



Program Statement

OPI: ADM
NUMBER: 2273.01
DATE: 7/31/2003
SUBJECT: Centralized Employee
Relocation Operations

1. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE.** To establish policies and procedures for processing permanent change of duty station (PCS) relocation actions by the centralized relocation operation.

- ◆ The procedures apply to all employees (including UNICOR employees) notified of a transfer.
- ◆ These relocations will be handled through the Relocation Services Section, Finance Branch, located in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office.

Local financial management staff will to act as liaisons between the transferee and the Relocation Services Section staff.

2. **DIRECTIVES REFERENCED**

PS 2013.01	Financial Management - Debt Management (3/3/94)
PS 2200.01	BOP Travel Regulations (11/1/84)
PS 3420.09	Standards of Employee Conduct (2/5/99)
41 CFR 302	Federal Travel Regulation

3. **STANDARDS REFERENCED**

- a. American Correctional Association 3rd Edition Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions: 3-4025
- b. American Correctional Association 3rd Edition Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities: 3-ALDF-1B-01
- c. American Correctional Association 2nd Edition Standards for the Administration of Correctional Agencies: 2-CO-1B-01

d. American Correctional Association Standards for Adult Correctional Boot Camp Programs: 1-ABC-1B-01

4. **DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY.** The Chief, Relocation Services Section, Finance Branch, and any individual designated to act in that capacity, is hereby delegated the authority to:

- determine relocation entitlements and sign relocation travel authorizations upon receipt of the signed Notification of Authorized Relocation form (BP-S610.022) from the transferee's selecting official,
- authorize travel advances, including those for employees who remain in temporary quarters beyond the initial 30-day period,
- approve or deny requests for extensions of temporary storage of household goods beyond the initial 90-day period for an additional period, not to exceed 90 days, in accordance with 41 CFR 302-7.8,
- approve or deny requests for trips to seek residence quarters (house hunting trips),
- approve or deny requests for extensions of the initial two year time limitation for completion of real estate transactions for an additional period of time not to exceed two years, in accordance with 41 CFR 302-11.22, and
- determine if title requirements on transferees' residences are met in accordance with 41 CFR 302-11.102.

These authorities cannot be further delegated by the Chief, Relocation Services Section, Finance Branch.

The authority to make determinations on requests for extensions of time in temporary quarters beyond 60 days and waivers of repayment of relocation allowances **is not re-delegated** below the Assistant Director for Administration.

- ◆ The authority to approve administrative leave associated with a permanent change of duty station **is not delegated** to the Chief, Relocation Services Section, and remains with the appropriate approving official at the old and/or new duty stations.

- ◆ The approval of the expenses associated with a house hunting trip does **not constitute approval** of an official leave status. Transferees **must obtain approval** for the house hunting trip travel dates from the appropriate individual.

5. NOTIFICATION OF A PERMANENT CHANGE OF DUTY STATION (PCS).

The Relocation Services Section must be notified at the time of all personnel selections to ensure the relocation process begins promptly. To assist with this, the following procedures will be followed for all personnel selections for which relocation expense reimbursement is authorized:

a. **Selecting Official's Responsibilities.** The selecting official will ensure that the Relocation Services Section is notified of all personnel selections within two working days after the personnel selection is made.

- ◆ The notification will be made using the completed Notification of Authorized Relocation form (BP-S610.022). This form can be included as part of the personnel selection package and must be transmitted via fax to (301) 317-5228.
- ◆ This form provides transferee identifying information and the location funding the relocation. The selecting official must sign the form. A BOPNet GroupWise message may be used instead of the BP-S610.022 as long as it contains, at a minimum, the information required on the form and is transmitted via the selecting official or designee to the Relocation Services Section mailbox at **BOP-ADM/Relocation**.

The Notification of Authorized Relocation form or BOPNet GroupWise message **does not** need to be completed for Executive Staff selections.

b. **Transferee's Responsibilities.** The employee is to contact the Relocation Services Section at (800) 347-7356 within two working days after notification of selection to assist the Relocation Services Section to start the relocation process for the transferee promptly.

