

DECISION

D. Agnew
**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20540

PHZ
8026

FILE: B-191415

DATE: October 17, 1978

MATTER OF: Susan P. Covell - Temporary Duty - Parking Fees and Telephone Installation and Service Charges

- DIGEST: 1. Employee on extended temporary duty traveled by privately owned automobile restricted to reimbursement of constructive cost of travel by common carrier. Employee may not be reimbursed an additional amount of \$220 for separate parking fees charged at lodgings she selected. Additional costs for parking resulted from employee's election to travel by automobile and would not have been incurred had she traveled by air. B-130712, April 11, 1968.
2. Employee residing in apartment complex while on temporary duty may not be reimbursed for telephone installation charge. She may be reimbursed for monthly service charge as a cost of lodging. See Comp. Gen. decs. cited.

This matter concerns the request for an advance decision by Mr. Douglas C. Graft, an authorized certifying officer of the U.S. Civil Service Commission (Commission) as to whether Ms. Susan P. Covell, an employee of the Commission, may be reimbursed expenses incurred in the amount of \$220 for parking fees and \$75.22 for telephone installation and service charges incurred while on temporary duty in Boston, Massachusetts.

The record shows that by Travel Order No. MB-50 dated October 1, 1976, Ms. Covell, whose official duty station is Washington, D.C., was authorized travel and actual subsistence expenses for the period February 21, 1977, through July 1, 1977, incident to a temporary duty assignment in Boston, Massachusetts, a designated high-rate geographical area. The travel order authorized transportation by common carrier or in lieu thereof, travel by privately owned automobile not to exceed the constructive cost. In accordance with para. 1-8.6 of the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) (FPMR 101-7) as amended by FPMR Temporary Regulation A-11, Supp. 3, Ms. Covell was authorized actual subsistence expenses not to exceed \$49 per day.

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Concerning reimbursement for the use of a privately owned conveyance in lieu of common carrier transportation para. 1-4.3 of the FTR provides as follows:

"Whenever a privately owned conveyance is used for official purposes as a matter of personal preference in lieu of common carrier transportation under 1-2.2d, payment for such travel shall be made on the basis of the actual travel performed, computed under 1-4.1 at the mileage rate prescribed in 1-4.2a plus the per diem allowable for the actual travel. The total allowable shall be limited to the total constructive cost of appropriate common carrier transportation including constructive per diem by that method of transportation. * * *"

The agency has determined that the constructive cost of travel by common carrier would be \$100.29 representing the amounts of \$112 for an airline ticket, \$52.29 for actual expense of subsistence, and \$36 for estimated taxi fares. Ms. Covell incurred \$431.52 in expenses in connection with her round-trip travel by privately owned automobile. These expenses consisted of \$152.73 for mileage and tolls, \$58.79 for actual expenses of subsistence, and \$220 for parking fees.

Ms. Covell has claimed the amount of \$220 for parking fees in addition to her reimbursement of the constructive cost of common carrier. This parking fee of \$220 represented the monthly parking fee of \$55 at the apartment complex where Ms. Covell resided during her temporary duty from March through June 1977.

Ms. Covell's supervisor has recommended that this claim for separate reimbursement for parking fees be approved on the basis that the daily rate at the apartment complex, including the additional fee for parking, of approximately \$22 was less than motel rates in the area. Presumably, the claimant could have resided at the same complex without regard to whether she had an automobile. The additional expense of the automobile parking fees resulted from Ms. Covell's personal


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preference to travel by automobile. The expense would not have been incurred had Ms. Covell traveled by air. Thus, we find no basis for allowing Ms. Covell reimbursement for parking fees in addition to reimbursement of the constructive cost of travel by common carrier. See B-130712, April 11, 1968.

We note that parking fees do not appear to be reimbursable as an expense of subsistence as parking fees are specifically reimbursable in connection with the use of a privately owned conveyance under 5 U.S.C. 5704(b) (1976), and para. 1-4.1c of the FTR, as amended by Temp. Reg. A-11 (May 19, 1975).

In addition to her claim for reimbursement for parking fees, Ms. Covell is also claiming \$75.22 representing the amounts of \$32.50 for telephone installation charges and \$42.72 for the monthly telephone service charge of \$10.68 for the period March through June 1977. The monthly service or user charge, but not the installation charge, is reimbursable as a cost of lodging incident to the occupancy of an apartment while on temporary duty. James L. Palmer, 56 Comp. Gen. 40 (1976); and 52 id. 730 (1973). These cases are to be distinguished from situations in which installation of a telephone in transient quarters has been administratively determined to be a matter of official necessity and where the installation charge is reimbursable as other than a lodging cost. Cf. John H. Baer, B-185975, October 28, 1976. We have been informally advised by the Commission that there was no administrative determination of the official necessity of a telephone in connection with Ms. Covell's temporary duty assignment.

In accordance with the above, Ms. Covell's reclaim voucher should be certified for payment in the amount of \$42.72 with respect to the telephone service charge, if otherwise proper. The remainder of the claim for the telephone installation and parking fees may not be allowed.


Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States