

Guidelines for Short Distance Transfers (SDT)

2/25/09/RSW

In order to define and clarify the Federal and NOAA travel regulations on short distance transfers (SDT), the following information is offered. Generally, an employee may only be reimbursed relocation expenses when they are transferring to a new official station that is more than 50 miles from their old official station. However, on a case by case basis, Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) , Chapter 302-2.6 affords agencies the flexibility to reimburse an employee relocation expenses when transferring to a new official station that is less than 50 miles from the old official station when:

- 1) And most importantly, it is determined that it is in the interest of the Government to do so; and
- 2) The one way commuting pattern between the old and new official station increases by at least 10 miles but no more than 50 miles; and
- 3) There is an increase in the commuting time to the new official station; and
- 4) A financial hardship is imposed due to increased commuting costs; and
- 5) The move of residence is to the vicinity of the new duty station which is a direct result of the transfer.

The **approving official** must consider how the move will benefit the Government by taking into consideration such factors as how the move will significantly improve the distance and time it takes the employee to get to work, as well as the overall cost to the Government. The burden of proof rests solely on the **employee** to prove that the move will benefit the Government. Employees who think they are eligible may apply for a preliminary determination if they desire to know their status before selling their present home. Employees must also take into consideration the tax liability for moves within 50 miles and are strongly encouraged to read [IRS Publication 521](#). Employees have up to two years to exercise their eligibility from the date they report to the new duty station.

Employees seeking approval for a SDT **must** submit:

- 1) A memorandum of request for a SDT through their approving official, through their servicing Line Office Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to the Director, Finance Office/Comptroller for approval. The memorandum of request must include a justification explaining how the move will benefit the Government; and
- 2) A completed SDT Worksheet; and
- 3) Recent traffic reports proving increased commute time; and
- 4) Mapquest mileage data showing distance from old residence to old duty station, old residence to new duty station, old duty station to new duty station, as well as mileage information on potential new homes; and
- 5) The vacancy announcement indicating relocation costs will be paid; and
- 6) A completed relocation worksheet indicating total relocation costs to be paid.

Relocation Entitlements for a SDT

Enroute Travel to the New Duty Station:

Employees are only entitled mileage and are not entitled to per diem when traveling enroute from the old duty station to the new duty station. Employees will use the mileage rate of .24 per mile when computing mileage.

Transportation of Household Goods:

The net weight of household goods and personal effects which may be transported at Government expense may not exceed 18,000 pounds. Charges for weight in excess of 18,000 pounds must be paid by you.

Miscellaneous Expense Allowance:

The following amounts will be paid for MEA without documentation or receipts, either:

- 1) \$500 or the equivalent of one week basic pay, whichever is less, for an employee without an immediate family; or
- 2) \$1,000 or equivalent of two weeks basic pay, whichever is less, for an employee with an immediate family.

Expenses Incurred in Connection with Residence Transactions:

Employees are entitled to reimbursable real estate expenses for both the sale and purchase of their home(s). The employee may elect either the direct sale reimbursement method or the voucherless home sale/home purchase method.

- 1) Under the direct sale reimbursement method, employees will be reimbursed not to exceed:
 - a) ten percent of the actual sale price for the sale of your residence at the old official duty station; and
 - b) five percent of the actual sale price for the purchase of your residence at the new official duty station.
- 2) Under the voucherless home sale/home purchase method, employees will utilize NOAA's contracted relocation services company, Prudential to sell/buy a home. These voucherless programs pay Prudential directly for relocation services.

Withholding Tax Allowance WTA and relocation income tax allowance (RITA):

Withholding tax allowance (WTA) and relocation income tax allowance (RITA) are computed to pay taxes on the employee's behalf and to ensure that the employee is made whole again after taxes. Applicable taxes will be withheld as required when vouchers are processed. These taxes include Federal, FICA, and Medicare. Your reimbursement will be made by electronic fund transfer directly to your bank account. Please keep your servicing finance office informed of any changes to your bank account.

For more complete information on relocation entitlements, please visit the NOAA Travel Office website:

<http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/%7efinance/RELO.trelopamphlet1.doc>

or call Rachael Wivell on 301-444-2136.

Short Distance Transfer (SDT) Worksheet

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____ Date _____

OFFICE PHONE NUMBER: _____

Date/proposed date of transfer to new duty station _____

___ **Preliminary Determination** (must include zip code of proposed new residence)

___ **Final Determination** (must include complete address of proposed new residence)

Note: A travel authorization cannot be issued without an approved final determination.

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Employees seeking approval for a SDT **must** complete the following information:

Section A - Addresses

1) Address of old duty station: _____

2) Address of new duty station: _____

3) Address of old residence: _____

4) Address of proposed residence: _____

(Zip code only for preliminary determination)

Section B – Mileage/Commute Time

Mileage Commute/Time

5) Mileage from old and new duty stations: _____

6) Mileage from old residence to old duty station: _____

7) Mileage from old residence to new duty station: _____

8) Mileage from new residence to new duty station: _____

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In addition to this worksheet, employees **must** also include:

___ A memorandum of request for a SDT through their approving official, through their servicing Line Office Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to the Director, Finance Office/Comptroller for approval. The memorandum of request **must** include a justification explaining how the move will benefit the Government. Employees may also include information explaining increased commute time, the availability of more efficient public transportation in the new area or unavailability of efficient public transportation in the old area, as well as any information regarding financial hardship due to increased commute costs.

___ Recent traffic reports proving increased commute time; and

___ Mapquest mileage data showing distance from old residence to old duty station, old residence to new duty station, old duty station to new duty station, as well as mileage information on potential new homes; and

___ The vacancy announcement indicating relocation costs will be paid; and

___ A completed relocation worksheet indicating total relocation costs to be paid.