

**DECISION****THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548**Lynn  
PKM  
29777**FILE:** B-215960**DATE:** November 14, 1984**MATTER OF:** Robert C. Markgraf - Relocation Expenses -  
Plumbing Repair**DIGEST:**

Employee of Defense Contract Audit Agency transferred from South Bend, Indiana, to Chicago, Illinois, claims incidental real estate expenses of \$747.97 for waterpipe repair at his new house prior to settlement. The claim is denied. Expenses claimed for plumbing repairs are operating or maintenance costs specifically disallowed by paragraph 2-6.2d of the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR). Additionally, under FTR para. 2-3.1c, costs disallowed under other sections are not reimbursable as miscellaneous expenses.

An employee of the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) is claiming costs totaling \$747.97 for plumbing repairs to the waterpipes of his home at his new duty station. The claim is denied because the cost of repairing cracks in underground waterpipes is an operating or maintenance cost which is not reimbursable.

Mr. Robert C. Markgraf, a DCAA employee, was transferred from South Bend, Indiana, to Chicago, Illinois, with a reporting date of November 22, 1982. The Regional Resources Manager, DCAA, has requested an advance decision as to whether these plumbing expenses may be reimbursed.

Mr. Markgraf reports that while occupying his new residence in Chicago prior to the actual settlement and taking of title, he discovered a problem with the waterpipes. The problem was brought to the attention of the seller who recommended a plumber to Mr. Markgraf. The necessary repairs were made by the recommended plumber for a charge of \$1,495.94. However, the seller refused to pay the bill. Because the plumber's bill had to be paid before the loan closing could take place, Mr. Markgraf paid the bill on February 9, 1983, and the settlement took place on February 11, 1983. Subsequently, Mr. Markgraf's attorney negotiated a settlement with the seller who

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agreed to pay one-half (\$747.97) of the plumbing charges, leaving an identical balance for which Mr. Markgraf is asking reimbursement as an incidental real estate expense. Mr. Markgraf's attorney did advise him that it probably would be possible to recover the full amount of the plumbing expense by resort to legal process but that the legal cost would probably exceed the additional amount of recovery. Mr. Markgraf therefore decided to accept the negotiated settlement without resort to litigation.

Repairs to a residence which make the property saleable or habitable are not reimbursable under the travel regulations, since, under paragraph 2-6.2d of the Federal Travel Regulations, FPMR 101-7 (September 1981) (FTR), operating or maintenance costs of a residence are not reimbursable. Additionally, under FTR para. 2-3.1c, costs disallowed under other sections are not reimbursable as miscellaneous expenses. Irwin Kaplan, B-190815, March 27, 1978.

Accordingly, Mr. Markgraf's claim is denied.

for *Milton J. Fowler*  
Comptroller General  
of the United States