

VA Financial Policies and Procedures
Relocation Packages

0801 OVERVIEW	3
0802 POLICIES	4
0803 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES	33
0804 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	33
0805 PROCEDURES	35
0806 DEFINITIONS	36
0807 RESCISSIONS	40
0808 QUESTIONS	42
APPENDIX A: PCS TRAVEL PORTAL	43
APPENDIX B: ADVANCE OF FUNDS	48
APPENDIX C: DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY	49
APPENDIX D: RELOCATION GENERAL ENTITLEMENTS AND DISCRETIONARY ALLOWANCES	52
APPENDIX E: RELOCATION SERVICES CONTRACT	53
APPENDIX F: HOME MARKETING INCENTIVE PROGRAM (HMIP)	58
APPENDIX G: POV MILEAGE RATES	61
APPENDIX H: TQSE ALLOWANCES	62
APPENDIX I: ITEMS ALLOWED/NOT ALLOWED TO BE SHIPPED WITH HHG	64
APPENDIX J: SHIPMENT OF MOBILE HOMES	65
APPENDIX K: MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE ALLOWANCE GUIDELINES	66
APPENDIX L: PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICES	68
APPENDIX M: TRANSFERS TO OCONUS LOCATIONS	70

APPENDIX N: OTHER OCONUS RELOCATION ALLOWANCES..... 71

APPENDIX O: TCS ALLOWANCES 73

APPENDIX P: IRS PUBLICATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH RELOCATION EXPENSES74

APPENDIX Q: PCS RELOCATION GUIDANCE PRIOR TO AUGUST 1, 2011 75

0801 OVERVIEW

The policy in this chapter is effective as of August 1, 2011, based on the latest Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) updates. This chapter establishes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) financial policies and procedures relating to relocation packages for both permanent change of station (PCS) and temporary change of station (TCS). This chapter implements and supplements those portions of the FTR pertaining to Relocation Allowances. The FTR is the Federal Government regulation that implements statutory requirements and Executive Branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expense (41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Chapters 300 through 304).

This chapter provides guidance on:

- A. General Rules – Section [080201](#).
- B. Employee Eligibility Requirements – Section [080202](#).
- C. PCS Allowances for Subsistence and Transportation Expenses
 - Allowance for Subsistence and Transportation -- Section [080203A](#).
 - Allowance for House Hunting (HH) Trip Expenses – Section [080203B](#).
 - Allowance for Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses – Section [080203C](#).
- D. Transportation and Storage of Property – Section [080204](#).
- E. Residence Transaction Allowances – Section [080205](#).
- F. Miscellaneous Expense Allowances – Section [080206](#).
- G. Outside of the Continental United States (OCONUS) Relocation – Section [080207](#).
- H. Senior Executive Service (SES) Separation Relocation Allowance – Section [080208](#).
- I. Temporary Change of Station (TCS) Allowances – Section [080209](#).
- J. Withholding Tax Allowance (WTA) and Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) – Section [080210](#).
- K. PCS Relocation Guidance Prior To August 1, 2011 – [Appendix Q](#).

0802 POLICIES

080201 GENERAL RULES. VA will adhere to the following general rules for PCS/TCS situations:

A. VA's Human Resources (HR) office will indicate whether relocation allowances are authorized when posting new job announcements.

B. Employees. For the purpose of this policy, the context of term "employee" refers to:

- New appointees;
- Transferred employees;
- Transferred employees from OCONUS locations; and
- Special appointees (e.g., political appointees).

C. Travel Authorization (TA). Relocation expenses may not be incurred until the employee has either an approved paper or electronic TA by the designated approving official for relocation. Refer to Appendix A, PCS Travel Portal, for information on the VA portal used to initiate travel authorizations. The TA will include, but is not limited to:

- Entitlements;
- Authorized discretionary allowances; and
- Authorized advance of funds.

Refer to Appendix B, Advance of Funds, for information on relocation allowances that are eligible for travel fund advances.

NOTE. If an employee is on TDY at the prospective new official duty station, acting in the position for which he/she is being considered, and he/she accepts the position, the employee's entitlement to TDY reimbursement ends immediately upon the acceptance of the position at the new permanent official duty station. The notification can be verbal or written. The notification date is not when the reporting day is scheduled, but rather the day on which the employee learns that he/she has received the promotion/job transfer assignment and accepts the position.

D. Relocation Authorization. Approving Officials, or their designees, will authorize all relocation authorizations. Refer to Appendix C, Delegation of Authority, for officials delegated to approve PCS/TCS relocation transfers. The TA must be approved prior to beginning any relocation-related activities that may require reimbursement.

E. VA Form 5-3918, Intra-Agency Transfer Request. This form will be completed by the gaining station or staff office respective HR for each VA employee who has either been selected for transfer or is a new appointee. For permanent duty travel, the VA receiving station's HR staff will initiate, as far in advance as possible, a VA Form 5-3918 in the PCS Travel Portal by completing Part I. The PCS Portal will electronically route this form to the receiving station's HR approver (if not the same as initiator) for signature on Part I; and to the relocating employee to complete Part II and sign the Service Agreement. The form will then be routed to the releasing station's HR approver, if applicable, for completion of Part III. This form is integral to the process and will accompany the Service Agreement. Refer to the VA HR policy on staffing for additional guidance and to Appendix A, PCS Travel Portal.

F. Service Agreement (SA). An SA is a written agreement between the employee and the VA, signed by the employee, stating that the employee will remain in the service of the Federal Government for a specified period of time. An SA must be executed prior to the beginning of any PCS relocation travel. VA will not pay a relocation allowance to any employee who has not signed an agency SA, except for SES employees who are authorized for "last move home" benefits. The SA covers travel within CONUS and/or OCONUS and tour renewal agreement travel. An SA is not required for a TCS. The SA will consist of:

- Employee Name, including additional employee data as reflected in the VA Form 5-3918];
- Releasing Official Duty Station with location (city/state) or departure home (city/state), if a new appointee;
- Receiving Official Duty Station with location (city/state);
- Duration: SAs require a minimum period of service with the Federal Government:
 - CONUS: for a period of service of not less than 12 months following the effective date of transfer;
 - OCONUS: for an agreed upon period of service of not more than 36 months or less than 12 months following the effective date of transfer. (Note: For OCONUS assignments, the tour agreement, VA Form 5-3918, SA and TA should all be consistent in the duration length);
- Duplicate Reimbursement Disclosure Statement;¹
- Signature of employee; and

¹ The duplicate reimbursement disclosure states the employee and their immediate family have not accepted, and will not accept, duplicate reimbursement for relocation expenses. Refer to FTR 302-2.20 for additional information.

- Date of execution.
- 1. Violation of an SA, other than for reasons beyond an employee's control and approved by the employee's agency, will require an employee to reimburse the Government for all costs reimbursed by the employee's agency, including the Withholding Tax Allowance (WTA) and Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA).
- 2. A new SA cannot void an existing SA that is already in effect. While a relocation SA is transferable within the Federal Government, the relocation allowance is specific to the receiving agency. Each SA is in effect for the period specified in the agreement.
- 3. The employee must notify the transferring agency of the timeframes remaining on any previous and/or current SA. The subsequent agency has the ultimate responsibility for recording the timeframe requirements associated with the employee's prior SA.
- 4. The employee relocating to an OCONUS location is required to provide the VA HR point of contact with his/her actual stateside place of residence immediately upon notification of the assignment. This information must be documented in the SA.

F. File Retention. VA will retain all relocation files for six years and three months in accordance with the National Archive and Records Administration (NARA) guidelines that set forth the governing provisions of file retention for executive agencies.

G. Employee Entitlements and Allowances for Relocation. VA will determine relocation eligibility based on existing regulatory provisions in effect at the time an employee reports to the new official duty station. However, this does not change the requirement that all aspects of relocation must be completed within one year of the reporting date at the employee's new official duty station, except when an extension has been authorized. If the employee is both eligible and authorized a relocation allowance, VA may grant the following entitlements and discretionary allowances:

- Entitlements. VA will pay or reimburse employees for relocation allowances, when authorized.
- Discretionary Allowances. VA has discretionary authority to pay or reimburse employees, when authorized by the approving official.

Refer to Appendix D, Relocation General Entitlements and Discretionary Allowances, for additional information on eligible relocation allowances.

H. Employee's Effective Reporting Date. VA requires the reporting date to be the date on which the employee physically reports for duty at the new or first official duty station. This date will be specified in the VA Form 5-3918. The "reporting date" will be the first day of the one-year time limit allowed to complete all applicable relocation activities. The effective transfer or appointment date will not always coincide with the reporting

date. For example, the effective transfer or appointment date at the official duty station may be Sunday, March 1, 20XX, yet the reporting date may be Monday, March 2, 20XX.

- Virtual employees who are transferred to another VA station but will continue to work virtually will not be authorized for a PCS move. Virtual or non-virtual employees, accepting positions requiring them to relocate to new duty stations, must physically report to their new official duty stations within 90 days from notification of the appointment. The receiving station’s supervisor may authorize transferring employees to remain as temporary virtual employees up to 90 days due to delays related to the sale or purchase of their residences at their official duty stations or due to delays related to family situations (school, work, illness). Once an employee has been notified that he/she has been selected for a position at the new official duty station, the employee will no longer be entitled to TDY travel entitlements to the new official duty station if the purpose of the TDY is related to the new position. If the TDY is unrelated to the new position, the TDY travel entitlements may continue if necessary. The first day of the one-year time limit that is allowed to complete all applicable relocation activities will be based on the reporting date.

I. Long Distance Moves. VA requires the distance to be at least 50 miles between the new official duty station and the old official duty station for employees in order to be eligible for relocation entitlements and allowances. This requirement follows the distance guidelines found in Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 521, *Moving Expenses*. In addition, VA policy requires Approving Officials to consider the following:

- An increase in commuting distance to the new official duty station from the old residence by 50 miles or greater than from the old residence to the old official duty station.
- The IRS distance test is met when the new official duty station is at least 50 miles farther from the employee's current residence than the old official duty station is from the same residence. For example, if the old official duty station is 3 miles from the current residence, then the new official duty station must be at least 53 miles from that same residence in order to receive relocation expenses for residence transactions.

IRS WORKSHEET 1 – DISTANCE TEST	
PROCESS	MILES
1. Enter number of miles from old home to new work place	XXX
2. Enter number of miles from old home to old work place	YYY
3. Subtract line 2 from line 1; if zero or less, enter -0-	XXX-YYY
IS LINE 3 AT LEAST 50 MILES?	
If YES, you meet the test.	If NO, you do not meet test and cannot deduct your moving expenses.

J. Short Distance Moves (less than 50 miles from the old official duty station). VA will not reimburse employees for relocation expenses if they relocate to a new official duty station that is less than 50 miles from the old official duty station. However, at the discretion of Approving Officials, exceptions may be granted for extenuating circumstances that must be approved in writing by the Assistant Secretary for Management/Chief Financial Officer (ASM/CFO). Approving Officials will provide all relevant documentation, background materials, and any additional information as evidence to support the extenuating circumstances.

NOTE: Per Executive Order dated October 1, 2009: Federal employees shall not engage in text messaging (a) when driving GOV, or when driving POV while on official Government business, or (b) when using electronic equipment supplied by the Government while driving (refer to Transportation Expenses Volume XIV Chapter 3).

K. Time Limits. Employees must complete all aspects of their relocations within one year of their reporting dates. However, Approving Officials may allow the following exceptions, when:

- An employee is furloughed to perform active military service; or
- There are shipping restrictions to/from the employee's OCONUS duty post. In this situation, the one-year period is exclusive of time spent on active military service and the time lost due to shipping restrictions.

L. Extensions. The approving official will allow an extension beyond the initial one year if an employee experiences delays related to the sale or purchase of their residence at the official duty stations or delays due to family situations (school, work, illness). If applicable, an extension may be granted up to one additional year. The total relocation timeframe cannot exceed two years. Approving Officials may grant an extension on a case by case basis, if:

- The employee actively searches for a place of residence and shows supporting documentation or relevant information of this search (such as real estate company and point of contact); or
- The delays in residence transactions are due to reasons outside the employee's control. An employee must submit a request for extension to his/her Approving Official no later than 30 calendar days after the expiration date of the initial one year period.

M. Driving a Privately-Owned Vehicle (POV). VA will limit authorization to one POV for an employee. Authorization for one POV for the employee's immediate family will be reimbursed if approved for separate travel or if justified for driving at the same time due to the number of immediate family members and luggage requiring two POVs.

N. Shipment of POV. The shipment of a POV represents a discretionary allowance, not an entitlement. Approving Officials have the discretion to authorize the shipment of a

POV. However, VA will generally limit the authorization to one POV per employee. Under extenuating circumstances, however, Approving Officials may authorize one additional POV for shipment, when shipment is more cost effective to VA. Approving Officials will consider the following when authorizing the shipment of a POV:

- The POV is in operating order and legally titled and tagged for driving; and
- The distance that the POV is to be shipped is greater than 600 miles.

O. Emergency Storage of POV. The approving official may authorize storage of a POV which has been shipped at the expense of the Federal Government when the Federal Government or a specific State declares a national or local emergency, respectively, and evacuation is required.

P. Use of Relocation Services Company (RSC). The use of an RSC represents a discretionary allowance, not an entitlement. VA has the discretion to authorize the use of an RSC. However, VA will establish policies governing the use of an RSC. Refer to Appendix E, Relocation Services Contract, for additional information regarding the Relocation Services Program.

Q. Home Marketing Incentive Program (HMIP). The HMIP provides a cash incentive award to VA employees who are both enrolled in the Appraised Value Offer (AVO) Program² and who have successfully found qualified buyers for their residences, referred to as the “amended sale.” Employees who sell their homes without enrolling in the Relocation Services Program are ineligible for the marketing incentive award. The HMIP offers eligible employees an award of 2 percent of the selling price of their homes, not to exceed \$8,000. Employees enrolled in the Buyer Value Option (BVO) Program and employees with homes considered Special Properties are not eligible for the HMIP. Refer to Appendix F, Home Marketing Incentive Program (HMIP), and Volume XV, Chapter 3, *Payroll: Awards and Incentives*, for additional information on the HMIP.

R. Reimbursement Vouchers. Employees should submit a voucher within five business days after completion of each benefit (e.g., house hunting trip, en route travel,) for official relocation travel.

