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DECISION

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

FILE: B-189406

DATE: February 8, 1978

MATTER OF: Spencer T. Thomas - Relocation Expenses -
Time Limitation on Shipment of Household
Goods

DIGEST: Employee, transferred from Madison to Milwaukee placed household goods in storage in Milwaukee within the 2-year time limitation without designating final destination of shipment. After more than 2 years from date of transfer, employee had household goods shipped to new residence. Employee may not be reimbursed cost of shipment to residence as prior shipment from Madison to storage point does not operate to bring later shipment within 2-year time limitation for reimbursement under para. 2-1.5a(2) of Federal Travel Regulations. In addition, there is no authority under para. 2-8.2c to allow claimant reimbursement for storage of household goods in excess of 60 days. See Comp. Gen. decs. cited.

This action is in response to a request for an advance decision by Mr. William I. Cooper, an authorized certifying officer of the Small Business Administration (SEA), as to whether Mr. Spencer T. Thomas, an agency employee is entitled to additional reimbursement for temporary storage and cost of handling and the delivery of his household goods from storage incident to his transfer from Madison, Wisconsin, to Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The record shows that Mr. Thomas transferred from Madison to Milwaukee on April 28, 1974, and was accompanied by his dependents. On April 27, 1976, Mr. Thomas consigned his household goods to a carrier for shipment to Milwaukee for temporary storage. Mr. Thomas' household goods were in temporary storage from April 27, 1976, until the date they were shipped to his new residence in Waukesha, Wisconsin, on January 4, 1977.

We note that the Bill of Lading No. 4085, dated April 27, 1976, shows that the net weight of the shipment of Mr. Thomas' household

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goods was 12,450 pounds. Since para. 2-8.2a of the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) (FPMR 101-7, May 1973) limits reimbursement for the costs of transportation of household goods to a maximum weight of 11,000 pounds for an employee with immediate family, any payment made to Mr. Thomas for the transportation of household goods in excess of 11,000 pounds should be collected.

Mr. Thomas now claims reimbursement of a total amount of \$923.50 representing \$747.50 for the cost of temporary storage of his household goods for the period July through December 1976 at Milwaukee and \$176 for the cost of handling and delivery of his household goods from storage in Milwaukee to his residence in Wakesha.

Reimbursement to Federal employees for travel and transportation expenses and relocation expenses resulting from transfers from one official station to another for permanent duty is governed respectively by 5 U.S.C. 5724 and 5724a (1970), and regulations issued pursuant thereto. The applicable regulations in force and effect at the time the claimed expenses were incurred are found in the FTR. Paragraph 2-1.5a(2) of the FTR, provides that the maximum time for beginning allowable travel and transportation cannot exceed 2 years from the effective date of the employee's transfer or appointment with certain exceptions not applicable in this case.

In applying the words "transportation shall not exceed 2 years from the effective date of the employee's transfer" appearing in FTR para. 2-1.5a(2), it is proper to consider the beginning of the transportation of household goods as the time the common carriers' liability attaches to the shipment, namely the time the common carrier receives the goods with an order to forward them to a particular destination. See 29 Comp. Gen. 100 (1949).

Concerning Mr. Thomas' request for reimbursement for temporary storage of his household goods in excess of 60 days, the FTR para. 2-8.2c provides, with an exception not pertinent here, that reimbursement for temporary storage shall not exceed 60 days. Accordingly, since Mr. Thomas' household effects were transported to his new duty station to be placed in storage within the 2-year time limitation he would be entitled to reimbursement of temporary storage for a period not to exceed 60 days.


With respect to Mr. Thomas' claim for transportation and handling costs incident to the shipment on January 4, 1977, of his household goods from temporary storage in Milwaukee to his new

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residence in that area, our Office has held that where the final destination of the shipment is not designated, the earlier transportation, within the 2-year time limitation, of household goods from the old duty station to storage in the locality of the new duty station will not operate to satisfy the requirements of FTR para. 2-1.5a(2) with respect to the later shipment from the storage point to the new residence which began after the expiration of the 2-year period. See B-181360, January 22, 1975.

Accordingly, since Mr. Thomas had not designated the destination of the shipment of his household goods until the shipment from the storage point on January 4, 1977, or after the expiration of the 2-year time period, Mr. Thomas is not entitled to reimbursement for costs of the shipment from storage to his new residence.

Action on the claim should be taken in accordance with the foregoing.


Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States