**250 HOME SERVICE TRANSFER ALLOWANCE (Last Updated 01/19/2020)**

**251 Description**

**251.1 Definitions (Interim eff. 7/5/2009 TL:SR 711; final eff. 8/30/2009 TL:SR 715)**

**a. "Home service transfer allowance" means an allowance for extraordinary, necessary, and reasonable expenses, not otherwise compensated for, incurred by an employee incident to establishing him/herself at a post of assignment in the United States as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5924(2)(B).**

**If an employee dies while assigned to a post in a foreign area, the home service transfer allowance may be paid to family member(s) (see definition 040m) to relocate to the United States provided at the time of death, they (1) resided with employee at his/her foreign post; or (2) were residing outside the United States at an agency-designated location for which they were receiving a Separate Maintenance Allowance under DSSR Section 260 (see also DSSR 252.8).**

**b. "Transfer" in Section 250 means a reassignment that involves travel from a post in a foreign area to a post in the United States with an understanding certified to by the employee that he/she will complete twelve months in U.S. Government service following the effective date of transfer. (See Section 252.5b.)**

**For family members (see definition 040m) of an employee who dies while assigned to post in a foreign area, transfer means relocation to the United States. The twelve month certification statement is not applicable.**

**c. "United States", for the purposes of this section, means the several States of the United States of America, including Alaska and Hawaii, the District of Columbia, its territories or possessions, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.**

**\*251.2 Scope (eff. 01/19/2020 TL:SR 986)**

**The home service transfer allowance is composed of four elements:**

**a. a lump sum miscellaneous expense portion to assist with certain extraordinary costs.**

**The following and similar types of extraordinary costs may be reimbursed with this allowance provided they are deemed to be reasonable and necessary in the individual case:**

**(1) disconnecting and connecting appliances, equipment and utilities;**

**(2) converting household equipment and appliances for operation on available utilities (including necessary power transformers);**

**(3) cutting and fitting rugs, draperies and curtains moved from one residence to another---not cost of new rugs, etc.;**

**(4) utility fees or contract deposits that are not offset by eventual refunds;**

**(5) automobile registration, driver's license and similar fees;**

**(6) personal cable and telephone costs attributable to the relocation of the employee and his/her family exclusive of such costs relating to travel and hotel arrangements intended to be reimbursed by per diem to which the employee is entitled;**

**(7) shipment and/or required quarantine of pet(s);**

**(8) reinstallation of catalytic converter which was removed prior to foreign assignment;**

**(9) required removal by state or local law of automobile parts (such as tinted windows or special lights) which were required by law at the foreign post.**

**The following and similar types of extraordinary costs are not covered and are not to be reimbursed by this allowance:**

**(1)losses in selling or buying real and personal property and costs of items related to such transactions;**

**(2) costs which are reimbursed under other provisions of these regulations or under any other regulations or under provisions of any statute;**

**(3) additional costs of moving household goods caused by exceeding the maximum weight limitation for which the employee has eligibility as provided by law or in regulations;**

**(4) costs of newly acquired items such as the purchase or installation costs of new rugs or draperies;**

**(5) higher income, real estate, sales, or other taxes as the result of establishing residence in the new post;**

**(6) fines imposed for traffic infractions while enroute to the new post;**

**(7) accident insurance premiums or liability costs incurred in connection with travel to the new post, or any other liability imposed upon the employee for uninsured damages caused by accidents for which the employee or a family member is held responsible;**

**(8)losses as the result of the sales or disposal of items or personal property not considered convenient or practicable to move;**

**(9) damage or loss of clothing, luggage or other personal effects while traveling to the new post;**

**(10) subsistence, transportation or mileage expenses in excess of the amounts reimbursed as per diem or other allowances under pertinent regulations;**

**(11) medical expenses due to illness or injury of the employee or a member of family while en route to the new post;**

**(12) costs incurred in connection with structural alterations; remodeling or modernizing of living quarters, garages or other buildings, to accommodate privately owned automobiles, appliances or equipment or the cost of replacing or repairing worn-out or defective appliances or equipment shipped to the new post;**

