

International Travel Policy

Policy and processes related to travel outside of Canada for Premier, MLAs and Cabinet

Criteria

1. Travel must be identified in the Annual International Travel Plan. Economic Development, Trade and Tourism (EDTT) prepares a list of all Premier/Minister/MLA proposed international travel for preliminary support on a quarterly basis. This plan is not a public document and is only available to the Premier, DMs, ADMs' cross-ministry team and EDTT.
2. Missions must support Alberta's current international objectives and priorities.
3. Is Premier/Ministerial/MLA support necessary? Determine whether Premier/Ministerial/MLA participation is critical or whether the mission objectives can be achieved at the senior officials' level.
4. Travel does not conflict with legislative responsibilities/house duties. Where the timing of Premier/Ministerial/MLA travel is discretionary, any conflict with the legislative session or other domestic ministerial responsibilities should be avoided.
5. Frequency of Premier/Ministerial/MLA missions to the market/region over the preceding 24 months or future missions. Efforts should be made to avoid a high frequency of Premier/Ministerial/MLA missions to one particular region or country unless there is a strategic reason for doing so. Premier/Ministers/MLAs are also encouraged to better co-ordinate their mission plans to avoid overlapping international travel.



Approval process

1. On a quarterly basis, a memo is forwarded from the Minister of EDTT to all Ministers requesting a list of all proposed international travel plans for the upcoming year. Proposed travel plans should include MLAs traveling on behalf of a Minister. The Annual International Travel Plan summarizes these submissions. The ADMs' cross-ministry team reviews and assesses these proposals and makes recommendations to the Minister of EDTT. The Minister of EDTT advises each Minister via memo if they have preliminary support to begin the planning process for their international travel. This level of support does not provide sufficient authorization to book flights or incur expenses.
2. Once preliminary support is received through the Annual International Travel Plan, requests for Premier's formal approval should be submitted to the Minister of EDTT for processing. Six weeks prior to the departure date for international travel, and three weeks prior to departure for domestic out-of-province travel.
3. A transmittal memo; a completed Proposed Out-of-Province Travel form, including the mission objectives and key initiatives; and a detailed draft itinerary must be submitted to the Minister of EDTT. Requests will go to the Premier's Chief of Staff for final approval. For Premier's travel, travel requests are to be submitted to the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance for approval and should include the same documents as required for Ministers and MLAs.
4. Premier/Ministers/MLAs must include any personal time that may be taken in conjunction with an international or domestic out-of-province mission in the transmittal memo and on the travel form. Personal time expenses must be borne personally by the Premier/Minister/MLA.



5. If spouses wish to travel with the Premier or a Minister/MLA for business or personal reasons, prior approval must be received from the Office of the Premier. In the case of the Premier, prior approval must be received from the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance. All expenses related to spousal participation on a trip will be borne personally by the Premier/Minister/ MLA unless the travel is approved as official government business. The Premier/Minister/MLA must indicate in the transmittal memo as well as on the travel form that their spouse will be accompanying.
6. If, for any reason, the approved mission travel dates, destinations and/or participants change, the Premier/Minister/MLA must submit, via transmittal memo, an amended travel form to the Minister of EDTT checking the box marked “amendment”. The changes must be indicated on the new form in bold. For Premier travel amendments, a new travel form must be submitted to the President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance.
7. The Premier/Minister/MLA must work in conjunction with the Minister of EDTT to ensure co-ordination of Alberta’s presence in the region for missions to the same region or repeat missions. Part of the co-ordination is to also discuss any possible health, security or political issues relating to their travel. This may include situations concerning both human and animal health threats, such as H1N1, SARS, BSE, foot and mouth disease or avian flu. It may also concern travel to areas subject to potential terrorist threats, regions of instability or civil war, or countries that are subject to international sanctions for human rights violations.



