

DECISION

17788 *Mosher*
**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548

FILE: B-200479**DATE:** April 16, 1981**MATTER OF:** David V. Craig - Transportation of
Household Effects - Commuted Rate

DIGEST: Transferred employee was authorized reimbursement for shipment of household effects at commuted rate on an intrastate transfer. Employee's claim for charge by mover for expedited or special service which exceeds commuted rate may not be allowed. Under the commuted rate system there is no authority to pay transportation charges in excess of those provided under that system. Although actual expense method may be used in intrastate transfers where unusual hardship of employee may result, no administrative determination was made to authorize actual expense method.

This action is in response to a request for a decision submitted by the certifying officer of the Central Region, Internal Revenue Service, Cincinnati, Ohio, regarding a claim for reimbursement of transportation expenses for movement of household effects upon an intrastate transfer of an employee. The employee claims the additional amount by which the carrier's charges exceeded the employee's authorized reimbursement on a commuted rate. The employee paid the mover for expedited or special service which apparently caused his costs to exceed the reimbursement he received at the commuted rate. No administrative determination was made to authorize the shipment of the employee's goods by the Government under the actual expense method, and there is no authority to pay a transportation claim in excess of the allowable commuted rate when the commuted rate system is used. Therefore, there is no basis to pay the employee's claim.

Mr. David V. Craig, an employee of the Internal Revenue Service, was officially authorized a change of duty assignment from Somerset, Kentucky, to Lexington, Kentucky. He was authorized to ship at the commuted rate and shipped 1,100 pounds of household effects. The commuted rate at the time of shipment was \$22.25

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per 100 pounds which entitled Mr. Craig to a reimbursement of \$244.75. However, since he had requested an expedited shipment, he was charged for a minimum weight of 6,000 pounds by the mover, amounting to \$615.44. Mr. Craig has requested that a special exception be made in his case for the reason that, as an Internal Revenue Service Revenue Officer, he was required to be out of the office much of the time and this necessitated his use of the special service under which he could give the mover a specific date on which he could be moved. He indicates that had he not used the expedited service, he would have been required to wait by a telephone for the movers to call him to inform him of a convenient time for the movers to make the move. He asserts that such a requirement on his time would have been detrimental to his job. The Internal Revenue Service has made no administrative determination to authorize movement of Mr. Craig's household goods under the actual expense method due to an emergency or undue hardship in his case.

Use of the commuted rate system for transportation of household effects is authorized at 5 U.S.C. 5724(c) (1976) which generally provides that a transferred employee shall be reimbursed on a commuted rate basis at rates fixed under regulations, instead of being paid for the actual expenses of transporting his household goods and personal effects. Provisions implementing this authority are found in the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) (FPMR 101-7, May 1973). In determining the amount to be reimbursed in a given case, FTR para. 2-8.3a(2) provides in part that:

"* * * If an employee is charged a minimum weight above the actual weight of his household goods under the applicable tariff (other than one based on expedited or special services) the reimbursement shall be based on the minimum weight as charged instead of the actual weight of the goods." (Emphasis added.)

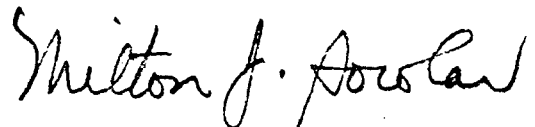
In determining whether the commuted rate method or the actual expense method is to be used in a given case, FTR para. 2-8.3c(3) provides that as a general policy,

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commuted rates shall be used when individual transfers are involved. In the case of intrastate transfers, however, FTR para. 2-8.3c(4)(d) provides that the actual expense method may be authorized when it is administratively determined that an unusual hardship would result to the employee through use of the commuted rate system. These regulatory provisions place on the administrative office the responsibility for deciding, based upon the guidelines provided, which system should be utilized in a given case. Once that determination is administratively made, payment is authorized only in accordance with the system selected. B-168466, January 21, 1970. This is especially true since under the commuted rate the employee is responsible for shipment of his goods whereas under the actual expense method household goods are shipped by the Government. B-187508, March 22, 1977.

In the present case, Mr. Craig was authorized shipment of his household goods under the commuted rate system. The regulations, FTR para. 2-8.3a(2), provide that under that system, the amount to be paid is computed by multiplying the number of hundreds of pounds shipped by the applicable rate per hundred pounds for the distance shipped as shown in the commuted rate schedule. Mr. Craig was reimbursed based on the commuted rate schedule in effect at the time he incurred the charges. Since the extra amount charged for the minimum weight of 6,000 pounds was for expedited service, such charges are specifically excluded under FTR para. 2-8.3a(2). Under these circumstances, no authority exists to compensate the employee for the difference between the commuted rate and the charges he was required to pay the commercial carrier. B-171078, January 13, 1971.

Accordingly, payment of the additional amount claimed is not authorized.



Acting Comptroller General
of the United States