

Hospitality Policy

The Municipality of the County of Inverness recognizes that hospitality-related activities are, at times, necessary and legitimate expenses supporting the effective conduct of government business and for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy.

1. Purpose

The offering of hospitality will be done in such a manner so as:

- i. To reflect the prudent stewardship of public funds. This policy safeguards the appropriate use of public funds through the establishment of uniform standards and procedures respecting Council member, Chief Administrative Officer (“CAO”) and Municipality of the County of Inverness employee hospitality claims.
- ii. To provide direction and guidance with respect to the appropriate expensing of necessary hospitality expenses that support the Municipality of the County of Inverness’s objectives.
- iii. To ensure hospitality is offered in an accountable, economical and consistent manner in the facilitation of government business and/or for reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy.
- iv. To ensure taxpayers’ dollars are used prudently and responsibly with a focus on accountability and transparency.

2. Hospitality and Hospitality Events

A hospitality event is a reception, ceremony, conference, or other event that involves hosting individuals from outside the Municipality of the County of Inverness. Hospitality may be offered under the following circumstances in accordance with this policy:

- i. Hosting foreign dignitaries;
- ii. Engaging in official public matters with representatives from other governments, business, industry or labour leaders, or other community leaders;
- iii. Sponsoring or hosting conferences;
- iv. Hosting ceremonies / recognition events; and
- v. Other official functions, as approved by the CAO, their designate or Municipality of the County of Inverness Council.

3. Signing Authority

- i. The following are the Signing Authorities for the positions referred to, and shall be responsible for administering this policy with respect to the individuals in those positions:

Position	Signing Authority
Member of Council	CAO or designate AND Audit Committee Chair or Vice-Chair
CAO	Warden or designate AND Audit Committee Chair or Vice-Chair
Municipality of the County of Inverness Employees	Immediate Supervisor or designate AND CAO or designate

- ii. A Signing Authority may designate a second signing authority. The designation of a secondary signing authority shall be in writing and shall state the name and position of the designate.
- iii. A Signing Authority is prohibited from authorizing payment of hospitality expenses incurred on their own behalf.

4. Authorization

- i. Subject to this policy, all hospitality events require prior authorization. A request for prior authorization for hospitality events requires the following information:
 - a. rationale/purpose of the event;
 - b. estimated numbers of attendees and their respective affiliations;
 - c. estimated itemized costs including gratuities and supplementary expenses.
- ii. Requests for hospitality events shall be reviewed by either the CAO or their designate, or Council, who shall consider the value and benefit of the proposed event in relation to its cost in deciding whether to approve the hospitality event.
- iii. In instances where a hospitality event has been held without prior approval, claims for reimbursement must provide the details outlined above and also include a document outlining the reasons prior approval was not possible.

5. Serving of Alcohol

Alcohol is prohibited at all hospitality events.

6. Gifts

For reasons of diplomacy, protocol, business development or promotional advocacy, the giving of token gifts to individuals outside of government (value not to exceed \$40.00) is sometimes appropriate. Any giving of gifts requires prior approval by either the CAO or their designate, or Council.

7. Claims for Reimbursement of Hospitality Expenses

- i. Claims for reimbursement of hospitality expenses must be submitted on the form provided from time to time by the Municipality of the County of Inverness and shall be signed by the claimant.
- ii. Hospitality expense claims must include the following:
 - a. A copy of the signed prior authorization for the hospitality event for which the expense was incurred;
 - b. The names and positions of the guests at the hospitality event;
 - c. The business objective for the expense;
 - d. A detailed itemized receipt for the expense.
- iii. In instances where prior approval of the hospitality event was not possible, the hospitality expense claim must also provide the information required in paragraph [11] and an explanation of why prior approval was not possible.

- iv. If no receipt is available for a hospitality expense, a written attestation signed by the claimant must be submitted to explain why the receipt is unavailable, and a description itemizing and confirming the expense must be provided. Debit or credit card transaction records are not acceptable as receipts.
- v. Hospitality expenses incurred by one individual on behalf of another must be attributed to the individual for whom those expenses were incurred.
- vi. No hospitality expense claim shall be paid unless the claim is first approved for payment by two signing authorities who have authority to approve the claim. Before approving an expense claim, a signing authority must ensure that:
 - a. the claim is consistent with this policy;
 - b. the expenses claimed were necessarily incurred in the performance of municipal business;
 - c. appropriate receipts are provided to support the claim, and that the claim documentation is appropriately filed;
 - d. the expenses claimed have appropriate justification; and
 - e. all requirements, as determined by the [municipal audit committee], have been fulfilled.
- vii. In considering a hospitality expense claim for payment, a signing authority may request additional explanations, documentation or justification from the claimant, and may refuse to approve any claim or expense did not have prior authorization and that the signing authority decides is unreasonable or not in compliance with this policy.
- viii. The use of petty cash to pay a hospitality expense claim is prohibited.

8. Reporting Requirements

- i. Pursuant to s. 65A of the *Municipal Government Act*, the CAO shall ensure that the Municipality of the County of Inverness does the following:
 - a. Within ninety (90) days of the end of each fiscal quarter, prepares and posts a hospitality expense report on the Municipality of the County of Inverness website that describes all of the hospitality expenses incurred by the Municipality of the County of Inverness, including purchases of alcohol, during the quarter;
 - b. By September 30th of each year, prepares and files with the Minister of Municipal Affairs an annual summary report that summarizes the hospitality expense reports for the preceding fiscal year, that is compliant with the requirements of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the requirements set out in the Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual.

9. Review Requirements

- i) The Municipality of the County of Inverness Audit Committee shall review the hospitality annual summary report by October 31st of each year.
- ii) By the January 31st immediately following a regular election held under the *Municipal Elections Act*, Council shall review this policy and, following a motion by Council, either re-adopt the policy or amend the policy and adopt the policy as amended.