

DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20548**

FILE: B-206779

DATE: August 31, 1982

MATTER OF: Wayne J. Henderson, et al. - Check cashing costs

DIGEST: Employees seek reimbursement of fees incurred in cashing travel advance checks for travel in the United States. Although paragraph 1-9.1c(2) of the Federal Travel Regulations specifically allows exchange fees for cashing Government checks issued for expenses incurred for travel in foreign countries, no such allowance exists for check cashing costs incurred incident to travel within the United States. The employees' check cashing costs may not be allowed.

Ms. Betty Gillham, Chief, Travel Branch, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Department of Energy, has requested a decision as to whether the fees incurred by employees for cashing travel advance checks in the United States may be paid. We hold that the check cashing costs may not be paid because the Federal Travel Regulations only allow check cashing costs when travel in foreign countries is involved.

Ms. Gillham states that paragraph 1-9.1c(2) of the Federal Travel Regulations, FPMR 101-7 (September 1981) (FTR), allows check cashing costs relating to travel in foreign countries. She notes that the payment of check cashing costs incident to temporary duty travel within the United States has not been provided for in the FTR. She asks, however, whether these costs may be certified for payment under the authority for miscellaneous expenditures in paragraph 1-9.1d of the FTR. Ms. Gillham points out that the BPA employees who have requested reimbursement of check cashing costs are in a continuous per diem status at temporary duty locations, and they infrequently return to their official duty stations or residences.

In a similar case involving the reimbursement of the cost of traveler's checks incident to travel within the United States we held that since the regulations at that time specifically provided only for the reimbursement of such costs in connection with travel outside

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the continental United States, such costs could not be allowed for travel within the continental United States. We stated that the travel regulations had the force and effect of law, and could not be enlarged by construction. B-166894, May 27, 1969. See also Joseph C. Hutchinson, B-182013, May 14, 1975.

Since we have consistently held that the FTR cannot be expanded by construction, and FTR paragraph 1-9.1c(2) specifically limits reimbursement of check cashing costs to travel in foreign countries, we do not believe that FTR paragraph 1.9.1d providing for reimbursement of other expenses can be construed to permit reimbursement here.

We hold, therefore, that since reimbursement of check cashing costs incurred incident to travel in foreign countries is specifically provided for in the regulations (see FTR paragraphs 1-9.1c(2) and 1-11.5e(1)), such costs relating to travel within the United States may not be allowed in the absence of a specific provision therefor. Accordingly, the check cashing costs incurred incident to the temporary duty travel within the United States may not be certified for payment.

Milton J. Fowler

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States