

**Board of Contract Appeals**  
General Services Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20405

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November 29, 2001

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GSBCA 15654-RELO

In the Matter of PAMELA S. MAANUM

Pamela S. Maanum, White Sands Missile Range, NM, Claimant.

Barbara j. Gaydos, Acting Chief, Travel Division, Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Rock Island, IL, appearing for Department of Defense.

**BORWICK**, Board Judge.

Ms. Pamela Maanum, an employee of the Department of the Army, moved her household goods (HHG) during her permanent change of station (PCS), having been erroneously told by an agency transportation movement officer that the travel authorization permitted use of the commuted rate method instead of the actual expense (Government Bill of Lading (GBL)) method actually authorized by the agency. The agency reimbursed claimant for \$308.38, which would have been the cost of the GBL move. Claimant seeks reimbursement of \$1111.96, which is the additional expense claimant incurred in her self-move. Despite the erroneous advice, claimant is limited by the Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) to the cost of the GBL move. Erroneous advice by agency officials cannot enlarge claimant's entitlement.

The facts as indicated by the record are as follows. On April 20, 2001, the agency authorized claimant a PCS transfer from Holloman Air Force Base (AFB), Otero County, New Mexico, to the White Sands Missile Range, Dona Ana County, New Mexico. Block 15a of the agency travel authorization is the block that describes the entitlement to shipment of HHG. Within that block there are two vertical columns of two check-boxes each, with each check box having descriptive labels immediately to the box's right. The top check box on the first column is labeled "yes," and the bottom check box on the first column is labeled "no." The top check box on the second vertical column is labeled "commuted rate." The bottom check box is designated "Government Bill of Lading (GBL)."

Within box 15a of claimant's authorization, the agency had checked the box labeled "yes," and the box labeled "Government Bill of Lading," intending to authorize claimant's shipment of HHG by GBL.

Claimant states that when she went to the transportation movement office at Holloman AFB, the transportation officer "told me I had to arrange for the move myself. She did say I would be reimbursed for the move." The agency admits that this advice was erroneous in that "they misinterpreted the entitlement of HHG shipment to be commuted rate instead of GBL as marked on the PCS order."

Acting on the erroneous advice, claimant made her own arrangements for the move and incurred charges of \$1420.34 from the moving company. The GBL rate for her move was \$308.38. Claimant submitted her transportation voucher and the agency reimbursed claimant the amount of the GBL rate. Claimant appealed to this Board, and maintains she is entitled to the additional \$1111.96 expenses she had incurred in arranging for the move herself.

The JTR provides that when an agency authorizes shipment of HHG by GBL and the employee makes arrangements for a self-move, reimbursement is limited to actual expenses incurred by the employee "not to exceed the cost of a Government-arranged move." JTR C8210-B. When an agency has properly authorized use of the GBL method to move HHG, and an agency gives erroneous advice as to whether an employee may use the commuted rate method, the employee's reimbursement is limited to the cost of the GBL. The erroneous advice cannot enlarge claimant's entitlement granted by regulation. Terry Beck, GSBCA 14590-RELO, 98-2 BCA ¶ 29,969.<sup>1</sup> Claimant is not entitled to recover the \$1111.96.

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ANTHONY S. BORWICK  
Board Judge

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<sup>1</sup> An agency may authorize use of the GBL method to ship HHG if it determines after a proper cost comparison, completed prior to determining the method to be authorized, that a GBL move would be more economical than a commuted rate move. JTR C8200, C8220. Here, claimant does not dispute, nor does the record demonstrate, that the agency failed to make the proper cost comparison in determining in advance to authorize shipment of claimant's HHG by a GBL.