**(13) additional insurance on household goods while in transit to the new post.**

**b. a lump sum wardrobe expense portion. For this portion, posts are grouped into three zones according to climate, and employees into three family sizes. The flat rates provided for in this portion are intended to offset a part of the wardrobe cost of two zone transfers only, from zones 1 to 3 or 3 to 1.**

**\*c. a subsistence expense portion designed to help offset costs of meals, groceries, laundry and dry cleaning of clothes and lodging in a hotel, pension, or other transient-type quarters, including obligatory service charges. A house or apartment may not be designated as "temporary lodging" unless the head of agency determines that it is or was occupied on a temporary basis. The expense of local transportation is not allowable. The subsistence expense portion is granted for periods during which expenses for meals, groceries, laundry/dry cleaning and temporary lodging were incurred within the time limits established in Section 252.3 at the new post of assignment in the U.S. (eff. 01/19/2020 TL:SR 986)**

**\*(1) Described at Section 252.3a are two mutually-exclusive methods of reimbursement, together with a third method, an optional alternative for agencies that adopt either mutually-exclusive method, #1 or #2. Agencies may choose either Method #1 or Method #2, but not both. The third method is an optional alternative that agencies adopting either Method #1 or Method #2 may offer their employees. It is described in Section 251.2c(2). More specific guidance on these several methods may be made available in agency implementing regulations. (eff. 01/19/2020 TL:SR 986)**

**\*(2) Fixed-Amount Reimbursement Method. When deeming it cost effective, the head of agency or designee may allow employees to choose a fixed-amount reimbursement system for subsistence expenses instead of the agency’s prescribed subsistence-expense method, whether #1 or #2. Under the fixed-amount system, the period of reimbursement is limited to and may be less than 30 days, with no extensions. See calculation of “fixed-amount” reimbursement under 252.3a. (eff. 01/19/2020 TL:SR 986)**

**\*d. a lease penalty expense portion to assist employees who received the living quarters allowance at their former foreign post, to help offset the expense of unavoidable lease penalties for the early termination of a residence quarters lease due to transfer required by a Federal agency. (eff. 01/19/2020 TL:SR 986)**

**252 Amounts (See also Section 252.5b.)**

**252.1 Miscellaneous Expense Portion (eff. 10/13/2019 TL:SR 979)**

**Upon entrance on duty pursuant to transfer (Section 251.1b), an employee may be paid the miscellaneous expense portion of the home service transfer allowance. (See Section 253 for advance of funds.) Should the employee enter on duty at a post in the United States or other non-foreign area location in advance of the arrival of his/her family, the employee may be paid the portion of the home service transfer allowance provided for an employee without family and may, upon the arrival of a family member at the post be paid the difference between the amount already granted and the amount authorized for an employee with family.**

**a. The following amounts may be granted without receipts or itemizing required:**

**(1) for an employee without family - $750 or the equivalent of one week's pay, whichever is the lesser amount;**

**(2) for an employee with family - $1,500 or the equivalent of two weeks' pay, whichever is the lesser amount.**

**b. The following amounts, based on the employee's salary at the time of entrance on duty at the new post, may be granted in lieu of the amounts provided in Section 252.1a, if supported by either paid bills or other acceptable evidence justifying the amounts claimed:**

**(1) for an employee without family - an amount based on actual allowable itemized expenditures not to exceed one week's salary for the employee or one week's salary for an employee at GS-13, step 10, whichever is the lesser amount;**

**(2) for an employee with family - an amount based on actual allowable itemized expenditures not to exceed two weeks' salary for the employee or two weeks' salary for an employee at GS-13, step 10, whichever is the lesser amount.**