The transferee must sign the relocation forms listed in Section 5.d. promptly and give them to the local Office of Financial Management.

- ◆ The transferee may not begin relocation travel (including the trip to seek residence quarters) until he or she signs all required forms, they are received by the Relocation Services Section, and the Chief, Relocation Services Section, has signed the relocation travel authorization (see Section 4.).

The transferee also must read all material and documents (see Section 5.d.) provided to him or her and contact his or her Counselor with any problems, concerns, or questions that may arise during the relocation process.

c. **Office of Financial Management Responsibilities.** Upon becoming aware of an employee's selection for transfer, the Controller, Budget and Accounting Officer (at facilities without a Controller), UNICOR Controller, or Regional Comptroller, as appropriate, will contact the transferee to notify him or her to contact the Relocation Services Section promptly.

- ◆ At facilities where there is no UNICOR Controller, the institution Controller will contact the UNICOR employee.

The above listed individuals will send the signed documents listed in Section 5.d. express mail to the Relocation Services Section.

Local OFM staff are to refrain from answering questions or offering advice to transferees regarding relocation entitlements. They are to refer the transferee to his or her assigned Counselor (see Section 5.d.).

- ◆ If an employee is not currently relocating and has general questions regarding relocation entitlements, he or she is to be referred to the Relocation Services Section.

d. **Relocation Services Section Responsibilities.** Immediately upon receiving the Notification of Authorized Relocation form, the Chief, Relocation Services Section, will assign a Counselor to assist the transferee with his/her relocation process.

- ◆ The Counselor will contact the transferee within two working days after receiving the Notification of Authorized Relocation form and conduct an in-depth interview to obtain the information necessary to determine authorized and estimated relocation expenses.

The Counselor will then prepare the following forms:

- **PCS Statement.** Used by the Relocation Services Section to document information necessary to determine suitable title of residence, carrier selection, valuation protection on household goods, and home sale assistance needs.
- **Statement of Proposed Transportation and Estimated Expenses.** Used by the Relocation Services Section to compute the transferee's estimated relocation expenses by category.
- **Relocation Travel Authorization and Application for Advance of Funds**
- **Withholding Tax Allowance, Excess Weight Repayment Agreement, and Service Agreement.** Used to advise the transferee of the Withholding Tax Allowance, Relocation Income Tax Allowance, the requirement to pay the costs associated with the transportation and storage of household goods in excess of 18,000 pounds, and the requirement to pay back the costs incurred if the 12-month Service Agreement is violated.
- **Statement of Understanding for a Short Distance Transfer.** Used to advise the transferee that the Chief, Finance Branch will determine eligibility for relocation expense reimbursement on a case-by-case basis.

It also advises that if the transfer is determined to be ineligible, the transferee is responsible for repaying relocation expenses already paid.

These forms will be faxed to the relocating employee.

Upon receiving the signed relocation forms, the Counselor will order necessary services including, as appropriate:

- shipment of household goods,
- home sale assistance, and
- issue the transferee a relocation travel advance (see Section 6.a.).

The Counselor also will mail to the transferee a package of necessary information, including a signed copy of the relocation travel authorization.

6. **RELOCATION POLICIES.** The following requirements apply to all transferees notified of a transfer.

a. **Travel Advances.** Travel advances will be issued in stages.

(1) **Initial Advance.** The Counselor will issue the transferee an initial advance in an amount not to exceed 75 percent of the estimated house hunting expenses.

(2) **Second Advance.** The Counselor will issue the transferee a second advance in an amount not to exceed 75 percent of the estimated total of en-route travel and the first 30 days of temporary quarters expenses. This will be issued in time for the transferee to receive it prior to the start date of en-route travel.

(3) **Third Advance.** The Counselor will issue, the transferee a third advance in an amount not to exceed 75 percent of the estimated expenses for the additional days of temporary quarters, not to exceed 30 days, minus the number of days used for a house hunting trip.

Note: Field locations must not issue PCS travel advances.

Note: Cash advances on a Government-issued travel charge card are not authorized for PCS travel.

The transferee will use the Relocation Services Section's Government Transportation Account (GTA) when making airline or other transportation arrangements, by calling the contracted Travel Management Center (TMC).

