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DECISION



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

FILE: B-203015

DATE: February 19, 1982

MATTER OF: William T. Lebo - Reimbursement for
Dependents' Relocation Travel

DIGEST: When employee and dependents are authorized to travel between official duty stations by commercial air or privately owned vehicle (POV) in connection with a permanent change of station, employee's election to travel unaccompanied by POV does not limit his entitlement to reimbursement for dependents' air travel from alternate point of origin to constructive cost of dependents' concurrent travel by POV since dependents are not required to accompany employee. There is no requirement for authorization of dependents' separate travel by mode approved in travel order. Reimbursement for dependents' travel from alternate point of origin may not exceed constructive cost of common carrier transportation between old and new duty stations. M. K. Farnsworth, B-183563, May 4, 1976, modified.

This action is in response to the request of Mr. H. O. Miller, an Accounting and Finance Officer of the Defense Logistics Agency, U.S. Department of Defense, for an advance decision concerning the entitlement of Mr. William T. Lebo to reimbursement for the constructive cost of the transportation of his wife and daughter to his new permanent duty station.

Incident to Mr. Lebo's permanent change of station (PCS) transfer from the Air Force Audit Agency, Fairborn, Ohio, to the Defense Audit Service, Arlington, Virginia, he was authorized travel for himself, his wife and daughter between official duty stations by commercial air. Travel by privately owned vehicle (POV) was also approved as advantageous to the Government. In anticipation of his transfer, Mr. Lebo sold his home in Fairborn and temporarily moved his dependents to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where they were residing when he accepted the new position.

He traveled by POV from Fairborn to his new duty station. His wife and daughter later traveled by commercial air from Oklahoma City to the Washington, D.C., area. In addition to a mileage allowance for his own travel by POV, Mr. Lebo claims reimbursement for his dependents' transportation limited to the constructive cost of commercial air travel between Fairborn, Ohio, and the Washington, D.C., area. Specifically, he claims the constructive cost of his family's travel by POV from Fairborn

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to the Dayton, Ohio, air carrier terminal and the commercial fare for air travel from there to Washington, D.C. He also claims the actual cost of their travel by POV from Washington National Airport to their residence in Alexandria, Virginia.

The Accounting and Finance Officer asks whether our holding in M. K. Farnsworth, B-183563, May 4, 1976, requires that reimbursement for the travel of Mr. Lebo's dependents be "limited to the constructive cost of their travel as if they had accompanied him by POV."

In Farnsworth, the employee and his wife traveled to his new duty station by POV, but the travel of the employee's 16-month-old child was delayed due to illness. The infant subsequently traveled by commercial air, but was required by airline regulations to be accompanied by an adult attendant. The employee claimed the constructive cost of his child's travel by POV instead of by commercial air carrier. We held that the cost of the attendant's transportation was attributable to the infant's travel, for which the employee could be reimbursed, limited, however, to the constructive cost of the child's travel by POV with her parents, "since his travel authorization did not contemplate travel by him and his dependents by different modes of travel." M. K. Farnsworth, supra. Upon further review, we find that this decision is unnecessarily restrictive in limiting the employee's reimbursement to the cost of accompanied travel by POV.

Under the provisions of Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) (FPMR 101-7) (May 1973), paragraph 2-2.2 and paragraphs C7000 and C7000-1 of Volume 2 of the Joint Travel Regulations (2 JTR), as applicable to the Department of Defense, an employee is entitled to the travel and transportation expenses of dependents from one duty station to another in connection with the employee's permanent change of station. In addition to the general presumption that travel by common carrier is advantageous to the Government, the regulations provide that when an employee uses his POV for permanent change of station travel, such travel also will be considered advantageous. See FTR paragraph 1-2.2c(1) (as amended by FPMR Temp. Reg. A-11, Supp. 8) and FTR paragraph 2-2.3 (May 1973). Paragraph C7001-3 of the JTR specifically provides that dependents are not required to accompany the employee by POV, should he elect that mode of travel. In recognizing the rule that separate travel is authorized, this regulation is consistent with FTR paragraph 2-2.2 which, insofar as pertinent, provides that travel of the immediate family may begin at a

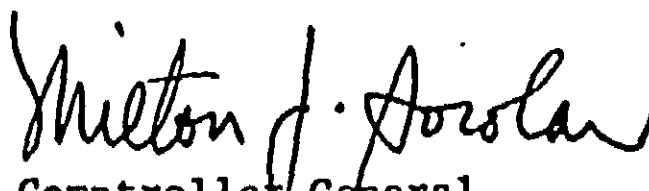
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point other than the employee's old duty station, provided that the cost to the Government "shall not exceed the allowable cost by the usually traveled route between the employee's old and new official stations."

Thus, when an employee's dependents travel by commercial carrier as authorized, the employee's entitlement to reimbursement for their travel is not limited to the constructive cost of travel by POV as if they had accompanied him. See Ronald D. Beeman, 60 Comp. Gen. 38 (1980) and B-150935, July 23, 1970. If travel by common carrier or POV has been authorized, and the employee travels by POV, there is no requirement for a separate authorization of dependents' unaccompanied travel by the authorized common carrier.

To the extent that M. K. Farnsworth, B-183563, supra, expresses a different rule, it is hereby modified. See Harold R. Jordan, B-191284, September 22, 1978, in which we held that an employee who had traveled by POV was entitled to reimbursement for the transportation of his dependent by common carrier. Accordingly, Mr. Lebo's entitlement to the transportation expenses of his dependents is not limited to the constructive cost of accompanied travel from Dayton to Alexandria by POV.

Since the travel of Mr. Lebo's dependents to his new duty station originated in Oklahoma City instead of his prior duty station, he may be reimbursed for the cost of their transportation, not to exceed the constructive cost of air travel from Dayton, Ohio, to Washington, D.C. See James C. Myers, B-181573, February 27, 1975. The constructive cost computation should include airfare as well as the usual taxicab-limousine fare for travel to and from the respective air terminals. Richard J. Walman, B-194061, September 12, 1979.

for 
Comptroller General
of the United States