080202 EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.

A. The following relocating employees are eligible for relocation expense allowances:

- An employee newly appointed to his/her first official duty station;
- An employee transferring in the interest of the Government from one agency or official duty station to another for permanent duty, and the commuting distance between

² AVO was formerly referred to as the Guaranteed Home Buyout Option.

the new official duty station and permanent residence has increased by 50 miles or greater from the old official duty station and the permanent residence;

- An employee performing travel in accordance with an overseas tour renewal agreement;
- An employee returning to his/her place of residence after completing a prescribed tour of duty for the purposes of separation from Government service or separation from the overseas assignment for reassignment to the same or different Government agency, which may or may not include PCS relocation benefits;
- A student trainee assigned to any position upon completion of college work;
- Assignment under 5 U.S.C. 4109, Government Employees Training Act (GETA);
- A career appointee to the SES, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 3132(a)(4), and a prior SES appointee who is returning to his/her official residence for separation and who will be retaining SES retirement benefits; or
- An employee who is being assigned to a TDY station in connection with a TCS assignment lasting longer than 6 months but less than 30 months.

B. Types of Relocation. VA may approve all relocation allowances that are in the best interest of the Government. Acceptable reasons for authorizing a move in the interest of the Government include:

- Directed Reassignments [e.g., VA requires an employee to move to another location due to a reduction in force, cessation, transfer of work, and/or special missions];
- Merit Promotion System; or
- New Appointments.

080203 PCS ALLOWANCES FOR SUBSISTENCE AND TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES.

A. Allowances for Subsistence and Transportation.

1. Per Diem.

a. Employees will use the standard CONUS per diem rates for en route relocation travel between the old and new official duty stations. Employees will be reimbursed in accordance with Volume XIV, Chapter 2, *Travel Per Diem*.

b. The number of authorized travel days will be based on an average minimum driving distance of 300 miles per calendar day. Reimbursement is based on the actual number of days used to complete the trip, not to exceed the established authorized travel days. Travel is to be continuous via the most direct/usually traveled route. Per diem will not be paid unless the travel period to the new official duty station is 12 hours or more.

c. VA will not authorize per diem for employees' immediate family members if employees are:

- New appointees;
- Assigned to posts of duty OCONUS returning to places of their actual residence for separation; or
- Being relocated under GETA (allows per diem payment for employee only).

d. Eligible family members will be authorized the following per diem amounts:

FAMILY MEMBER	MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF REIMBURSEMENT
Spouse or domestic partner who is accompanied by employee	75 percent of employee's daily rate.
Spouse or domestic partner who travels separately (not accompanied by employee)	Same rate as employee.
Family members 12 years or older	75 percent of employee's daily rate.
Children under 12 years	50 percent of employee's daily rate.

NOTE. To be considered "accompanied spouse or domestic partner" for per diem purposes, an employee and spouse or domestic partner are considered to be traveling together on the same days even if the two parties are driving separate POVs.

2. POV Mileage.

a. Mileage is determined based on the actual place of origin. For new employees, the place of residence at origin to the new official duty station will be utilized in determining mileage. For transferring employees, the old and new official duty stations will be utilized. Acceptable evidence for POV ground mileage will include odometer readings of actual and necessary distance traveled for conducting official business. A comparison of actual mileage will be made against the number of miles calculated using Mapquest® used by VA as the principal standard for determining approved reimbursement. Other similar standards (e.g., Rand McNally, Yahoo) may be used if data is not available in Mapquest.com®. When the deviation exceeds 5 percent between the actual and standard (rounded up to the nearest mile), justification must be provided to the authorizing official. VA may consider exceptions for extreme circumstances involving:

- Delays beyond the employees' control (e.g., illness en route, road construction, vehicle repairs);
- Delays due to an act of God;
- Restrictions by Government officials; or
- Employees who have been certified as being physically handicapped.

b. Authorization of Multiple POV. VA will allow reimbursement to employees for the driving of more than one POV if the Approving Official determines it is advantageous to the Government. For example, an employee reports to the official duty station before his/her family. However, the use of more than one POV must be requested by the employee and authorized in writing by the Approving Official. Refer to Appendix G, POV Mileage Rates, for information on rates.

B. Allowances for House Hunting (HH) Trip Expenses.

1. HH can only be used by the employee and/or spouse to seek a permanent residence, if authorized. HH is not an entitlement.

2. VA may authorize HH to expedite the process of finding a permanent residence. The duration authorized for HH must be reduced from the duration authorized for Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses (TQSE). Employees are eligible for HH trip expenses if they are relocating in the interest of the Government. The criteria are:

- Employee's old and new official duty stations are located within the United States, including OCONUS non-foreign locations;
- Employee's old and new official duty stations are 75 or more miles apart. Distance must be measured by map distance and travel must be by a usually-traveled surface route; and
- Employee is not assigned to Government or other prearranged housing at their new official duty station.

3. Only employees and their spouses may travel on a HH trip at the Government's expense. **VA will only authorize one round trip for an employee and his/her spouse in connection with a specific transfer.** If an employee and spouse travel separately for a HH trip, reimbursement will be limited to the cost that would have been incurred if the employee and spouse had traveled together as one round trip.

4. VA may authorize up to 10 calendar days, which includes the trip duration in the Travel Authorization. Employees may begin travel as soon as their agencies issue a TA for a HH trip.

5. Reimbursement. VA may reimburse eligible employees a HH trip allowance based on the following:

PER DIEM ALLOWANCE METHOD	PER DIEM ALLOWANCE OR LUMP SUM AMOUNT METHOD
Transportation Expenses	
Actual transportation costs for employees and/or spouses	Actual transportation costs for employees and/or spouses
Subsistence Expenses	
Per diem allowance for employees and/or spouses, as prescribed under FTR Chapter 302-5.13	<p>One of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A per diem allowance at the standard CONUS rate for you and/or your spouse (see http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem); or 2. Only if offered by VA and chosen by you, a lump sum, as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If you perform an HH trip and your spouse does not, or if your spouse performs an HH trip and you do not, multiply the applicable locality per diem rate by 5.00 (see http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem). b. If you and your spouse both perform an HH trip, together or separately, multiply the applicable locality per diem rate by 6.25 (see http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem).

NOTE. Approving Officials will make the determination in advance whether the per diem or lump sum method is offered to employees.

6. Transportation Mode(s). VA will authorize employees to travel by the transportation mode(s) determined to be most advantageous to the Government. Reimbursement will be paid based on the authorized mode(s). A cost comparison must be prepared to determine the costs for alternative modes of transportation unless authorized to use a specific mode of transportation for medical reasons. For trips less than 250 miles, VA considers POV to be most advantageous method of transportation unless there are reasons for not using a POV that are acceptable to the Approving Official (e.g., traveler is physically impaired, does not own or lease a POV, has only one POV that is used for family transportation, or the POV is not roadworthy for such a trip).

C. Allowances for Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses (TQSE).

1. VA will not authorize TQSE if the distance between the old and new official duty stations is less than 50 miles. “Temporary quarters” refers to lodging obtained for the purpose of temporary occupancy from a private or commercial source. Factors used to determine whether quarters are temporary include:

- Duration of the lease;
- Movement of household effects into the quarters;
- Type of quarters;
- Employee’s expressions of intent;
- Attempts to secure a permanent dwelling; and
- Length of time the employee occupies the quarters.

NOTE. TQSE may be authorized for a necessary time period until a permanent residence has been secured.

2. TQSE is a discretionary allowance intended to reimburse employees for some costs for meals, lodging, and other necessities when occupying temporary quarters. TQSE does not include transportation expenses, such as rental car reimbursement. The Approving Official will determine the TQSE method and number of days to be authorized. TQSE must be authorized in advance of occupancy and may not be approved after the fact. New appointees, employees assigned under GETA, or employees returning from an overseas assignment for the purposes of separation are not eligible for TQSE.

3. VA will offer TQSE in the following forms:

- TQSE Actual Expense Reimbursement (TQSE/AE). VA may authorize TQSE/AE for a limited time period until a permanent residence has been secured. For example, when an employee completes closing on a home purchase or secures a rental and has accessibility to the residence, temporary quarters will be terminated. VA will allow authorization up to an initial 60 days of TQSE/AE with an additional 60 days when compelling reasons warrant. Approving Officials will ensure TQSE/AE is used to minimize or avoid other relocation expenses, such as prolonged temporary storage of household goods (HHG). The maximum allowable TQSE/AE is 120 days. Compelling reasons for an extension include:

- Delivery of HHG to your new residence is delayed due to strikes, customs clearance, hazardous weather, fires, floods or other acts of God, or similar events;
- You cannot occupy your new permanent residence because of unanticipated problems (e.g., delay in settlement on the new residence, or short-term delay in construction of the residence);

- You are unable to locate a permanent residence that is adequate for your family's needs because of housing conditions at your new official duty station;
 - Sudden illness, injury, or death of employee or immediate family member; or
 - Similar reasons.
- TQSE Lump Sum Payment (TQSE/LS). VA may authorize a TQSE/LS based on the new official duty station's locality rate in effect when the TQSE/LS offer is accepted by the employee, and is paid in a lump-sum payment. TQSE/LS may be authorized for the number of days determined necessary, up to 30 days with no extensions under any circumstances. If offered, an employee must choose between TQSE/LS and TQSE/AE, but is under no obligation to accept the lump sum option. Once a TQSE method has been selected, it may not be changed.

Refer to Appendix H, TQSE Allowances, for the per diem rates used for calculation.

NOTE. For TQSE/LS, a payment will be issued to the employee in the form of a settlement, not an advance. The employee will complete a travel voucher requesting a TQSE/LS payment. VA will make the TQSE/LS payment as close as is reasonably possible to the time that the transferee will begin occupancy of the temporary quarters. There is no requirement to follow up with a settlement voucher and receipts on the TQSE/LS. Taxes are withheld and a RITA may be filed on this payment in the following year.

080204 TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE OF PROPERTY.

A. VA will authorize shipment and storage of employee HHG up to the maximum weight allowance of 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 for the shipment. In no case may a shipment weigh over 20,000 gross pounds (the 18,000 pounds net weight of the uncrated HHG plus the 2,000 pound allowance for packing materials). The employee is responsible for payment of any shipping and temporary storage charges in excess of the 18,000-pound maximum weight allowance. VA will issue a bill of collection for payment of charges for shipping and storage in excess of the allowable limits.

B. Employee HHG must be shipped using one of the following two methods:

- Shipment by Commercial Carrier; or
- Self-Shipment.

NOTE. Employees transferring to, from, and within OCONUS areas are required to use shipment of HHG by the Commercial Carrier Method.

1. Shipment by Commercial Carrier Method. Under this method, the PCS Counselor from the Austin Financial Services Center (FSC) will initiate a Bill of Lading with VA's contracted commercial carrier, who will contact the employee once the Bill of Lading has been received and processed. The commercial carrier will pack, ship, store, deliver, and unpack your goods in one lot. Under this method, VA will pay the commercial carrier directly and the employee will not incur any associated upfront costs. If the employee lives in a remote location that the commercial carrier is unable to access by truck, VA will pay the commercial carrier for additional costs incurred in order to reach the residence, as long as the 18,000-pound limit is not exceeded.

2. Self-Shipment Method. Under this method, employees will itemize the costs associated with moving their HHG on an SF 1012 Travel Voucher. If an employee elects to move his/her goods using this method, approval must be obtained from the Approving Official and documented on the TA. Self shipment reimbursement is limited to the actual cost incurred, not to exceed what the Government would have incurred under the method selected by VA. Reimbursable costs under the self-shipment method may include the following items:

- Truck rental;
- Fuel;
- Packaging materials;
- Toll charges;
- Weight tickets; and
- Insurance on HHG.

3. Employees will not charge any expenses under the self-shipment method to their Travel Cards (Government Travel Charge Cards) if the expenses are associated with moving their HHG. Instead, employees will prepare a claim for reimbursement for all expenses, using the SF 1012 Travel Voucher. Employees will attach the following documents to their travel vouchers:

- Weight certificates from the nearest weighing station before and after loading the vehicle. [Note. If hauling goods in multiple trips, weight certificates must be provided for each trip];
- Copy of the Travel Authorization limiting the reimbursement of the self-shipment method to the cost of the shipment by the Commercial Carrier Method;
- Inventory of goods being shipped; and
- All associated paid-in-full receipts for which reimbursement is requested.

C. Shipping Professional Books, Papers, and Equipment (PBPE)

1. VA may authorize shipment of PBPE if the weight will exceed the maximum weight of 18,000 pounds. PBPE includes professional or specialized items owned by employees, but used to perform their jobs (e.g., periodicals, magazines, reference materials). When authorized, shipping PBPE is considered an administrative cost to VA. However, for ease of administration in calculating this allowance, PBPE should be included as part of the HHG shipment, if possible.

2. Approving Officials will review, certify and approve the shipment of these professional items. A written inventory of goods to be shipped will be reviewed by the employee's new supervisor. The inventory of goods should be separated into the following three categories:

- Professional Books;
- Papers; and
- Equipment.

3. Items should generally be listed individually, but may be grouped if appropriate (e.g., encyclopedia set). For goods listed as a group, the employee will provide an estimate of the number of items contained in the group (e.g., encyclopedia set of 10 books). A justification will also be provided in support of the need for the goods included under each category. If items are deemed necessary and authorized for shipment, the commercial carrier will pack the professional items listed on the employee's approved inventory separately from your HHG. The Bill of Lading will contain separate weight readings and costs associated with the employee's professional items in order to be fully reimbursed as an administrative expense of the station or staff office separate from the relocation funds.

Refer to Appendix I, Items Allowed/Not Allowed To Be Shipped With HHG.

D. Mobile Homes. Refer to Appendix J, *Shipment Of Mobile Homes*.

E. Shipment of POVs.

1. VA may authorize shipment of POVs when it is determined the POV is in operating order, legally titled and tagged for driving, and the distance that the POV is to be shipped is 600 miles or more.

2. VA may authorize employees to transport only the number of POVs equal to the number of people on the relocation travel orders, who are licensed drivers, not to exceed two, while relocating within CONUS at Government expense.

F. Insurance coverage on Shipment and Storage of HHG.

1. Full Value Protection Method. VA will provide full value protection of HHG at no cost to the employee when using the contracted commercial carrier. Full value protection insures HHG at the full replacement value for individual items not to exceed the

maximum of \$5 per pound for the entire shipment weight. For example, an employee ships 10,000 pounds of HHG to his/her new official duty station. If the moving truck transporting the goods is involved in an accident that results in the loss of all of the employee's HHG, the employee will receive a maximum of \$50,000 to replace his/her belongings.

2. Excess Full Value Protection Method. Employees may elect the excess full value protection to insure their HHG based on the dollar valuation of their belongings being shipped. Employees should select this method if they want to ensure full coverage of their goods in the event of damage or loss of the shipment. If this method is selected, the employee will be billed for the additional cost to VA.

