



UNITED STATES
CIVILIAN BOARD OF CONTRACT APPEALS

December 1, 2014

CBCA 4054-TRAV

In the Matter of DIANE L. KLEINSCHMIDT

Diane L. Kleinschmidt, Patuxent River, MD, Claimant.

Bonnie Petree, Travel Department Comptroller, Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Department of the Navy, Patuxent River, MD, appearing for the Department of the Navy.

SHERIDAN, Board Judge.

Claimant, Diane L. Kleinschmidt, an employee of the Department of the Navy, missed her departure flight for temporary duty (TDY) travel. The Board finds she acted as a prudent traveler in timing her arrival at the airport in order to catch her flight and should not be denied the additional expense she incurred for the rental car she was required to use.

Background

Claimant was authorized TDY travel to Savannah, Georgia, from April 28 through May 2, 2014, to include airfare between the Washington, D.C., area and Savannah. On April 28, she drove her personally-owned vehicle (POV) to the Baltimore Washington International (BWI) airport and parked at 9:54 a.m., local time. Although she had no bags to check, claimant missed her 11:15 a.m. Delta Airlines flight to Savannah, "due to the high volume of travelers being processed through airport security." Claimant states she has traveled for the Government from southern Maryland for the past nineteen years without a similar incident occurring.

After missing the flight, claimant contacted her authorizing official (AO), for direction on the proper corrective action to follow. She was able to book a flight from BWI to Atlanta, Georgia, but was unable to obtain a seat on a connecting flight from Atlanta to Savannah that same day. Claimant received approval from her AO to obtain a rental car through the SATO

travel office, so she could drive from Atlanta to Savannah. She incurred \$190.42 in costs for the rental car and \$26.65 for gas, for a total of \$217.07. The travel office has offered to reimburse claimant \$77 for the rental car, which is the amount that was refunded for the unused airfare ticket from Atlanta to Savannah. Claimant seeks payment of the entire \$217.07.

Discussion

The agency notes that claimant's parking sticker shows that she entered the BWI airport parking lot eighty minutes before her flight was scheduled to depart. The agency posits that by leaving only eighty minutes to get from the parking lot to the airport terminal, through the security screening, and arrive at the gate for her flight, claimant failed to act as a prudent traveler in calculating the amount of time needed to make her flight. The agency posits claimant should be responsible for the \$217.07 of increased expenses associated with the rental car, offset by the \$77 saved in airfare.

The agency notes that per Delta Airlines recommendations, travelers should be at the gate and ready to board at least fifteen minutes before their scheduled departure time. Delta's website also states, "The recommended arrival time at the airport is 75 minutes prior to departure when traveling within the United States." The agency also observed that a high volume of travelers being processed through airport security delayed claimant's arrival at her gate.

This Board has observed that federal civilian employees traveling on official business must exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business. *Carleton Bulkin*, CBCA 1511-TRAV, 09-2 BCA ¶ 34,143, at 168,788; *James M. Cunningham*, CBCA 1106-RELO, 08-2 BCA ¶ 33,944, at 167,959.

Here, claimant acted prudently in calculating the amount of time she needed to arrive at the airport to make the flight departure time. While claimant may have cut her arrival to BWI a bit close – given the distance she was driving to the airport, its size, and parking – she arrived at the airport within a reasonable time to expect to be able to make her flight. Claimant also acted reasonably when she coordinated with her AO as to whether and how she should continue her TDY.

We see no evidence that claimant did not act as a prudent traveler, and there is no reason to deny payment of the \$217.07 of expenses for an unfortunate circumstance that has happened only once in claimant's nineteen years of government travel.

Decision

The claim is granted.

PATRICIA J. SHERIDAN
Board Judge