



**The Comptroller General
of the United States**

Washington, D.C. 20548

Billard

Decision

Matter of: Jack K. Huffman III - Household Goods - Available
Scales - Constructive Weight

File: B-233346

Date: June 12, 1989

DIGEST

An employee's claim for reimbursement on the commuted rate basis for the transportation of household goods in his pickup truck, which he used to travel to his new official duty station, was disallowed because it was supported only by an estimate of weight rather than actual scale weight. On appeal from the disallowance, the claimant submitted copies of weight certificates obtained more than 4 years after the transportation occurred by reloading and weighing the truck. The claim may not be allowed since scales were available during transportation and the weight certificates obtained years after the transportation occurred are not sufficient evidence.

DECISION

An employee claims reimbursement for transportation of household goods under the commuted rate system incident to a permanent change of station. For reasons to be explained, the claim may not be allowed.

BACKGROUND

In May 1983, Jack K. Huffman III, an employee of the Department of the Army, traveled from his old duty station at Fort Lee, Virginia, in his privately-owned pickup truck, to his new duty station at Fort Hood, Texas. He states that the truck was loaded with items of household goods, such as kitchen equipment, small appliances, and personal items, that he considered would be needed at his new duty station until he could move his family and the remainder of his

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household goods.^{1/} Mr. Huffman did not weigh his truck, although scales were available.

The Army paid Mr. Huffman a monetary allowance in lieu of transportation for his travel, but denied his claim for \$594.30 as reimbursement for the transportation of his household goods in his pickup truck based on the commuted rate applied to his weight estimate of 700 pounds. The Army forwarded the claim to our Claims Group as doubtful^{2/} because under the Joint Travel Regulations, vol. 2, para. C8000-2d (Change 208, Feb. 1, 1983), reimbursement on the commuted rate basis could not be made in the absence of weight certificates where adequate scales were available.

Our Claims Group disallowed the claim, concluding that there was insufficient evidence of weight, but indicated that some precedents of this Office permit claimants, who have moved themselves, to obtain weight certificates after completion of the transportation.^{3/} In his appeal Mr. Huffman requests reimbursement for the transportation of 1,180 pounds (rather than the original 700 pounds). He supports his appeal with weight certificates, dated in September 1987, when, according to his statement, he reloaded his pickup truck with most of the items he had moved (more than 4 years earlier) in the same vehicle. He also furnished a list of the items he weighed.

DISCUSSION

Our precedents, accepting weight certificates obtained after transportation occurred, are limited to very narrow facts. B-172979, July 9, 1971, and B-169117, Mar. 16, 1970. In Paul C. Warner, B-180897, Apr. 21, 1975, we explained that such certificates can be considered only where the transportation presented difficulties in determining the weight and when the weights were obtained within a relatively short period of time after the transportation.

Neither fact exists here. The weight certificates were not obtained until more than 4 years after the transportation,

^{1/} Mr. Huffman explains that the anticipated relocation of his family and household goods never occurred because of a change in his marital status.

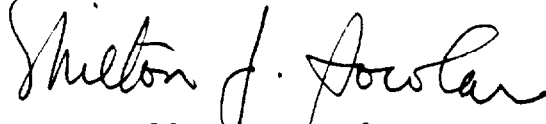
^{2/} The matter originated with the accounting and finance officer, Headquarters III Corps and Fort Hood, Texas.

^{3/} Settlement Certificate Z-2863312, March 23, 1987.

and Mr. Huffman states that he simply "forgot" to weigh the shipment during transportation.

Since scales were available to Mr. Huffman during transportation, his case is controlled by Phillip Rogers, B-199803, Mar. 25, 1981, which denied a claim for reimbursement under the commuted rate system in similar circumstances.

Accordingly, the disallowance of Mr. Huffman's claim is sustained.



Acting Comptroller General
of the United States