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**DECISION**



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

**FILE:** B-201921

**DATE:** June 2, 1981

**MATTER OF:** Master Sergeant , USAF

**DIGEST:** Member of the Air Force is assigned to Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SeaTac), and occupies Government quarters at McChord Air Force Base, Washington. Member may be reimbursed for transportation costs between McChord and SeaTac as travel for official business under 37 U.S.C. § 408 (1976), where he is ordered to begin and end daily duty with delivery of official documents at McChord, even though member's quarters are at McChord and, if not required to deliver documents, member would be responsible for commuting costs between McChord and SeaTac.

May a member of the uniformed services be paid a mileage allowance for the use of his privately owned vehicle while on official business even though this travel is actually the same travel he performs in commuting from his lodgings to his duty station? The answer is yes.

This case was presented to our Office for an advance decision by the Accounting and Finance Officer, Headquarters 62d Military Airlift Wing (MAC), McChord Air Force Base, Washington, and concerns the propriety of reimbursing certain travel expenses incurred by Master Sergeant . The request has been assigned PDTATAC Control No. 81-4, by the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee.

Sergeant is stationed at the 62d Aerial Port Squadron, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SeaTac). Sergeant quarters are at McChord Air Force Base, 29 miles from SeaTac. While he had the option of living near SeaTac in Government-leased or individually procured housing or at McChord in base quarters, he chose the latter since a recommendation had been submitted to provide Government transportation from McChord to SeaTac. This request for Government transportation was not approved at the time involved; however, it has been requested again.

Twice daily, travel documents must be transported between SeaTac and McChord. Although he is officially assigned to SeaTac, Sergeant has been directed to

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begin and end his daily duty with retrieval and delivery of the travel documents at the McChord passenger terminal, located near his quarters. Sergeant uses his own automobile for the 29-mile trip between McChord and SeaTac.

The Deputy Commander for Resource Management at McChord has authorized funds for reimbursing Sergeant for the trips between McChord and SeaTac. The Accounting and Finance Officer now asks whether the trips should be regarded as non-reimbursable, domicile-to-duty travel, even though Sergeant stops en route at the passenger terminal to retrieve official documents.

Pursuant to 37 U.S.C. § 408 (1976), a member of a uniformed service may be reimbursed for the cost of transportation necessary in the conduct of official business within the limits of his duty station. Volume 1 of the Joint Travel Regulations (1 JTR), para. M4500, et seq., implementing section 408, prescribe the basis for reimbursement for travel within and adjacent to permanent and temporary duty stations. Paragraph M4502-1 of 1 JTR in effect at the time provided that when authorized or approved under the conditions of that part, members who traveled by privately owned automobile were entitled to be reimbursed at the rate of 20 cents per mile.

In general, travel between a member's residence and his place of duty is considered the personal responsibility of the member and is not regarded as travel on official business under 37 U.S.C. § 408. See 48 Comp. Gen. 124, 128 (1968). If Sergeant had not been directed to begin and end his daily duty at McChord, the general rule would require him to bear the costs for commuting from his quarters to SeaTac, his duty station. However, because Sergeant duty effectively begins and ends at the base passenger terminal, we conclude that his personal commuting costs are limited to travel between his quarters and the terminal.

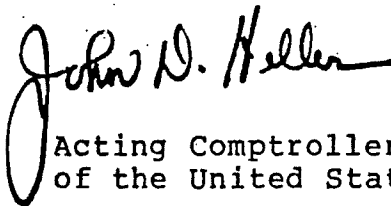
The stops at the passenger terminal clearly are for the convenience of the Government in that delivery of the travel documents is necessary in accomplishing SeaTac's mission. Thus, it is our view that Sergeant travel between McChord and SeaTac constitutes travel on official business

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for which he may be reimbursed in accordance with 37 U.S.C. § 408 and 1 JTR para. M4502. ✓

Accordingly, the voucher is returned and may be certified for payment if otherwise correct.

The foregoing is based on the premise that there is no other reasonable means for transporting the documents between SeaTac and McChord. If in fact there is a regular transportation service between SeaTac and McChord which could be used to transport the documents we believe assigning the task to Sergeant is inappropriate since it has the effect of reimbursing him for travel between his residence and place of duty.



Acting Comptroller General  
of the United States