

*Riedinger*



Comptroller General  
of the United States

120254

Washington, D.C. 20548

## Decision

**Matter of:** Kevin Murphy

**File:** B-255791

**Date:** April 25, 1994

---

### DIGEST

An employee performed international travel in excess of 14 hours through several time zones. He was authorized a return rest stop in London. He claimed an additional day as a rest stop in the London area in connection with the return flight. A rest stop authorized under section 301-7.11 of the Federal Travel Regulations is an approved enlargement of travel time, the purpose of which is to help the traveler overcome the effects of long, wearisome, and sometime arduous travel. Where flight scheduling is such that the employee has a stopover of more than 20 hours, including overnight, and has access to lodging and meals, the purpose of the authorized rest stop has been satisfied and an additional rest stop period at government expense may not be reimbursed.

---

### DECISION

This decision is in response to a request from an authorized certifying officer, Centers for Disease Control, Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,<sup>1</sup> concerning the entitlement of an employee to be permitted an additional rest stop period beyond the scheduled stopover period incident to international travel through several time zones where the flight duration was greater than 14 hours. We conclude that he is not entitled to an additional rest stop period, for the following reasons.

Mr. Kevin Murphy, an employee of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, was authorized to perform temporary duty travel to Lome, Togo, and Kampala, Uganda, and return during the period June 7-26, 1993. He was authorized an outbound rest stop in Paris, France, on June 8, 1993, and a return rest stop in London on June 24, 1993.

---

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Claude F. Pickelsimer, Director, Financial Management Office.

059819/151526

Mr. Murphy arrived in Paris at 5:25 a.m. on June 8, 1993, and departed for Lome at 12:00 noon on June 9, 1993. The June 9 flight was the next available scheduled flight to Lome from Paris after he arrived there. Mr. Murphy's time on the ground at Paris was over 30 hours. The agency asks whether this constituted a rest stop or was it simply a stopover.

On Mr. Murphy's return flight, he left Kampala, Uganda, at 7:50 a.m. on June 24, 1993, and arrived at London Heathrow Airport at 4:55 p.m. the same day. He then traveled to a hotel near Gatwick Airport and he stayed there as a rest stop until he departed Gatwick Airport on June 26, 1993, at 11:00 a.m. Mr. Murphy's time on the ground there was about 42 hours.

According to the flight schedules, there were no appropriate connecting flights to the United States until June 25. Had Mr. Murphy remained in the Heathrow area, two flights were available to him on June 25. They were, (A) a United Airline flight which departed at 1:00 p.m., and (B) a United Airline flight which departed at 4:15 p.m. At Gatwick, he had three flights available to him on June 25. They were, (A) a Trans World Airline flight which departed at 1:00 p.m., (B) a Delta flight at 1:25 p.m., and (C) a Delta flight at 2:50 p.m. Thus, Mr. Murphy had 5 flights available to him on June 25, 1993, which would have provided him a minimum of 20 hours stopover time either at Heathrow or Gatwick during his return trip. The question asked is whether he is entitled to the additional period as a rest stop for expense reimbursement purposes.

The regulation governing per diem entitlement for travel to, from, between, or within locations outside the continental United States (CONUS), including permissible rest stops, is contained in section 301-7.11 of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR).<sup>2</sup> Section 301-7.11(a) thereof provides, in part:

"(a) When travel is direct between authorized origin and destination points which are separated by several time zones and either the origin or destination point is outside CONUS, a rest stop not in excess of 24 hours may be authorized or approved when air travel \* \* \* exceeds 14 hours by a direct or usually traveled route."

We have held that government employees normally are required to perform official travel as expeditiously as if they were traveling on personal business, even though travel may have

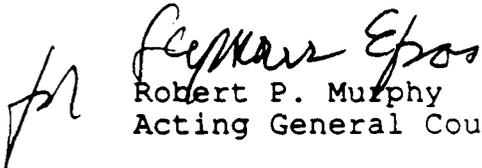
---

<sup>2</sup>41 C.F.R. 301-7.11 (1993).

to be performed on nonworkdays.<sup>3</sup> The purpose of authorizing a rest stop is to permit enlargement of travel time at government expense in certain instances to help the traveler overcome the effects of "jet lag" or other effects associated with long, wearisome, and sometimes arduous travel. Clearly, where international air travel through several time zones exceeding 14 hours is involved, and scheduling provides only minimal ground time for stopovers or connecting flight changeovers, it is appropriate to allow a rest stop, where possible, but the permitted additional period may not be "in excess of 24 hours." In contrast, where normal scheduling is such that the traveler must remain on the ground at an interim location for a protracted period, including overnight, and has access to lodging accommodations and meals, it is our view that the purpose for which an authorized rest stop is intended has been satisfied and an additional rest stop period at government expense is inappropriate.

In the present case, Mr. Murphy had a scheduled stopover in Paris that was over 30 hours. That period was part of normal scheduling and also satisfied the purpose of the rest stop authorized under section 301-7.11(a) of the FTR. On the return flight, Mr. Murphy arrived at Heathrow at 4:55 p.m. on June 24. Although there were no later connecting flights that day, he could have departed from either Heathrow or Gatwick airport on any one of five flights between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 4:15 p.m. on June 25. Therefore, since he had at least 20 hours rest before the next available flight and had lodging accommodations and meals available to him during that time, he was not entitled to an additional day in London as a rest stop.

Accordingly, the agency acted properly in denying Mr. Murphy's claim for expenses for the evening of June 25 and all day June 26.

  
Robert P. Murphy  
Acting General Counsel

---

<sup>3</sup>46 Comp. Gen. 425 (1966).