**252.2 Wardrobe Portion (eff. 10/13/2019 TL:SR 979)**

**Upon entrance on duty pursuant to transfer (Section 251.1b), an employee may be paid the wardrobe expense portion (if applicable) of the home service transfer allowance prescribed in Section 251.2b.**

**In determining eligibility and the amount of a wardrobe portion of the home service transfer allowance payable to an employee who is transferred from a post listed in Section 920, the conterminous United States and Hawaii are considered to be classified as Zone 2, Alaska as Zone 1, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the U.S. Pacific island possessions as Zone 3.**

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| --- | --- |
| **Size of Family** | **Two Zone Transfer**  **Zone 1 to 3 or 3 to 1** |
| **Employee without family**  **Employee and one member of family**  **Employee and more than one member of family** | **$700**  **$1150**  **$1500** |

**\*252.3 Subsistence Expense Portion (eff. 01/19/2020 TL:SR 986)**

**a. Commencement of Grant(s)**

**The grant(s) may cover periods during which the employee, or a family member, incurred expenses for meals, groceries, laundry/dry cleaning and temporary lodging at the post in the U.S. and may begin as soon as the employee's transfer has been authorized and the written agreement required in Section 252.5b has been signed, provided that the total number of days for which reimbursement is authorized does not exceed the period of the employee's eligibility as prescribed in Section 252.3b. The days need not run consecutively and may be broken by periods of annual leave, home leave or temporary duty. The employee may be on annual leave, home leave or temporary duty and may still be able to claim expenses as long as the expenses are incurred at the new post of assignment. (See 252.3d for allowable expenses while on temporary duty.) The time period shall run concurrently for the employee and all members of family.**

**Actual-Expense Reimbursement Method – Agency Method #1**

**The amount which may be reimbursed for subsistence expenses under Agency Method #1 shall be the lesser of either the actual amount of allowable expenses incurred by the employee and family members (Section 040m) for each time period, or the amount computed as shown below. Lodging tax may be reimbursed separately in addition to the amounts described below.**

**(1) For the first thirty days:**

**a. For the initial occupant (employee or family member age 12 or over), a daily rate not in excess of the standard CONUS per diem rate. When temporary quarters are in a non-foreign area outside the CONUS, the per diem rate for that area is applicable; and**

**b. For each other occupant, whether employee or family member age 12 or over, 75% of the daily rate established in 252.3a(1)a.**

**c. For each family member occupant under age 12, 50% of the daily rate established in 252.3a(1)a.**

**(2) For the second thirty days:**

**d. For the initial occupant (employee or family member age 12 or over), 75% of the applicable per diem rate established in 252.3a(1)a.**

**e. For each family member occupant 12 years or over, 50% of the applicable rate established in 252.3a(1)a.**

**f. For each family member occupant under age 12, 40% of the daily rate established in 252.3a(1)a.**

**(3) Additional sixty days:**

**g. For Actual-Expense Reimbursement Method – Agency Method #1**

**When the head of agency determines, on a case-by-case basis, that an extension of time is necessary due to compelling reasons beyond the control of the employee, up to an additional sixty days may be authorized, computed at the same rates established for the second thirty day period under 252.3a(2).**

**The daily actual subsistence expenses required to be itemized under Section 252.3c will be totaled for each time period to permit a comparison with the maximum allowable for the particular period derived under the above formulas. If fewer than thirty days are authorized or used for a period, the maximum allowable amount will be based on the number of days authorized, or used, multiplied by the applicable daily rate.**

**Partial-Flat-Rate Reimbursement Method – Agency Method #2**

**The amount which may be reimbursed for lodging expenses under Agency Method #2 shall be the lesser of either the actual amount of lodging expenses incurred by the employee and family members (Section 040m) for each time period, or the lodging portion of the applicable per diem rate shown below. Lodging tax may be reimbursed separately in addition to the amounts described below. A separate flat amount to defray costs for meals, groceries, laundry and dry cleaning is based on the percentages shown below of the Meal and Incidental Expense (M&IE) portion of the applicable per diem rate. Receipts are required only for lodging if this method is followed and itemization of daily expenses is not required.**

