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DECISION



H. Dunn, Civ. Per.
**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

FILE: B-188214

DATE: May 9, 1978

MATTER OF: Johnnie Cain - Travel expenses - mileage for
change of station travel

DIGEST: Transferred employee was authorized use of
privately owned vehicle for travel from old
station to new station under FTR 2-2.3. In
fact, he traveled in a rented truck in which
he transported his household goods, with his
automobile in tow. Employee was reimbursed
on the commuted rate basis for transportation
of his household goods. He is not entitled to
mileage incurred in returning to new duty
station after returning rented vehicle since
relocation travel had already been completed.

This action is in response to a request dated December 22,
1976, from Mr. O.D. Kottmann, authorized certifying officer, United
States Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA),
requesting a decision on the propriety of certifying for payment
a reclaim voucher submitted by Mr. Johnnie Cain for travel expenses
he incurred when traveling from Denver, Colorado, to Grand Junction,
Colorado, after returning a truck rented for transporting his
household goods from Chicago, Illinois, to Grand Junction, incident
to his permanent change of station as an employee of ERDA.

By travel order dated August 29, 1975, Mr. Cain was authorized,
inter alia, transportation for himself via privately owned vehicle
at the rate of 8 cents per mile, and transportation of his house-
hold goods not in excess of 5,000 pounds, from Chicago, Illinois,
to Grand Junction, Colorado. The record indicates that Mr. Cain
rented a truck to haul his household goods and drove the truck
from Chicago to Grand Junction with his car in tow. Denver was
the closest point at which he could return the truck. Therefore,
after he unloaded his truck at Grand Junction, he drove to Denver
with his car in tow and dropped off the truck. He then returned
to Grand Junction in his car.

Mr. Cain has been reimbursed on the commuted rate basis for
the transportation of his household goods in the amount of \$1,149.39.
His claim for \$100.16 for mileage for his privately owned vehicle
at the rate of 8 cents per mile was disallowed on the basis of
our decision in Matter of Eldon E. Strine, B-183974, November 14,
1975, which states that the travel regulations require actual use

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of a vehicle as a prerequisite to payment of mileage. Mr. Cain has filed a reclaim voucher for \$20.56 for his travel from Denver to Grand Junction, after dropping off the truck, since he actually occupied and drove the vehicle during that portion of his trip.

In Strine we held that paragraph 2-2.3 of the Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7) (May 1973) implicitly requires actual use of a vehicle as a prerequisite to the payment of mileage, and we disallowed the employee's claim for mileage because he did not travel in his automobile but towed it behind a rented truck. Thus, Mr. Cain may not be paid mileage for towing his car.

Further, he may not be paid mileage for driving his car from Denver to Grand Junction since that trip was performed after he had completed his relocation travel. FTR para. 2-2.2a. The commuted rate is constructed to cover all the costs, on an approximated basis, associated with the shipment of the particular goods involved including, as in Mr. Cain's situation, the return of the rented vehicle used to transport the goods. Because the commuted rate system is an approximation, it will sometimes be favorable to an employee but in other circumstances may operate to his disadvantage depending upon the variables in each shipment. B-174642, March 6, 1972. When it does operate to the disadvantage of an employee, there is no basis upon which the difference may be reimbursed. B-187173, October 4, 1976.

In view of the foregoing, the voucher which is returned may not be certified for payment.


Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States