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**DECISION**



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

**FILE:** B-218964

**DATE:** November 26, 1985

**MATTER OF:** Audrey Rose and Allen Bailey

**DIGEST:**

Employees with the National Park Service, who operate heavy duty trucks in the performance of their duties as tree maintenance workers, may not be reimbursed for payment of fees for state licenses required to operate the vehicles. These fees are personal expenses incurred by the employees to qualify for their Government employment.

Employees of the National Park Service claim reimbursement of expenses incurred in obtaining Class B Motor Vehicle Licenses which they are required to have in the performance of their duties.<sup>1/</sup> We conclude that fees paid by the employees to the State of Maryland to obtain licenses required in their Federal employment may not be reimbursed because these expenditures represent personal expenses incurred incident to qualifying for their positions.

Ms. Audrey Rose and Mr. Allen Bailey are employed by the National Park Service as tree maintenance workers. An administrative decision was made to change the type of equipment used by tree workers in the performance of their duties. Because they are now required to operate motor vehicles classified as heavy duty trucks, each employee was required to obtain a Maryland Class B Motor Vehicle License. The additional license cost each employee \$20. Since it was an administrative decision by Park Service officials that caused the new requirement, the employees seek reimbursement for this expense.

The submission states that based on the Comptroller General's holding in Water Treatment Operator Certificates, B-193862, April 30, 1979, payments of the claims are

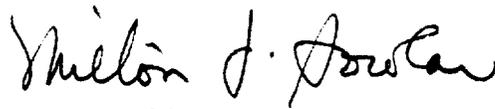
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<sup>1/</sup> Mr. Thomas G. Gall, Authorized Certifying Accountant, National Park Service, has requested this advance decision.

doubtful. In that case, we held that the National Park Service could not reimburse its employees for the cost of certification by the State of California as water treatment operators. The disallowance was based on a determination that the required certification was a matter of personal qualification which is the employee's responsibility.

We have held consistently that it is the duty of an officer or employee of the United States to qualify himself for the performance of his official duties. Where a Federal employee must secure permits or licenses to perform the duties of his or her position, we have held repeatedly that compliance is a matter of personal qualification and that payment by the Government of any fees incident to obtaining these permits or licenses is not authorized. These costs are personal expenses which must be borne by the employee and this rule applies notwithstanding that the license requirement becomes effective after the employee has been hired. Pesticide Applicator License Fee, B-186512, January 17, 1977; 46 Comp. Gen. 695 (1967); 51 Comp. Gen. 701, 702 (1972). We have specifically held that this rule applies to the requirement to obtain a driver's permit. 6 Comp. Gen. 432 (1926).

The employees in this case are required to pay the license fee in order to maintain the qualifications for their position, qualifications which are generally applicable to tree workers using required equipment. Accordingly, the claims of Ms. Rose and Mr. Bailey may not be approved for payment.

*for*   
Comptroller General  
of the United States