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DECISION



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

FILE: B-210867

DATE: July 13, 1983

MATTER OF: Robert B. Wood

DIGEST:

Transferred employee, who shipped 4,250 pounds of household goods and personal effects separately from his mobile home because carrier required that mobile homes over 70 feet long shipped by lowboy trailer be empty, may not be reimbursed for cost of that shipment. Allowance for movement of mobile home is in lieu of allowance for shipping household goods.

The issue in this decision is whether an employee who ships a mobile home to his new duty station under a Government Bill of Lading may be reimbursed for the cost of shipping household goods separately, where the shipping company required the mobile home to be emptied of all furniture and other personal effects. The answer is that the employee may not be reimbursed for the cost of separately shipping his household goods, since the applicable statute and regulations do not permit reimbursement for shipment of household goods when the Government incurs the cost of transporting a mobile home to his new duty station under 5 U.S.C. § 5724(b).

An authorized certifying officer at the Department of Agriculture's National Finance Center has requested an advance decision on the propriety of reimbursing Mr. Robert B. Wood, an employee of the Forest Service, for the cost of shipping his household goods when the Government has incurred the cost of transporting a mobile home to his new duty station. Mr. Wood was authorized a permanent change of duty station from Dillon, Colorado, to Mammoth Lakes, California, by a travel authorization dated August 13, 1982. His mobile home was shipped under Government Bill of Lading by Morgan Drive Away. Due to the size of the mobile home, Morgan Drive Away transported it by means of a lowboy trailer. Morgan required that all household goods and personal effects be removed from the mobile home in accordance with its policy for transporting mobile homes exceeding a length of 70 feet. Therefore, Mr. Wood was required to ship 4,250 pounds of household goods and personal effects separately. He has requested reimbursement based on the commuted rate in the amount of \$1,608.60 for transporting his household goods.

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The certifying officer asks whether, due to the unusual circumstances presented, Mr. Wood may be allowed both transportation of his mobile home and transportation of his household goods and, if so, whether reimbursement for transportation of household goods would be limited to the actual costs incurred.

Under 5 U.S.C. § 5724(b) (1976) transportation of a "house trailer or mobile dwelling" is authorized for an employee who "otherwise would be entitled to transportation of household goods." The requirements for eligibility are set forth in paragraph 2-7.1a of the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR) (FPMR 101-7, November 1981) which provides, in pertinent part, that:

* * * An employee who is entitled to transportation of his/her household goods under these regulations shall, instead of such transportation, be entitled to an allowance, as provided in this part, for the transportation of a mobile home for use as a residence. * * *

Under the statute and implementing regulations, payment of the cost of transporting a mobile home is in lieu of paying for the shipment of household goods. Both allowances cannot be paid for the same transfer, even if they would not, in the aggregate, exceed the maximum allowance for the shipment of household goods. 51 Comp. Gen. 27 (1971). Reimbursement for separate transportation of household goods has been denied in situations similar to Mr. Wood's where the carrier would not accept the mobile home weighing more than the manufacturer's weight and where the carrier would only insure factory installed items. Matter of Lightner, B-184908, May 26, 1976; Matter of Weber, B-180943, October 2, 1974.

Accordingly, Mr. Wood may not be reimbursed for the cost of shipping 4,250 pounds of personal effects and household goods separately from his mobile home. Since reimbursement may not be allowed, we will not comment on the measure of reimbursement.

for *Harry R. Van Cleave*
Comptroller General
of the United States