



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

In Reply  
Refer to: B-203531(DAS)

June 25, 1981

Ms. Margaret L. Leete  
Executive Assistant  
Department of Housing and Urban  
Development  
One Northshore Building  
1111 Northshore Drive  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37919

Dear Ms. Leete:

This letter is in response to your letter dated May 28, 1981, concerning an employee's [claim for temporary quarters subsistence expenses] submitted after the employee incurred the expenses. You state that no prior authorization was given since the employee did not believe that she would need temporary quarters.

Enclosed are two decisions of our Office in which we state that where advance authorization for temporary quarters allowance would have been granted but for the employee's failure to request advance authorization, temporary quarters subsistence expenses may be post approved. B-173113, July 26, 1971; Charles J. Klee; B-189489, June 7, 1978. We note that these decisions do not discuss the term "administrative error" since no such error occurred. The Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) do require agencies to administer the temporary quarters provisions reasonably and equitably so that such expenses are paid only where necessary and justified in connection with transfers of station. FTR para. 2-5.1. In contrast to FTR para. 2-4.3c governing house-hunting trips, there is no requirement in the FTR that temporary quarters expenses must be authorized in advance. Therefore, where such expenses are necessary and justified we have not objected to agency approval after travel orders have been issued, provided that payment is in accord with agency policy.

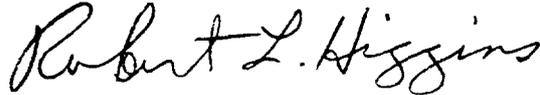
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We do not believe it is necessary or desirable to advise employees to mark all available needs in requesting travel orders. Travel orders should reflect only the expenses reasonably anticipated at the time they are prepared and an agency should not authorize expenses that do not appear to be necessary.

We hope that the enclosed decisions are of assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert L. Higgins".

Robert L. Higgins  
Assistant General Counsel

Enclosures