**(4) For the first thirty days:**

**a. For the initial occupant (employee or family member age 12 or over), a daily lodging rate not in excess of 100% of the lodging portion of the standard CONUS per diem rate and a flat rate of 100% of the M&IE portion of the standard CONUS per diem rate to defray costs for meals, groceries, laundry and dry cleaning. When temporary quarters are in a non-foreign area outside the CONUS, the lodging and M&IE portions of the per diem rate for that area are applicable; and**

**b. For each other occupant, whether employee or family member age 12 or over, 75% of the daily rates established in 252.3a(4)a.**

**c. For each family member occupant under age 12, 50% of the daily rates established in 252.3a(4)a.**

**(5) For the second thirty days:**

**d. For the initial occupant (employee or family member age 12 or over), 75% of the applicable rates established in 252.3a(4)a.**

**e. For each family member occupant 12 years or over, 50% of the applicable rates established in 252.3a(4)a.**

**f. For each family member occupant under age 12, 40% of the applicable rates established in 252.3a(4)a.**

**(6) Additional sixty days:**

**g. For Partial-Flat-Rate Reimbursement Method - Agency Method #2**

**When the head of agency determines, on a case-by-case basis, that an extension of time is necessary due to compelling reasons beyond the control of the employee, up to an additional sixty days may be authorized, computed at the same rates established for the second thirty day period under 252.3a(5).**

**Fixed-Amount Reimbursement Method**

**To determine the fixed amount to be paid multiply the number of days authorized for subsistence reimbursement by 75% of the maximum per diem rate prescribed at the post of assignment in the United States (for the initial occupant, either employee or family member age 12 or over). Then, for each additional family member, multiply the number of days authorized by 25% times the maximum per diem rate.**

**Example of fixed-amount reimbursement:**

**Authorized Travelers Days 1 - 30**

**Employee Per Diem rate at new official station x .75**

**Each Dependent Per Diem rate at new official station x .25**

**Rates of per diem are published in the following regulations:**

**1. Conterminous/Continental United States (CONUS) (48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia): Appendix A to Chapter 301 of the Federal Travel Regulation. Internet site:** <http://www.gsa.gov/perdiem> **(eff. 5/1/05 TL:SR 650)**

**2. Non-foreign areas (Alaska, Hawaii, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and territories and possessions of the United States): Department of Defense Joint Travel Regulations (JTR). These rates are also included in Civilian Personnel Per Diem Bulletins issued by the Department of Defense and published on the Department of Defense Internet site:** <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/perdiem.cfm>. **These bulletins are also available on the Department of State Office of Allowances’ Internet site:** <https://aoprals.state.gov> **under General Information/Per Diem.**

**b. Termination of Grant(s) (eff. 01/19/2020 TL:SR 986)**

**The grant(s) of the subsistence expense portion may authorize reimbursement for any periods for which meals, groceries, laundry/dry cleaning and temporary lodging expenses were incurred by the employee or family member at the post of assignment in the U.S., or other non-foreign areas as appropriate, up to the total number of calendar days authorized, provided that: (1) during periods for which reimbursement is authorized the employee was in pay status; and (2) he/she was not authorized travel per diem (however, see Section 252.3d for limited exception). No reimbursement shall be authorized for any period on or after one of the following dates, whichever is earliest:**

**(1) the date the employee or any member of family occupies residence quarters;**

**(2) the date the employee departs from the U.S. post on transfer, or the effective date of transfer when the employee is absent from the U.S. post at the time the transfer order is issued and does not return to the U.S. post before proceeding to his/her new foreign post;**

