

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington, DC 20405

April 17, 2020

Federal Travel Regulation
GSA Bulletin FTR 20-06

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Relocation Allowances – Waiver of certain provisions of the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) (Chapter 302) for official relocation travel of employees during the COVID-19 pandemic

1. What is the purpose of this bulletin? This bulletin informs agencies that certain provisions of the FTR governing official relocation travel are temporarily waived for individuals relocating during the national emergency issued by the President on March 13, 2020 concerning the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Specifically, this bulletin provides information to agencies regarding waivers to time limits established by the FTR for completion of all aspects of relocation, temporary storage of household goods (HHG) shipments, and house hunting trip(s) (HHT).
2. What is the applicable date of this bulletin? This bulletin is retroactively effective for official relocation travel performed after March 13, 2019, one year prior to the date of the national emergency issued by the President concerning COVID-19.
3. When does this bulletin expire? This FTR Bulletin will expire one year from March 13, 2020, unless extended or rescinded by this office.
4. What is the background of this bulletin? Federal agencies authorize relocation entitlements to those individuals listed at FTR §302-1.1 and those assigned under the Government Employees Training Act (GETA) (5 U.S.C. Chapter 41). As a result of the Presidential national emergency proclamation concerning COVID-19, agencies should consider delaying all non-essential relocations to affected areas. However, GSA understands that agencies may have a need to relocate employees to affected locations, or may be unable to cancel relocations already in progress. Thus, each agency may determine whether to apply the waivers set forth in this bulletin to affected employees' relocation travel to areas that are impacted by COVID-19. The COVID-19 outbreak has produced uncertainty and created difficulties for individuals attempting to complete their relocations within one year. For example, employees are encountering shipping restrictions for HHG, which may mean they require more days of temporary

storage than are permitted in the FTR. In addition, employees are running into last minute cancellation of airline flights for HHT due to the volatility of the airline industry.

5. What FTR provisions are addressed by this bulletin?

a. Completion of Relocation. Per FTR §302-2.9, employees must complete all aspects of their relocation within one year from the effective date of their transfer or appointment. However, in accordance with FTR §302-2.110, agencies may authorize an extension for up to 12 months if an employee (i) is furloughed to perform active military duty (§302-2.10), (ii) cannot travel and/or transport HHG due to shipping restrictions to or from a post of duty outside the continental United States (OCONUS) (§302-2.11), or (iii) for reasons beyond a current employee's control and acceptable to the agency, additional time is needed to complete real estate selling/purchasing transactions (§302-11.22).

b. HHG Temporary Storage. Per FTR §302-7.9, for continental United States (CONUS) to CONUS shipments, the initial period of temporary storage of HHG at Government expense may not exceed 60 days. The agency may authorize up to an additional 90 days for CONUS to CONUS temporary storage, not to exceed a total of 150 days. For HHG shipments with an OCONUS origin or destination, the initial period of HHG temporary storage at Government expense may not exceed 90 days. The agency may authorize up to an additional 90 days for OCONUS origin/destination temporary storage, not to exceed 180 days.

c. HHT. Per FTR §302-5.11, an employee may be authorized a roundtrip HHT by their agency to seek permanent residence prior to reporting at the new official station. The HHT should be for a reasonable period, not to exceed 10 calendar days.

6. What waivers may my agency apply to the FTR provisions addressed by this bulletin?

If relocation travel during COVID-19 cannot be delayed, then agencies may apply the following waivers up to the duration of this bulletin:

a. Completion of Relocation. The requirement in §302-2.9 to complete all aspects of relocation entitlements within one year may be waived.


b. HHG Temporary Storage. The maximum temporary storage periods in FTR §302-7.9 (150 days for CONUS-to-CONUS or 180 day for OCONUS relocations) may be waived for those employees relocating who have experienced unforeseen circumstances beyond their control resulting from the COVID-19 national emergency. Agencies will consider the merits of individual requests on a case-by-case basis.

c. HHT. Agencies may allow additional travel days beyond the 10-day limit in FTR §302-5.11 if airline flights are delayed, cancelled, or changed for reasons beyond the employee's control. Employees should work with airlines to schedule travel on the next available return flight. Agencies will consider employees' requests on a case-by-case basis.

7. What should agencies do? Agencies should update their internal relocation policies and reimbursement procedures to allow for additional time to complete all aspects of relocation and to authorize, on a case-by-case basis, additional days of HHG temporary storage, and additional day(s) for HHT in accordance with this bulletin.

8. Whom should I call for further information? For further information or clarification of content, please contact Mr. Rick Miller, Office of Government-wide Policy (M), Office of Asset and Transportation Management (MA), at (202) 501-3822 or by e-mail at travelpolicy@gsa.gov. Please cite FTR Bulletin 20-06.

By delegation of the Administrator of General Services.

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