



Determining a Voluntary Meeting

In order for the meeting to be truly voluntary, it would need to meet **all 4 criteria**:

1. Attendance is voluntary
2. It is outside normal office hours
3. The training is not directly related to the employee's job
4. The employee does not perform any productive work

Wages and Compensation

For voluntary meetings/training: you do not have to pay for anything. If a meeting, training, course, lecture is voluntary for an employee, they can attend at their own discretion and incur those costs on their own.

For mandatory meetings/training: the clock starts when the employee leaves the house to travel to the event. Then, of course, continues during the time the employee is attending the event. Travel time can be separated out at a different rate of pay (typically minimum wage). The employee must be reimbursed for any travel expenses. This includes mileage and parking if they are using their own cars, or reimbursement for taxi or public transportation (the employee is responsible for providing a receipt).

Additionally, travel expenses include things like hotel and meals, though you are allowed to set a limit on expenditures or require approval for hotels in advance.

The actual meeting time and training time must be documented and paid. Usually, meal and rest breaks are built into events. Just like at your office, rest breaks are on the clock, while meal breaks are not (unless the employee is not free during the meal break, for example if a speaker is lecturing through lunch).

Employees may incur overtime while travelling for mandatory meetings. If the employee incurs overtime while under the lower rate of pay, the overtime must be paid out at the employee's normal overtime rate, or at a weighted average (weighted average requires an in-depth calculation, and it is typically easier to just stick with the standard overtime).

Hotel and Room Sharing

There is no law prohibiting employers from requiring employees on business travel to share a hotel room. However, doing so may cause employee relations issues that, in the long run, cost an employer more in lower employee morale, higher turnover, and decreased productivity than the savings realized.

Not being at home and putting in long days in unfamiliar territory may already stress employees. While a small number of employees may be comfortable sharing a room, a room-sharing policy could create ill will between co-workers. The following scenarios are potentials for conflict:

- A light sleeper bunked with a snorer
- Similarity or difference in sexual orientation
- An early-to-bed sleeper bunked with a night owl
- Differences in personal space zones
- Differences in bedtime and/or bathroom rituals