

Travel and expense reimbursement

If you are authorized to travel on GMWC business you will be reimbursed for reasonable expenditures incurred for transportation, accommodation and meals. You must follow the expense claim policies and procedures set out below when submitting expense claims. The GMWC General Manager must receive authorization prior to traveling outside of the Maritimes from the Commission Board.

You are expected to travel by the mode of transportation most advantageous to the conduct of the business. Travel is to be taken by the shortest direct route and advantage should be taken of return rates and special fares. Additional expenses incurred for personal reasons are not reimbursed.

Use of personal vehicle for GMWC business

Insurance

When travel is by your private vehicle, the vehicle must be properly insured for public liability and property damage (\$1,000,000 minimum). In authorizing the use of a private automobile and agreeing to compensate the employee on a mileage basis, GMWC is assuming no liability to indemnify you for any personal loss or injury which might be sustained as a result of such use. It is your sole responsibility to provide adequate protection against risk of personal liability and property damage.

Calculating trip distance

Only the actual distance driven on GMWC business is to be included in a mileage allowance claim. If your business trip begins at your residence, the distance reimbursed will be the distance from the place of employment to the destination or from the residence to the destination, whichever is shorter.

Example: A Commissioner who works in Riverview must drive to Saint John for business. He/She lives in Sackville. The distance reimbursed will be based on Riverview – Saint John and return.

Example: A Commissioner who works in Riverview must drive to Saint John for business. He/She lives in Sussex and departs directly from home to Saint John. After working in Saint John, he returns in the afternoon to Riverview. The distance reimbursed will be based on Sussex – Saint John – Riverview.

Personal mileage

Only business-related mileage is claimable. If you take yourself out of the course of employment, the additional mileage may not be claimed.

Example: A Commissioner who lives in Riverview must travel from Riverview to Halifax on business, and elects to depart on a weekend in order to visit relatives in Antigonish on the way. The direct distance from Riverview to Halifax may be claimed, while the Truro – Antigonish [and return] mileage may not be claimed.

Mileage rate

The current rate for use of personal vehicles is \$0.57 / km. The Commission will adopt the Province of New Brunswick kilometric allowance rate effective the date any changes are made.

Parking

Parking for business reasons is a claimable expense with receipts. You are expected to prefer hotels with free parking where possible. GMWC does not reimburse for valet parking.

You may claim actual and reasonable expenses for metered parking without receipts where no receipt is provided by the meter system [e.g. coin meter].

Tolls

Bridge and highway tolls may be claimed as expenses, when used during claimable portions of business trips. Receipts must be submitted for tolls where they are issued [e.g. Cobequid Pass, Confederation Bridge].

Tickets

GMWC does not reimburse for parking, speeding, or other tickets.

Fitness to operate motor vehicles

Operating a GMWC vehicle or driving for business purposes while under the influence of drugs or alcohol is a serious breach of public trust behavior and is grounds for review by the Commission Executive.

Long trips by vehicle

Where very long trips must be taken by vehicle, it may be less expensive for GMWC to require you to use a rental vehicle. GMWC will reimburse you for the actual cost of vehicle rental and gas for the rental vehicle.

Rental vehicles

GMWC may negotiate a preferred rental car provider, in which case you would be required to book rental cars through that provider.

GMWC will reimburse you for necessary use of rental vehicles up to mid-sized cars. Most expensive grades of rental vehicles, such as SUV's or convertibles, are not permitted without special authorization from the Commission Chair.

You should ensure that mileage limits are considered when comparing rental car prices.

GMWC will reimburse additional charges for vehicles equipped with a GPS or transponder when reasonably necessary.

In Canada, you should decline extra insurance coverage as this is covered by corporate insurance. In the USA, GMWC will reimburse you for full insurance coverage on rental vehicles.

You should fill rental cars with fuel yourself when returning the vehicles, declining more expensive fuel options.

Travel by air or other means

When travel by air or train is necessary for GMWC business, you are expected to travel by the most economical route consistent with the efficient conduct of business. Travel by executive or first class is not covered, nor will the Commission provide fare for a spouse or companion.

Where necessary, airport parking will be covered.

