

BUSINESS TRAVEL GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

BUSINESS TRAVEL CAN CREATE VALUABLE TAX DEDUCTIONS — BUT ONLY IF IT'S HANDLED PROPERLY. HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU BOOK YOUR NEXT TRIP.



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WHAT QUALIFIES AS BUSINESS TRAVEL?

Travel expenses are generally deductible when:

- The trip is **ordinary and necessary** for your business
- You are traveling **away from your tax home** (generally overnight)
- The primary purpose of the trip is business

Examples include:

- Meeting clients
- Attending conferences or trade shows
- Site visits
- Continuing education related to your industry

Deductible Business Travel Expenses

The following expenses are typically deductible:

Transportation

- Airfare, train, or bus tickets
- Rental cars
- Uber/Lyft and taxis
- Mileage if driving your personal vehicle

Lodging

- Hotel or Airbnb stays (business portion only)

Meals

- 50% deductible in most cases
- Must be business-related (not lavish or extravagant)

Other Travel Expenses

- Baggage fees
- Parking and tolls
- Internet fees for work
- Conference registration fees

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUSINESS TRAVEL

You can combine business and personal travel — **but allocation matters.**

- If the primary purpose is business, airfare is generally deductible
- Personal days (extra hotel nights, meals, excursions) are not deductible
- Keep detailed records showing business meeting dates and activities

Documentation Is Key

For every trip, keep:

- Receipts
- Proof of payment
- Conference agendas or meeting confirmations
- Notes on who you met with and business purpose

Good documentation protects your deductions if ever questioned.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Deducting travel without an overnight stay
- Writing off family member expenses (unless they are employees with a legitimate business purpose)
- Failing to separate personal expenses
- Not keeping receipts

Pro Tip: Plan Before You Travel

Before booking:

- Confirm the trip qualifies
- Review reimbursement procedures
- Make sure owner compensation and payroll are structured correctly

Planning ahead maximizes deductions and minimizes risk.