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**DECISION**



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

**FILE:** B-215285

**DATE:** December 13, 1984

**MATTER OF:** Floyd L. Klavetter

**DIGEST:** For personal convenience a Government employee traveled on temporary duty by privately owned automobile and claimed mileage with per diem. The certifying officer computed reimbursement on a lower constructive cost basis derived from a coach airfare. The employee disputed availability of the service and fare at the time of travel, and contends an available Super Saver airfare contained objectionable restrictions. The agency has demonstrated, however, that the lower airfare was the established coach airfare (not a Super Saver fare involving added restrictions) at the time travel was performed. Since the schedule used by the agency satisfied travel needs, the lower constructive combined costs of transportation and per diem is the proper limitation for reimbursement.

An authorized certifying officer of the Department of the Interior<sup>1/</sup> requests a decision on the proper computation of comparative cost reimbursement for an employee who used his privately owned automobile for temporary duty travel with cost reimbursement limited to coach airfare. Reimbursement should be limited to the coach airfare which was available when the travel was performed.

Mr. Floyd L. Klavetter, an employee of Office of Surface Mining, Department of the Interior, was authorized to travel on temporary duty from January 5 through January 13, 1984, for the purpose of attending a field office grants administration management review in Birmingham, Alabama. For his personal convenience, he was authorized to use a privately owned automobile to perform the travel. On his return he submitted a travel voucher which claimed lodging for 6 nights, meals for

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<sup>1/</sup> Jutta E. Partyka, Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation and Enforcement, Denver, Colorado, submitted this claim.

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7 days and \$312.84 for mileage. The voucher shows that he departed his residence in Parkville, Missouri, on Saturday morning, January 7. He arrived in Birmingham on Sunday afternoon and attended the meetings from Sunday afternoon through the afternoon of Friday, January 13, when he departed Birmingham. At midnight on that day he arrived at his home in Parkville.

Mr. Klavetter claimed reimbursement on a comparative cost basis using \$406 as the applicable coach airfare. He argues that in the computation of comparative costs the airfare used by the certifying officer, \$286, was a Super Saver fare, and that in order to qualify for that fare he would have had to remain 7 days in Birmingham, and purchase his ticket 2 weeks in advance.

The certifying officer based the lower comparative cost on a "Y," or coach airfare, which was shown in the Official Airline Guide, because there was no contract airfare applicable for travel in January 1984. The constructive costs were based on specific scheduled departure flights which would have enabled Mr. Klavetter to arrive in Birmingham in time for the Sunday meeting and returned him to Kansas City at 5:05 p.m. on Friday. The certifying officer has concluded that the lower fare would have been charged for this travel when performed, in effect, disputing the claimant's contention that it was a Super Saver fare.

The only question presented is whether the coach airfare used by the certifying officer was in effect for the constructive schedule required of Mr. Klavetter's travel.

The General Services Administration, which maintains airfare information as part of their responsibility in its overall administration of Government travel, advised us that the coach airfare selected by the certifying officer was applicable when the travel occurred. They indicated further that the airline schedule used in the constructive cost computation was accurate, and that there were no restrictions on use of the service. The schedule would have permitted Mr. Klavetter to arrive in Birmingham on Sunday in time for the 2-hour meeting, and to depart without a 7-day layover until Saturday. The

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constructive itinerary was reasonable and satisfied the dates of departure and arrival required for the travel. Our review of the airline guide in effect for January 1984 confirms that the lower fare was not a Super Saver fare but the full coach fare, and that this fare would have been charged for travel if performed in accordance with the constructive schedule.

Accordingly, the certifying officer properly based the cost comparison on the coach airfare shown in the Official Airline Guide and the claimant is not entitled to additional reimbursement predicated on some higher fare.

*for*   
Comptroller General  
of the United States