G. Temporary Storage of HHG.

1. VA will provide up to 60 calendar days storage of HHG. However, storage of goods in excess of 30 calendar days is treated as taxable income to the employee and will be included as gross income.

2. Employees may request to extend temporary storage of their goods in 30 calendar day increments for an additional period, but no more than 90 calendar days, by submitting a memorandum to their Approving Officials and the FSC PCS Counselors. If the extension is approved, the authorization must be documented as an amendment to the TA. Circumstances beyond the employee's immediate control that could justify additional storage time may include the following:

- An intervening TDY or long-term training assignment;
 - A lack of suitable available housing or delays in new residence construction;
 - The serious illness of an employee or illness/death of an immediate family member;
- or
- An act of God beyond the control of the employee.

3. Under no circumstances may goods be stored in temporary storage for a period of more than 150 calendar days total (60 days initial authorization plus up to 90 days extension).

H. Extended Storage of HHG.

1. Approving Officials may approve an extended period of time under the following circumstances if the extensions apply to the employee's transfer:

- Employee is assigned to an isolated official duty station within CONUS; or
- Employee is assigned to an OCONUS official duty station and VA determines that extended storage is cost effective; or

- Employee is assigned to an overseas location where VA limits the amount of HHG the employee may transport to that location; or
- It is necessary for a TCS.

NOTE. If approved, the Approving Official will authorize the extended storage and provide documentation on the TA.

2. An official duty station must meet one of the following two criteria to be classified as an isolated station:

- The quarters to be occupied at the new official duty station will not accommodate the HHG; or
- Quarters that would accommodate the HHG are not available within 50 miles of the new official duty station.

080205 RESIDENCE TRANSACTION ALLOWANCES.

A. General Conditions and Limitations for Eligibility.

1. Eligible Employees. Eligible employees include all VA employees and other Federal Government employees who join the VA without a break in service and who are transferring for the benefit of the Government, subject to the FTR.

2. Service Agreement. The employee must sign an SA (refer to 080201F above) to be eligible for the Appraised Value Option (AVO) Program. In the event the employee violates the SA terms, VA has the right to recover from the employee all payments that were made to the contractor on the employee's behalf. For SES or SES Equivalent employees and VA OIG Non-Bargaining Unit employees authorized for the AVO, a 36-month service agreement must be signed.

3. Ineligible Employees. The following employees are ineligible for the AVO:

- New appointees to any position, and
- Employees assigned under GETA.

B. To be eligible for benefits for sale of a residence at the departure official duty station, the dwelling must be the employee's actual residence from which he/she commuted to and from work at the time of official notification of transfer (or the employee acquired an interest in the property prior to official notification), and one of the following four situations applies to the title of the residences (or the interest in a cooperatively-owned dwelling on a pro rata basis):

- The title is solely in the employee's name;

- The title is jointly in the employee's name with one or more members of his/her immediate family;
- The title is solely in the name of one or more members of the employee's immediate family; or
- The title is with an individual accommodation party (i.e., an individual who signs the employee's financing agreement, such as a mortgage, to lend his/her name and credit to the arrangement).

If the above title requirements are not met, the employee will be reimbursed on a pro rata basis. Refer to FTR 302-11.100 to 302-11.106 for additional information on title requirements.

NOTE. All land and buildings must be reasonably related to the residence site. Non-residential property is ineligible.

NOTE. For relocation services, additional eligibility requirements will be determined by the contractor in accordance with contract guidelines.

C. VA may offer the AVO Program in connection with an employee's PCS.

1. The VA Secretary is the Approving Official for all eligible SES and SES Equivalent Title 38 employees, such as VHA Network and Medical Center Directors, Chief Officers, and other appointed under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 7306. Requests to authorize an AVO must include written affirmation of the critical need for the AVO by the applicable Under Secretary or Assistant Secretary, the General Counsel, or the Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals.
2. Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, the General Counsel and the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals are the approving officials for all other employees under their jurisdictions not covered by paragraph 080205B above. For non-SES or equivalent positions, requests to authorize an AVO must include written affirmation of the critical need for the AVO by the applicable VHA Network Director, VBA Area Office Director, NCA Memorial Service Network Director, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Deputy General Counsel, or Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals.
3. The VA Inspector General (IG) has independent authority, under the Inspector General Act, to authorize an AVO in connection with a transfer of IG employees. The IG will provide the Director, FSC, with notice of any re-delegation and will follow the processes outlined herein upon authorizing an AVO.

D. Procedures for AVO Approval.

1. Appropriate approval authority must be obtained before generating a VA Form 5-3918.
 2. The AVO will be offered only on the basis of a position's proven critical need; requirement for critical skill(s); the availability of funds; and a candidate's written statement that he/she will not accept transfer unless the home buyout is authorized.
 3. A copy of the approval for the AVO and the completed VA Form 5-3918 must be submitted to the FSC within 2 business days after the job offer and acceptance by the employee. Employees are required to participate in home sale counseling if using the AVO method.
 4. Authorization of an AVO is discretionary for all transfer situations where relocation expenses have been approved.
 5. An employee approved for an AVO must market his/her home for at least 60 days before accepting an appraised value offer.
 6. Employees not authorized for an AVO will be limited to reimbursement under the Buyer Value Option (BVO) or Direct Reimbursement.
 7. All properties entering the AVO must meet the terms of the current relocation services contract. Properties found ineligible will not be transacted through this contract.
- E. VA employees must list their homes for sale within 90 days from the date of initiation with the relocation services contractor. This listing requirement applies to both the BVO and AVO programs. SES, SES Equivalent and VA OIG Non-Bargaining Unit employees are eligible to seek an extension to the 90 day deadline. Employees must submit their extension requests of this listing requirement, with adequate justification, to the applicable approving authority. Requests for extension must be approved as follows:
1. The VA Secretary is the Approving Official for all listing requirement extension requests for all eligible SES and SES Equivalent Title 38 employees, such as VHA Network and Medical Center Directors, Chief Officers, and others appointed under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 7306.
 2. The VA IG exercises independent approval authority, under the Inspector General Act, to approve all extension requests for Non-Bargaining Unit IG employees.
- F. VA employees not authorized for an AVO will be limited to reimbursement under the BVO or Direct Reimbursement.

Refer to Appendix E, Relocation Services Contract, for information on the AVO and BVO programs.

G. Direct Reimbursement for Sale of Residence at Departure Official Duty Station. If the employee is not authorized for the AVO program or elects not to participate in the BVO Program, the employee may be eligible for reimbursement for reasonable and customary seller's closing costs in accordance with regulation, for up to a maximum of 10 percent of the actual sale price of his/her property. The employee will attend closing, will pay out-of-pocket for closing costs, and will submit for reimbursement. Under this program, the employee must sell and close on the property within one (1) year of his/her effective reporting date unless granted an extension for up to another year. The Home Marketing Incentive is not applicable under Direct Reimbursement. If the employee elects Direct Reimbursement for the sale of his/her residence, that decision is irrevocable. The employee cannot convert to the AVO or BVO programs.

H. Purchase of Residence at Destination Official Duty Station. To be eligible for reimbursement, employees must purchase and close on their property within two (2) years of their effective reporting dates. The new home must be the home that the employee commutes to and from work on a daily basis in order to be authorized for reimbursement, and one of the following situations applies to the title of the residence (or the interest in a cooperatively-owned dwelling on a pro rata basis):

- The title is solely in the employee's name; or
- The title is jointly in the employee's name with one or more members of his/her immediate family; or
- The title is solely in the name of one or more members of the employee's immediate family; or
- The title is with an individual accommodation party (i.e., an individual who signs the employee's financing agreement, such as a mortgage, to lend his/her name and credit to the arrangement).

If the above title requirements are not met, the employee will be reimbursed on a pro rata basis. The employee will be reimbursed reasonable and customary buyer's closing costs not to exceed 5 percent of the actual new home purchase price.

I. Direct Reimbursement of real estate expenses for both sale and purchase are mandatory entitlements for transferring employees. For direct reimbursement for the sale or purchase of primary residences at the departure and destination official duty stations, VA will reimburse the following expenses that are considered allowable in accordance with the FTR:

- Broker's fee or real estate commission paid on the sale of the residence, not to exceed rates that are generally charged in the locality of the old official duty station. The maximum rate is currently 7 percent of the sale price of your house.

- Cost of advertising in the newspaper or other media when the house is sold without the services of a real estate agent.
- Appraisal fee for establishing a suggested sales price for your residence.
- Legal (attorney) and related fees for searching for the title, preparing abstracts, and providing a title opinion or a title insurance policy where customarily furnished by the seller; costs of preparing conveyances, other instruments, and contracts and related notary fees; cost of making surveys; cost of preparing drawings or plats; recording fees and recording taxes (or other charges incidental to recordation); document preparation; and flood certification.
- Owner's title insurance policy (provided it is a prerequisite to financing or the transfer of property); or if the cost of the owner's title insurance policy is inseparable from the cost of other insurance), which is a prerequisite to financing or to transfer of property.
- Penalty charge for prepayment of the mortgage on your current residence when provided for on the mortgage instrument (not to exceed 3 months' interest).
- Escrow settlement fee or agent's fee for closing a real estate transaction.
- Lender's title insurance.
- State revenue stamps.
- Transfer or mortgage taxes.
- Power of Attorney (trustee fee).
- Release fee.
- Title examination.
- Title services.
- Title insurance binder (in lieu of title search).
- Radon and pest inspection (if required by law or the lender).

J. Non-Reimbursable Expenses. VA will not reimburse employees for the following expenses in connection with residence transactions:

- Any fee that has been inflated or higher than normally imposed for similar services;
- Cost of litigation;

- Funding fees (e.g., VA funding fee);
- Mortgage insurance premium (MIP);
- Maintenance and operating costs;
- Down payments;
- Mortgage interest, points and discounts; and
- Property taxes.

K. Expired Leases.

1. VA will reimburse employees for certain expenses associated with the settlement of an unexpired lease if the dwelling was the actual residence the employee commuted to and from work at the time he/she was officially notified of the transfer, and one of the following three situations applies to the lease agreement:

- The lease is solely in the employee's name; or
- The lease is jointly in the employee's name with one or more members of their immediate family; or
- The lease is solely in the name of one or more members of the employee's immediate family.

If the above title requirements are not met, the employee will be reimbursed on a pro rata basis.

2. VA will reimburse expenses, including broker's fees, for obtaining a sublease or charges for advertising an unexpired lease, when the following additional conditions are met:

- Terms of the lease provide payment of settlement expenses that cannot be avoided by sublease or other arrangement;
- Expenses were not incurred due to failure to give timely lease termination notice after the employee had definite knowledge of their transfer; and
- Broker's fees or advertising charges are not in excess of those customarily charged for comparable services in the locality.

3. Employees will complete an SF 1012 and itemize each expense associated with the settlement of the unexpired lease. In addition, receipts will be included for all expenses claimed showing paid in full. A copy of the signed lease agreement, letter notifying termination of lease, and document identifying any penalty for lease termination will be attached to the SF 1012. The expenses can be submitted as a lump sum payment or on a monthly basis depending on the terms of the lease settlement agreement with the rental agency.

080206 MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE ALLOWANCES.

A. VA will reimburse employees who have no immediate family member(s), a \$650 flat amount or, if the expenses are itemized, an amount up to one week basic compensation, whichever is the lesser amount.

B. VA will reimburse employees who have one or more immediate family member(s), a \$1,300 flat amount or, if the expenses are itemized, an amount up to two weeks basic compensation, whichever is the lesser amount.

C. The maximum miscellaneous expense allowance authorized must not exceed the highest basic salary for a GS-13, step 10.

Refer to Appendix K, Miscellaneous Expense Allowance Guidelines, for additional information.

**080207 OUTSIDE OF THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES (OCONUS)
RELOCATIONS.**

A. Foreign OCONUS Relocations.

1. VA may authorize the following relocation allowances for foreign OCONUS relocations:

- Transportation of employee and family;
- Shipment of POV;
- Property Management Services (refer to Appendix L, Property Management Services);
- Extended Storage of HHG;
- Temporary Quarters Subsistence Allowance (TQSA)
 - Prior to CONUS departure, or
 - Upon arrival at OCONUS location; or

- TQSE (upon return from OCONUS assignment).
2. Refer to the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) for additional allowances that VA may authorize for foreign OCONUS relocations. Also refer to Volume XIV, Chapter 6, *International Travel*, for Passport and Visa information needed for travel to foreign countries.

B. Non-Foreign OCONUS Relocations.

1. VA may authorize the following relocation allowances for non-foreign locations:

- Transportation of employee and family;
- Shipment of POV;
- TQSE;
- Relocation Services Program; or
- Allowances for expenses incurred in connection with residence transactions.

2. Employees are eligible for an allowance for expenses incurred in connection with residence transactions if their agencies have authorized relocation expenses.

Authorized expenses may include the following:

- Sale of employee's residence at the old official duty station from which the employee commutes daily, and/or the purchase of a residence at the employee's new official duty station in the United States;
- Termination expenses for a lease which has not expired on the employee's residence or mobile home lot, considered as the employee's permanent residence at the old official duty station; or
- Purchase of a new residence in the United States after completion of an overseas tour of duty. The return move is to a different official duty station in the United States. The new official duty station must be at least 50 miles from the previous official duty station in the United States.

Refer to Appendix M, Transfers To OCONUS Locations, for additional information on mandatory and discretionary OCONUS allowances.

C. VA may authorize extended storage of HHG for the duration of the assignment, including 30 days before the tour begins and 60 days after the tour has been completed. Extensions may be authorized for subsequent service or tours of duty at OCONUS locations. When a tour of duty is terminated, the employee's storage costs will be paid

at the Government’s expense until the end of the month. The following example demonstrates time limitations for extended storage of HHG for OCONUS tours of duty:

BEFORE TOUR	DURING TOUR	AFTER TOUR
30 days	Not to exceed tour duration (12-36 months)	60 days

D. Once the OCONUS assignment has been completed, VA will pay for relocation costs back to actual stateside place of residence as indicated on the SA. If the employee accepts a position with no relocation entitlements or accepts a position at another Government agency with relocation entitlements at a location other than the place of residence on the SA, VA will pay for relocation costs back to the actual stateside place of residence, as indicated on the SA. The employee or receiving Federal agency is responsible for any additional relocation costs.

E. Refer to Appendix N, Other OCONUS Relocation Allowances, for additional information on returning from an OCONUS tour of duty, transfers between OCONUS duty stations, and returning from OCONUS for separation.

