

Riedinger



The Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

Decision

Matter of: Patrick W. Whalen

File: B-234499

Date: August 29, 1989


DECISION

Mr. Whalen performed relocation travel by car accompanied by his wife, 18 year old dependent daughter, and non-dependent brother-in-law. He claims reimbursement for 4 days per diem and return travel by air for his brother-in-law. According to Mr. Whalen, he was unable to drive a vehicle or carry luggage due to a work-related injury. Therefore, he needed his brother-in-law's assistance in connection with his move.

Relocation travel reimbursement generally is limited to the employee and his or her immediate family. See 5 U.S.C. §§ 5724 and 5724a (1982); Federal Travel Regulations, incorp. by ref., 41 C.F.R. § 101-7.003 (1988), ch. 2, part 2. Our decisions have allowed travel expense reimbursement for other persons accompanying a transferred employee or the employee's dependents in unusual cases where the services of the other person were essential. See E. Breland Collier, 59 Comp. Gen. 675 (1980) (attendant for blind employee whose spouse also was blind); Harold R. Jordan, B-191284, Sept. 22, 1978 (escort for employee's minor children who traveled by air where airline regulations required such children to be accompanied by an adult).

In the present case, however, Mr. Whalen has made no showing that the services of his brother-in-law were essential, as opposed to being merely convenient. For example, there is no indication that Mr. Whalen's spouse and daughter could not have handled the driving and the luggage. Compare E. Breland Collier, supra, 59 Comp. Gen. at 677.

Accordingly, Mr. Whalen's claim may not be allowed.


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General Counsel

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