

## Frequently Asked Questions Cont'd

8. **Q:** What documentation is required to process Real Estate Sale and Purchase reimbursement if I sell or purchase my home independently?  
**A:** Your signed/legible copy of the final HUD-1 Settlement Sheet.
9. **Q:** What am I eligible to claim under TQSE?  
**A:** Check the FTR website **Chapter 302-6** (see Useful Internet Web Sites below).
10. **Q:** What documentation do I need to voucher for my PCS reimbursements?  
**A:** A summary of what is being claimed and receipts for lodging, transportation and any other items over \$75.
11. **Q:** Where do I submit my voucher receipts for payment?  
**A:** Using ENTRUST encryption, scan and email to PCS.Travel@hq.doe.gov
12. **Q:** What am I eligible to claim under Househunting expenses?  
**A:** Check the FTR website **Chapter 302-5** (see Useful Internet Web Sites below).
13. **Q:** What residence transaction expenses will DOE pay?  
**A:** Check the FTR website **Chapter 302-11.200** (see Useful Internet Web Sites below).
14. **Q:** Am I eligible for a last move home?  
**A:** Only if you are a career SES as defined in 5 U.S.C. 3132 (a) (4), and if you were transferred or re-assigned geographically in the interest of the DOE.
15. **Q:** What happens if my TQSE location becomes my permanent residence?  
**A:** If your TQSE location becomes your permanent residence quarters, you may receive a TQSE allowance **ONLY** if you show in a manner satisfactory to DOE that you initially intended to occupy the quarters temporarily.
16. **Q:** What do I need to do to receive my home marketing incentive?  
**A:** Nothing. Once the relocation contractor bills DOE for services, DOE will issue you the reimbursement.

17. **Q:** What if I do not want to accept the relocation contractor's offer for my house?  
**A:** You may reject the offer and proceed to sell your home independently. However, once you reject the relocation contractor's offer, you will not be eligible for this service again for this move.
18. **Q:** What is a Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA)?  
**A:** Payment of a RITA is authorized to reimburse eligible transferees for substantially all of the additional Federal, State, and local income taxes incurred by you, or by you and your spouse if a joint tax return is filed, as a result of certain travel and transportation expense & relocation allowances which are furnished in kind or for which reimbursement is provided by the government. Check the FTR website **Chapter 302-17** (see Useful Internet Web Sites below).
19. **Q:** What amounts will I see on my W-2 in the year that I complete my move?  
**A:** All reimbursements made directly to you and all taxable items paid on your behalf to a third party relocation contractor and any airline contractor.
20. **Q:** Must my family and I occupy TQSE at the same location?  
**A:** No. *If you must vacate* your home at the old duty station, and report to your new duty station, but your family must remain at the old station for a "compelling reason," you may occupy TQSE at both locations.

### **Useful Telephone Numbers**

PCS Help Line .....(301) 903-8689  
Prudential Relocation.....1(877) 237-5068  
ADTRAV .....1(877) 472-6717  
Travel Office Fax #.....(301) 903-5240

PCS email address:

**PCS.Travel@HQ.DOE.GOV**

### Useful Internet Web Sites

GSA Federal Travel Regulation (FTR)

<http://www.gsa.gov/fttr>

U.S. DOE Travel Manual (DOE M 552.1-1A)

<https://www.directives.doe.gov/directives/current-directives/552.1-DManual-1a/view?searchterm=None>

## **Department of Energy (DOE) Relocation Guide Effective August 1, 2011**

This guidance prepared by the Energy Finance and Accounting Service Center (EFASC) will assist you in understanding DOE policy on permanent change of station (PCS). This guide implements new policy issued by the General Services Administration (GSA), and becomes effective for all PCS effective on and after August 1, 2011. The principle source for Departmental policy on employee permanent change of station (PCS) is the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), 41 CFR, Chapter 302.

Your effective transfer/appointment date is the date on which you report for duty at your new or first official duty station. All aspects of your relocation must be completed **within one year** from the effective date of transfer or appointment and may be extended **one additional year**, by request and approval from your program office.

You must **not** incur any relocation expenses or make any commitments related to a PCS until after your authorization is approved and service agreement has been signed. As part of your **service agreement**, you will be required to sign a **disclosure statement** which confirms that you and /or your immediate family have not accepted, and will not accept, duplicate reimbursement for relocation expenses.

**Short Distance moves** – you must pass a 'distance test' in order to qualify for a short distance move. Your new official duty station must be **at least 50 miles further** from your current residence than the old duty official station is from that same residence. *For example*, if your current residence is three miles from your current official duty station, then your new official station must be **53 miles** further than your old residence.

**Mode of Transportation** – DOE may authorize you to travel by the mode of transportation that is most advantageous to the government. For trips of **less than 250 miles**, you will be authorized to travel by POV; for trips with a distance of 250 miles or greater, you will be authorized common carrier. Exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis.

**Time Limitations for Temporary Storage (TS) (Domestic)**  
The initial period for TS shipments may not exceed 60 days. Requests for additional time up to a maximum of 90 additional days must be received for processing prior to expiration of the original 60 days. Temporary Storage may never exceed a total of 150 days.