- ◆ In these cases, the airline ticket or other transportation cost will not be included in the estimated expenses when computing the authorized travel advance amount.
- ◆ If the transferee has a Government-issued travel charge card, it may be used for payment of all airline or other transportation tickets, and the cost will be included in the estimated expenses when computing the travel advance amount authorized.

Personal credit cards must not be used to purchase airline or other transportation accommodations.

b. **Travel to Seek Residence Quarters.** If the one-way distance between the old and new duty stations is more than 600 miles, the use of a privately owned vehicle (POV) will not be authorized at Government expense.

- ◆ If the employee uses a POV for personal convenience, per diem will not be allowed for the additional travel time required for the trip.
- ◆ This is applicable even when the total number of days used is 10 or fewer.

c. **Additional Temporary Quarters Travel Advance.** When a transferee realizes the need for additional days of temporary quarters beyond the initial 30-day period authorized, he or she will complete and mail to his or her Counselor a Temporary Quarters Advance Request.

- ◆ The Counselor will provide this request form to the transferee upon his or her request.

d. **Temporary Storage of Household Goods.** When a transferee realizes the need for an additional period of temporary storage of household goods beyond the initial 90-day period authorized, he or she will complete and mail to his or her Counselor a "Temporary Storage Extension Request" form.

- ◆ The transferee is to complete this form as soon as the need arises and before the initial 90-day period expires.

e. **Extension of Time for Completion of Real Estate Transactions.** When a transferee realizes the need for an extension of the time limitation for completion of real estate transactions beyond the initial two-year period authorized, he or she must complete and mail to his or her Counselor a "Request for Extension of Time for Completion of Real Estate Transactions" form.

- ◆ The transferee is to complete this form as soon as the need arises and before the initial two-year time limitation expires.

f. **Short-Distance Transfers.** If a relocation fits any of the criteria listed below, the Counselor will ensure the transferee is carefully counseled and cautioned on short-distance transfers.

Guidance on short-distance transfers may be obtained from the Chief, Relocation Services Section.

Short-distance transfers are described in 41 CFR 302-2.6. In particular, moves which fall into one or more of the following circumstances are short distance transfers and may not qualify for relocation reimbursement:

- the distance between the old and new duty stations is 100 miles or less, and/or
- the distance between the old and proposed new residence is 100 miles or less, and/or
- the distance between the old residence and new duty station is 100 miles or less, and/or
- the commuting time between the old residence and the new duty station is nearly the same (within 45 minutes) as the commuting time between the new proposed residence and the new duty station.

If any one of the above criteria is met, the Chief, Finance Branch, will determine the eligibility for relocation expense reimbursement on a case-by-case basis.

In no case will relocation allowances be paid if the commuting distance and/or time between the old residence and new duty station is less than the commuting distance and/or time between the new residence and new duty station.

Employees who transfer between duty stations that are within 100 miles of each other will be cautioned and counseled regarding the location of the new residence.

- ◆ If the Chief, Finance Branch, determines the relocation of residences is not reasonably related to the change of official duty station, relocation allowances will not be authorized and the transferee will be required to repay any relocation expenses already incurred, including the home sale assistance program and household goods shipment costs.

Certifying Officers will not certify for payment short-distance relocation vouchers until the Chief, Finance Branch, has determined eligibility.

Certifying Officers will forward the following information to the Chief, Finance Branch, through the Chief, Relocation Services Section, Finance Branch, for review:

- mileage between the old and new duty stations,
- mileage between the old and new residences,
- commuting mileage and time between the old residence and old duty station,
- commuting mileage and time between the old residence and new duty station,
- commuting mileage and time between the new residence and new duty station, and
- a map showing the relative locations of old and new duty stations and old and new residences.

All of the above information will be required in order to determine eligibility for relocation allowances. Once the Chief, Finance Branch, determines eligibility for relocation allowances, it will be returned to the Relocation Services Section for disposition.

