

DECISION

**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

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FILE:

B-168857

DATE: MAY 14 1976

MATTER OF:

Claims for costs in excess of commuted rate
for temporary storage of household goods

DIGEST:

Employees, on permanent change of duty station, temporarily stored their household goods at new duty station. Fees for temporary storage exceeded the commuted rate, as compiled by General Services Administration, and employees claim amount of fees in excess of commuted rate. Claims may not be paid since there is no authority to consider additional expenses or higher charges in excess of commuted rate.

This action is in response to the request for an advance decision by Gordon E. Reynolds, a certifying officer of the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, reference 08-00.11, regarding payment of the reclaim vouchers of Mr. Kenneth W. Schulz and Mr. James S. Brunton for charges in excess of the commuted rate for the temporary storage of their household goods.

The record indicates that both Mr. Schulz and Mr. Brunton were transferred to Helena, Montana, in connection with a permanent change of duty station. Mr. Schulz temporarily stored 9,460 pounds of household goods in Helena from August 22 to August 30, 1974, and was charged a rate of \$5.45/cwt, or \$515.57. The administrative office reimbursed Mr. Schulz at the maximum allowable commuted rate of \$4.30/cwt plus a 6 percent surcharge, or \$431.19, and Mr. Schulz reclaims the difference, \$84.38. Mr. Brunton placed 11,000 pounds of household goods in temporary storage in Helena from August 16 to September 13, 1974, and was charged the same rate of \$5.45/cwt, or \$599.50. The administrative office likewise reimbursed Mr. Brunton at the maximum allowable commuted rate of \$4.30/cwt plus a 6 percent surcharge, or \$501.38, and Mr. Brunton reclaims the difference, \$98.12.

Both employees were authorized reimbursement for the transportation and temporary storage of their household goods and personal effects on a commuted basis as provided in 5 U.S.C. 5724 (c) (1970). Our decisions applying the implementing regulations in Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-56, now contained in paragraph 2-8.5 of the Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7) (May 1973), have consistently held that when the commuted rate is properly utilized there is no basis

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for allowing reimbursement of any additional transportation or storage expenses in excess of the amount to which the employee is entitled on the commuted rate basis. B-173572, August 13, 1971; and B-173142, July 26, 1971. The commuted rate schedules are contained in General Services Administration Bulletin FPMR A-2, and there is no indication that the rate schedules used were inapplicable or that the computations based thereon were incorrect.

Accordingly, the vouchers returned herewith may not be certified for payment.

R. F. Keller

Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States