

DOCUMENT RESUME

02283 - [A1372352]

[Storage and Drayage of Household Goods]. B-186351. May 10, 1977. 4 pp.

Decision re: Frank W. Hahnenberg; by Paul G. Dembling (for Elmer B. Staats, Comptroller General).

Issue Area: Personnel Management and Compensation (300).
Contact: Office of the General Counsel: Civilian Personnel.
Budget Function: General Government: Central Personnel Management (805).
Organization Concerned: Department of Agriculture; Forest Service.

Authority: B-165253 (1968). B-167488 (1969). B-174642 (1972).
F.T.R. (FPMR 101-7), para. 2-8.5b(1).

Orris C. Huet, an Authorized Certifying Officer of the Department of Agriculture, requested an advance decision regarding the reimbursement of certain expenses associated with the shipment of a Federal employee's household goods incident to a transfer of permanent duty station. The employee contended that the commuted rates for transportation of household goods should be applied in two steps, since they were stored in a warehouse 112 miles from his new duty station. The commuted rate for storage, which includes costs of drayage, must be used when the household goods are moved from storage to the employee's new residence. (Author/SC)

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Douglas
Faulkner
Civ. Pers.



DECISION

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

FILE: 2-186351

DATE: MAY 10 1977

MATTER OF: Frank W. Hahnenberg - Storage and Drayage of Household Goods

DIGEST: Household goods of transferred employee were stored in warehouse 112 miles from new duty station. Employee contends that commuted rates for transportation of household goods should be applied in two steps. Under Federal Travel Regulations, commuted rate for storage of household goods includes costs of drayage, and that rate, not transportation rate, must be used when household goods are moved from storage to employee's new residence.

By letter of March 17, 1976, Ms. Orris C. Huet, an authorized certifying officer of the United States Department of Agriculture requested an advance decision regarding the authority for reimbursing Mr. Frank W. Hahnenberg for certain expenses associated with the shipment of his household goods incident to a transfer.

Under the authority of AD-202, Travel Authorization No. 090724, dated April 3, 1975, Mr. Hahnenberg, an employee of the Forest Service, was transferred from Lufkin, Texas, to Ontonagon, Michigan. The travel authorization provided that the shipment of household goods would be by commuted rate. He was also authorized up to 60 days storage of his household goods, since he had not yet acquired a residence at his new duty station. His household goods were picked up by the carrier at his old residence in Lufkin on May 2, 1975, and placed in storage at Negaunee, Michigan, on May 8, 1975. On June 4, 1975, Mr. Hahnenberg's household goods were removed from storage and transported to his new residence at Ontonagon a distance of 112 miles.

The bill of lading covering Mr. Hahnenberg's shipment shows that he actually paid the carrier the following charges:

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Transportation from Lufkin to Negaumee		
1,293 miles at \$18.72 x 4,540 Lbs.	= \$	849.89
Valuation charge at \$.50 per 100 Lbs.		
5,700 at \$.50 cwt.	=	28.50
Storage-in-transit 1 mo. 4,540 Lbs. at \$.85 cwt.	=	38.59
Warehouse handling charge 4,540 Lbs. at \$1.00 cwt.	=	45.40
S.I.T. Valuation Charge	=	4.09
Cartage 112 miles 4,540 Lbs. at \$7.87 cwt.	=	357.29
Stair carry (origin) 4,540 Lbs. at \$.30 cwt.	=	13.62
Containers and packing	=	<u>23.75</u>
		\$1,381.13

When Mr. Hahnenberg submitted his claim, he calculated the amount due as follows:

Lufkin to Negaumee	4,540 Lbs. at \$22.70 cwt.	= \$1,030.58
Negaumee to Ontonagon	4,540 Lbs. at \$11.85 cwt.	= 537.99
Stair carry	4,540 Lbs. at \$.30 cwt.	= 13.62
Mackinac Bridge Toll		= 15.89
Storage - actual cost excluding tariff		= <u>88.09</u>
		\$1,686.16

His claim was allowed by the administrative office as follows:

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Transportation of Household Goods

Lufkin, TX - Ontonagon, MI - 1353 miles

4,540 Lbs. at \$23.70 cwt.	\$1,075.98
Stair carry	13.62
Bridge Toll	15.89

Storage of Household Goods

4,540 Lbs. at \$4.82	218.83
	<u>\$1,324.32</u>

In allowing the claim for the transportation of the household goods, the distance between the old and new duty stations was used, not the distance between the old duty station and the storage facility, and the commuted rate for storage was used, since the allowance for storage computed in that way exceeded the actual storage costs.

Mr. Hahnenberg contends that, since there was no storage facility near his new duty station, the move should be broken into two portions with the appropriate commuted rate for transportation of household goods being applied to each portion.

Mr. Hahnenberg does not seem to question the use of the commuted rate system to determine the amount of reimbursement to which he is entitled. Instead he seems only to question the manner in which the system is applied. In fact, neither Mr. Hahnenberg nor the agency has computed the amount of his entitlement correctly. We have previously considered cases in which household goods were moved into storage at a location other than the city or town to which they would ultimately be delivered. See B-165253, October 9, 1968, and B-167488, August 13, 1969. In both of those cases we held that the distance to be used in choosing the appropriate commuted rate was the distance between the storage facility and the old or new duty station depending upon where the goods had been placed in storage. Therefore, the distance between Lufkin and Meigs, where the household goods were stored, should have been used to determine the proper commuted rate for the computation of the cost of transporting Mr. Hahnenberg's household goods.

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We believe that the allowance for the cost of storing and delivering Mr. Hahnenberg's goods has been correctly computed. The governing regulation is paragraph 2-8.5b(1) of the Federal Travel Regulations, FPMR 101-7 (May 1973), which provides, in pertinent part, that:

"In connection with transportation within the conterminous United States under the commuted rate system, costs of temporary storage within the applicable weight limit will be reimbursed to the employee in the amount of his costs for storage including in and out charges and necessary drayage, but not to exceed the commuted rates for storage in GSA Bulletin FPMR A-2. * * *

The commuted rate for storage in GSA Bulletin FPMR A-2 referred to in the above paragraph includes the pickup or delivery and warehouse handling charges, as well as the actual storage rate and would include the cost of transporting Mr. Hahnenberg's household goods from Negaunee to Ontonagon.

The commuted rate system is not designed to precisely reimburse each employee for the exact amount of his expenses. It is not designed to provide for all possible contingencies for all employees, rather it is an approximation which will sometimes give an employee an amount greater than his expenses, but at other times it will work to an employee's disadvantage. B-174642, March 6, 1972.

Accordingly, Mr. Hahnenberg's reclaim voucher may not be certified for payment, and the amount of reimbursement paid for the transportation of his household goods should be recomputed, and if there is an overpayment it should be collected.

Paul G. Dambline

For the Comptroller General
of the United States