



Memorandum

**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

Office of Inspector General

Subject: ACTION: Permanent Change of Station (PCS)
Moves Associated with the Atlanta Terminal
Radar Approach Control (TRACON)

Date: December 10, 2001

From: David A. Dobbs 
Deputy Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation

Reply to
Attn of: JA-10:x60500

To: Steven J. Brown
Associate Administrator for Air Traffic Services

It has come to our attention that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) entered into a local agreement concerning Air Traffic employees transferring to the new Atlanta TRACON in Peachtree City, Georgia. This agreement allowed Air Traffic employees to become eligible for paid PCS moves that would otherwise not have been authorized under terms of the FAA/NATCA national collective bargaining agreement or Federal Travel Regulations.

The new Atlanta TRACON in Peachtree City is approximately 25 miles from the old TRACON at Hartsfield Airport. Under provisions of the FAA/NATCA national collective bargaining agreement, PCS benefits would not be paid under these circumstances because the old and new duty station are less than 50 miles apart. However, in March 1999, FAA and NATCA officials from FAA's Southern Region entered into a local agreement concerning the relocation of the Atlanta TRACON that allowed for PCS benefits to be paid if an employee's commute increased by 10 miles and 30 minutes. As a result, 44 Air Traffic bargaining and non-bargaining unit employees were authorized PCS moves that under terms of the national agreement would not have been permitted.

We are concerned that FAA would enter into a local agreement of this nature when the FAA/NATCA national agreement already clearly establishes a standard for PCS eligibility. In fact, the national agreement even stipulates that

local officials cannot enter into agreements that “. . . increase or diminish entitlements expressly contained in this Agreement.”

In contrast, no Airways Facilities employees were authorized PCS benefits. FAA officials stated those employees, who fall under provisions of the Professional Airways Systems Specialists (PASS) collective bargaining agreement and who did not have a similar local agreement, did not qualify under the express terms of the national FAA/PASS agreement.

Additionally, many of the moves authorized under the local Air Traffic agreement appear to be primarily for the benefit of the employee and not in the best interests of the Government. For example, one employee was authorized \$76,000 in PCS benefits after submitting documentation stating that his commute had increased by 15 miles.

Another employee was paid over \$38,000 after submitting documentation stating that his commute had increased by 13 miles. In total, the 44 moves allowed by the local agreement may cost the Government as much as \$1 million in PCS expenditures. *In our opinion, those funds represent a significant waste of taxpayer dollars and are contrary to the basic tenets of the agency's personnel reform efforts to operate more like a business.*

We understand that the local agreement in Atlanta was “technically” rescinded in November of this year. However, those actions are essentially moot since the rescission applies only to future moves and even lists all the individuals who will continue to qualify for PCS benefits under terms of the local agreement.

In 1995, we reported on similar issues involving PCS moves associated with the opening of Denver International Airport. We are concerned that a similar incident does not happen again. We are expressly concerned that the agreement in Atlanta may establish a precedent for other locations. Accordingly, Air Traffic Services must take proactive steps now to ensure that similar agreements are not developed in conjunction with other consolidation efforts, such as those ongoing at the Potomac and Northern California TRACONs.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact me at x60500 or Richard Kaplan (Program Director) at x61402.

cc: FAA Administrator, AOA-1
FAA Chief of Staff, AOA-2
Assistant Administrator for Financial Services/CFO, ABA-1
Assistant Administrator for Region and Center Operations, ARC-1
Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs/CFO, B-1

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