Reporting

1. News releases

1.1 Information on international travel must be released to the public in the form of a news release no later than 24 hours prior to any travel outside of Canada unless there are security reasons not to do so. The news release must include:

- dates and objectives of the travel
- basic itinerary
- list of delegation, including the Premier, Minister, or MLA as well as:
 - Premier's office staff
 - Minister's office staff
 - all Government of Alberta (GoA) staff
 - advance mission staff
- information about events (e.g., conference or meeting programs) to be attended by elected officials (included as background if available)
- estimated costs (which will be an estimate of all costs to be reported referenced in the International Travel Final Report in Section 3)

1.2. News releases are to be co-ordinated with the Premier's Communications Office.



2. Cabinet report

2.1 Premier, Ministers and MLAs must report, via memo to Cabinet, the results of the trip within one week following their return.

3. International Travel Final Report

3.1 An International Travel Final Report outlining outcomes and achievements will be posted on the government expense disclosure website under “International Travel” with a link to this information on the ministry’s website within two months of travelling. This report should include the travel expenses and be compiled in accordance with the Public Disclosure of Travel and Expenses Directive.

The Premier’s International Final Travel Report will be posted on the same disclosure site with a link to this report on the Premier’s website.

International travel final reports will vary in length and scope in accordance with the nature and duration of the trip. Information should include:

- overview (executive summary)
- mission objectives (key goals identified for the trip)
- results (details of significant accomplishments, including achievement of strategic outcomes as they relate to the GoA’s International Strategy)
- entire delegation list (noted in the pre-mission news release) naming the elected officials and Premier’s/Ministers’ office staff as well as listing the number of GoA staff accompanying (e.g., 2 staff) and advance mission staff



- International travel expenses will include costs for the following when accompanying the Premier, Minister or MLA :
 - Premier's office staff
 - Minister's office staff
 - all GoA staff
 - costs of any advance missions
 - Canadian Embassy/High Commission/Consulate charges for services provided to the GoA
 - incremental costs for all electronic devices, such as roaming charges for cell phones and iPads, and costs associated with communications, such as media call-backs
 - costs incurred for any staff who originally were scheduled to participate in a mission but did not ultimately participate (includes airfare cancellation fees, hotel cancellation fees, registration cancellation fees, etc.)

3.2 The following should be attached to the International Travel Final Report and posted with this report:

- final itinerary (level of detail similar to the itinerary provided for the news release
- copies of significant speeches or presentations made while away
- news releases issued before leaving
- news releases or communiqués issued while away



3.3 International travel expenses are not to include incremental costs for GoA International Office staff accompanying the Premier/Minister/MLA on missions within their designated territory or for GoA staff participating in trade shows, conferences or events that are part of their core business.

3.4 In reporting on multi-ministry missions, the total expenses are to be compiled and included with the International Final Travel Report on the government expense disclosure website under “International Travel,” and a link with this information should be available on each ministry’s website with each department’s cost allocation clearly identified.

3.5 Expenses will be reported under the following categories:

Participant costs

- travel (includes airfare, airport service fees and ground transportation costs, including taxis, car rentals, parking, trains, buses as well as mileage to/from airport or taxis to/from airport in Alberta, including any cancellation fees)
- accommodation (room charges and related taxes, including any cancellation fees)
- meals (includes restaurant bills and tips, meals on hotel bills, per diem meal claims, share of group meals or working sessions)
- incidental and miscellaneous (includes cell phone rental charges; incremental costs for all electronic devices, such as roaming charges for cell phones and iPads and costs associated with communications such as media call-backs)



- conference/registration fees, including cancellation fees; fax and internet charges; passport and visa fees; medical and inoculation fees; laundry and dry cleaning; baggage handling fees; out-of-country per diems; and other sundry expenditures)

General mission

- receptions and hosting (receptions, luncheons, dinners and events that are hosted by the GoA that are specific to the mission and include meeting related costs for room rental, room rental for hosted events, food, beverages, catering staff, service charges, entertainment, flowers)
- incidental and miscellaneous (includes fees for translation of documents; publications; shipping charges; gifts purchased specifically for mission; and Canadian Embassy/High Commission/Consulate charges for services provided to the GoA).

3.6 All private and personal information will be protected in the expense reports in the same fashion as information that is protected under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

