



The Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

Decision

Matter of: Dan Wendling

File: B-224048

Date: April 24, 1987

DIGEST

Employee completed his temporary duty in Oklahoma City at 6 p.m. on Friday, but remained at his temporary duty point until Sunday when he returned by air to his permanent duty station in Memphis. He was not required to travel during unreasonable hours and reimbursement of his air travel expense is based on the constructive cost of the next available flight on Saturday with the extra expense of the flight made on Sunday for the employee's convenience to be borne by him.

DECISION

A decision is requested whether an employee may be paid the extra cost of air travel based on constructive cost comparison which was deducted from the reimbursement of his travel expenses when he interrupted his travel by not returning to his permanent duty station on the next available flight after completion of temporary duty.^{1/} We conclude that the employee may not be paid since when an employee for his convenience interrupts travel by a direct route, the employee shall pay the additional expense.

Mr. Dan Wendling, an employee of the Defense Logistics Agency assigned to the Defense Industrial Plant Equipment Center, Memphis, Tennessee, performed temporary duty at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma. Since he completed his temporary duty at 6 p.m. on Friday, May 2, 1986, he was unable to take his scheduled return flight on Friday. He remained at his temporary duty point until Sunday, May 4, 1986, when he returned to his permanent duty station, and the reimbursement of his expenses was based on a constructive cost comparison.

^{1/} Ms. Patricia N. Shipp, Accounting and Finance Officer, Defense Depot, Memphis, Tennessee, submitted the request for a decision and it has been assigned control number 86-15 by the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee.

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Since he was not required to travel during unreasonable hours (12 p.m. on Friday until 6 a.m. on Saturday), the cost comparison was based on the next available flight after 6 a.m. on Saturday, May 3, 1986. The airfare for that flight was \$101. However, the airfare on the flight that Mr. Wendling actually used on Sunday was \$203, which was \$102 more than it would have been had he taken the Saturday flight. This amount was deducted from the reimbursement of Mr. Wendling's travel expenses.


Mr. Wendling has submitted a voucher claiming payment for the additional cost of air travel deducted from his travel reimbursement. He contends that after completing his assignment at 6 p.m. on Friday he was unable to take his flight as scheduled and there were no other flights available that night. Realizing that he would have to travel on his own time, he decided to delay his departure until Sunday. However, the ticket cost \$102 more than it would have had he traveled on the next available Saturday flight. The only reason it cost \$102 more was because he delayed his return travel until Sunday as a matter of personal preference.

Regulations governing travel of Federal employees are contained in Chapter 1 of the Federal Travel Regulations, FPMR 101-7 (September 1981) incorp. by ref., 41 C.F.R. § 101-7.003 (1986) (FTR). Paragraph 1-2.5b thereof concerning interrupted travel provides:

"b. Indirect-route or interrupted travel.
When a person for his/her own convenience travels by an indirect route or interrupts travel by direct route, the extra expense shall be borne by him/her. Reimbursement for expenses shall be based only on such charges as would have been incurred by a usually traveled route.* * *"

Mr. Wendling was required to begin his return travel to his permanent duty station after completion of his temporary duty using the first flight scheduled at a reasonable hour on Saturday. His delay in returning until Sunday, for his own convenience, amounted to an interruption of his official travel. Therefore, reimbursement for his expenses was based on such charges as would have been incurred had he traveled on Saturday. Thus, his reimbursement for airfare on his return travel was limited to \$101, the constructive cost of the direct route flights available on Saturday.

Accordingly, the claim for payment for the additional cost of the air travel deducted from Mr. Wendling's travel reimbursement is denied.

for 
Comptroller General
of the United States