



Comptroller General
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20548

Decision

CP

Matter of:

File: B-246482

Date: March 25, 1992

DIGEST

An employee's claim for the value of an airline ticket procured with his personal frequent flyer mileage credits for return travel from an annual leave point to his permanent duty station with a stopover at a temporary duty point en route may not be allowed. An employee is obligated to return from annual leave at his own expense. If he chooses to return after completion of a temporary duty assignment en route, he may be reimbursed only for the difference between what it cost him to return via the temporary duty site and what it would have cost him to return to his duty station directly from his annual leave site. Here, the employee incurred no additional transportation expense attributable to the temporary duty assignment.

DECISION

Mr. _____, an employee of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in Washington, D.C., claims the value of an airline ticket procured through frequent flyer mileage credits from his personal travel which was used to return from an annual leave point to his permanent duty station with a stopover for official duty at a temporary duty location en route.¹ For the following reasons, Mr. _____ claim is denied.

Mr. _____ planned a week of leave to Tulsa, Oklahoma, and obtained a roundtrip ticket with frequent flyer mileage credits he had accumulated through his personal travels. Mr. _____ was involved in giving workshops in each HUD regional office. His trip to the Chicago, Illinois office was scheduled to coincide with his return trip to Washington from Oklahoma. Accordingly, HUD issued a travel order authorizing return travel from Tulsa through Chicago for temporary duty and then to the permanent duty station in

¹This responds to a request for a decision from the Administration Comptroller-Director, Office of Finance and Accounting, Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Washington, D.C., so he could avoid returning to Washington, and then immediately traveling back to Chicago. However, HUD did not procure a new return ticket from Tulsa because the one that had already been obtained by Mr. _____ for his annual leave travel was routed from Tulsa through Chicago to Washington.

Mr. _____ believes it would be inequitable to take the value of the return ticket from Tulsa he obtained for his personal use and convert it to a return ticket for performing temporary duty without paying him for it. However, the general rule is that when an employee proceeds to a point away from his official duty station on annual leave, he assumes the obligation of returning at his own expense. We have long held that if an employee during or after such leave is required to perform temporary duty and he chooses to return to his permanent duty station after completion of the temporary duty, he may be reimbursed only for the difference between what it cost him to return to his permanent duty station via the temporary duty site and what it would have cost him to return to his permanent duty station directly from the place where he was on leave. _____, 56 Comp. Gen. 96 (1976) and cases cited.

In this case, since the airline routed Mr. _____ ticket through Chicago, he did not incur any additional transportation expense attributable to the temporary duty assignment in returning from his annual leave site. Accordingly, HUD properly denied his claim for the total value of his return airline ticket from Oklahoma to Washington, D.C.²

for *James F. Hinchman*
James F. Hinchman
General Counsel

²HUD based its denial of the value of Mr. _____ return ticket on _____, B-227468, Mar. 11, 1988. While that case is relevant in holding that only travel costs actually incurred may be reimbursed, it does not dictate the result in this situation because Mr. _____ is responsible for his return transportation from annual leave. Whether he discharges this responsibility by paying cash for the ticket or by forfeiting frequent flyer mileage credits is of no consequence.