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*E. Grammer
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DECISION



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

FILE: B-187233

DATE: January 28, 1977

**MATTER OF: James B. Nickel - Transportation costs of
shipping automobile**

**DIGEST: Claims Division denial of Navy employee's
claim for transportation costs of shipping
personal automobile upon change of official
station from California to Maryland is
sustained. Despite employee's argument
that auto without fuel due to national gas
shortage is nothing more than "stick of
furniture," authority for transportation
of household goods does not encompass
transportation of auto. 5 U.S.C. 5727(a)
(1970); FTR para. 2-1.4(h) (May 1973).**

This is in response to a letter dated June 3, 1976, in which Mr. James B. Nickel, a civilian employee of the Department of the Navy, appealed that part of our Claims Division settlement of July 18, 1975 which denied that part of his claim (\$826.79) for the shipment of his automobile. This claim represented the total cost of shipping Mr. Nickel's automobile from San Diego, California to Oxon Hill, Maryland, incident to a transfer of official station.

Mr. Nickel contends that his car is a household effect and the costs of its shipment may be reimbursed as such. He reasons:

"that an automobile for which a cross country traveler cannot rely on a steady purchase of necessary gasoline (due to national gas crisis) is nothing more than a stick of furniture."

Mr. Nickel now claims \$320.23 for the shipment of his "household effect type automobile." The reduction from the previous claim, he explains, is due to the fact that instead of requesting the total transportation costs for the car, he is now basing his claim "only on 1,060 lbs. of household goods shipment allowance not previously used."

Notwithstanding the exigencies of the national fuel crisis, the law is clear that the authority for reimbursement

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of costs for the shipment of household goods does not encompass the shipment of an automobile. An express statutory prohibition against the reimbursement Mr. Nickel seeks is contained in 5 U.S.C. 5727(a) (1970), which reads as follows:

"Except as specifically authorized by statute, an authorization in a statute or regulation to transport the effects of an employee or other individual at Government expense is not an authorization to transport an automobile."
(Emphasis added.)

Furthermore, paragraph 2-1.4(h) of the Federal Travel Regulations (FPMR 101-7) (May 1973), explicitly excludes automobiles from those items that may be counted as household goods. Our Office has consistently interpreted the term as excluding such items as automobiles. 53 Comp. Gen. 159 (1973); 52 id. 479 (1973); 50 id. 376 (1970).

Thus there is no authority for allowing Mr. Nickel's claim for the costs of shipping his car across the country. The denial by the Claims Division for reimbursement of the cost of transporting Mr. Nickel's automobile is hereby sustained.


Deputy Comptroller General
of the United States