All transferees who fit the criteria for a short-distance transfer are required to sign a Statement of Understanding for a Short-Distance Transfer which explains the requirements of short-distance transfers.

g. **Last Move Home.** Relocation allowances upon separation for retirement for SES career appointees must be in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation, 41 CFR 302-3, Subpart D.

(1) **SES Career Appointee Responsibilities.** The Director must approve all requests for last move home travel allowances.

- ◆ The requests must be forwarded to the Chief, Relocation Services Section, through the Regional Director (if appropriate).
- ◆ The Director's signature on the forms indicate approval of the last move home allowances.

The request must include moving dates and the origin and destination of the move, if known. Tentative dates and locations may be provided.

- ◆ The request must be submitted as soon as possible and in time to meet the requirements of the Federal Travel Regulation, 41 CFR 302-3.314.

The SES Career Appointee will complete the Itinerary for Claiming Reimbursement for En Route Travel to document relocation expenses and submit it to the Chief, Relocation Services Section, with any necessary attachments and receipts.

(2) **Relocation Services Responsibilities.** Upon receiving the request for last move home allowances, the Chief, Relocation Services, will prepare an estimate of moving expenses and a travel authorization and forward these documents to the Chief, Finance Branch, for forwarding to the Director for approval and signature.

7. **TRAVEL VOUCHER SETTLEMENT.** The Counselor assigned to the transferee will monitor the transferee's relocation through every phase and settle the relocation travel voucher upon completion of the employee's move.

a. **Time Limitation for Travel Voucher Settlement.** The transferee must submit to his or her Counselor all original receipts, itineraries, and all other required travel voucher information no later than 15 days after the expiration of temporary quarters entitlement.

- ◆ Entitlement expires immediately upon vacating temporary quarters or upon expiration of the authorized time limitation for temporary quarters, whichever occurs first.
- ◆ The transferee is required to submit original receipts and keep copies of the receipts in the event the originals are lost in the mail.

If the Counselor does not receive the required documentation within the 15-day time limitation, the Counselor will initiate debt management procedures as described in Section 8.

b. **Voucher Preparation.** The Counselor will review all documentation the transferee submits carefully and promptly advise him or her if additional information is needed or if any problems are encountered during settlement.

- ◆ Once the Counselor receives **all** required documentation, the Counselor will calculate the final settlement and prepare the voucher within 15 days.

The Counselor will mail the settled voucher to the transferee for signature. The transferee must sign the voucher in all designated areas and obtain the signature of his or her timekeeper if en route travel time was exceeded.

- ◆ The employee must return the signed documents to his or her Counselor no later than five days after receipt.
- ◆ If the Counselor does not receive the signed voucher from the employee within 15 days, the Counselor will initiate debt management procedures as described in Section 8.

c. **Final Settlement Amount.** The Counselor will compute the final settlement amount taking into consideration the travel advance, all withholding taxes, and the withholding tax allowance.

(1) **Amount Due to Transferee.** If the final settlement results in an amount due to the employee, the Counselor will issue the transferee's payment promptly via direct deposit to the transferee's designated bank account.

(2) **Amount Due from Transferee.** If the final settlement results in an amount due from the employee, the employee will submit a check for the full amount due when he or she returns the signed travel voucher (see Section 7.b.).

d. **Claims for the Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA).** The Relocation Services Section will compute the RITA in accordance with 41 CFR 302-17.

- ◆ By February 15, the Counselor will mail a RITA claim form to each transferee due a RITA.
- ◆ If the employee does not submit a RITA claim by May 15, the Counselor must initiate debt management procedures, as explained in Section 8, to collect the amount of the withholding tax allowance previously paid.

8. **DEBT MANAGEMENT.** The debt management procedures set forth in the Program Statement on Financial Management - Debt Management will be followed to collect unused travel advances, withholding tax allowances, excess household goods weight costs, and other relocation debts (as defined in the Program Statement on Debt Management).

- ◆ Once the debt becomes delinquent, the Assistant Director, Regional Director, or Warden, as appropriate, of the employee's new duty station will be advised.
- ◆ In addition, all information concerning the delinquent debt will be forwarded to the Office of Internal Affairs for possible Standards of Employee Conduct violation(s).

/s/

Harley G. Lappin
Director