

DECISION

17574 *Tolpe*
THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

FILE: B-198246

DATE: March 31, 1981

MATTER OF: Linda A. Johnson *(Request for)* Reimbursement for
Travel to Airport

DIGEST: Employee on temporary duty was driven by friend in latter's automobile to airport for return flight to official duty station. Employee's claim for mileage and parking fee may be paid to the extent it does not exceed cost of taxicab fare and tip. Decisions limiting reimbursement for travel with private party to actual expenses paid to private party apply only to regular travel on temporary duty, not travel to and from common carrier terminals.

This decision responds to a request from Ronald Boomer, a certifying officer with the General Services Administration (GSA), Region 10, concerning a voucher submitted by Ms. Linda A. Johnson, a GSA employee, for mileage and parking fees incurred during temporary duty travel. The issue presented is whether Ms. Johnson may be reimbursed for mileage and parking fees incurred when a friend drove Ms. Johnson to the airport at the temporary duty station.

Ms. Johnson traveled from Auburn, Washington, to San Francisco, California, to attend a training seminar for the period September 24-28, 1979, and she elected to remain in San Francisco on personal business over the weekend, September 29-30. On Sunday, September 30, Ms. Johnson was driven by a friend in the friend's automobile from the friend's residence to the San Francisco Airport, and for this trip Ms. Johnson has claimed mileage (26 miles times 18-1/2 cents per mile) of \$4.81 and a parking fee of \$1. Since the privately owned vehicle was not owned by Ms. Johnson, the agency questions whether she may be reimbursed for round-trip mileage not to exceed the cost of a taxicab fare or only for the actual expenses she paid to the driver for gas, oil, tolls, etc.

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Under the authority of 5 U.S.C. § 5704 (1976) and the implementing regulations contained in the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) (FPMR 101-7), employees who use a privately owned vehicle (POV) on official business may be reimbursed for mileage, parking fees, and other expenses. For travel to and from common carrier terminals, the FTRs permit reimbursement for round-trip mileage to the extent that it does not exceed the cost of taxicab fare, including tip. See FTR paras. 1-4.2c and 1-2.2d.

Neither the Federal Travel Regulations nor our decisions limit the payment of mileage under these circumstances to travel in a POV owned by the employee. Therefore, we have no objection to the payment of mileage to an employee on temporary duty for travel to or from common carrier terminals, regardless of who owns or operates the POV.

In the present case, the voucher reviewer denied Ms. Johnson's claim based on GSA's internal regulations, Order OAD P 7620.7, chapter 4-21.1a, which limits reimbursement for employees traveling as a passenger in a POV owned and operated by a person not traveling on Government business. This internal regulation reflects prior decisions of this Office limiting reimbursement under such circumstances to the amount paid by the employee to the driver of the vehicle for gasoline, oil, tolls, parking fees, etc., not to exceed the cost of common carrier travel. Walter D. Felzke, B-191282, September 29, 1978; B-152030, August 15, 1963; B-150486, February 1, 1963; and B-147455, November 21, 1961. Those decisions related to employees traveling to and from temporary duty stations. In view of the round-trip mileage authority in the FTRs above, we do not believe that the rule set forth therein should be applied to automobile travel to and from common carrier terminals. Therefore, we find that GSA's internal regulation should be construed to relate to temporary duty travel and not to apply to travel to and from common carrier terminals.

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Accordingly, we hold that Ms. Johnson's claim for mileage and the parking fee may be paid if otherwise proper.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Milton J. Fowler".

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States