

DECISION**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548****FILE:** B-207500**DATE:** October 20, 1982**MATTER OF:** Robert D. Maxwell - Transportation of
Household Goods - Accessorial Charges**DIGEST:**

A transferred employee who moved his own household goods was reimbursed actual expenses since there was insufficient documentation to pay him under the commuted rate method. He may be reimbursed the additional expense he incurred in hiring a moving company to move certain items of furniture into a loft area of his house. That expense may be reimbursed as part of the actual cost of transporting his household goods. See 48 Comp. Gen. 115 (1968).

J. R. Burkett, a certifying officer and Director of the Division of Accounting, Fiscal and Budget Services, Region VI, Department of Health and Human Services, has requested our opinion as to whether Mr. Robert D. Maxwell, an employee of the Social Security Administration, may be reimbursed for the expenses he incurred in hiring a moving company to move certain items of furniture into a loft area in his home. We believe Mr. Maxwell is entitled to such reimbursement.

Mr. Maxwell was transferred from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to Dallas, Texas, in August 1981, and was authorized to ship his household goods by the commuted rate method. He moved his own household goods on September 28, 1981, and placed them in storage. He was reimbursed only his actual expenses because he did not provide sufficient documentation for reimbursement under the commuted rate method. See Federal Travel Regulations FPMR 101-7 (May 1973) (FTR) paragraph 2-8.3a(3). Mr. Maxwell moved into his new residence in November 1981. That residence contained a large loft room accessible only by a narrow spiral staircase. Since larger pieces of furniture had to be hoisted into the room, Mr. Maxwell could not move them himself and hired two men from a moving company to assist him.

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Mr. Maxwell states that he was charged \$145.50 for the assistance of the two men and claims entitlement to reimbursement for that amount. The bill shows that he hired the Tex Sun Moving and Storage Company at the rate of \$42.50 for 3 hours. Although the \$145.50 sum appears as the final charge, it is unclear how that charge was calculated. In any event, Mr. Maxwell was only reimbursed \$30.81--3 hours at \$10.27 per hour, the rate prescribed for labor charges in GSA Bulletin FPMR A-2, Supplement 97, Additional Allowances.

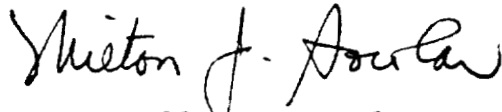
GSA Bulletin FPMR A-2, "Commuted Rate Schedule", applies only where reimbursement is made according to the commuted rate method. Therefore, we do not believe that it should apply to Mr. Maxwell's situation where, although he was authorized to ship his household goods by the commuted rate method, he was only reimbursed his actual expenses.

The transportation of household goods is governed by the FTR. Paragraphs 2-8.3a(3) and 2-8.2b(4) of the FTR provide that the weight of household goods transported for the purpose of computing the commuted rate of payment allowable must be determined by the actual scale rate weight of the goods or by the constructive weight of such goods determined on the basis of the space occupied when properly loaded for shipment in a van. We held in 48 Comp. Gen. 115 (1968) that, if an employee is unable to establish his entitlement to a commuted payment under the requirements of the regulations, he may be reimbursed the actual expenses he incurs in transporting his household goods in an amount not to exceed the amount that would have been payable to him based on approximate estimated weight at the applicable commuted rate. In accordance with that decision reimbursement to Mr. Maxwell of his actual expenses appears to be proper.

Therefore, we see no reason why the total expense incurred by Mr. Maxwell to move his household goods into the loft room should not be included as a part of his reimbursable actual expenses.

B-207500

Accepting Mr. Maxwell's statement that he could not move furniture into the loft room by himself, the expenses he incurred can be considered a necessary actual expense related to his move. Accordingly, he may be reimbursed in full.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Milton J. Aoulan".

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States