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ms. Blatch

**DECISION**



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

*[Claim for Travel and Transportation Expenses]*

**FILE:** B-196950

**DATE:** March 24, 1980

**MATTER OF:** Anthony P. DeVito - Delayed Travel  
Authorization

- DIGEST:**
1. Employee traveled from Washington, D. C. to Detroit, Michigan, in 1975 and returned in 1979 pursuant to an extended Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignment. No travel orders were issued until after all travel was completed and employee failed to submit claim for reimbursement until his return in 1979. Because his IPA contract provides general authority for payment, travel authorization could be issued. However, payment of expenses must be supported by proper itemization of expenditures and receipts required by regulations in effect at time travel was actually performed.
  2. Claim for 30 days temporary quarters subsistence expenses submitted 4 years after expenses were incurred must be disallowed unless supported by receipts from hotel and contemporaneous itemization of other expenses. FTR para. 2-5.4b.
  3. Employee returning from Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignment by commercially rented vehicle is entitled only to the constructive cost of travel by privately owned vehicle or common carrier, as applicable, unless it can be demonstrated that agency had determined prior to his departure that consistent with FTR para. 1-2.2c(4), it would be more advantageous to Government for him to travel by commercially rented vehicle.

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This action is in response to the request of Lena M. Jones, Authorized Certifying Officer, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), for an advance decision concerning whether she may certify for payment the travel and transportation expenses of Anthony P. DeVito incurred incident to an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) assignment. AGC00023

The issue raised is whether Mr. DeVito's travel and transportation expenses may be paid where the travel authorizations were issued well after the travel was actually performed. Mr. DeVito traveled from Washington, D.C., to his IPA assignment in Detroit, Michigan, on May 10, 1975. He remained there pursuant to an extended IPA contract until he returned to Washington, D.C., on August 9, 1979, over 4 years later. No claim was submitted until September 28, 1979, and the travel orders authorizing payment for travel and transportation expenses to and from Detroit were not issued until September 30, 1979.

The agency has advised that, pursuant to its usual procedure, Mr. DeVito was provided with the necessary forms for submission of his travel authorization for processing prior to his departure from Washington, D.C., in 1975, and was repeatedly requested to return the forms but failed to do so until after his return to Washington in 1979. Mr. DeVito argues that although the travel authorizations were issued after travel was actually performed, he is nonetheless entitled to reimbursement because his IPA contract specifies that HUD will pay his travel and transportation expenses to and from the IPA assignment.

It is well established that except when prior issuance is impracticable, or when travel is of such a limited nature that it is unnecessary, written travel orders should be issued prior to incurrence of travel expenses. Written travel orders provide notice and a record of the employee's instructions and entitlements, assist in fund control, and satisfy the requirement of recording obligations at the time they are incurred. B-181431, February 27, 1975.

However, in limited circumstances, we have permitted payment where travel had been orally authorized and a confirmatory travel order issued shortly after the travel has been performed. James H. Morrill, B-192246.2, April 26, 1979; H. M. Christopherson, B-183563, July 14, 1976; See also 52 Comp. Gen. 236, 239 (1972); 43 id. 50, 52 (1963). Payment has also been authorized where another acceptable

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document provides authorization for the travel performed. Robert L. Feder, B-185355, July 2, 1976; Robert W. Cooper, B-192590, December 14, 1978.

In this instance, Mr. DeVito's IPA contract provides general authorization for payment of his expenses but does not specify his exact entitlements. Accordingly, travel expenses may be approved to the extent that they could have been authorized under the travel regulations in effect at the time the travel to and from the IPA duty station was performed. However, payment of expenses must be supported by proper itemization of expenditures and receipts required by Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR) para. 1-11.2 and 1-11.3 (May 1973).

For example, the maximum per diem allowance payable prior to May 19, 1975, was \$25, not the \$33 claimed; and the mileage rate in effect at the time Mr. DeVito traveled to Detroit was 8 cents a mile. FTR para. 1-7.2a (May 1973); FTR para 2-2.3b, as amended. Further, we note that while Mr. DeVito has claimed 30 days temporary quarters-subsistence expenses for the period beginning May 12, 1975, he has not submitted a receipt for lodging expenses or itemization of other expenses, as required by FTR para. 2-5.4b. The letter dated October 10, 1979, from the Planning Department of the City of Detroit reciting the location and approximate dates of Mr. DeVito's temporary lodging is not sufficient documentation of this expense, particularly when the expenses were incurred over 4 years ago. Absent a receipt from the hotel, and contemporaneous itemization of other expenses, this item should be disallowed.

With regard to the voucher submitted for expenses incurred upon his return to Washington, D.C., in 1979, we note that Mr. DeVito did not travel in his own automobile, but instead rented a station wagon and transported an unspecified amount of "clothes, valuables and personal HUD reference files." He claims \$275.92 for car rental costs. FTR para. 1-2.2c(4) (April 29, 1979) permits the use of rented vehicles only when it has been determined that use of a rented vehicle would be more advantageous to the Government than use of other methods of transportation. Accordingly, unless it can be demonstrated that the agency had determined, prior to Mr. DeVito's departure, that it would be more advantageous to the Government for him to rent a station wagon from a commercial car rental outlet, reimbursement on this item should be limited to the constructive cost of travel by a

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privately owned vehicle. If Mr. DeVito did not own an automobile at the time he completed travel from Detroit to Washington, D.C., reimbursement may be limited to the constructive cost of travel by common carrier. A.L. Strasfogel, B-186975, March 16, 1977; FTR paras. 2-2.2a; 2-2.3a; and 1-2.2c.

Accordingly, the vouchers covering Mr. DeVito's travel and transportation expenses may be certified for payment only in accordance with the above.



For The Comptroller General  
of the United States