## RELOCATION ALLOWANCES BY TYPE

### New Employee/New Appointee

*DOE must pay or reimburse:*

- Transportation of employee & immediate family member(s)
- Per diem for employee only
- Transportation & temporary storage of household goods
- Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of HHG

*DOE has discretionary authority to pay/reimburse:*

- Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV)

### Transfers Between Official Stations

*DOE must pay or reimburse:*

- Transportation & per diem of employee & immediate family
- Miscellaneous moving expense
- Sell/buy residence transactions or lease termination expense
- Transportation & temporary storage of household goods
- Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of HHG
- Relocation income tax allowance (RITA)

*DOE has discretionary authority to pay/reimburse:*

- Househunting (HH) per diem & transportation, employee & spouse only
- Temporary quarters subsistence expense (TQSE)
- Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV)
- Use of a relocation services company
- Use of property management services
- Home marketing incentive

### Last Move Home- SES employees Separating

*DOE must pay or reimburse:*

- Transportation for employee & immediate family member(s)
- Per diem for employee only
- Transportation & temporary storage of household goods
- Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of HHG

*DOE has discretionary authority to pay/reimburse:*

- Shipment of privately owned vehicle (POV)

### Temporary Change of Station (TCS)

*DOE must pay or reimburse:*

- Transportation & per diem of employee & immediate family
- Miscellaneous moving expense
- Transportation & temporary storage of household goods
- Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of HHG
- Relocation income tax allowance (RITA)
- Property management services

*DOE has discretionary authority to pay/reimburse:*

- Househunting (HH) trip expenses
- Temporary quarters subsistence expense

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Q:** When may I incur PCS expenses?  
**A:** After your PCS orders are approved. The only exception is when you elect to use DOE's relocation contractor to sell your residence. In this case, you may not put your home on the market until the relocation contractor contacts you.
  
2. **Q:** I have been notified that I will be transferred to another duty station. How long will it take to process the paperwork, including approvals?  
**A:** Approximately 45 days. The time frame is based on factors such as: submission of paperwork by the employee, signature of the authorizing official, funds availability, and use of relocation services.
  
3. **Q:** Does the service agreement I sign require me to remain in service to DOE for at least one year?  
**A:** No, but you must remain in federal service for a period of 12 months. However, if you must leave federal service for reasons beyond your control and acceptable to DOE, you will not be required to reimburse DOE for expenses paid toward your relocation.
  
4. **Q:** Can DOE limit me to a dollar amount for reimbursement on relocation expenses?  
**A:** No, however, DOE can limit the allowances as stated previously in the "Relocation Allowances By Type" section.
  
5. **Q:** How long will it take to process my voucher(s)?  
**A:** Travel vouchers will be processed within 30 days of receipt by the Travel Office.
  
6. **Q:** Do I need to keep receipts?  
**A:** For the "Actual" method of reimbursement, where itemization of expenses is required, receipts are required for lodging, *regardless of the amount*, and any item over \$75.00. Receipts are not required for the "Lump Sum" method of reimbursement for Misc., HH or TQSE Allowances.
  
7. **Q:** What happens if I need to go on TDY or if I take leave while on TQSE?  
**A:** Once you have begun TQSE, it continues to run whether or not you actually occupy the temporary quarters. However, you *may* interrupt TQSE for en route travel, TDY, military duty, or sick leave. The TQSE will be extended by the same number of days.

**Time Limitations for Temporary Storage (Outside CONUS)** – The initial period for TS shipments may not exceed 90 days. Requests for additional time (up to a maximum of 90 additional days) must be received for processing prior to expiration of the original 90 days. Temporary Storage for OCONUS moves may never exceed a total of 180 days.

**Lump Sum Payment Option** – Formerly referred to as "Fixed Amount".

**Lump Sum Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expense (TQSE)** – You are encouraged to elect a lump sum payment for TQSE. If you elect this option, you are eligible to request this payment once you have signed a certification (included in your service agreement) that you will occupy temporary quarters and incur TQSE.

**Maximum Weight Allowance of Household Goods (HHG)** – The maximum net weight for the HHG allowance is 18,000 pounds (for uncrated or van line shipments). A 2,000 pound allowance is added to the 18,000 pounds net weight allowance to cover packing materials. In no case may a total shipment weigh over 20,000 gross pounds.

**Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) (CONUS)** - You may ship no more than 2 POVs and only if DOE has determined the following: (1) it is advantageous and cost effective to the government; (2) the POV(s) is in operating order; (3) POV(s) is legally titled and tagged for driving; and (4) the distance to be shipped is 600 miles or more.

**POV Shipment (OCONUS)** - Only 1 POV may be shipped at government expense on OCONUS moves.

**Property Management Services** – Should you elect to rent your home instead of selling, you may be authorized this service for one year. One additional year may be authorized if justified. If you later elect to sell your home and are then authorized Sale of Residence expenses, you will be required to repay all reimbursements paid by DOE on your behalf for property management of your home.

**Miscellaneous Expenses** – Effective July 18, 2011, lump sum amounts have increased to \$650 for employees with no dependents and \$1300 for employees with dependents.

**Domestic Partners** – Effective March 1, 2011, GSA revised the definition of "Immediate family" to include "Domestic partner" and children, dependent parents, and dependent brothers and sisters of the "Domestic partner" as named members of the employee's household.