

Board of Contract Appeals

General Services Administration
Washington, D.C. 20405

March 27, 2003

GSBCA 16075-RELO

In the Matter of CHRISTI L. OLIVER

Christi L. Oliver, Needles, CA, Claimant.

Candace L. Thatcher, Chief, Accounts Payable Branch, Bureau of Land Management, National Business Center, Denver Federal Center, Department of the Interior, Denver CO, appearing for Department of the Interior.

PARKER, Board Judge.

The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has requested an advance decision as to whether it should pay the claim of Christi L. Oliver for reimbursement of the cost of renting a car tow dolly. For the reasons discussed below, we hold that BLM should pay the claim.

Background

Ms. Oliver, a new appointee, was authorized a permanent change of station relocation from Corvallis, Oregon, to Needles, California, in July 2002. Her travel orders authorized a self-move, including "U-haul, auto-transport, packing costs and fuel costs." Ms. Oliver transported her household goods using a U-Haul truck and towed her car behind the truck using a car tow dolly. The agency has determined that rental of the tow dolly was advantageous to the Government as well as cost effective because its use prevented multiple trips, which would have significantly disrupted work flow in the first month of Ms. Oliver's employment, and because the agency would have paid more for her move if she had driven her car and BLM had shipped Ms. Oliver's household goods by Government bill of lading.

Discussion

Section 302-9.301 of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) sets forth the requirements for authorizing transportation of a privately owned vehicle (POV):

Under what conditions may my agency authorize transportation of my POV within CONUS [the continental United States]?

Your agency will authorize transportation of your POV within CONUS only when:

(a) It has determined that use of your POV to transport you and/or your immediate family from your old official station (or place of actual residence, if you are a new appointee or student trainee) to your new official station would be advantageous to the Government;

(b) Both your old official station (or place of actual residence, if you are a new appointee or student trainee) and your new official station are located within CONUS; and

(c) Your agency further determines that it would be more advantageous and cost effective to the Government to transport your POV to the new official station at Government expense and to pay for transportation of you and/or your immediate family by commercial means than to have you or an immediate family member drive the POV to the new official station.

41 CFR 302-9.301 (2002). Also relevant to the issue is the following provision:

What means of transportation may we authorize for POV's?

You may authorize:

(a) Commercial means of transportation for POV's if available at reasonable rates and under reasonable conditions; or

(b) Government means of transportation for POV's on a space-available basis.

41 CFR 302-9.500.

Here, the agency authorized Ms. Oliver to transport her auto as part of a self-move because it determined that doing so met the tests set forth in the FTR. That decision was appropriate. Because transporting Ms. Oliver's car was authorized, and because transporting the car by renting a tow dolly can be considered as a "commercial means of transportation . . . at reasonable rates and under reasonable conditions," the cost of renting the tow dolly should be considered as a reimbursable expense. BLM should pay to Ms. Oliver the \$350 cost of renting the tow dolly.

ROBERT W. PARKER
Board Judge