080208 SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE (SES) SEPARATION RELOCATION ALLOWANCE.

A. SES employees must meet the conditions as defined in FTR Chapter 302 to be eligible for separation relocation allowance (also known as “last move home”). The employee must reside in a different geographical area which is at least 50 miles from his/her last official duty station.

GSA granted VA a waiver, effective December 19, 2003, to the “50 mile rule” due to hardships caused for some VA employees. This waiver remains in effect from the December 19, 2003 effective date, until either a permanent citation is made in Federal regulations or until the GSA’s Office of Governmentwide Policy rescinds the waiver. To qualify under the waiver for reimbursement of HHG moving expenses, SES members must:

- Reside in Government-furnished housing on VA facility grounds;
- Be required to vacate Government-furnished housing upon separation from Federal service; and
- Meet the qualifications for SES “last move home” benefits.

B. Before receiving reimbursement for moving expenses, the employee must submit a request to VA for authorization and approval of his/her moving expenses with the tentative moving dates and the origin and destination location of the employee’s

planned move. All travel and transportation of HHG must begin no later than six months after the employee’s date of separation.

C. Relocation allowances are as follows:

“LAST MOVE HOME” FOR SES CAREER APPOINTEES UPON SEPARATION	
RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA MUST PAY OR REIMBURSE	RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA HAS DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO PAY OR REIMBURSE
Transportation for employee and immediate family member(s) (FTR Part 302-4).	Shipment of POV (FTR Part 302-9).
Per diem for employee only (FTR Part 302-4).	
Transportation and temporary storage of HHG (FTR Part 302-7).	
Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of HHG (FTR Part 302-10).	

080209 TEMPORARY CHANGE OF STATION (TCS) ALLOWANCES.

A. VA will authorize a TCS when:

- It is necessary to accomplish the mission of the agency effectively and economically, and
- The employee is directed to perform a long-term assignment at another official duty station; or
- VA otherwise could authorize TDY travel and pay travel allowances, including payment of subsistence expenses; or
- The employee meets the distance requirement of 50 miles or more [NOTE. VA will not pay TCS for short distances, as prescribed in 080201J]; or
- VA determines it would be more advantageous, cost and other factors considered, to authorize a long-term assignment; or
- The employee meets any additional conditions VA has established.

NOTE. An SA is not required for TCS travel.

B. Duration of a TCS. A TCS will not be shorter in duration than 6 months nor last longer than 30 months.

1. If the assignment is cut short of the 6 months for reasons other than separation, TCS expenses will be reimbursed.

2. If the TCS lasts longer than 30 months, VA:

- Must permanently assign the employee to the temporary official duty station or return the employee to the previous official duty station;
- May not pay for extended storage or property management services past the 30th month; and
- Must pay the expenses of returning the employee and his/her immediate family members and the HHG to the previous official duty station unless permanently assigned to the temporary official duty station.

C. VA will pay for the following expenses in connection with the employee's departure and return to the official duty station:

- Travel, including per diem, for employees' and their immediate families (refer to 080203A);
- Transportation and temporary storage of HHG (refer to 080204);
- Transportation of a mobile home instead of transportation of HHG (refer to 080204);
- TQSE (refer to 080203C);
- Miscellaneous expense allowances (refer to 080206);
- Property management expenses (refer to Appendix L, Property Management Services);
- Transportation of a POV (refer to 080204);
- Lease break at permanent official duty station location and lease break after completion of TCS at TCS location (if applicable); and
- A relocation income tax allowance for additional income taxes incurred on payments. (refer to 080210)

D. VA will authorize the following expenses if employees are permanently assigned to TCS official duty stations:

- Travel, including per diem, for one round trip between the temporary official duty station and the previous official duty station, for employees and members of their immediate family who relocated to the temporary official duty station. VA may also pay the same expenses for a one-way trip from the previous official duty station to the new permanent official duty station for any immediate family member who did not accompany the employee to the temporary official duty station;
- Residence transaction expenses;
- Relocation services;
- Temporary quarters subsistence expenses;
- Transportation of HHG not previously transported to the temporary official duty station;
- Transportation of a privately-owned vehicle(s) not previously transported to the temporary official duty station; and
- If the employee changes his/her residence as a result of the permanent assignment to the temporary official duty station, VA may pay for transporting the HHG, subject to the weight limit per FTR, between the residence the employee occupied during the temporary assignment and the new residence.

E. The following individuals are not eligible for a TCS:

- A new appointee;
- An individual employed intermittently in the Government service as a consultant or expert and paid on a daily when-actually-employed (WAE) basis;
- An individual serving without pay or at \$1 a year; or
- An employee assigned under GETA.

Refer to Appendix O, TCS Allowances, for additional information.

080210 WITHHOLDING TAX ALLOWANCE (WTA) AND RELOCATION INCOME TAX ALLOWANCE (RITA).

A. The Withholding Tax Allowance (WTA) and the Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) assist employees with the additional Federal, State or local income tax liability incurred as a result of a move. The allowances are developed by GSA in conjunction with IRS. These allowances are based on the assumption that relocated employees will

itemize their deductions, rather than take the standard deductions on their income tax returns. VA employees should review IRS publications in Appendix P, IRS Publications Associated With Relocation Expenses, and/or seek professional tax advice to determine how the relocations affect their personal tax situation.

B. Withholding Tax Allowance (WTA).

1. VA will add a WTA allowance to travel vouchers to defray an employee's out-of-pocket expenses if the employee selects to apply WTA. The WTA is actually an advance estimate of the RITA.

- Each time covered taxable moving expenses are paid to the employee, the FSC will calculate the WTA and add it to the travel voucher.
- The WTA only covers the estimated Federal withholding tax amount. The reimbursement amount the employee will receive will be the amount claimed less deductions for non-reimbursable items and the estimated amounts withheld for State taxes and OASDI/Medicare.
- The WTA is considered taxable income and is subject to tax withholding. The total amount of an employee's WTA paid during a calendar year, as well as the total of all other allowable moving expenses, is included on the W-2 as wages, tips, and other compensation.

C. Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA).

1. Employees will submit a RITA travel voucher the year following in which the employee receives payment of covered taxable moving expenses and the WTA.

- The difference between the WTA and the RITA is that the WTA is an estimate of the Federal withholding taxes due and the RITA uses actual figures provided by the employee to determine the Federal, State, and local tax effects from the move.
- The RITA is calculated the year after the reimbursements involving taxable moving expenses along with a WTA, are received.
- The RITA uses actual figures provided by the employee to calculate the proper amounts that should have been reimbursed for Federal, State and local taxes.

To file a RITA claim, the employee must submit to the FSC the FSC RITA Questionnaire form, copies of all W-2 forms and SE 1040 self employment forms (if applicable) for the employee (and for spouse, if filing jointly). Forms 1099 are not applicable since the RITA is based only on earned income, except for 1099R forms for military retirement pay.

2. If the employee has been reimbursed more WTA than the RITA allowed, the employee will receive a bill of collection for the overpayment of the WTA. If the employee did not receive enough WTA for the moving expenses, the employee will receive a payment to make up the difference. Like the WTA, the RITA is considered taxable income and is subject to tax withholding, reportable to the IRS on the W-2. Employees who are relocating should be aware that the IRS considers certain expenses and allowances to be reported as income. Those that are not taxable generally may be deducted when filing the annual tax return. Refer to Appendix P, IRS Publications Associated with Relocation Expenses, for publications that may be helpful to the relocating employee.

D. The following are considered taxable reimbursements when paid to the employee:

- All HH expenses, including airfare and rental car;
- En-route MIE (meals and incidental expenses);
- Temporary storage of HHG over 30 days;
- Non-temporary storage of HHG;
- Temporary quarters expenses;
- Miscellaneous expense allowances;
- Real estate expenses;
- Home marketing incentive payment; and
- Withholding Tax Allowance (WTA) and Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA).

NOTE. Reimbursement for all of the above expenses are included in the gross income reported on an employee's W-2 for the tax year in which reimbursement is paid.

E. The following are not considered taxable reimbursements:

- Reimbursement for en-route transportation and lodging expenses;
- Shipment of HHG and the first 30 days of storage;
- Shipment of POV; and
- Payment to third-party relocation services for sale of residence.

F. VA will withhold taxes directly from travel voucher payments. Any taxable payments that are made to a third-party service on the employee's behalf are still considered taxable income and could impact the income reported on the employee's W-2.

0803 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

080301 5 U.S.C. 5707, Travel, Transportation and Subsistence

080302 5 U.S.C. 5724, Travel and Transportation Expenses of Employees Transferred; Advancement of Funds; Reimbursement on Commuted Basis.

080303 5 U.S.C. 5753, Recruitment and Relocation Bonuses

080304 41 C.F.R. Chapters 300-304, Federal Travel Regulation

080305 Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR)

080306 National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) General Records Schedule 6

0804 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

080401 The Assistant Secretary for Management/Chief Financial Officer (ASM/CFO) oversees all financial management activities relating to the Department's programs and operations, as required by the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990 and 38 U.S.C. 309. Specific responsibilities include the direction, management and provision of policy guidance and oversight of VA's financial management personnel, activities and operations. The CFO establishes financial policy inclusive of travel, systems and operating procedures for all VA financial entities and provides guidance on all aspects of financial management. The DAS for Finance may authorize actual expense greater than 150 percent up to 300 percent for VACO and Staff Office employees.

080402 Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, Chief Financial Officers, Finance Officers, Chiefs of Finance Activities, Chief Accountants and other key officials are responsible for ensuring compliance with the policies and procedures set forth in this chapter and will designate one or more persons to answer questions pertaining to the preparation of temporary duty travel and permanent change of station authorities and vouchers. Under Secretaries and the Chairman of the Board of Veterans' Appeals may authorize actual expense greater than 150 percent up to 300 percent for travelers under their jurisdiction.³

080403 The Office of Financial Policy (OFP) under the CFO's direction, provides Departmentwide financial policy and guidance. OFP is responsible for developing, coordinating, issuing, evaluating and reviewing VA's financial policies, to include those

³ Under Secretaries may delegate this authority to the VISN, MSN or Area Offices.

that impact financial systems and procedures for compliance with all financial laws and regulations.

080404 Approving Officials will:

- A. Authorize only that official travel for travelers under their jurisdiction in advance of the travel; authorize extensions or exceptions related to official travel.
- B. Determine if the travel is essential for the purpose of carrying out the mission of VA.
- C. Ensure all travel is authorized and performed consistent with the FTR (41 C.F.R. 301-304), VA Travel Policy, and any other agency-specific guidance relating to travel issues.
- D. Ensure adequate funds are available before authorizing travel.
- E. Ensure all travel is performed in the most economical and effective manner.
- F. Examine expense reports to ensure the justification, supporting documentation and receipts are attached to ensure that travel expenses for which reimbursement is claimed was performed as authorized.
- G. Ensure travelers under their jurisdiction complete vendorizing forms to receive travel payments electronically and file expense reports including paid-in-full receipts.

080405 Travelers will:

- A. Be knowledgeable of the Federal Travel Regulation, VA Travel Policy, and any other agency-specific guidance relating to travel issues.
- B. Minimize costs of official travel by exercising the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, delays, or luxury accommodations and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business will not be reimbursed are not acceptable under this standard. Travelers will be responsible for excess costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference for convenience.
- C. Ensure travel is authorized by the approving official prior to departure.
- D. Cancel transportation and lodging reservations timely.
- E. Claim and obtain, where applicable, exemptions of tax imposed on hotel accommodations in locations listed in the Federal Acquisition Service's (FAS) GSA

SmartPay Website. Only certificates issued by the locality granting the exemption may be used. This is applicable to TDY travel only; not applicable for taxes related to TQSE.

F. Submit a voucher within five business days after completion of each benefit (e.g., house hunting trip, en route travel, real estate purchase/sale) for official relocation travel. For TQSE, expense claims should be filed in 30 day increments unless the employee's total duration in TQ is less than 30 days.

G. Liquidate travel advances by submitting reimbursement claims for authorized, incurred expenses. Any claim for reimbursement will be applied to outstanding advances, until reconciled.

H. Comply with VA's Travel Charge Card Program guidance contained in Volume XVI, Chapter 2, *Travel Charge Card*.

0805 PROCEDURES

Procedural and other guidance to assist the traveler can be found either in Section 0802, POLICIES, or in the following appendices:

- [Appendix A: PCS Travel Portal](#)
- [Appendix B: Advance of Funds](#)
- [Appendix C: Delegation of Authority](#)
- [Appendix D: Relocation General Entitlements and Discretionary Allowances](#)
- [Appendix E: Relocation Services Contract](#)
- [Appendix F: Home Marketing Incentive Program \(HMIP\)](#)
- [Appendix G: POV Mileage Rates](#)
- [Appendix H: TQSE Allowances](#)
- [Appendix I: Items Allowed/Not Allowed to be Shipped with HHG](#)
- [Appendix J: Shipment of Mobile Homes](#)
- [Appendix K: Miscellaneous Expense Allowance Guidelines](#)
- [Appendix L: Property Management Services](#)
- [Appendix M: Transfers to OCONUS Locations](#)
- [Appendix N: Other OCONUS Relocation Allowances](#)
- [Appendix O: TCS Allowances](#)
- [Appendix P: IRS Publications Associated with Relocation Expenses](#)
- [Appendix Q: PCS Relocation Guidance prior to August 1, 2011](#)

0806 DEFINITIONS

080601 Amended Value Sale. If the employee is authorized to participate in the Appraised Value Offer (AVO) Program and finds a qualified buyer for his/her home, the relocation services contractor will purchase the home from the employee for the negotiated sale price from the third party buyer. The contractor will close the transaction with the buyer and pay the applicable reasonable and customary seller's closing costs (inclusive of the real estate commission).

080602 Appraised Value Offer (AVO) Program. Home sale program where the contractor will make the employee an offer based on relocation appraisals. The employee has 60 calendar days after contractor notification of the appraised value offer to accept or decline the contractor's offer, if no third party offer is received from an outside buyer. The employee must meet mandatory marketing and inspection requirements in order to accept the appraised value offer. This program was formerly referred to as the Guaranteed Home Buyout Option Program.

080603 Approving Official (AO). An employee with authority to approve or direct travel for official Government business by the agency head.

080604 Business Class. A class of accommodation offered by airlines that is higher than coach and lower than first class, in both cost and amenities. This class of accommodation is generally referred to as "business, business elite, business first, world business, connoisseur, or envoy" depending on the airline.

