

Port of Houston Authority
Standards for Approving and Funding Employee Meals
March 2018



A. Purpose. The purpose of the Standards for Approving and Funding Employee Meals (the “Standards”) is to supplement the Port Authority Policy for Approving and Funding Local Port Commissioner and Employee Meals (the “Policy”), in order to better ensure compliance with laws of the State of Texas pertaining to use of the funds of the Port of Houston Authority (“Port Authority”) for employee meals.

B. Scope.

1. These Standards are to be followed by all Port Authority employees.

2. The Travel, Meals & Business Entertainment Authorization and Expense Reimbursement Policy specifically provides for the approval of and reimbursement for meals purchased by or for Port Commissioners or Port Authority employees while on approved travel for Port Authority business. **Meals for such persons who are traveling are, therefore, not covered by these Standards.**

3. The Policy also specifically provides for the approval of and reimbursement for meals purchased by or for Port Authority employees in connection with ceremonial or business-related functions with outside parties. **Such meals are also not covered by these Standards.**

C. Employee Training Programs.

1. A “Training” program or event as used in these Standards is limited to a formally organized locally-held group educational activity that (i) provides the skills or knowledge required for a particular profession, job, or function, (ii) benefits the Port Authority’s mission, and (iii) has been approved by the Manager, Training and Development.

2. The length, venue, or timing of a Training event may, from time to time, present justification for meals provided to Training participants. The cost of meals supplied during or in conjunction with a Training event should be considered when calculating the overall cost of Training and made a part of the Training budget insofar as practicable. In addition, the cost of meals must be reasonable. Approval will be provided only if the above factors, and whether the Training is discretionary or mandatory, have been taken into account.

3. In addition, no payment for meals provided in conjunction with Training will be made without *prior approval of the Training* by the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, or their respective designees.

D. Events for Employee Recognition, Seasonal Celebration, or Building Morale.

1. Employee recognition, seasonal celebration, and morale building events sponsored or supported by the Port Authority must be compatible with the Port Authority’s Code of Ethics, policies, and mission.

a. Employee recognition events shall be administered objectively, properly documented, and limited to on-site recognition of the following:

- i. Outstanding job achievement;
- ii. The anniversary of the fifth year of Port Authority employment, and subsequent five-year work anniversaries; and
- iii. Retirement, after at least ten years of Port Authority service.

All employees at the applicable on-site location shall be invited to employee recognition events.

b. A seasonal celebration or morale building event as used in these Standards is limited to a Port Authority-wide activity established by the Executive Division. Event attendance by employees shall be optional at seasonal celebrations.

c. Meals provided at employee recognition, seasonal celebration, and morale building events must be justified and reasonable in cost. In addition, costs for an employee recognition event shall not exceed the amounts set forth on a schedule maintained by the Chief People Officer.

2. In addition, no payments for meals at employee recognition events will be made *without prior approval of the event* by the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, or their respective designees, after giving consideration to the foregoing factors.

E. Request Form. Requests for approval should be made by submission of a completed Port Authority Local Meal Request Form.

F. Authority and Responsibility. These Standards have been authorized by the Executive Director. The Chief People Officer, or such other persons as may be designated by the Executive Director, is responsible for interpretation and resolution of issues related to these Standards. In addition, the Chief People Officer may provide such documents and forms and take such other actions as are necessary or appropriate in carrying out these Standards.

Approved by: 
Executive Director

Standards Owner: Chief People Officer
Standards Version: Original
Review Schedule: During 2020 and each even-numbered year thereafter