



Comptroller General  
of the United States

511165

Washington, D.C. 20548

## Decision

**Matter of:** William G. Hiatt, Jr.

**File:** B-256947

**Date:** September 20, 1994

### DIGEST

A transferred employee may not be allowed reimbursement for shipping his household goods when the government has reimbursed him for shipping his mobile home to his new duty station under 5 U.S.C. § 5724(b) (1988). Under that statute, the allowance for shipping the mobile home is in lieu of the allowance for shipping household goods. Robert B. Wood, B-210867, July 13, 1983.

### DECISION

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) requests a decision as to whether a transferred employee may be allowed reimbursement for shipping his household goods when the government has reimbursed him for shipping his mobile home. For the following reasons, his claim may not be allowed.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. William G. Hiatt, Jr. is an employee of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation, USDA, who was transferred from Torrington, Wyoming, to Billings, Montana. He was authorized movement of his mobile home to his new duty station under 5 U.S.C. § 5724(b) (1988). Mr. Hiatt engaged a transportation company to transport his mobile home. However, he also rented a truck to transport his household goods separately since the transportation company's contract states that household goods shipped within the mobile home are not covered against breakage.

The USDA allowed Mr. Hiatt reimbursement for shipping the mobile home in the amount of \$2,649.09, but denied his claim for rental of a truck in the amount of \$527.28 to ship his household goods in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 5724(b) (1988). However, USDA asks whether Mr. Hiatt's claim for renting the truck to move his household goods may be allowed since it was necessary, for all practical purposes, to do so

<sup>1</sup>This matter was submitted to our Office by Ms. Susan C. Lauga, an Authorized Certifying Officer, Department of Agriculture, New Orleans, Louisiana. Reference: FSD-1 RJP.

under the circumstances of this case, and there were overall savings to the government.

In Robert B. Wood, B-210867, July 13, 1983, a shipping company required that the mobile home to be shipped must be emptied of all furniture and personal effects. We held that, despite the circumstances, 5 U.S.C. § 5724(b) does not permit reimbursement for shipping household goods when the government incurs the cost of transporting a mobile home to the new duty station since, under the wording of that statute, the allowance for shipping a mobile home is in lieu of the allowance for shipping household goods. Since the statute prohibits such reimbursement, we cannot allow it despite the legitimate practical concerns which the USDA's submission raises.

Accordingly, Mr. Hiett's claim for truck rental expenses is denied.

*for* *Seymour E. Cross*  
Robert P. Murphy  
Acting General Counsel