080605 Buyer Value Option (BVO) Program. Home sale program in which no relocation appraisals are completed, nor is an appraised value offer provided. Efforts are concentrated on the contractor providing ongoing marketing assistance to help employees receive a third party offer from an outside buyer. When a bona fide buyer is found, the contractor purchases the home from the employee for the third party sale price. The contractor then closes the sale with the buyer, paying the applicable reasonable and customary seller's closing costs (inclusive of the real estate commission).

080606 Coach-Class. The basic class of accommodation by airlines that is normally the lowest fare offered regardless of airline terminology used. For reference purposes only, coach class may also be referred to by airlines as "tourist class," "economy class," or "single class" when the airline offers only one class of accommodations to all travelers.

080607 Common Carrier. Private-sector supplier of air, rail, bus or ship transportation.

080608 Constructive Travel. Involves the need to limit a traveler's reimbursement when travel is performed using a mode of transportation not authorized/approved by the approving official or when one travels by other than the usually traveled route between two points.

080609 Continental United States (CONUS). Refers to the 48 contiguous States and the District of Columbia, as defined in the FTR 301-1.3(c) (6).

080610 Contract Carriers. U.S. certified air carriers which are under contract with the government to furnish Federal employees and other persons authorized to travel at Government expense with passenger transportation service. This also includes GSA's scheduled airline passenger service between selected U.S. cities/airports and between selected U.S. and international cities/airports at reduced fares.

080611 Direct Reimbursement for Sale of Residence at Departure Duty Station. Reimbursement for reasonable and customary seller's closing costs in accordance with regulation, for up to a maximum of 10 percent of the actual sale price of the employee's property.

080612 Employee. An appointed officer or employee of an agency, including a special Government employee. This definition also includes an individual employed intermittently in the Government service as an expert or consultant and paid on a daily when-actually-employed (WAE) basis, and an individual serving without pay or at \$1 a year (also referred to as "invitational traveler").

080613 Federal Travel Regulation (FTR). The FTR implements statutory requirements and Executive Branch policies for travel by Federal civilian employees and others authorized to travel at Government expenses.

080614 First Class. The highest class of accommodation offered by the airlines in terms of cost and amenities. This is generally termed "first class" by airlines and reservation systems.

080615 Foreign Area (see also non-foreign area). Any area, including the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands, situated both outside CONUS and the non-foreign areas.

080616 Government-contract Rental Automobile. An automobile obtained for short-term use from a commercial firm, as specified in the Federal Travel Directory, under the provisions of an appropriate GSA Federal Supply Schedule contract.

080617 Government-furnished Automobile. An automobile owned by VA, an automobile assigned or dispatched to VA on a rental basis from a GSA Interagency Fleet Management Center, or an automobile leased by VA for a period of 30 days or longer from a commercial firm.

080618 Immediate Family. Any of the following named members of the employee's household at the time he or she reports for duty at the new permanent duty station or performs other authorized travel involving family members:

- Spouse;
- Domestic partner;
- Children of the employee, of the employee's spouse, or of the employee's domestic partner, who are unmarried and under 21 years of age or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self-support. [The term "children" shall include natural offspring; stepchildren; adopted children; grandchildren, legal minor wards or other dependent children who are under legal guardianship of the employee, of the employee's spouse, or of the domestic partner; and an unborn child(ren) born and moved after the employee's effective date of transfer.];
- Dependent parents (including step and legally adoptive parents) of the employee, of the employee's spouse, or of the employee's domestic partner; and
- Dependent brothers and sisters (including step and legally adoptive brothers and sisters) of the employee, of the employee's spouse, or of the employee's domestic partner, who are unmarried and under 21 years of age or who, regardless of age, are physically or mentally incapable of self-support.

Note. "Immediate family" definition is based on current FTR. If the definition in the FTR is updated, the VA definition will default to the FTR.

080619 Miscellaneous Travel Expenses. Other miscellaneous travel expenses are those described in 41 C.F.R. that are directly attributable and necessary to the travel and TDY as authorized and performed. When authorized or approved, these expenses are reimbursable in addition to the per diem allowance and transportation expenses.

080620 Non-Foreign Area. The States of Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands and the territories and possessions of the United States (excludes the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).

080621 OCONUS Foreign. All countries outside of the United States and its territories.

080622 Official Station. The location of the employee's or invitational traveler's permanent work assignment. Refer to Volume XIV, Chapter 7, *Local Travel*.

080623 Official Travel. Travel under an official Travel Authorization from an employee's official station or other authorized point of departure to a TDY location and return from a TDY location, between two TDY locations, or relocation at the direction of a Federal agency.

080624 Other Than Coach Class. Any class of accommodations above coach class, e.g., first class or business class.

080625 Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS). Refers to Alaska, Hawaii, and the United States territories, including American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

080626 Per Diem. A daily payment instead of actual expenses for lodging, meals, and related incidental expenses. The per diem allowance is distinguished from transportation expenses and other miscellaneous travel expenses.

080627 Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel Portal. An electronic system developed by the Austin FSC to automate the processing of documents related to PCS relocations.

080628 Privately Owned Automobile. A car or light truck (including vans and pickup trucks) that is owned or leased for personal use by an individual.

080629 Privately Owned Vehicle (POV). Any vehicle such as an automobile, motorcycle, aircraft, or boat, operated by an individual that is not owned or leased by a Government agency, and is not commercially leased or rented by an employee under a Government rental agreement for use in connection with official Government business.

080630 Rest Period or Rest Stop. A duration of rest not to exceed 24 hours at either an intermediate point en route or at the destination and will allow for appropriate overnight lodging. The rest period or stop begins upon arrival at the lodging accommodation and ends at departure from the accommodation.

080631 Special Properties. Eligible properties which are determined by the contractor and VA to be especially difficult to sell or where the property value is especially difficult to determine, in accordance with the relocation services contract. VA is required to pay a higher fee to the contractor for special handling fees.

080632 Temporary Change of Station (TCS). A TCS means the relocation to a new official station for a temporary period while performing a long-term assignment, and subsequent return to the previous official station upon completion of the assignment.

080633 Tour Renewal Agreement Travel. Overseas tour renewal travel refers to travel of the employee and his/her immediate family members returning to their home in CONUS, Alaska, or Hawaii between overseas tours of duty.

080634 Transportation Expenses. Expenses include commercial bus, air, rail, or ship fares and are reimbursable in addition to the per diem allowance. Transportation expenses also include local transit system and taxi fares, cost of commercial rental cars and other special conveyances, and mileage and other allowances to cover operating expenses for use of privately owned conveyances, including fees for parking, ferries, etc.

080635 Travel Authorization. Written or electronic authorization to travel on authorized official change of station for the Government resulting in reimbursement for expenses on a travel claim (voucher).

080636 Travel Card (Government Travel Charge Card). A convenient method for Federal agencies and their employees to make payments for official Government travel and travel-related expenses. There are two types of accounts available under the GSA SmartPay contract – an individually billed account (IBA) and a centrally billed account (CBA).

080637 Travel Claim (Voucher). A written request, supported by documentation and receipts, where applicable, for reimbursement of expenses incurred in the performance of official travel, including PCS travel.

080638 Travel Management Center (TMC). A common carrier travel firm under contract providing reservation, tickets and related travel management services for official travelers.

080639 Travel Management Service (TMS). A service for booking common carrier (e.g., air, rail, and bus confirmations and seat assignments), lodging accommodations, and car rental services; fulfilling (i.e. ticketing) reservations; providing basic management information on those activities; and meeting other requirements as specified in the FTR. A TMS may include a TMC, a Commercial Ticket Office (CTO), an electronically available system, other commercial methods of arranging travel, or an in-house system.

080640 Traveler. An individual as defined by the FTR who is authorized to perform official Government travel.

080641 Work. Any place within the accepted commuting area, as determined by the Federal agency for the locality involved, where an employee performs his/her official duties.

0807 RESCISSIONS

080701 MP-1, Part 2, Chapter 2, Employee Travel Management

080702 OF Bulletin 09E1.01, Approval Requirements - Guaranteed Home Buyout Option (GHBO)

080703 OF Bulletin 09E1.06, Permanent Change of Station – Calculated Lump Sum Pilot Program

080704 OF Bulletin 09047E3.06, Approval Requirements – Guaranteed Home Buyout Option (GHBO)

- 080705 OF Bulletin 09047E3.07, Home Marketing Incentive (HMI) Award Program
- 080706 OF Bulletin 04GC3.02, Waiver of Distance Requirement: Last Move Home for Senior Executive Service Members Residing in Government Furnished Quarters
- 080707 OF Bulletin 04GC3.03, Home Marketing Incentive Award Program
- 080708 OF Bulletin 03GC3.01, Reimbursement of Resident Transactions Associated with PCS Moves
- 080709 OF Bulletin 03GC3.03, Extension of the Home Marketing Incentive Award Pilot Program
- 080710 OF Bulletin 02GC3.01, Home Marketing Incentive Award Pilot Program
- 080711 OF Bulletin 01GC3.01, Relocation Services Program
- 080712 Travel Notice 10-02, Suspension of the Calculated Lump Sum Pilot Program
- 080713 Travel Notice 08-11, Approval Authority for Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses and Temporary Storage
- 080714 Travel Notice 08-08, Mid Year 2008 Relocation Mileage Rate Reimbursement Change
- 080715 Travel Notice 08-05, Relocation Mileage Rate Reimbursement Change
- 080716 Travel Notice 03-04, Revised Rates for the Relocation Services Contract
- 080717 Travel Notice 03-06, Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) Tax Tables
- 080718 Travel Notice 03-10, Extension of the Home Marketing Incentive Award Pilot Program
- 080719 Travel Notice 03-18, Timing of Obligations for Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Benefits
- 080720 Travel Notice 02-02, 2002 Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) Tables
- 080721 Travel Notice 02-04, Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Transfers
- 080722 Travel Notice 02-05, 2002 Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) Tax Tables
- 080723 Travel Notice 02-06, 2002 Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) and Income Tax Reimbursement Allowance (ITRA) for Calendar Year 2002

080724 Travel Notice 02-07, Redetermined Rates for Relocation Services Contract

080725 Travel Notice 02-12, Implementation of a Home Marketing Incentive Pilot Program

080726 Travel Notice 02-18, Various Changes to Federal Travel Regulation (TDY and PCS)

080727 Travel Notice 02-19, Revised Home Marketing Incentive Pilot Program

080728 Travel Notice 01-03, Cendant Mobility Services Corporation Contract Modification

080729 Travel Notice 01-05, Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) New Tax Tables

080730 Travel Notice 01-06, Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA) Tax Tables

0808 QUESTIONS

Questions concerning these travel policies and procedures should be directed as follows:

VHA	VHA CFO Accounting Policy (10A3A) (Outlook)
VBA	VAVBAWAS/CO/FINREP (Outlook)
All Others	Office of Financial Business Operations Charge Card Oversight and Travel Policy Service Travel Policy (Outlook)

APPENDIX A: PCS TRAVEL PORTAL

A. Overview.

The Financial Services Center (FSC) developed the Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Travel Portal to streamline the process for initiating and approving documents required by relocating employees authorized PCS travel reimbursements. This application automates the process to prepare and submit an Intra-Agency Transfer Request, VA Form 5-3918, discretionary requests and approvals, budget requests and a Travel Authority for Permanent Duty, VA Form 3036c, for the traveler. This process applies to transferring employees and new appointees.

Effective December 31, 2010, all VA Form 5-3918s must be initiated and completed through the PCS Travel Portal. Manual forms will no longer be accepted.

B. Defining Station Users for PCS Travel Portal.

Each station will assign points of contact to serve as primary or alternate for each required function. These individuals will be responsible for accessing the application, completing their function, and signing the document using their digital signature. Once authenticated, the document will flow automatically to the appropriate designated point of contact to perform the next step in the process.

The following is a list of the station POCs and their roles:

1. HR Office personnel -- completes VA Form 5-3918;
2. Budget Officer – provides budget information;
3. Authorizing Official – approves discretionary requests, Travel Authority and electronic requests to add or delete station users from the PCS Travel Portal;
4. Traveler (employee) – completes VA Form 5-3918, Part 2, and service agreement;
5. FSC PCS Travel Section Staff -- coordinates discretionary requests, budget requests, Travel Authority and any amendments. Also updates user information in the PCS Travel Portal; and
6. Super User – HR or Budget contact that will facilitate electronic requests for additions/deletions to station users.

C. Process Steps (Status) in the PCS Travel Portal.

The following list outlines the various statuses that exist within the PCS Travel Portal. The status will reflect the current step for the PCS move from the creation of the VA Form 5-3918 in the PCS Travel portal through the approval of the Travel Authority.

1. VA Form 5-3918 Creation – Gaining HR creates and completes Part 1.
2. VA Form 5-3918 -- Awaiting Receiving Station HR Approval/Signature – HR signer will access the VA form and sign Part 1.
3. FSC - Awaiting Review User information – PCS Travel Section staff will receive an email from the PCS Travel Portal to validate that the traveler does not already have an existing PCS Travel Portal profile. If the user already exists, the existing user profile will be updated to reflect the new information.
4. VA Form 5-3918 -- Awaiting Traveler Signature – The traveler will receive a welcome email from the PCS Travel Portal with their username and instructions to access the portal, change their password, and complete and electronically sign the VA Form 5-3918, Part 2, and service agreement.
5. VA Form 5-3918 -- Awaiting Releasing Station HR Approval/Signature – Releasing station (if current VA employee) will receive notification to complete and electronically sign the VA Form 5-3918, Part 3.
6. FSC – Awaiting Set Initial Contact with Traveler – PCS Travel Section will make initial contact with the employee within 24 hours of receiving notification.
7. FSC -- Awaiting Counselor Assignment - Upon contact with employee, a counsel call will be scheduled with an assigned counselor.
8. FSC -- Awaiting Completion of Pre-Counseling – PCS Travel Counselor will provide counseling to employee and facilitate requests for discretionary items.
9. VA Form 3036c -- Awaiting Approval Discretionary Items – Approving Official will approve or deny discretionary request.
10. VA Form 3036c -- Awaiting Completion of Counseling – Counselor will update PCS information based on discretionary approvals and submit request for budget information.
11. VA Form 3036c -- Awaiting Approval Funds from Funding Station – Budget Official will provide funding information through the PCS Travel Portal.
12. VA Form 3036c -- Awaiting TA Completion – Counselor will make final updates to information in PCS Travel Portal and submit request for Travel Authority approval.
13. VA Form 3036c -- Awaiting Supervisory Review – PCS Counselor Supervisor will review Travel Authority for accuracy and either reject back to counselor for corrections or route to Approving Official for approval.

14. VA Form 3036c -- Awaiting Traveler Signature – If relocation services have been requested, the traveler will be prompted to sign the Relocation Services Authorization form.

