

DECISION

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

FILE: B-184594

DATE: FEB 12 1976

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MATTER OF: John H. Martin -- Reimbursement of miscellaneous moving expenses.

DIGEST:

1. Employee, upon relocation to new duty station, submitted voucher for miscellaneous expenses allowance. Fee for inspection of new residence (other than for termites) is not allowable under Federal Travel Regulations (FTR 101-7) (May 1973). Such inspection is not reimbursable since it is not a required service customarily paid for by the purchaser of a residence and miscellaneous expenses allowance may not be used to reimburse employee for expenses disallowed under other parts of Federal Travel Regulations.
2. Employee, upon relocation to new duty station, submitted voucher for miscellaneous expenses allowance. Charges for disconnecting appliances at old residence and connecting them at new residence are allowable under Federal Travel Regulations to extent charges do not include cost of structural alteration such as installing wiring or venting a dryer. Case is remanded for administrative determination to what extent charges claimed are allowable.
3. Employee, upon relocation to new duty station, submitted voucher for miscellaneous expenses allowance. Charge for exterminating fleas at new residence is not allowable under Federal Travel Regulations. Charge, which is for consideration under allowance for real estate transaction, is not reimbursable since it is cost of house maintenance and is not required service customarily paid for by purchaser. Further, miscellaneous expenses allowance may not be used to reimburse employee expenses disallowed under other parts of regulations.
4. Employee, upon relocation to new duty station, submitted voucher for miscellaneous expenses allowance. Charges for connecting telephone and obtaining driver's licenses and automobile tax.

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This action is in response to the request for a decision by Ms. Elaine K. Shelleman, an authorized certifying officer of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, regarding payment of the voucher of Mr. John H. Martin for miscellaneous moving expenses incurred in connection with a permanent change of duty station.

The record indicates that Mr. Martin was transferred from St. Louis, Missouri, to Washington, D.C., and was allowed \$200 for miscellaneous expenses incurred in connection with the transfer in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7) (May 1973), para. 2-3.3a(2). However, Mr. Martin has claimed the following items as his miscellaneous moving expenses:

1) Inspection of house under condition of real estate contract	\$110.00
2) Disconnection of washer and dryer in former residence	13.75
3) Connection of telephone	20.00
4) Installation of washer and dryer in new residence	97.12
5) Extermination charge from fleas in basement which were not discovered or discoverable prior to previous owners leaving possession of premises	65.00
6) Fees for obtaining auto licenses for spouse and self	20.00
7) Fees for obtaining auto license tags for two automobiles	<u>142.00</u>
	\$467.87

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He seeks an additional miscellaneous expenses allowance of \$267.87 (\$467.87 less \$200 previously paid).

The Federal Travel Regulations, chapter 2, part 3, provide for a miscellaneous expenses allowance in order to defray the various costs associated with discontinuing a residence at an old duty station and establishing a residence at a new duty station in connection with a permanent transfer of station. Para. 2-3.1a. In addition, part 6 of chapter 2, Federal Travel Regulations, allows reimbursement for incidental charges for required services customarily paid by the seller/purchaser in connection with a residence transaction. Para. 2-6.2f.

The record indicates that the house inspection, item 1, was made at Mr. Martin's demand and at his expense on the house he purchased at his new duty station. Since the expense was incurred incident to the purchase of a house, the question as to whether it is reimbursable is for consideration under Para. 2-6f of the Federal Travel Regulations. The inspection was apparently concerned with the physical condition of the house, excluding a termite inspection, since under an Addendum to the sales contract the seller was required to provide evidence of a satisfactory termite inspection. Our Office has held that the cost of a termite inspection is reimbursable as a required service customarily paid by the seller or buyer (B-176531, November 29, 1973; B-175918, June 15, 1972), but the house inspection in this case does not appear to be reimbursable as a required service customarily paid by the purchaser of a residence at the new duty station as contemplated by para. 2-6.2f of the Federal Travel Regulations and may not be allowed under that regulation. Therefore, since the miscellaneous expenses allowance may not be used to reimburse an employee for expenses disallowed elsewhere in the Federal Travel Regulations, item 1 is not reimbursable. Para. 2-3.1c.

With regard to items 2 and 4, the Federal Travel Regulations allow reimbursement of the fees for disconnecting and connecting appliances. Para. 2-3.1b(1). Therefore, item 2 is reimbursable. However, Mr. Martin has noted on his voucher that the charges for installation of the washer and dryer in his new residence (item 4) included installation of an air vent through a wall. Our Office

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has held that the costs incurred in the installation of a 220 volt circuit or in venting a dryer are not allowable as they reflect costs of structural alterations (para. 2-3.1c (13)). B-172333, April 23, 1971; B-164111, June 10, 1968; B-161582, November 2, 1967. Accordingly, reimbursement for item 4 may not be made until Mr. Martin furnishes an itemized bill showing what the charge for connecting the dryer was exclusive of charges for structural alterations.

Mr. Martin's claim for the flea extermination charge, item 5, is analogous to claims for the cost of exterminating termites. Such claims are for consideration under para. 2-6.2f of the Federal Travel Regulations. As noted above, we have allowed reimbursement of termite inspection fees as a required service customarily paid by the seller or buyer of a residence, but we have denied reimbursement for termite extermination since this is a part of house maintenance. B-172111, May 16, 1971; B-163331, May 1, 1966. Extermination of fleas appears to be a cost of house maintenance and as such is not reimbursable. Since it is for maintenance under para. 2-6.2f of the Federal Travel Regulations, it may not be reimbursed as part of the miscellaneous expense allowance. Para. 2-3.1c.

Finally, items 3, 6, and 7 appear allowable as costs within the contemplation of para. 2-3.1b (1) and (6) of the Federal Travel Regulations.

Accordingly, the voucher is returned for action in accordance with the above.

R. F. KELLER

Deputy] Comptroller General
of the United States