

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

FILE: B-184091

DATE:

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97673MATTER OF: **Ronnie G. Jones - Reimbursement of Expenses of Moving Household Goods in connection with Transportation of Mobile Home**

DIGEST: Employee moved mobile home from old to new duty station pursuant to transfer under Federal Travel Regulations para. 2-7.1a (May 1973). He is not entitled to reimbursement for expenses of moving household goods not in mobile home since 5 U.S.C. § 5724(b) and FTR para. 2-7.1a provide that reimbursement for transportation of mobile home is in place of that for transportation of household goods.

Mr. H. A. Anderson, a regional administrator with the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, requests an advance decision on the propriety of paying the reclaim voucher of Mr. Ronnie G. Jones for expenses incurred in moving household goods in connection with the transportation of a mobile home. The goods were transported incident to Mr. Jones' permanent change of duty station from the Mississippi Division of the Federal Highway Administration to the Indiana Division in March 1975.

The record shows that Mr. Jones was issued Travel Order No. 05-00-108, dated February 6, 1975, and he has been reimbursed for the cost of transporting a mobile home from Mississippi to Indiana. However, his claim for transportation of household goods not shipped in the mobile home was denied. Mr. Jones states in his reclaim that items such as books, clothing, canned food, and a freezer could not be shipped in the mobile home due to the possibility of structural damage to the mobile home and the inability to obtain insurance if such items were shipped in the mobile home.

Section 5724 of title 5, United States Code (1970), provides in pertinent part as follows:

"(b) Under such regulations as the President may prescribe, an employee who transports a house trailer or mobile dwelling inside the continental United States, inside Alaska, or between the continental United States and Alaska, for use as a residence, and who otherwise would be entitled to transportation of household goods and personal

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effects under subsection (a) of this section, is entitled, instead of that transportation, to—

"(1) a reasonable allowance not in excess of 20 cents a mile for transportation of the house trailer or mobile dwelling, if the trailer or dwelling is transported by the employee; or

"(2) commercial transportation of the house trailer or mobile dwelling, at Government expense, or reimbursement to the employee therefor, including the payment of necessary tolls, charges, and permit fees, if the trailer or dwelling is not transported by the employee."

The above statute is implemented by para. 2-7.1a of the Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7) (May 1973) which reads as follows:

"a. Eligibility. An employee who is entitled to transportation of his household goods under these regulations shall, in lieu of such transportation, be entitled to an allowance, as provided in this part, for the transportation of a mobile home for use as a residence. In order to be eligible for the allowance, the employee shall certify in a manner prescribed by the head of the agency that the mobile home is for use as a residence for the employee and/or his immediate family at the destination. If an employee is not eligible to receive an allowance for movement of his mobile home, he may be eligible to receive an allowance based on the transportation of his household goods under the provisions of 2-8."

The Federal Travel Regulations define household goods in para. 2-1.4h as follows:

"h. Household goods. Personal property which may be transported legally in interstate commerce and which belongs to an employee and his immediate family at the time shipment or storage begins. The term includes household furnishings, equipment and appliances, furniture, clothing, books, and similar property. It does not include property which is for

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resale or disposal rather than for use by the employee or members of his immediate family; nor does it include such items as automobiles, station wagons, motorcycles, and similar motor vehicles, airplanes, mobile homes, camper trailers, boats, birds, pets, livestock, cordwood, building materials, property belonging to any persons other than the employee or his immediate family, or any property intended for use in conducting a business or other commercial enterprise."

Among the items specifically included in the definition of household goods are appliances, clothing and books--items which Mr. Jones transported. Inasmuch as shipment of household goods is authorized by para. 2-8 of the Federal Travel Regulations, Mr. Jones was eligible for reimbursement for the costs incurred in transporting his goods. However, he elected to use his transportation allowance to move a mobile home. Subsection 5724(b) of title 5, United States Code, and FTR para. 2-7.1a provide that the allowance for the transportation of a mobile dwelling is in place of reimbursement for the transportation of household goods and personal effects. Therefore, Mr. Jones is not eligible for reimbursement of transportation expenses for household goods under para. 2-8. B-184026, September 16, 1975, 55 Comp. Gen. ____.

Accordingly, the voucher may not be certified for payment.

R. F. KELLER

Deputy } Comptroller General
of the United States