15. Awaiting Signature of Approving Official – Approving Official will review and electronically sign the Travel Authority.

16. VA Form 3036c -- Awaiting Release of Obligation to FMS – Counselor will receive notification of approved Travel Authority and send obligation to the Financial Management System (FMS).

17. VA Form 3036c -- Awaiting Review FMS Obligation – The following day, the Counselor will confirm funds obligated correctly in FMS and electronically sign the Travel Authority. If obligation not successful, counselor will first work with station to resolve rejects prior to signing.

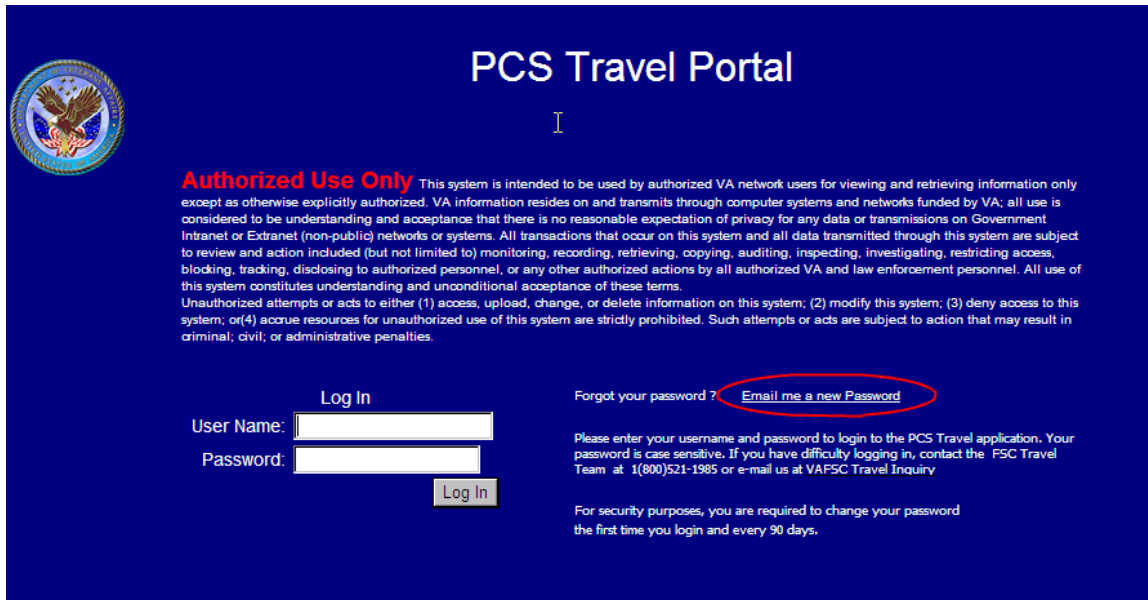
18. VA Form 3036c -- Awaiting completion of claims – Travel Authority is now complete and this status will remain unless an amendment is made to the Travel Authority. If an amendment is created, the status will revert to VA Form 3036c – FSC -- Awaiting TA Completion; follow the status steps involved through VA Form 3036c – Awaiting Completion of Claims.

D. Accessing the PCS Travel Portal.

1. The PCS Travel Portal can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.pcsportal.fsc.va.gov/login.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

2. Once access to the PCS Travel Portal has been granted, each user will receive a welcome email, which will include their user name, a link to access the portal and instructions for requesting a password. Once you select the link to access the PCS Travel Portal, you will see the screen shown on p. 46. Enter your user name in the User Name box and then click the link to the right “email me a new password.”



The image shows the PCS Travel Portal login interface. At the top left is the VA seal. The title "PCS Travel Portal" is centered. Below the title is a "Log In" button. To the right of the button is a link "Forgot your password?" with a sub-link "Email me a new Password" circled in red. Below the button are two input fields: "User Name:" and "Password:". Below the "Password:" field is another "Log In" button. To the right of the input fields is a paragraph of text: "Please enter your username and password to login to the PCS Travel application. Your password is case sensitive. If you have difficulty logging in, contact the PSC Travel Team at 1(800)521-1985 or e-mail us at VAPSC Travel Inquiry". Below this text is another paragraph: "For security purposes, you are required to change your password the first time you login and every 90 days."

Authorized Use Only This system is intended to be used by authorized VA network users for viewing and retrieving information only except as otherwise explicitly authorized. VA information resides on and transmits through computer systems and networks funded by VA; all use is considered to be understanding and acceptance that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy for any data or transmissions on Government Intranet or Extranet (non-public) networks or systems. All transactions that occur on this system and all data transmitted through this system are subject to review and action included (but not limited to) monitoring, recording, retrieving, copying, auditing, inspecting, investigating, restricting access, blocking, tracking, disclosing to authorized personnel, or any other authorized actions by all authorized VA and law enforcement personnel. All use of this system constitutes understanding and unconditional acceptance of these terms. Unauthorized attempts or acts to either (1) access, upload, change, or delete information on this system; (2) modify this system; (3) deny access to this system; or (4) accrue resources for unauthorized use of this system are strictly prohibited. Such attempts or acts are subject to action that may result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties.

Log In

User Name:

Password:

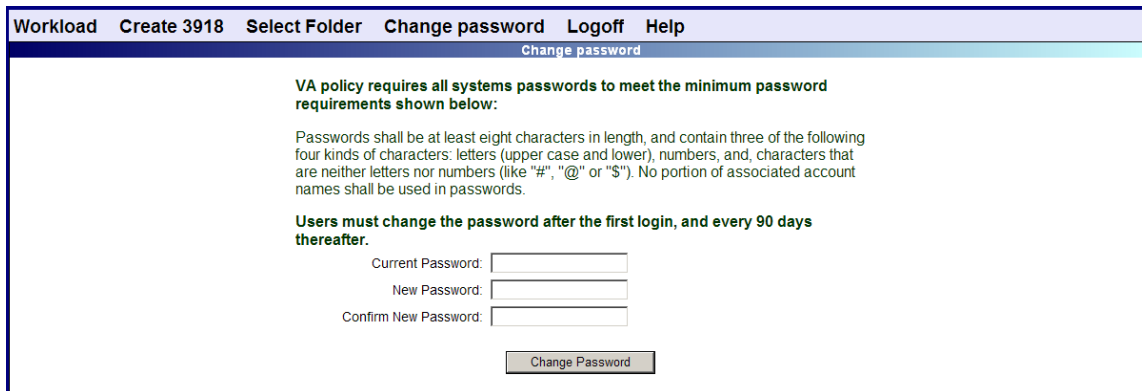
Log In

Forgot your password? [Email me a new Password](#)

Please enter your username and password to login to the PCS Travel application. Your password is case sensitive. If you have difficulty logging in, contact the PSC Travel Team at 1(800)521-1985 or e-mail us at VAPSC Travel Inquiry

For security purposes, you are required to change your password the first time you login and every 90 days.

- a. After successfully logging onto the site for the first time, change the password using VA password security guidelines. Passwords shall be at least eight characters in length and contain three of the following four kinds of characters: letters (upper case and lower), numbers, and characters that are neither letters nor numbers (like "#", "@", or "\$"). No portion of associated account names shall be used in passwords. When accessing the application for the first time, a screen appears directing the traveler to change their password.



The image shows the "Change password" screen. At the top is a navigation bar with links: "Workload", "Create 3918", "Select Folder", "Change password", "Logoff", and "Help". Below the navigation bar is the title "Change password". The main content area contains the following text: "VA policy requires all systems passwords to meet the minimum password requirements shown below:" followed by a paragraph of password requirements: "Passwords shall be at least eight characters in length, and contain three of the following four kinds of characters: letters (upper case and lower), numbers, and, characters that are neither letters nor numbers (like '#', '@' or '\$'). No portion of associated account names shall be used in passwords." Below this is another paragraph: "Users must change the password after the first login, and every 90 days thereafter." At the bottom are three input fields: "Current Password:", "New Password:", and "Confirm New Password:". Below the input fields is a "Change Password" button.

Workload Create 3918 Select Folder Change password Logoff Help

Change password

VA policy requires all systems passwords to meet the minimum password requirements shown below:

Passwords shall be at least eight characters in length, and contain three of the following four kinds of characters: letters (upper case and lower), numbers, and, characters that are neither letters nor numbers (like "#", "@", or "\$"). No portion of associated account names shall be used in passwords.

Users must change the password after the first login, and every 90 days thereafter.

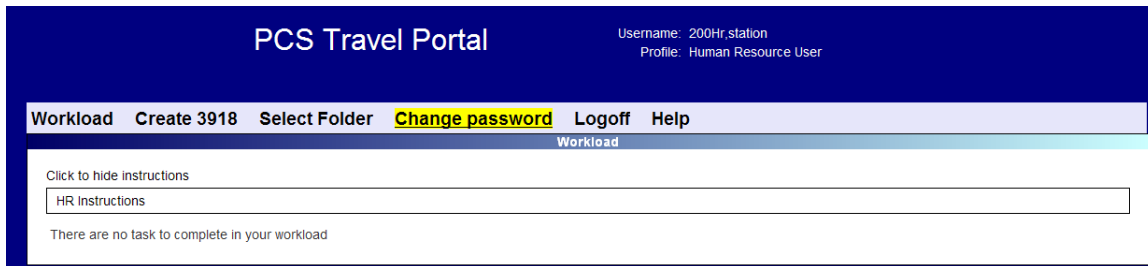
Current Password:

New Password:

Confirm New Password:

Change Password

b. If the user wishes to change their password at any time, “Change Password” is an option on the task bar.



APPENDIX B: ADVANCE OF FUNDS

Advance of funds, if eligible, may or may not be authorized depending on the specific item, as follows:

AUTHORIZED FUND ADVANCES	
Subsistence and Transportation	VA may authorize an advance of funds for per diem mileage allowances for en route travel (FTR 302-4.600).
Temporary Quarters Subsistence Expenses (TQSE)	VA may advance funds necessary to cover estimated TQSE for up to 30 days. If deemed necessary, VA may authorize advance of funds for 30 additional days (FTR 302-6.15).
Transportation of mobile home and boats used as a primary residence	VA may authorize advance of funds for employees responsible for arranging and paying commercial carriers to transport their mobile homes and boats. Advance may not exceed the estimated amount allowed (FTR 302-10.301).
Transportation and temporary storage of HHG	VA may authorize an advance of funds when the transportation of HHG and temporary storage is authorized under the commuted rate method (FTR 30-7.105).
Shipping and emergency storage of a POV	VA will limit advances to the estimated amount of the expenses authorized for transportation and emergency storage of a POV (FTR 302-9.11).

FUND ADVANCES NOT AUTHORIZED	
House hunting (HH) Trip	VA will not advance funds in excess of the anticipated sum of: transportation costs, maximum per diem allowable for duration of the trip, or Fixed amount payment, whichever is applicable (FTR 302-5.16).
Miscellaneous Expense-Allowances (MEA)	VA will not advance funds for MEA (FTR 302-16.101).
Extended storage of HHG	VA will not advance funds for extended storage of HHG (FTR 302-8.4).
Residence transaction expenses	VA will not advance funds for residence transaction expenses (FTR 302-11.307).
Relocation Income Tax Allowance (RITA)	VA will not advance funds for RIT Allowance (FTR 302-17.12).

APPENDIX C: DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Relocation Travel Approval Levels	Deputy Secretary; Chief of Staff; Deputy Chief of Staff; Under Secretaries; Assistant Secretaries; Deputy Assistant Secretaries or Written Redefinition of Authority**	VHA Network Directors; VBA Area Directors; NCA Network Directors or Written Redefinition of Authority**	Field Facility Directors or Medical Directors or Written Redefinition of Authority**
1. Making determination that transfer is in the interest of the Government and not primarily for the convenience or benefit of the employee or at the employee's request.	X	X	X
2. Transfer of employees who now are or will be under their jurisdiction.	X	X	X
3. Of appointees and student trainees assigned to certain positions in the 50 States and the District of Columbia.	X	X	X
4. Of new appointees from their places of actual residence at time of appointment to permanent duty at official stations located OCONUS.	X	X	
5. Making determination of place of actual residence in connection with tours of duty OCONUS.	X	X	X
6. Making determination on round trip travel to new official station to seek permanent residence quarters.	X	X	X

Relocation Travel Approval Levels	Deputy Secretary; Chief of Staff; Deputy Chief of Staff; Under Secretaries; Assistant Secretaries; Deputy Assistant Secretaries or Written Redeflegation of Authority**	VHA Network Directors; VBA Area Directors; NCA Network Directors or Written Redeflegation of Authority**	Field Facility Directors or Medical Directors or Written Redeflegation of Authority**
7. Making determination on allowance of subsistence expenses while occupying temporary quarters. Any additional time in certain cases, as provided in FTR.	X	X	X
8. Transportation of immediate family.	X	X	X
9. Making determination whether transportation of HHG will be accomplished by Government bill of lading or the commuted rate system.	X	X	X
10. Transportation of mobile home used as a residence.	X	X	X
11. Transportation of privately owned motor vehicles at Government expense.	X	X	X
12. Emergency storage of privately owned motor vehicles at Government expense.	X	X	
13. Making determination in cases of violations of agreement to remain in the service of Government for a certain period, whether or not separation was beyond employee's control.	X	X	X

Relocation Travel Approval Levels	Deputy Secretary; Chief of Staff; Deputy Chief of Staff; Under Secretaries; Assistant Secretaries; Deputy Assistant Secretaries or Written Redeflegation of Authority**	VHA Network Directors; VBA Area Directors; NCA Network Directors or Written Redeflegation of Authority**	Field Facility Directors or Medical Directors or Written Redeflegation of Authority**
14. Making determination with respect to delays or other considerations where minimum average mileage distance is not met.	X	X	X
15. Extension of up to 90 additional days for temporary storage of HHG.	X	X	X
16. Extension of one additional year for completion of real estate transactions.	X	X	X
17. SES Last Move Home Allowances.	X		
18. Temporary Change of Station	X	X	X

** Written Redeflegation of Authority must be provided to the Travel Policy/FSC PCS Staff (reference Directive 0000, Delegation of Authority, effective September 9, 2009.)

