

TO ALL MEDIA
From The Office of the Auditor General

November 7, 2025

Good afternoon -

Office of the Auditor General – Auditor General Heather Thomas has released a new report reviewing the travel, meal, and hospitality expenses of ministers, along with how these expenses are disclosed to the public.

The review focused on whether ministries have fit-for-purpose frameworks in place to manage and publicly disclose these expenses through the government’s travel webpage. A rotational approach was used so that all ministries will be reviewed over a two-year cycle.

“While the disclosure of ministerial travel expenses is not mandated by law, publishing this information demonstrates respect for public funds, fiscal responsibility, and accountability,” said Auditor General Thomas. “Transparency in the use of government resources – particularly for travel – is best practice, and the **Public have the Right to Know.**”

The Auditor General determined that, while voluntary disclosure is commendable, some areas for improvement are required.

The following observations were noted during the examination:

- **Expenses without appropriate support** - Original receipts were not included for all travel expense claims.
- **Incomplete or inaccurate disclosures** – Complete information not disclosed on the government travel webpage.
- **Inconsistent timelines** – Different ministries posted travel expenses at varying times, ranging from a day or two to several weeks after travel expense claims were processed.
- **Lack of central records** – Not all ministries in-scope maintained a comprehensive and central record of ministers’ travel available for review.
- **Delegation costs excluded** – Current disclosures on the government travel webpage do not include the costs of accompanying ministerial delegations.

The Auditor General recommends the following to improve the effectiveness and transparency of ministerial travel disclosures:-

1. Establish a **standardized reporting system** with clear guidelines for all ministries.
 2. Strengthen **internal controls and training** of public officers and ministers.
 3. Include the **full costs of the ministerial delegations** in future public disclosures on the travel webpage.
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You the citizens of Bermuda may want to ask the following questions:

- Why are the costs of all ministerial business travel, including those of accompanying delegations, not fully disclosed to the public?
 - What consequences or corrective actions are in place for public officers and ministers who fail to comply with government policies on travel, meal, and hospitality expenses?
 - To what extent do the public and other stakeholders expect – or require – detailed reporting on the use of public funds by elected officials.
 - Would there be more accountability, if each ministry were required to publish a formal audited report summarizing all ministerial travel expenses annually?
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About the Office of the Auditor General of Bermuda

The post of Auditor General established under the Bermuda Constitution Order. The specific mandate and responsibilities of the Auditor General are set out in the Audit Act 1990, and include carrying out audits of Government and its organizations and reporting to the legislature.

The mission of the Office of the Auditor General is to add credibility where appropriate to the Government's financial reporting and to promote improvement in the financial administration of all Government Ministries, Departments and all other entities for which the Government is accountable to Parliament.