

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

FILE: B-184025

DATE: JUN 3 1976

60947
56MATTER OF: **Martin A. Mastagni - Temporary quarters
allowance**

98866

DIGEST: Incident to transfer, employee was authorized subsistence while occupying temporary quarters for a 10-day period. Employee's request for additional 10 days was orally authorized by his superior. Since administrative approval of an extension of time would have been granted if administrative office had not inadvertently delayed action on request for additional time, we have no objection to allowance of reimbursement for the additional 10-days claimed.

This action is in response to a letter dated May 22, 1975, from Orris C. Huet, an Authorized Certifying Officer of the United States Department of Agriculture. Mr. Huet submits the voucher of Martin A. Mastagni, in which he requests payment of an additional 10 days subsistence while occupying temporary quarters.

Mr. Mastagni, a Forest Service employee, was transferred from Santa Barbara, California, to Kernville, California, effective May 13, 1974. The travel authorization authorized subsistence while occupying temporary quarters for only 10 days, as it was believed that would provide adequate time to set up his mobile home, which was being shipped at Government expense. However, upon learning that his mobile home would not be ready before the end of the 10 day period, Mr. Mastagni requested an additional 10 days subsistence while occupying temporary quarters. An additional 10 days (to begin May 23, 1974) was orally authorized by his superior on or about May 20, 1974. However, due to a heavy work-load the request was inadvertently misplaced and a typewritten request for the 10-day extension was not handed to Mr. Mastagni for his signature until July 16, 1974. That request was approved by the proper administrative officer on July 17, 1974.

In B-163025, dated August 12, 1968, our Office allowed the Forest Service to amend a travel authorization to grant an additional 20 days temporary quarters allowance due to an administrative error. We held that the employee was entitled to an allowance for the 30-day maximum period, despite the form of the original travel order, primarily because the administrative

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office in approving a travel advance to the employee to cover an additional 3 weeks subsistence led him to the belief that no further action was required to effect an amendment to his travel order. Also, it was agency policy to allow the maximum 30-day period of temporary quarters which would have been granted by an amendment to the order had it not been for the confusion involved.

In Mr. Mastagni's case, he originally requested 30 days temporary quarters allowance, but the agency determined that 10 days would be sufficient for him to have his trailer moved and set up. As indicated above, prior to the expiration of the 10-day period, Mr. Mastagni requested 10 additional days temporary quarters allowance and was verbally informed that it would be approved. This request was approved in July 1974.

In the circumstances, the administrative approval in July of the extension of time may be viewed as a ratification of the oral authorization.

Accordingly, the voucher may be certified for payment, if otherwise proper.

R.F. KELLER

Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States