APPENDIX D: RELOCATION GENERAL ENTITLEMENTS AND DISCRETIONARY ALLOWANCES

ENTITLEMENTS	DISCRETIONARY ALLOWANCES
Transportation of employee and immediate family member(s)	Shipment of a POV(s)
Per diem for employee and/or immediate family	TQSE - not authorized in a foreign area
Transportation and temporary storage of HHG	Home marketing incentive program
Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of transportation of HHG	Househunting per diem and transportation, employee and spouse only
Extended storage of HHG	Property management services
Miscellaneous moving expenses	Use of relocation services companies (see Note 3)
Sale and purchase of residence expenses or lease termination expenses	
Relocation income tax allowance	

Notes:

1. New appointees are ineligible for the same entitlements as transferred employees.
2. Relocation entitlements are based on the “type of transfer” and not subject to negotiation.
3. All employees are eligible to participate in the Buyer Value Option (BVO) Program, if qualified. However, the Appraised Value Option (AVO) Program is discretionary.

APPENDIX E: RELOCATION SERVICES CONTRACT

1. RELOCATION SERVICES. This section is not applicable to new appointees and employees assigned under the Government Employees Training Act as they are not authorized the use of a relocation services contract. Relocation services are services provided by a private company under a contract to assist the employee in relocating to a new official duty station. Government contracted relocation companies provide assistance to employees by:

- Making the employee an offer based on the appraised value of the home via an Appraised Value Offer (AVO) program;
- Providing marketing assistance at reduced rates through the Buyer Value Option (BVO) or AVO programs; and
- Offering some services at the new station for renters/buyers at no cost to the employee or the agency.

There are two programs associated with relocation services for the sale of a residence at the departure official duty station:

A. Appraised Value Offer (AVO) Program. If the employee is authorized to participate in the AVO program and is unable to find a qualified buyer for his/her home, the contractor will make the employee an appraised value offer based on relocation appraisals. The employee has 60 calendar days after contractor notification of the appraised value offer to accept or decline the contractor's offer. The employee must meet mandatory marketing and inspection requirements in order to accept the appraised value offer. If the employee chooses to accept the contractor's offer, VA will pay an increased fee on the home's sale price for the service. The contractor maintains the home in its inventory and pays carrying costs until a qualified buyer is found. It is in VA's best interest to encourage employees to find a qualified buyer for the home because of the higher fee associated with the AVO. If the employee receives an offer from a qualified buyer while participating in the AVO program, the contractor will amend the appraised value offer amount to the negotiated sale price from the buyer. The contractor will purchase the home, close the transaction with the buyer and pay the applicable reasonable and customary seller's closing costs (inclusive of the real estate commission). VA will be billed the appropriate fee for an amended value sale. Employees are not required to be at the closing. Employees are responsible for expenses related to their residences until the contractor has acquired the home and the employee has vacated the property. An employee is eligible for a Home Marketing Incentive if an offer from a buyer is obtained and the contractor successfully closes with the buyer. If an employee opts out of the AVO program, they cannot re-enter the program later or be authorized for the BVO program.

B. Buyer Value Option (BVO) Program. If the employee is not authorized to participate in the AVO, they may use the services of the BVO Program. Relocation appraisals are not completed when using the BVO Program and efforts are concentrated on the contractor providing ongoing marketing assistance to help employees receive fair market value for their homes. When a bona fide buyer is found, the contractor purchases the home and then closes the sale with the buyer, paying the applicable reasonable and customary seller's closing costs (inclusive of the real estate commission). Employees are not required to be at the closing. Employees are responsible for expenses related to their residences until the contractor has acquired the home and the employee has vacated the property. There is no appraised offer or guaranteed buyout associated with the BVO Program. The Home Marketing Incentive is not applicable under the BVO program. If an employee opts out of the BVO program, they cannot re-enter the program later or be authorized for the AVO program.

2. OWNED AND OCCUPIED RESIDENCE. In order to be eligible, the employee's home must be the actual residence owned and occupied by the employee at the time he or she was first informed of the transfer. The residence must be the place from which the employee regularly commuted to and from work when the employee received the official notice to relocate. Relocation services are available to transferring employees who are eligible for reimbursement of real estate expenses and have been authorized the use of relocation third party services program. All homes may not qualify or be accepted into the program. The FSC PCS counselor will advise on available services through the relocation services provider and will include the applicable service on the employee's travel authority. Once the travel authority is approved, the employee will be initiated with the relocation services contractor. The relocation services contractor will confirm that the employee is aware that he or she will be required to market the home independently by listing the home with a network real estate broker in order to be eligible for the home sale service portion of the contract. An employee has the right to cancel the request for relocation services or to reject an offer received from the contractor at any time prior to acceptance of the offer. If the services are canceled or rejected, the contractor will be paid by the Government for all inspection fees, title search costs and appraisal costs that were incurred up to the point of cancellation or rejection up to a maximum defined in the contract. The employee is entitled to copies of any document(s) paid for by the Government that would be usable by the employee in selling the home on a reimbursement basis. If during the appraisal process or the 60-day appraised value offer period under the AVO program, the employee receives an offer from an outside party that is equal to or more than the Government-contracted company's offer, the employee should not enter into a contract or sign any agreement document with the potential outside buyer. The contractor will review the terms and conditions of the offer to ensure it is bona fide. If the employee chooses not to work with the contractor and enters into their own agreement with the third party buyer (signs the contract offer), this will automatically cancel participation in the program. The employee will not be reimbursed for any fees already incurred and billed by the relocation services contractor.

3. **CONTRACTOR-PROVIDED SERVICES.** Marketing strategies, recommendations and advice furnished by the contractor will be provided in writing upon request of the employee. The contractor will advise the employee that any listing agreement must contain the following exclusion clause: “The seller(s) hereby reserve the right to sell the Property directly to (Contractor Name) at any time and, in such event, to cancel this listing agreement with no obligation for commission or continuation of listing hereafter and to turn over an acceptable written offer hereunder to (Contractor Name) for closing and payment of commission which will be deemed earned and payable only upon closing to title”. An employee can delay the start of the authorized home sale program for up to 90 days from the date of initiation with the contractor. This applies to both the AVO and BVO programs. If approved for the AVO program, appraisals may be delayed an additional 30 days from the listing date. Extensions may be approved only for SES, SES equivalent or OIG Non-Bargaining Unit employees. Employees are required to list their home with a network real estate agent and their list price must be within the contract specified guidelines. If the employee decides to use the relocation services but delays initiation and in the meantime sells the house through a real estate agent without going back to the relocation contractor, the employee will not be eligible for the home sale incentive program. In the case of the above situation, the Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR) should be notified in order to cancel the order with the relocation contractor and deobligate the funds. Following is a brief summary of the relocation services eligibilities and processes. This is clearly a complex area and not all scenarios may be addressed. The employee should contact their PCS Counselor with any questions.

4. **INELIGIBLE PROPERTY.** Properties not eligible for the Relocation Services Program include:

- Mobile or manufactured/modular homes (whether or not affixed to real property owned by the employee);
- Cooperative Units;
- Houseboats;
- Non-insurable homes;
- Homes that cannot be financed (Federal or conventional);
- Homes on which construction has not been completed;
- Homes that do not comply with State and local codes;
- Contaminated homes - Urea foam formaldehyde insulation (UFFI), radon, etc.;
- Homes without foundations;

- Employee owned rental properties;
- Homes located outside the United States and its territories; and
- Homes that cannot be valued through the relocation appraisal process, such as homes in remote and inaccessible locations that lack comparables, or are otherwise deemed unmarketable. The determination of such a home is at the discretion of the contractor. Contractor may refer to such homes as “Special Properties”.

5. SPECIAL PROPERTIES. Eligible properties which are determined by the contractor and VA to be especially difficult to sell or where the property value is especially difficult to determine, in accordance with the relocation services contract. VA is required to pay a higher fee to the contractor for special handling fees. Special Property designation requires higher level approval, pursuant to the guidelines stipulated for AVO approval. Properties referred as special under the BVO program will be deemed ineligible and cancelled from the home sale program (the employee would be eligible to sell their home under the Direct Reimbursement option).

6. ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES. Properties eligible for the Relocation Services Program:

- Must be the primary residence owned and occupied by employee at the time of the initial official notification of transfer.
- Must be the place from which transferee commutes to and from work on a daily basis.
- Must be the name of the employee or
- Be in the joint name of the employee and one or more members of his/her immediate family as defined previously.
- Title must be vested:
 - Solely in the name of one or more members of the employee’s immediate family or in the joint name of the employee and a separate unrelated joint owner (including a divorced or permanently separated spouse), subject to pro rata reimbursement based on the percentage of the ownership of the vended property.
- An employee will not be eligible for home sale services unless all owners satisfy the Government and the contractor of their willingness and ability to pay their proportional shares of the contract cost directly to the contractor. The Government will pay only a proportional share of the contract cost if:

- Any person(s) other than immediate family members owns a share in the residence.
- The residence is a duplex or other type of multiple occupancy dwelling that is owned by an employee and or his immediate family and is only partially occupied by the employee. [NOTE. This restriction is not applicable to a case where an employee owns a condominium unit.]
- Sale of excess acreage will be at the employee's expense. Excess acreage is land that does not reasonably relate to the residence site, as determined by the relocation company.

7. PRE-DECISION COUNSELING. VA's relocation contractor offers pre-decision assistance for employees applying for a position with VA where a PCS move is authorized. Due to the decline in the real estate market, this program was developed to provide valuable information about market conditions and estimated home values at the departure and destination duty stations. The employee will complete a self assessment and will have two property Broker Market Analyses completed by two local network realtors. The contractor will review the marketing data with the employee. The employee can then make an informed decision regarding accepting the relocation, selling their home or purchasing a new home at destination.

NOTE. Refer to Appendix J, *Property Management Services*, for additional information.

APPENDIX F: HOME MARKETING INCENTIVE PROGRAM (HMIP)

A. The purpose of the HMIP is to encourage employees to find a qualified buyer for their home while enrolled in VA's Appraised Value Offer (AVO) Program.

B. This program rewards Federal employees who, through their own initiative, save the agency money by finding a qualified buyer for their homes while enrolled in the AVO Program and when relocating in the interest of the Government. VA's AVO Program provides employees with assistance in selling their homes at their old official duty stations when transferring for the benefit of the Government and when authorized permanent change of station allowances.

Employees participating in the AVO Program may sell their homes in one of two ways:

1. **AMENDED VALUE SALE.** If the employee is authorized to participate in the AVO Program and finds a qualified buyer for the home, the Relocation Services Contractor (hereafter referred to as Contractor) will purchase the home from the employee for the negotiated sale price from the third party buyer. The contractor will close the transaction with the buyer and pay the applicable reasonable and customary seller's closing costs (inclusive of the real estate commission). VA will be billed the appropriate fee for an amended value sale. The closing with the buyer must be successfully completed for the employee to qualify for the HMI. For this service, VA pays a reduced fee on the home's sale price.

2. **APPRAISED VALUE SALE.** If the employee is authorized to participate in the AVO Program and is unable to find a qualified buyer for the home, the Contractor will make the employee an offer based on relocation appraisals. The employee has 60 calendar days after contractor notification of the appraised value offer to accept or decline the contractor's offer. The employee must meet mandatory marketing and inspection requirements in order to accept the appraised value offer. If the employee chooses to accept the contractor's offer, VA will pay an increased fee on the home's sale price for the service. The contractor maintains the home in its inventory and pays carrying costs until a qualified buyer is found. It is in VA's best interest to encourage employees to find a qualified buyer for the home because of the higher fee associated with the AVO.

C. **REQUIREMENTS.** Employees must be approved to use the AVO Program. Once approved for the AVO, it is the employee's option of whether to participate or not to participate in the HMI Award Program.

1. The amount of the award is limited to 2 percent of the selling price of the residence, not to exceed \$8,000.

2. The award will be paid from the savings achieved by the lower fees incurred. The employee's new official duty station will fund the award to approved and qualifying employees.

3. VA will review the results of the HMI award annually to determine if the program continues to result in a cost savings to the Department. If it is determined that the continuation of the program is not cost effective, the Department will provide a notice 30 days prior to discontinuing the program.

D. PROCEDURES

1. Eligibility. To participate in the program, the employee must:

a. Be authorized to transfer in the interest of the Government and at Government expense;

b. Elect to use and be approved for the AVO Program;

c. List his/her residence with a network broker that participates in the Contractor's Relocation Services Program;

d. Find a qualified buyer for the home while enrolled in the AVO Program; and

e. Have the sale of his/her home closed by the Relocation Services Contractor.

2. Exclusions. The following employees are not eligible for the HMI award program:

- New hires or appointees;

- Employees not approved to use the AVO Program;

- Employees who elect to sell their residences without enrolling in the Department's Relocation Services Program;

- Employees whose homes do not qualify for the AVO portion of the Relocation Services Program;

- Cases where the buyer fails to close on the purchase of the home, and the Contractor provides a appraised value buy-out offer to employees for their homes;

- Employees whose homes are classified as a Special Property; or

- Employees participating in the BVO Program.

3. Award Limitation. Employees are eligible for an award of 2 percent of the selling price of the home, not to exceed \$8,000.
4. Tax Implications. Awards made under the HMI Awards Program constitute taxable income to the employee and taxes will be withheld from the award.
5. Processing the Award
 - a. The employee's FSC PCS Counselor will initiate the award by completing the HMI Award Worksheet and Justification. The FSC PCS Counselor will have the employee sign the certification on the HMI Award Worksheet and Justification and forward it to the employee's authorizing official (i.e., the official who authorized the employee's official change of station). The FSC PCS Counselor will maintain the copy of the worksheet in the employee's relocation file.
 - b. Upon receipt of the HMI Award Worksheet and Justification, the authorizing official will complete the VA Form 4659, *Incentive Awards Recommendation* (refer to VA Handbook 5017, dated April 15, 2002, for instructions on completing the VA Form 4659). The authorizing official must sign the VA Form 4659 and submit it along with the supporting documentation through the station's HR office.
6. Funding the Award. The gaining station will fund the HMI Award.

APPENDIX G: POV MILEAGE RATES

Per POV	MALT MILEAGE RATE effective January 1, 2011
Employee only	\$0.19
Spouse or domestic partner and immediate family members, if travelling separate from employee.	\$0.19

NOTE: The Monetary Allowance in Lieu of Transportation (MALT) rate is a payment for official PCS travel performed by an eligible traveler based on the official distance between authorized locations. The number of travelers in the POV has no bearing on the amount paid in MALT.

POV mileage will not be authorized for overseas tour renewal travel (FTR 302-4.500).

