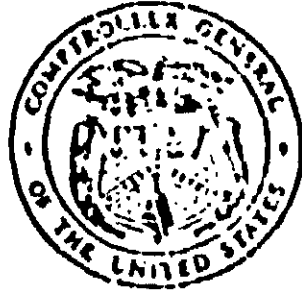


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DECISION



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

FILE: B-207089

DATE: July 19, 1982

MATTER OF: Brian M. Bruh-Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses-Shared Lodging

DIGEST: An employee shared a private residence leased by another Government employee and the employee's daughter shared an apartment with a fellow college student during the period for which temporary quarters subsistence expenses are claimed. The shared apartment arrangement involves considerations different from the rules which pertain to lodgings furnished by a friend or relative, where it is difficult to place a value on the services furnished. An employee who shares responsibility for private quarters with another individual generally shares expenses on a pro rata basis at a fixed monthly amount. Therefore, he need not supply evidence that additional expense resulted from his lodging.

John M. Gregg, Chief, Financial Services Branch, General Services Administration (GSA), Washington, D.C., requests an advance decision concerning the propriety of certifying for payment a voucher submitted by Brian M. Bruh for temporary quarters subsistence expenses (TQSE) for himself and his daughter following his transfer and permanent change of station from the Internal Revenue Service in Boston, Massachusetts, to GSA in Washington, D.C., in July 1980.

The issue for determination is whether an employee who shares responsibility for private quarters with another individual, during the period for which TQSE is claimed, is required to submit evidence of additional cost which resulted from his lodging in accordance with the standard of proof applicable to cases in which a friend or relative furnishes the employee's lodging. For the reasons set forth below, we hold that the rules pertaining to an employee who utilizes the facilities of a friend or relative do not apply in the context of shared apartment arrangements.

Mr. Bruh reported for duty at his new official duty station on July 7, 1980, and shared an apartment with another Government employee during the period July 6 through October 25, 1980. Mr. Bruh's claim for \$275, representing lodging expenses incurred during the period September 19 to October 19, 1980, is accompanied by a canceled check in the amount of \$275 payable to the employee, and his signed statement that Mr. Bruh stayed at his residence and contributed to expenses at a monthly rate of \$275.

Mr. Bruh's daughter also incurred lodging expenses of \$120 during the period September 19 to October 19, 1980, and this amount represents half the monthly rent for an apartment which she shared with a fellow college student for 60 days prior to moving into her family's permanent residence at the new duty station. In support of this portion of the claim, Mr. Bruh has submitted a canceled check in the amount of \$120 payable to Ms. Bruh's roommate.

As indicated by the agency, we have held that where an employee seeks reimbursement for temporary quarters occupied at the home of a friend or a relative, his claim may not be paid where the employee has not furnished information as to whether the friend or relative incurred additional expenses to furnish the employee lodgings. See Richard Ennis, B-190716, May 9, 1978. Therefore we have stated that the burden is on the employee to prove the additional expense caused by the lodging. Richard W. Metzler, B-191673, December 5, 1978. The above rules are dictated by the language of paragraph 2-5.4 of the Federal Travel Regulations, FPMR 101-7 (May 1973) (FTR), which, in part, limits reimbursement for occupancy of temporary quarters to subsistence expenses actually incurred.

We do not believe that the standard applicable to reimbursement of lodging expenses of an employee utilizing the facilities of a friend or relative would be an appropriate standard to apply where, as here, the employee or his dependent shares responsibility for leased quarters with another individual. The problems of proof associated with a claim for the costs of lodging with a friend or relative are not present in the shared apartment arrangement since, in the latter situation, it is generally assumed that expenses will be shared on a pro rata basis. Thus, the actual basis for reimbursement can be readily determined since

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the expenses are usually in the form of monthly rent and are paid to a third party in a fixed amount. This is not so in the situation where one resides with a friend or relative, since it is difficult to place a value, if any, on the services furnished.

Neither Mr. Bruh nor his daughter occupied temporary quarters in the homes of a friend or relative, but instead entered into shared apartment arrangements during the period for which TQSE is claimed. Thus, the documentation submitted by Mr. Bruh evidencing the amounts paid to the individuals with whom the private quarters were shared provides a sufficient basis for reimbursement. Accordingly, the voucher may be certified for payment.

for Milton J. Fowler
Comptroller General
of the United States