



The Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

Decision

Matter of: Dora M. Perez - Reimbursement for Lodging
Reservations
File: B-225155
Date: July 16, 1987

DIGEST

An employee made confirmed reservations at a motel by using her credit card for nine other employees and herself who were scheduled for temporary duty. The employee and seven of the other employees made reasonable attempts to locate the motel on the first night but could not do so due to an erroneous address in a General Services Administration (GSA) Directory. The employee incurred liability of \$276.48 for eight no-show reservations, and her agency has determined that she acted in a reasonable manner and in her official capacity. We grant her claim in these circumstances in which the failure to locate the proper motel and consequent liability for no-show reservations was due to an erroneous address in the GSA Directory.

DECISION

This decision is in response to a request for an advance decision from Mr. Peter H. Tovar, Chief, Accounting and Finance Division, Office of Comptroller, Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), Alexandria, Virginia, forwarded here by indorsement from the Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Allowance Committee (PDTATAC), which has assigned this matter PDTATAC Control No. 86-17. At issue is the entitlement of Ms. Dora M. Perez to reimbursement for her own and seven other persons' motel reservations which were forfeited to the motel for reasons beyond her control. For the following reasons, we hold that Ms. Perez is entitled to reimbursement for the forfeited reservation deposits.

BACKGROUND

Ms. Dora M. Perez and nine other employees of DLA in the area of San Francisco, California, were assigned temporary duty to attend a Professional Development Center course at Rancho Santiago College in Garden Grove, California. On March 20, 1986, motel reservations were made at the Travel

Lodge Motel in Garden Grove, California. Ms. Perez confirmed the first night's reservations for the 10 employees by using her Master Card number since none of the other employees had a credit card available for use. Upon arriving in Garden Grove, only two of the 10 employees were able to find the Travel Lodge Motel because an erroneous address had been listed for it in the General Services Administration's Federal Hotel/Motel Discount Directory. There was no motel at the address given. After driving around looking for the Travel Lodge Motel and not being able to find it in the telephone book or by contacting the information operator, Ms. Perez and the other seven employees checked into another motel. Although these circumstances were explained to the Travel Lodge Corporation headquarters in San Diego, California, and to the General Services Administration, Ms. Perez was required to pay \$276.48 for eight no-show reservations. She seeks reimbursement from DLA, and in its report, DLA recommends that this claim be approved.

OPINION

Title 5, U.S.C. § 5702 (1982) provides that under regulations prescribed by the General Services Administration an employee may be reimbursed for the necessary expenses of official travel. While those regulations contain no specific provision under which forfeited deposits for hotel reservations may be reimbursed, the regulations provide generally that an employee is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. Federal Travel Regulations, para. 1-1.3a (Supp. 1, September 28, 1981), incorp. by ref., 41 C.F.R. § 101-7.003.

Our decisions have held that reimbursable travel costs may include forfeited room deposits and that when employees reserve hotel accommodations for a temporary duty assignment and forfeit the room deposit because the assignment is canceled, the Government will reimburse reasonable costs incurred. See Miguel H. Cintron, B-221662, July 28, 1986, citing Rainey and Morse, 59 Comp. Gen. 612 (1980). Also, we have allowed payment to Government travelers for the cost of hotel rooms they have rented but, because of unforeseen circumstances, they could not use. For example, in

Milton J. Olsen, 60 Comp. Gen. 630 (1981), we held that regardless of entitlement to per diem or actual subsistence expenses, the cost of unused lodgings may be paid as a travel expense if it is determined that the lodgings were not used because of a change in government requirements. See also Loida Velilla, B-214204, October 19, 1984; Darwin L. Lee, B-198699, October 6, 1980.

In the present case, DLA has determined that Ms. Perez acted in a reasonable manner and in her official capacity when she made the lodging reservations and attempted to ensure that accommodations were available for other employees and herself on a training assignment. Thus, on the basis of our cases cited above, we find that Ms. Perez' claim of \$276.48 for reimbursement of no-show lodging reservations may be paid in these circumstances in which the failure to locate the proper motel and consequent liability for no-show reservations was due to an erroneous address in the GSA Directory.

Accordingly, the agency may certify for payment Ms. Perez' supplemental voucher for these lodgings reservations.

for Larry D. Van Cleave
Comptroller General
of the United States