**(3) the date of the employee's separation (See Sections 040r and 254.2).**

**c. Determination of Rates (eff. 01/19/2020 TL:SR 986)**

**The rate at which a subsistence expense portion calculated using the Actual-Expense Reimbursement Method (Agency Method #1) may be granted shall be the total amount of the expenses for the employee and family members for restaurant meals, including tips, groceries, laundry/dry cleaning and temporary lodging (including room and bath, heat, light, fuel, water and the cost of service and fees imposed by the management upon the occupant during the period or periods allowed by Section 252.3b) or the maximum rate prescribed by Section 252.3a, whichever is less.**

**The rate at which a subsistence expense portion calculated using the Partial-Flat-Rate Reimbursement Method (Agency Method #2) may be granted shall be the flat rate to defray costs for restaurant meals, including tips, groceries, and laundry/dry cleaning, plus the lesser of the total amount of the expenses for temporary lodging (including room and bath, heat, light, fuel, water and the cost of service and fees imposed by the management upon the occupant during the period or periods allowed by Section 252.3b), or the maximum rate prescribed by Section 252.3a.**

**Under either the Actual-Expense Reimbursement Method (Agency Method #1), or the Partial-Flat-Rate Reimbursement Method (Agency Method #2), taxes may be reimbursed separately for lodging. The location of the temporary quarters must be within reasonable proximity of the new post. For the Actual-Expense Reimbursement Method (Agency Method #1), evidence of the actual daily cost of meals, groceries, laundry and dry cleaning shall be a certified statement by the employee. For the Partial-Flat-Rate Reimbursement Method (Agency Method #2), reimbursement to defray costs for meals, groceries, laundry and dry cleaning is calculated as a flat rate and does not require a certified statement by the employee. For Agency Method #1 or Agency Method #2, the head of agency or designee shall require supporting receipts or other appropriate documentation for daily cost of temporary lodging.**

**For the Fixed-Amount Reimbursement Method receipts are not required, whether for lodging or for meals, groceries, laundry, or dry cleaning; however, agencies should verify that temporary quarters were occupied and may require employees to keep receipts. Lodging taxes are not reimbursed separately under this method.**

**d. The subsistence expense portion may continue on behalf of any individual (employee or dependent) during any period of official travel which authorizes per diem on behalf of that individual. However, payment shall be authorized only when the head of agency concludes that the employee acted responsibly in retaining temporary quarters during the period of official travel. Payment for the temporary quarters maintained at the post of assignment shall be computed using only the lodging portion of the applicable per diem rate and the formula found in Section 252.3a for the applicable agency method. Lodging tax may be paid separately under the Actual-Expense Reimbursement Method (Agency Method #1) or the Partial-Flat-Rate Reimbursement Method (Agency Method #2); however, not under the Fixed-Amount Reimbursement Method. (eff. 01/19/2020 TL:SR 986)**

**252.4 Lease Penalty Expense Portion (Eff. 7/9/06 TL:SR 666)**

**This portion is to help offset the expense of a residence quarters lease penalty unavoidably incurred abroad by an employee receiving the living quarters allowance as a result of a transfer to the United States. The amount of reimbursement shall not exceed the amount required by the specific terms of a rental contract signed by the employee as a prior condition of obtaining the lease for quarters abroad, or the equivalent of three months’ rent, whichever is less.**

**Amounts as indicated above may be reimbursed only after an appropriate authorizing official of the employing agency certifies in writing that:**

**a. the employee's transfer to the United States was due solely to actions by the employing agency and to unusual conditions fully beyond the control of the employee; and**

**b. the termination of the lease and departure of the employee did not result from any specific actions by the employee to seek a curtailment of the assignment for transfer or promotion; and**

**c. the employee was not negligent in promptly notifying the landlord of the intent to terminate the lease after receiving an official notice of transfer; and**

**d. all reasonable steps were taken by the employee to dispose of the residence quarters by sublease or assignment to others; and**

**e. both the employee and employing agency made reasonable efforts to avoid the full lease penalty by delaying the employee's transfer to the United States.**

