



The Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

Riedinger

Decision

Matter of: Paul J. Castleberry - Indirect Travel -
Reimbursement Limitation
File: B-232576
Date: August 24, 1989

DIGEST

An employee, who had purchased a Super Saver ticket in order to combine personal travel with temporary duty travel, was required by the government to return early to his duty station. As a result, the employee was unable to meet the prescheduling conditions of the Super Saver ticket and he could not use it for his return trip. Since the government may reimburse only those travel expenses that would have been incurred for direct official travel, there is no authority to compensate the employee for his loss on the Super Saver ticket.

DECISION

This decision is in response to a request from a Finance and Accounting Officer, Defense Nuclear Agency, concerning the claim of an employee to be reimbursed certain airfare expenses incident to the performance of temporary duty travel in June 1988.^{1/} We conclude that the employee may not be reimbursed, for the following reasons.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Paul J. Castleberry, an employee of the Defense Nuclear Agency, was directed to perform temporary duty travel from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles, California, and return. For personal reasons, he elected not to purchase his airfare ticket through use of a Government Transportation Request (GTR). He was authorized by the agency to purchase his own round-trip ticket at a cost of \$476, with the understanding that his round-trip airfare reimbursement would be limited

^{1/} The submission has been assigned Control No. 88-13 by the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee.

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to the cost of direct travel to Los Angeles and return at the GTR rate of \$376. He purchased a Super Saver ticket which permitted him to combine personal travel to other locations with his official travel. However, that ticket was restricted to use on prescheduled dates. Dr. Castleberry used the Super Saver ticket for his trip to Los Angeles, but he was required by his agency to return to Washington a day earlier than expected. As a result, he could not use the return trip portion of the Super Saver ticket. The agency furnished him with a return trip ticket purchased with a GBL at a cost of \$188.

The agency limited Dr. Castleberry's reimbursement to \$188, representing the cost to the government for the direct flight to Los Angeles. Dr. Castleberry contends that he also should receive the additional \$188 which the government would have reimbursed him had he been able to use the Super Saver ticket for his return to Washington as originally planned. He points out that the only reason he could not comply with the scheduling conditions of the Super Saver ticket and use it for the trip back to Washington was because the government required his early return.

OPINION

Paragraph 1-1.3b of the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR)^{2/} limits reimbursement for travel expenses to those expenses essential to the transaction of official business. In addition, paragraph 1-2.5 provides in part:

"1-2.5 Routing of Travel

"a. Official Necessity. All travel shall be by a usually traveled route. . . .

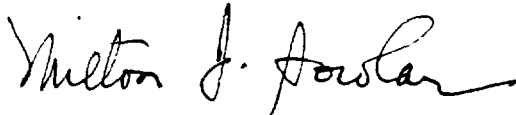
"b. Indirect-route or interrupted travel. When a person for his/her own convenience travels by an indirect route or interrupts travel by direct route, the extra expense shall be borne by him/her. . . ."

These provisions clearly limit allowable travel expenses to those which the government would have incurred had the employee traveled by the usual traveled route and by the mode of travel authorized. Thus, in the case of indirect or interrupted travel, reimbursement cannot exceed the constructive cost of direct routing or the actual cost of

^{2/} Incorp. by ref., 41 C.F.R. § 101-7.003 (1988).

travel, whichever is less. John P. Butt, 65 Comp. Gen. 47 (1985); Irwin M. Lieberman, B-221760, Aug. 11, 1986; Alan G. Bolton, Jr., B-200027, Aug. 24, 1981. In the present case, the agency paid the expenses that Dr. Castleberry would have incurred for direct official travel, reimbursing him \$188 for his trip to Los Angeles and providing for his return trip by a GTR. There is no authority to reimburse Dr. Castleberry for the loss that resulted from his inability to use the Super Saver ticket for his return trip.

Accordingly, Dr. Castleberry's claim cannot be allowed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Milton J. Fowler". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States