If you wish to travel by train or car instead of by air, please consult with the Commission Chair. If such travel is approved, GMWC may reimburse you to the lesser of the actual cost or mileage charge, or the lowest available air fare to that destination.

Ground transportation

You should use the most economical form of ground transportation on arrival by air or train, having consideration for the schedule of business activities.

Travel expense advances

If you do not have a personal credit card, you may request a cash advance before a business trip. Cash advances are an exceptional practice and must be approved by the Commission Chair. If approved, the amount of the advance shall be at the discretion of GMWC. The use of the advance must be covered by an approved expense statement and supported by receipts where required. Unused advance money must be repaid to GMWC at the end of the business trip.

An alternative may be for the GMWC to pay specific trip expenses using its corporate credit card. This could include expenses such as conference registration, airfare, hotels and rental vehicles.

Travel and health insurance

GMWC has an Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Policy in which each Commissioner is named.

Hotels and accommodations

You will be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary accommodation expenses. GMWC may establish corporate rates at designated hotels and require that such hotels be used when possible.

The following accommodation-related expenses are NOT reimbursable:

- Room service meals, snacks, and drinks;
- Penalty charges for room damage or smoking in non-smoking rooms;
- Charges for use of spas or fitness facilities;
- Valet or concierge services;
- Hotel dry cleaning or laundry [except as provided under “laundry” below];
- Mini-bar.
- Movies

Laundry

If you are required to travel more than five days you may claim reasonable and necessary laundry and dry cleaning costs. Where possible, use of expensive hotel laundry services should be avoided.

Personal phone calls

Personal long distance calls from hotels can be very expensive. When travelling, personal calls up to about 15 minutes in total length will be a reimbursable claim every second day [on average].

Accommodation with friends or relatives

If you are on a business trip and choose to stay overnight with friends or relatives as an alternative to an otherwise necessary hotel stay, you may claim up to \$25 reimbursement for a gift for such persons.

Meals

There are two methods of claiming meal expenses: per diem or actual expense. Regardless of approach, no per diem or meal expense may be claimed for meals provided for free as part of a hotel or guest stay, conference, training, or other event, or when another person has paid for the meal [e.g. co-worker or vendor].

Per diem method

A per diem basis is defined as a daily allowance for meals. If you use the per diem allowance method you may claim the following amounts and are not required to submit receipts:

Complete travel day [entire day away from home]	\$ 50.00
Partial day – breakfast	\$10.00
Partial day – lunch	\$15.00
Partial day – supper	\$25.00

“Partial days” mean the day of departure and the day of return. Partial day per diem claims may be made for

- breakfast – when a Commissioner must depart before 0700h.
- lunch – when a Commissioner must depart before 1130h or arrive back after 1300h.
- supper – when a Commissioner must depart before 1700h or arrive back after 1900h.

All times are local for this purpose. All times are local for this purpose. The \$5 Incidental expense claim cannot be made unless the employee is away from home for the entire day. A Commissioner cannot claim this expense if they are at a training course and only require the lunch per diem as an example.

Actual expense method

With prior permission of the Commission Chair, you may elect to claim actual expenses instead of a per diem. Permission will normally be restricted to the following cases:

- Travel to locations where the cost of living makes the normal per diem inadequate.

Commissioners dining together

When two or more Commissioners dine together and their bills are combined, the longest serving Commissioner must pay for the meal and make the reimbursement claim.

Expense claims

Receipts

Receipts must accompany expense claims in all cases except:

- Coin-operated metered parking;
- Meals covered by the per diem system;
- Tolls where no receipt is normally available [Halifax Harbour bridges].

Receipts must be original *itemized* receipts whenever possible. The itemized portion of the receipt shows the items purchased and the applicable provincial and federal taxes, ensuring proper administration of this policy and greatly easing the associated accounting.

The entire receipt is needed. The itemized portion must not be torn off or defaced.

Integrity of claims

Falsification [such as padding] of expense claims is fraudulent behavior and is grounds for review by the Commission Executive.

Submitting claims

All expense claims must be approved by the Commission Chair and submitted on GMWC's forms to Finance for reimbursement. Claim forms must be signed.

Normal time for processing claims is 14 days.

The General Manager is accountable for ensuring that the expense claim process is followed by all Commissioners.