

# DECISION



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

157

FILE:

B-181903

MATTER OF:

DATE: NOV 6 1975

✓ - Multiple-Person Travel Voucher

## DIGEST:

1. Expenses incurred by international visitors and paid for by contract escort are not reimbursable on voucher form SF 1012 since each traveler is required to sign voucher to claim reimbursement for authorized travel expenses which he personally incurred in the performance of his official travel. However, assuming that travel authorizations have been obtained, the travel expenses may be claimed and paid on SF 1164 ("Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business") or SF 1034 ("Public Voucher for Purchases and Services other than Personal").
2. If multiple-person travel voucher would serve the purpose of paying for travel expenses incurred for foreign journalists touring the United States under arrangements with the United States Travel Service, Department of Commerce should seek approval by Administrator of General Services Administration in accordance with para. 1-11.3a of the Federal Travel Regulations.

An authorized certifying officer of the United States Department of Commerce has requested a decision as to whether he may certify for payment a multiple person travel voucher under the circumstances stated below.

To achieve the objectives of the International Travel Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U. S. C. § 2121, et seq., the United States Travel Service, Department of Commerce, conducts familiarization tours of the United States for foreign journalists. The purpose of this program is to promote the publication of travel articles which will stimulate interest in and encourage travel to the United States by foreign residents.

Initially each of the journalists in a tour group was furnished a separate travel advance and each was required to submit a travel voucher to account for expenditures. This procedure was not

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satisfactory because many of the foreign journalists did not communicate in English, were unfamiliar with payment requirements for services received, and experienced much difficulty in the preparation and documentation of their travel vouchers.

To correct these deficiencies, the United States Travel Service has initiated a new procedure, under which a tour guide is furnished a travel advance for all persons in the tour party and is responsible for the payment of the expenses of all persons in the party. The tour guide is under contract and is responsible for the proper preparation and documentation of a travel voucher covering the expenditures of all persons in the tour party. Since the tour guide is a stateside resident, any corrections or adjustments necessary in the travel voucher are more readily facilitated.

The travel voucher (SF 1012) in this case was prepared by Mr. , a contract escort and covers the expenses of a group of French journalists. The contract between the Government and Mr. indicates that his travel expenses are to be allowed in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Travel Regulations with certain exceptions, one of which provides that in the case of escort assignments with international visitors, the contractor shall be authorized a fixed per diem of no less than \$25, nor more than \$35. The voucher indicates that this exception has been used to authorize a flat rate per diem of \$25 and to compute per diem on a whole-day basis. On the basis of the contract provisions, the Federal Travel Regulations would be applicable to Mr. travel.

The voucher appears to be in order and payable only insofar as Mr. official travel expenses are concerned. We do not feel that the expenses incurred, and paid for by Mr. , for the international visitors are properly payable on the SF 1012. The voucher form SF 1012, should not be utilized as a multiple-payment voucher since each traveler is required to sign the voucher to claim reimbursement for authorized travel expenses which he personally incurred in his performance of official travel.

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The file does not include the travel authorizations for the international visitors nor does it indicate the travel expenses which they were authorized. However, it is assumed that such documents and authority can be furnished by the Department of Commerce or the United States Travel Service. On that basis, reimbursement for the travel expenses paid by Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ for the international visitors may be claimed and paid on SF 1164 ("Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business") or SF 1034 ("Public Voucher for Purchases and Services Other than Personal").

If a multiple voucher form would serve the purpose of paying travel expenses under the international visitors program, we recommend that the United States Travel Service seek approval from the Administrator of General Services to use such a form for future travel in accordance with paragraph 1-11.3a of the Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7, May 1973). Further, it may be possible to incorporate provisions into the contract with the interpreter/escort personnel to provide for their escort services to include payment of travel expenses of the entire visiting party and the payment for such services to be accomplished through commercial billing procedures.

The voucher for travel and transportation expenses is returned for processing in accordance with this decision.

~~NOT RECORDED~~

~~RECEIVED~~  
Comptroller General  
of the United States