**NOTE: Above statements “a” through “e” are included on Section 960 HSTA Worksheet.**

**252.5 Payment**

**a. The grant of the home service transfer allowance may be paid in a lump-sum amount.**

**b. Granting Home Service Transfer Allowances (Interim eff. 7/5/2009 TL:SR 711; final eff. 8/30/2009 TL:SR 715)**

**When granting a home service transfer allowance (except for family members of a deceased employee), the following certification required by Section 251.1b shall either be inserted in the Remarks box of SF-1190 or signed on Section 960 HSTA Worksheet and attached to the SF-1190:**

**"In order to be eligible for a grant of the home service transfer allowance, I certify that I agree to complete 12 months in United States Government service following the effective date of my transfer to a post in the United States or other non-foreign area, unless separated for reasons beyond my control which are acceptable to my employing agency. Failure to comply will result in my liability for repayment of this allowance."**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Employee's Signature**

**252.6 Prohibitions**

**Employees eligible under their agencies' regulations for either a subsistence expense allowance or a miscellaneous allowance authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5724a(a)(3) or 5724a(b) respectively, (under the Federal Travel Regulation) are not eligible for the subsistence expense, the miscellaneous expense and the wardrobe expense portions of the home service transfer allowance authorized by these regulations.**

**252.7 Special Rule - Married Couple Employee or Domestic Partnership Employee (Interim eff. 7/5/2009 TL:SR 711; final eff. 8/30/2009 TL:SR 715)**

**The miscellaneous expense portion "with family" rate may be granted to either eligible married couple employee or domestic partnership employee (both civilian employees of the U.S. Government) or each may be granted the employee "without family" rate. If there are additional members of family, one employee may be granted the "with family" rate and the other the "without family" rate. However, for grants above the non-receipt amounts, the same expenditures may not be utilized by both employees.**

**For the wardrobe portion (if applicable), each employee may be granted the "without family" rate. With additional family members present at post, one of the employees may receive a "with family" rate and the other may be granted the "without family" rate.**

**For the subsistence expense portion, each employee may be granted the "initial occupant" rate. One of the employees may be granted applicable amounts for any additional family members. Alternatively, the employees may agree to consider one spouse or domestic partner as a family member only. Regardless of the payment rate elected, however, the total number of days may not exceed sixty days for any family. (eff. 5/1/05 TL:SR 650)**

**For the lease penalty expense portion, only one of the employees at the same post may be reimbursed for an unavoidable lease penalty under section 252.4.**

**252.8 Home Service Transfer Allowance and Separate Maintenance Allowance**

**Family members for whom a separate maintenance allowance (SMA) was authorized while the employee was in a foreign area, shall not be considered members of family for the purpose of the home service transfer allowance unless official transportation was authorized permitting those family members to join the employee at the new post of assignment in the U.S.**

**253 Advance of Funds for Home Service Transfer Allowance**

**An advance of funds may be made for the home service transfer allowance through the authorized disbursing officer. The amount of such advance shall not exceed the maximum rate of the wardrobe portion (if applicable) and subsistence expense portion and the non-receipt amounts of the miscellaneous expense portion and the amount of unavoidable lease penalty authorized in accordance with Section 252. The initial advance of funds for subsistence expenses shall not exceed the maximum amount allowable under Section 252.3a for the first 30 day period. Thereafter, funds may be advanced for subsequent 30 day periods (actual subsistence method only) as authorized by the agency.**

**254 Conditions Requiring Refund**

**254.1 Refund of Funds Advanced**

**An advance of funds not subsequently covered by a grant of the home service transfer allowance shall be refunded by the employee to the agency.**

**254.2 Refund of Grant**

**An employee who has been transferred and who has been paid a home service transfer allowance under 5 U.S.C. 5924(2)(B) shall refund to the agency the total amount received as such allowance if he/she voluntarily separates (Section 040r) within twelve months from the date of his/her entrance on duty at his/her post in the U.S. or other non-foreign area, unless the head of agency determines in writing that it is appropriate to waive the refund.**