



**The Comptroller General
of the United States**

Washington, D.C. 20548

Decision

Matter of: Ralph D. Hendrix - Extended Temporary Duty - Per Diem and Travel Expenses for Return Travel

File: B-229180

Date: October 25, 1988

DIGEST

An employee on extended temporary duty who returns to his permanent station is not entitled to per diem at his permanent station. Reimbursement for return travel expenses may be made only if he submits proper proof that he was requested to return for official business.

DECISION

We are asked to decide whether an employee on extended temporary duty away from his official duty station is entitled to per diem and transportation expenses for a return trip to his duty station.^{1/} For the following reasons, we hold that the employee is not entitled to per diem at his official station, but may be reimbursed for transportation expenses and per diem en route upon proper proof that he was asked by agency officials to return to his duty station for official business.

Mr. Ralph D. Hendrix, an employee of the National Security Agency was performing long-term training duty away from his official duty station at Fort Meade, Maryland, in Norfolk, Virginia, from January 26 through June 28, 1986. During the period Thursday, April 10 through Sunday, April 13, 1986, he returned to Fort Meade. Mr. Hendrix claimed transportation expenses and per diem for his travel to Fort Meade. He claims that agency officials asked him to return to Fort Meade to take part in discussions which could not take place over unsecure telephone lines. The reason Mr. Hendrix claimed per diem was that it was necessary to use motel accommodations since his residence was under construction

^{1/} The request for decision was presented by Mr. Albert De Petro, Finance and Accounting Officer, National Security Agency.

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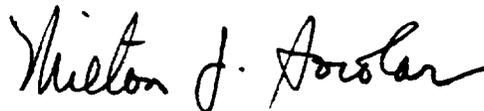
and was uninhabitable. The agency denied his claims on the basis that an employee is not entitled to per diem at his permanent station and the travel was not authorized by his orders.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

An employee is not entitled to a per diem allowance either at his permanent duty station or at the place of abode from which he commutes to his official station. Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) para. 1-7.6a, incorp. by ref., 41 C.F.R. § 101-7.003 (1986). This rule has been consistently upheld by this Office. Phillip Rabin, 64 Comp. Gen. 70 (1984). Furthermore, the fact that an employee does not maintain a residence at or near his official station or is unable to use the residence has no bearing on his entitlement to a per diem allowance while at the official station. Nicholas G. Economy, B-188515, Aug. 18, 1977, and Fraudulent Travel Voucher, B-217989, Sept. 17, 1985. Accordingly, Mr. Hendrix is not entitled to a per diem allowance for the period involved at his official station.

It is well settled that in order to be reimbursed for travel expenses, an employee must have authorization or approval from an appropriate official to perform the travel. This authorization is usually required in advance of performing the travel. FTR, para. 1-1.4. While Mr. Hendrix indicates that he was requested by agency officials to return to his permanent duty station, the record contains no travel orders or authorization for Mr. Hendrix to perform the travel.

If, however, Mr. Hendrix is able to provide proper proof showing he was ordered to Fort Meade pursuant to National Security Agency business, an appropriate agency official may retroactively approve that travel and Mr. Hendrix may properly be reimbursed for travel expenses. Accordingly, if the agency deems it appropriate, reimbursement for the transportation expenses may be made in accordance with FTR, para. 1-7.5c.



Acting Comptroller General
of the United States