

# Travel Policy

## 1- Preamble

This travel policy applies only on Mercy Hands staff who travel for work purposes. To be covered in this policy, the travel activity must involve spending at least one night away from home town. Temporary relocating an employee to a new work station does not constitute a “travel” situation and therefore is not covered by this policy. Traveling expenses for events that are not directly related to the implementation of Mercy Hands’ programs and projects may not be covered by Mercy Hands.

## 2- Purpose

The purpose of Mercy Hands Travel Policy is to provide administration, departments, supervisors and other employees with specific guidelines covering travel and related expenses.

## 3- Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the General Administrator to enforce and ensure proper implementation of the Travel Policy. Based on this policy, the General Administrator will design procedures and forms necessary for the appropriate and efficient implementation of Travel Policy. The General Administrator is responsible for training all Mercy Hands staff on Travel Policy, Procedures, and Forms.

## 4- Guidelines

1. Travel expenses should be covered from the travel related budget lines of funded projects. If no such lines exist, then Mercy Hands will try to cover travel expenses from its strategic reserve.
2. Travel expenses covered by Mercy Hands are transportation, lodging, and per diem.
3. Per diem is the daily allowance used to cover meals. Three meals will be covered if none will be provided by an external party ((donor, hotel, etc.), only two will be covered if one is covered by an external party, and so on. The traveler must mention in the Travel Request Form how many meals to be covered by external parties. For local travel, the per diem ranges from \$0 to \$25, while for international travel it ranges from \$0 to \$40. The amount of per diem is decided by the Director of Finance, after consulting with the General Coordinator and Director of Logistics and Security. Factors to be considered while deciding the amount of per diem are funds availability (covered by the project vs Mercy Hands) and destination (local vs. international).

4. Employees can travel using project vehicles and driver or public transportation (taxi, airplane, train), and expenses will be paid according to formal receipts or according to estimated travel costs for public transportation. Employees are not allowed to use their personal vehicles or any other private transportation for work purposes.
5. For travel expenses covered by Mercy Hands – not by a project – the approval of the Executive Director must be obtained.
6. Travel arrangements shall not be made before obtaining the approval of the Administration.
7. The traveler may receive an advance payment for the travel. The traveler shall submit all travel related receipts within 5 days from returning and giveback whatever money left from the advance payment or otherwise the traveler will incur all travel related expenses.
8. Mercy Hands' Drivers will be compensated for milage if they travel beyond the administrative borders of their base governorate. For drivers who will not travel overnight, they will be paid per diem (lunch meal). Mileage compensation will be calculated by the Director of Logistics and Security, who will use the milage cost table as a reference. Fund availability shall be considered in the calculations of the mileage compensation. The Director of Logistics and Security will update the milage cost table, in accordance with the local market prices, in January of every year and submit to the Director of Finance for review and approval.
9. The Director of Logistics and Security is responsible for the logistic arrangements of travel, specifically: Assigning drivers, calculating running cost, flight booking, and residence. For a group travel, the Director of Logistics and Security shall apply the concept of shared cost for lodging and transportation. If the staff is traveling to a location where Mercy Hands has a guesthouse then the staff shall stay in the guesthouse unless no space would be available at the guesthouse.
10. All travel expenses requests must follow the procedures of Procurement Policy.
11. In case of the extraordinary situation of expat traveling abroad for the purpose of renewing the visa/ residency in Iraq, Mercy Hands will cover lodging and the trip abroad and back, but it will not cover per diem and daily transportation. Expats are encouraged to synchronize their visa related travel with their paid vacation travels.
12. If the actual travel expenses will be less than the estimated then the remaining advance money shall be returned to Mercy Hands.

## 5- Standard Operating Procedure

1. The travel requester shall get the approval of the supervisor for the intended travel as a prerequisite to submitting the travel request.

2. The travel requester will fill out and submit the travel request form available on Mercy Hands' website ([www.mercyhands.org/forms](http://www.mercyhands.org/forms)). The form will be submitted to the Director of Logistics and Security (DLS).
3. The DLS will review the request. If no major security concerns, then he will approve the request and forward it to the designated travel requester's supervisor for review and approval.
4. The requester's supervisor will review the travel request form, sign – if approved, and forward to Director of Finance (DF), copying the DLS, HR Director, and Director of Procurement (DP).
5. The DF will review the request and decides how much of - and how -the travel expenses will be covered. To make an informative decision, the DF shall consult with the Finance Officer(s), HR Director, the travel requester's supervisor, and/or the Executive Director.
6. The DF will forward the travel request form to the Budget Holder along with instructions on how much and how travel expenses will be covered. By default, the budget holder is the Program Manager/ Director of the project from which travel expenses will be covered.
7. Accordingly, the Budget Holder will fill out and submit PRF through Precoro

N.B. In case travel expenses will be covered by Mercy Hands' strategic reserve, the budget holder is the Executive Director; therefore, the travel request must be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director and the PRF will be issued by an authorized officer, General Administrator or General Coordinator.

8. The PRF will be reviewed and approved by the Director of Procurement. The travel procurement shall follow the procurement policy and procedures of Mercy Hands. The DP will inform the DLS of the procurement approval.
9. The DLS will immediately start making travel arrangements for the travelers – if he has not already started.
10. The Budget Holder will print out the PRF and generate MRF then submit both to the Finance Officer of the designated project.
11. The Finance Officer confirms there is enough funds and approves the MRF and disperse Advance Payment for the travel expenses – if requested.

12. The travel requester will collect the advance payment from Finance and Accounting Department.
13. After the traveler returns from travel they will have two business days to submit to the Finance Department the travel expenses receipts and other supporting documents (meal receipt, travel ticket, boarding pass, voucher with the driver's signature, driver's ID and car ID or car plate picture, etc.) for advance payment liquidation or reimbursement.

## 6- Travel Policy Amendment

The Executive Director is authorized to amend the Travel Policy. Any amendment to the Travel Policy will not be enacted unless ratified by the Board of Directors.



Khaldoon Al-Moosawi  
Executive Director  
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