfers
• Insurance coverage
• Valet services
• Loss/theft of cash advance money or company-paid airline tickets
• Loss/theft of personal funds or property
• Lost baggage
• Luggage and briefcases
• Magazines, books, newspapers, subscriptions, movies (including in-flight and hotel in-house movies)
• Medical bills
• “No show” charges for hotel or car service
• Optional travel or baggage insurance
• Parking or traffic tickets
• Entertainment, including sports events
• Personal property insurance
• Pet care
• Postage costs, postcards
• Professional memberships
• Room service
• Routine car maintenance/ tune-ups
• Souvenirs/personal gifts
• Spouse/companion travel
• Telephone calls
• Tips
• Tobacco products
• Toiletries, such as toothpaste, toothbrush, etc. and other personal care products
• Upgrade fees which includes airfare, hotel, and rental car costs
• Any other expense not explicitly authorized by this policy.
3.14 Expense Reporting

3.14.1 Expense Reports Completion and Submission

Vanguard EM requires submission of a properly completed expense report or invoice to be reimbursed. In order to be “properly completed” the expense report or invoice must comply with this policy and the inspector's independent contractor agreement or the subcontractors contract or task order (if applicable), and must be accompanied by all necessary backup documentation. Backup documentation must be legible or will not be accepted.

Costs that are not submitted for reimbursement within 30 days of incurring the costs will not be reimbursed.

3.14.2 Documentation Requirements

Claimed expenses except M&IE and POV mileage must be supported by a valid receipt indicating the day and location the cost was incurred.

All pages of the original travel invoice/itinerary (with travel agency transaction fees) should be included with invoices that include expense costs. Travelers will not be reimbursed for air travel, lodging and car rental expenses unless an itinerary is attached.

In addition to receipts, the following documentation must be submitted with all expense reports:

- **Air / Rail** – National Travel invoice / itinerary
- **Hotel** – Daily hotel folio showing nightly charge, nightly tax, and proof of payment
- **Rental Car** – Rental agreement and itemized receipt showing the type of car rented and final charges
- **Personal Car (POV Mileage)** – If expense report is submitted manually, POV mileage must be supported by a Vanguard EM Travel Log; if submitted through Risk Manager, POV mileage data must be input into Risk Manager. The traveler should keep a hard copy of the Travel Mileage Log.
- **Gas/Tolls/ Ground Transportation/ Parking** – Receipts or official E-ZPass printout showing dates/locations and amounts of all charges.

3.14.3 Incorrect or Incomplete Expense Reports

Expense reports that are incorrect or incomplete will be returned to the traveler for corrective action – this might result in delay or non-reimbursement of specific items. Disregard for company policy or altering of receipts can result in disciplinary action and/or termination of the traveler’s services.

3.15 Travel Risk Management

3.15.1 Health Precautions/Immunizations

National Travel counselors will advise travelers if immunizations are required based on their travel destination. The traveler is also advised to contact their personal physician to determine if an immunization or other medical intervention based on their medical situation is recommended prior to travel.
3.15.2 Emergency Travel Assistance

Travelers should call National Travel at the 24-hour, emergency travel number during an emergency or unexpected change in travel plans during and after normal business hours: 800-557-0842. This number also appears on the travel itinerary.

3.15.3 General Safety Tips

If traveler encounters a situation (hotel or transportation) that they feel is a threat to personal safety, they may contact National Travel to request alternate arrangements. An explanation regarding the nature of the threat will be required at the time of change so that the matter can be investigated.

While traveling on Vanguard EM business, the traveler must:

- Safeguard Vanguard EM assets at all times.
- Avoid prominently displaying Vanguard EM logos when not conducting inspections.
- Never leave laptops, cell phones, electronic gadgets and personal belongings unattended, even at airport security checkpoints.

4 References

N/A