



UNITED STATES
CIVILIAN BOARD OF CONTRACT APPEALS

February 19, 2026

CBCA 8762-RELO

In the Matter of JEFFREY C.

Jeffrey C., Claimant.

Marc E. Mandel, Office of the General Counsel, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, Washington, DC, appearing for Department of Justice.

NEWSOM, Board Judge.

Claimant challenges the agency's decision to collect from him the Government's overpayment of \$4900 in costs to move the claimant's household effects (HHE).¹ We deny the claim.

Background

Claimant was employed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) with a duty station in Australia. On July 31, 2023, he separated from federal service. Claimant asserts, and the FBI agrees, that claimant was authorized to be reimbursed for the relocation costs of moving his HHE.

Before claimant separated from service, the agency's transportation carrier performed a pre-move inspection at claimant's residence to estimate the weight of his HHE. Because

¹ This dispute is governed by the Foreign Affairs Manual, which uses the term "household effects" (instead of "household goods") to refer to property associated with "the home and all personal effects belonging to an employee and immediate family members." 14 FAM 611.3.

the carrier's estimated weight (12,000 pounds) exceeded claimant's applicable weight allowance, the carrier provided claimant with an Overweight Survey Letter. FBI Exhibit AE-1. This letter notified claimant that (1) the estimated weight of his HHE was 12,000 pounds; (2) the final weight would be determined on the day of the move; and (3) the maximum authorized weight was 7200 pounds. *Id.* Significantly for the present dispute, the letter warned that "[i]t is very important that you are aware that if you go over your weight allowance, you will be responsible for payment of the overage that is shipped." *Id.* The letter added that the "FBI will collect the overage amount from you upon completion of your move." Claimant signed the letter, "indicating" that he read the letter's information and "agree[d] to [its] terms regarding any overages." *Id.*

On the day of the move, the carrier calculated the weight of claimant's HHE to be 14,109 pounds and later lowered that weight to 14,080 pounds. FBI Exhibit AE-2 at 1 (Weight Certificate); FBI Exhibit AE-3 at 1-2; *see* FBI Exhibit AE-2 at 2-3 (Container Verified Gross Mass Tickets). However, the carrier did not use either of these weights to calculate the amount due but instead used the *estimated* weight of 12,000 pounds. Prior to the move, by email dated July 13, 2023, the carrier calculated \$12,400 as the amount due based on an estimated weight of 12,000 pounds. FBI Exhibit AE-3 at 9. The carrier later billed the FBI \$12,400. *Id.* at 1 2.

Subsequently, the FBI sought to collect the excess weight costs from claimant. On November 1, 2024, the FBI notified claimant that the weight allowance for his move was 7200 pounds at a cost of \$7500. Because claimant's HHE exceeded the authorized weight, he owed the agency the difference between the actual cost of the move, \$12,400, and the cost that would have been incurred to move the authorized weight, \$7500, for a difference of \$4900. Claimant requested that the FBI waive the debt, but that request was denied.

Discussion

Payment of travel and relocation expenses of Department of Justice employees who are serving abroad, such as the claimant, are governed by the Foreign Service Act of 1980 under regulations issued by the Secretary of State. 28 U.S.C. § 530A (2018). The Secretary of State promulgates the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM), which provides guidance for the payment of the costs of moving and storing HHE of applicable employees. *Richard W.*, CBCA 7786-RELO, 23-1 BCA ¶ 38,432, at 186,779; 14 FAM 611.2-1(b), 611.6. The applicable weight allowance under the FAM for moving claimant's HHE was 7200 pounds. 14 FAM 611.7-1.

Claimant argues that the FBI should not be able to collect the cost of moving his weight overage because the FBI has not demonstrated that the excess weight caused the FBI

to incur additional costs. That is incorrect, for multiple reasons. Claimant was entitled to be reimbursed for the cost of moving no more than 7200 pounds. The record shows that the cost to move 7200 pounds would have been \$7500. The FBI paid \$12,400 to move HHE weighing well in excess of 7200 pounds and, thus, overpaid by \$4900. Furthermore, by signing the Overweight Survey Letter, claimant agreed that if he exceeded the weight allowance, he would be responsible for the costs of any overage. Reimbursement is also required by the FAM, which states that employees are responsible for any transportation, storage, or other costs incurred by them “which are not authorized by laws and regulations.” 14 FAM 612.3(a).

Claimant also challenges the calculated weight of 14,080 pounds for his HHE, arguing that the FBI did not provide adequate support for that weight. That argument is irrelevant because the FBI did not use the calculated weight of 14,080 pounds to compute the amount due. In calculating claimant’s amount due for the excess weight, the FBI used the estimated weight of 12,000 pounds—the same weight provided to claimant in the Overweight Survey Letter in advance of the move.

Decision

The claim is denied.

Elizabeth W. Newsom
ELIZABETH W. NEWSOM
Board Judge