APPENDIX H: TQSE ALLOWANCES

A. TQSE ACTUAL EXPENSE METHOD: The maximum daily allowable amount is:

FISCAL YEAR 2011 RATES	EMPLOYEE AND/OR UNACCOMPANIED SPOUSE OR DOMESTIC PARTNER	EMPLOYEE'S ACCOMPANIED SPOUSE, DOMESTIC PARTNER OR IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS 12 YEARS OR OLDER	IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBERS UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE
First 30 days of temporary quarters	Standard CONUS rate (e.g., \$123.00)	0.75 times standard CONUS rate; \$92.25	0.50 times standard CONUS rate; \$61.50
Any additional days of temporary quarters	0.75 times standard CONUS rate; \$92.25	0.50 times standard CONUS rate; \$61.50	0.40 times standard CONUS rate; \$49.20

NOTES:

1. The maximum allowable amount is the “maximum daily amount” multiplied by the number of days an employee incurs TQSE.
2. Rates will change after the first 30 days in temporary quarters.
3. Per diem rates are subject to change based on GSA guidelines. Current CONUS per diem rates are available at <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>.
4. The “maximum daily amount” is determined by adding the rates in the table for the employee and/or spouse or domestic partner and each immediate family member authorized to occupy temporary quarters.
5. If a spouse or domestic partner occupies temporary quarters in lieu of the employee or in a location separate from the employee, temporary quarters must be taken concurrently.
6. On the day TQSE begins and ends, meals and incidental expenses (MIE) will be 75 percent of the applicable MIE allowance.
7. For OCONUS, the applicable per diem rate is the locality rate established by the Secretary of State under FTR Chapter 301 (FTR 301-11.6).

B. TQSE LUMP SUM METHOD – TQSE/LS

The TQSE/LS is based on the new official duty station locality rate in effect when the TQSE/LS offer is accepted by the employee, and is paid in a lump sum. TQSE/LS may be authorized for the number of days determined necessary, up to 30 days with no extensions under any circumstances. If offered, the employee must choose between TQSE/LS and TQSE/AE (actual expenses), but is under no obligation to accept the fixed option. Once a TQSE method is selected, it may not be changed. Payment of the TQSE/LS is based on the total number of individuals actually moving to the new permanent duty station, not the number occupying temporary quarters. The maximum daily rate the employee may be paid is 75 percent of the maximum per diem rate, whereas the maximum the immediate family members may be paid is 25 percent of the maximum per diem rate.

The following is an example of the TQSE/LS for the first 30 days of temporary quarters, based on a family consisting of the employee, spouse, domestic partner, one child over 12 years of age, and one child under 12 years of age moving to a new locality with a per diem rate of \$131 per day. **No further days will be authorized and no receipts are required.**

FAMILY ENTITLEMENT (LOCALITY RATE = \$131.00)			
FAMILY MEMBER	NUMBER OF DAYS	FACTOR	FIXED AMOUNT (Days x Adj. Rate)
Employee	30	0.75 times Locality Rate = \$98.25	\$2,947.50
Spouse or domestic partner	30	0.25 times Locality Rate = \$32.75	982.50
Child Over 12	30	0.25 times Locality Rate = \$32.75	982.50
Child Under 12	30	0.25 times Locality Rate = \$32.75	982.50
Total Entitlement			\$5,895.00

APPENDIX I: ITEMS ALLOWED/NOT ALLOWED TO BE SHIPPED WITH HHG

A. PROPERTY TRANSPORTABLE UNLESS PROHIBITED

The following items may be included in the shipment of HHG, unless the commercial carrier prohibits such inclusion:

- All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs);
- Riding lawn mowers;
- Jet skis;
- Golf carts;
- Boats that easily fit into the commercial carrier's moving van; or
- Pianos.

Note: If any of these items are included in the shipment of HHG, their weight will be factored into the 18,000-pound limit. The employee should indicate their intention to ship any of the above items on their pre-inventory so that the commercial carrier can plan accordingly.

B. PROPERTY NOT TRANSPORTABLE AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE

The following items will not be included in the shipment of HHG:

- Automobiles, trucks, vans, and similar motor vehicles;
- Boats that do not easily fit into the commercial carrier's moving van;
- Airplanes or gliders;
- Farm vehicles;
- Major vehicle parts (e.g., engines);
- Live animals (e.g., birds, fowl, insects, reptiles);
- Cord wood and building materials;
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Property for resale or commercial use; or
- Flammable and / or explosive materials (e.g., fireworks).

Note: The employee should contact the commercial carrier regarding any items owned that he/she is not sure whether to include for shipment as part of HHG.

APPENDIX J: SHIPMENT OF MOBILE HOMES

The term "mobile home" refers to traditional trailer homes as well as boats. Employees will be permitted to transport a mobile home provided they certify that it is being used as the current residence and will be used as the permanent residence at the new official duty station.

The FSC PCS counselor will be contacted to obtain a GSA cost comparison. The GSA cost comparison will be calculated based on the estimated cost of moving 18,000 pounds of HHG and temporarily storing the goods for 90 calendar days. The employee will not be reimbursed for any costs associated with moving the mobile home that exceed the amount of the GSA cost comparison.

If employees select a commercial carrier to move their mobile homes, reimbursement will be the actual expense for the following items, but not to exceed the GSA cost comparison amount:

- Carrier's charge for transporting the mobile home;
- Ferry fares and bridge, road, and tunnel tolls;
- Taxes, charges, and fees charged by the State or another Government authority for transporting the mobile home in or through its jurisdiction;
- Charges for flag car or escort service (when required by State or local law);
- Carrier's service charge for obtaining permits; and
- Costs of preparing the mobile home for movement.

The following expenses will not be reimbursed:

- Maintenance;
- Repairs;
- Storage;
- Insurance for homes above carrier's maximum liability; and
- Charges designated in the tariffs as "Special Service."

If employees tow or drive their mobile homes on their own, they will be reimbursed \$0.11 per mile in addition to the POV reimbursement rate of \$0.19 per mile (for CONUS transit), plus any ferry fares or bridge, road and tunnel tolls.

APPENDIX K: MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE ALLOWANCE GUIDELINES

The Miscellaneous Expense Allowance (MEA) is to help defray some of the costs incurred due to relocating. The MEA is related to expenses that are common to living quarters, furnishings and household appliances, and to other general types of costs inherent in relocation of a place of residence. MEA can be used to cover expenses that cannot be easily categorized, such as carpet cleaning, replacement of window treatments, painting, automobile registration fees, disconnecting/connecting appliances, non-refundable utility fees/deposits, etc. Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to, the items listed below:

GENERAL EXPENSES	FEES/DEPOSITS	LOSSES
Appliances	For disconnecting/ connecting appliances, equipment, utilities or conversion of appliances for operation on available utilities.	
Rugs, draperies and curtains	For cutting and fitting such items, moved from one residence quarters to another.	
Utilities (See FTR 302-10.20 for mobile homes)	Deposits or fees not offset by eventual refunds.	
Medical, dental and food locker contracts		Losses that cannot be recovered by transfer or refund and are incurred due to early termination of a contract.
Private Institutional care contracts (such as that provided for handicapped or invalid dependents only)		Losses that cannot be recovered by transfer or refund and are incurred due to early termination of a contract.
Privately-owned automobiles	Registration, Driver's License and use taxes imposed when bringing vehicles into certain jurisdictions.	

GENERAL EXPENSES	FEES/DEPOSITS	LOSSES
Transportation of pets	Only costs associated with dogs, cats and other house pets as well as costs due to stringent air carrier rules are included. Other animals (horses, fish, birds, various rodents, etc.) are excluded because of their size, exotic nature or restrictions on shipping, host-country restrictions and special handling difficulties. Not included are inoculations, examinations, boarding quarantine or other costs in the moving process.	

APPENDIX L: PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

“Property Management Services” are programs provided by private companies for a fee, which help an employee to manage his/her residence at the old official duty station as a rental property. These services typically include, but are not limited to, obtaining a tenant, negotiating the lease, inspecting the property regularly, managing repairs and maintenance, enforcing lease terms, collecting the rent, paying the mortgage and other carrying expenses from rental proceeds and/or funds of the employee, and accounting for the transactions and providing periodic reports to the employee.

A. Property management services is a discretionary expense which the VA may offer to eligible employees. Eligible employees include:

- Transfers to locations outside the United States, and
- Employees under a TCS assignment.

B. Employees and/or a member(s) of the employee’s immediate family must hold title to a residence which the employee is eligible to sell at Government expense.

C. Employees have the option to either utilize the property management services program facilitated by the relocation services contractor or to secure their own property management company and pay for any applicable fees to the company of their choice. An employee is not obligated to use the authorized property management services allowance. The employee has the option of choosing to sell his/her residence at their own expense.

1. VA will pay property management services for the duration of the foreign post assignment until the employee has transferred back to an official duty station in the United States for the duration of the TCS assignment or until separated from Government service.

2. If participating in the relocation services contractor property management program, the contractor will bill VA for the contracted service fees. The employee will not need to seek reimbursement for property management fees.

D. Employees opting not to use the property management program with the contractor will be required to pay for all fees for property management and seek reimbursement for customary and reasonable fees related to property management services and allowable under regulation. The fees should be clearly specified in the contract with the property manager. The employee will submit an expense form accompanied by all paid-in-full receipts and the property management contract to the FSC for review and reimbursement.

E. When VA reimburses the employee directly for property management services, the employee will be taxed on the amount of expenses that VA pays for property management services, whether VA reimburses the employee directly or whether VA pays a relocation services company to manage the employee's residence. VA must pay the employee a relocation income tax allowance (RITA) for the additional Federal, State and local income taxes the employee incurs on property management expenses for which VA reimburses the employee or pays on the employee's behalf.

APPENDIX M: TRANSFERS TO OCONUS LOCATIONS

TRANSFERS FROM A CONUS TO AN OCONUS OFFICIAL DUTY STATION	
RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA MUST PAY OR REIMBURSE	RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA HAS DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO PAY OR REIMBURSE
Transportation and per diem for employee and immediate family members (FTR Part 302-4).	TQSE is not authorized in a foreign area, however, employees may be entitled to the following under the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR) (Government Civilians-Foreign Areas): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Foreign Transfer Allowance (FTA) for quarters occupied temporarily before departure from the 50 states or the District of Columbia for an official duty station in a foreign area incident to a permanent change of station and travel to first official duty station overseas. • Temporary quarters subsistence allowance (TQSA).
Miscellaneous expense allowance (FTR Part 302-16).	Property management services (FTR Part 302-15).
Transportation and temporary storage of HHG (FTR Part 302-7).	Shipment of a POV. (FTR Part 302-9).
Extended storage of HHG (FTR Part 302-8).	Use of relocation services companies when transfer is to Alaska or Hawaii (FTR Part 302-12).
Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (FTR Part 302-17). ¹	Home marketing incentives when transfer is to Alaska or Hawaii (FTR Part 302-15).

¹Allowed when old and new official duty stations are located in the United States. Also allowed when, instead of being returned to the former non-foreign area official duty station, an employee is transferred in the interest of the Government to a different non-foreign area official duty station.

APPENDIX N: OTHER OCONUS RELOCATION ALLOWANCES

TRANSFERS FROM AN OCONUS TO A CONUS OFFICIAL DUTY STATION	
RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA MUST PAY OR REIMBURSE	RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA HAS DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO PAY OR REIMBURSE
Transportation and per diem for employee and immediate family member(s) (FTR Part 302-4).	Shipment of a POV (FTR Part 302-9).
TQSE (FTR Part 302-6). ¹	
Miscellaneous expense allowances (FTR Part 302-16).	
Sell and buy residence transaction expenses or lease termination expenses (FTR Part 302-11). ²	
Transportation and temporary storage of HHG (FTR Part 302-7).	
Extended storage of HHG only when assigned to a designated isolated official duty station in CONUS (FTR Part 302-8).	
Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (FTR Part 302-17).	

¹ A TQSE under the DSSR may be authorized preceding final departure subsequent to the necessary vacating of residence quarters.

² Allowed when old and new official duty stations are located in the United States. Also allowed when, instead of being returned to the former non-foreign area official duty station, an employee is transferred in the interest of the Government to a different non-foreign area official duty station than the one from which transferred when assigned to the foreign official duty station.

TRANSFER BETWEEN OCONUS OFFICIAL DUTY STATIONS	
RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA MUST PAY OR REIMBURSE	RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA HAS DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO PAY OR REIMBURSE
Transportation and per diem for employee and immediate family member(s) (FTR Part 302-4).	Shipment of a POV (FTR Part 302-9).
TQSE (FTR Part 302-6). ¹	Property management services (FTR Part 302-15).
Transportation and temporary storage of HHG (FTR Part 302-7).	
Miscellaneous expense allowances (FTR Part 302-16).	
Extended storage of HHG (FTR Part 302-8).	
Relocation income tax allowance (RITA) (FTR Part 302-17).	

RETURN FROM OCONUS OFFICIAL DUTY STATION TO PLACE OF ACTUAL RESIDENCE FOR SEPARATION	
RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA MUST PAY OR REIMBURSE	RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA HAS DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO PAY OR REIMBURSE
Transportation for employee and immediate family member(s) (FTR Part 302-4).	Shipment of a POV (FTR Part 302-9).
Per diem for employee only (FTR Part 302-4).	
Transportation and temporary storage of HHG (FTR Part 302-7).	

¹TQSE may be authorized under the Department of State Standardized Regulations.

APPENDIX O: TCS ALLOWANCES

TEMPORARY CHANGE OF STATION (TCS)	
RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA MUST PAY OR REIMBURSE	RELOCATION ALLOWANCES VA HAS DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY TO PAY OR REIMBURSE
Transportation and per diem for employee and immediate family member(s)	House hunting trip expenses
Miscellaneous expense allowances	TQSE
Transportation and temporary storage of HHG	
Transportation of a mobile home or boat used as a primary residence in lieu of the transportation of household	
Transportation of a POV	
Relocation income tax allowance (RITA)	
Property management services Lease break expenses	

NOTES:

1. VA will fully fund both the initial relocation and subsequent return associated with a TCS at the time the employee is issued a TCS authorization.
2. The TCS refers to the relocation to a new official duty station and subsequent return. As it is one assignment, and one set of orders, funding needs to be obligated for the entire relocation.
3. In a 1984 Comptroller General decision (64 Comp. Gen. 45) regarding properly obligating funds for relocation, the Comptroller General ruled that the transfer of the employee is a bona fide need of the year in which he is ordered to transfer and the expenses must be charged against funds current in that year.

APPENDIX P: IRS PUBLICATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH RELOCATION EXPENSES

- Publication 463 - Travel, Entertainment, and Gift Expenses
- Publication 521 - Moving Expenses
- Publication 525 - Taxable and Nontaxable Changes
- Publication 553 - Highlights of Current Tax Changes.

APPENDIX Q: PCS RELOCATION GUIDANCE PRIOR TO AUGUST 1, 2011



Vol XIV Relocation Ch
8 App Q Guidance Pri