



092741 *Director, OPSS*

UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D C 20548

CIVIL DIVISION

JUN 10 1970

BEST DOCUMENT AVAILABLE

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

We reviewed selected administrative operations of the United States Marshals Service, Department of Justice, Washington, D. C., and the United States marshal (USM) offices in the judicial districts of Maryland, Massachusetts, and Washington Western.

Our review, which included an evaluation of the Department's travel policies, showed that opportunities existed for the Department to reduce the cost of USM operations by lowering the mileage reimbursement and per diem rates paid to USMs and deputy USMs. Our review showed also that overpayments of per diem were made to deputy USMs and should be recovered. These matters are discussed below and are being brought to your attention for appropriate corrective action.

SAVINGS IN TRAVEL COSTS AVAILABLE BY  
REDUCING THE MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE

The Department reimburses USMs and deputy USMs for use of their privately owned automobiles (POAs) at a rate of 10 cents per mile regardless of the number of miles driven. According to the General Services Administration (GSA), the cost per mile of operating interagency motor pool (IMP) cars decreases as the number of miles driven increases. The Department can achieve savings in travel costs incurred by USMs and deputy USMs who use their POAs by establishing reimbursement rates which decrease as the number of miles driven increase.

Many of the duties, such as serving summonses, writs and other court orders, making arrests, transporting prisoners, seizing property, and protecting the lives of defendants and witnesses, performed by USMs and deputy USMs require considerable travel. During fiscal year 1969 about 700 USMs and deputy USMs in 86 judicial districts, located in the continental United States except for the District of Columbia, traveled about 15.6 million miles for which they were paid about \$1.6 million. The average mileage traveled by these USMs and deputy USMs was 1,850 monthly, and 22,200 annually. The average mileage ranged from about 360 monthly and 4,560 annually in the New York Southern district to about 4,010 monthly and 48,120 annually in the Texas Southern district.

744857 **092741**

The following tabulation shows the computed GSA average cost per mile to operate IMP standard sedans at various mileage levels during fiscal year 1969.

<u>Annual mileage</u>	<u>Cost per mile</u>
1,000	\$ .4614
3,000	.1755
5,000	.1184
7,000 <sup>a</sup>	.0939
10,000	.0755
20,000	.0540
22,000	.0521
25,000	.0498
30,000	.0469

<sup>a</sup>At 6,360 miles, the cost of operating an IMP standard sedan is 10 cents a mile.

In fiscal year 1969, USMs and deputy USMs in the 86 judicial districts traveled an average of 22,200 miles each and were reimbursed about \$2,220 for the year. The cost of operating an IMP car for this distance as shown on the GSA tabulation was about 5.19 cents per mile or \$1,150--about half of the amount paid to the average USM or deputy USM. A USM office and an IMP were located in the same city in more than 50 of the 86 districts included in our review. Substantial savings to the Government could have been realized by the use of IMP cars in lieu of POAs to the extent that IMP cars would have been available for assignment to USMs and deputy USMs in these districts.

As a result of our report to the Congress entitled "Potential Reductions in Cost of Automotive Travel by Federal Employees Where Use of Government-Owned Vehicles is Feasible" (B-158712 dated August 23, 1966), some Federal agencies established reimbursement schedules for use of POAs which gave consideration to the relative cost of operating an IMP car. For example, the following reimbursement schedules were in effect during fiscal year 1969, for the Department of Agriculture (Agriculture), the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

IRS and HUD	First 500 miles a month	10 cents
	From 501 to 1,000 miles a month	7 cents
	Over 1,000 miles a month	6 cents

(A rate schedule to limit mileage reimbursement for annual travel in excess of 18,000 miles is also in effect in IRS.)

Agriculture	First 600 miles a month	9 cents
	Over 600 miles a month	7 cents

If these reimbursement rates had been paid by the Department for travel performed by USMs and deputy USMs during fiscal year 1969, we estimate that savings from about \$369,000 to \$424,000 could have been realized. Our estimate is based on average mileage traveled by USMs and deputy USMs assigned to 86 of the 93 judicial districts.

The above mileage reimbursement rate schedules are being presented as illustrations of actions other Government agencies have taken to reduce the cost of FOA travel by employees and should not necessarily be viewed as the optimum or the only reimbursement schedules to be considered by the Department.

#### Conclusion

The Department can substantially reduce its costs of travel by USMs and deputy USMs by encouraging the use of IMP cars by high-mileage drivers in those districts where IMPs are located in the same city as the USMs' offices. In those instances where the use of IMP cars are not practical, or the employees prefer to drive a FOA, the Department should consider establishing mileage reimbursement rates which give consideration to the cost of operating IMP cars.

#### Recommendations

We recommend that a mileage reimbursement rate be established which decreases as the number of miles traveled increases to compensate USMs and deputy USMs when use of FOAs is necessary for official business. We recommend also that the Department consider revising its travel policy to give USMs and deputy USMs the option of utilizing IMP cars, where available, for official business.

#### OVERPAYMENTS OF PER DIEM TO DEPUTY MARSHALS ON TEMPORARY DUTY WHERE LODGING WAS FURNISHED

During the 11 month period from September 1967 through August 1968, certain deputy USMs on a temporary assignment were reimbursed \$16 a day for per diem, although lodging was furnished by the Government.

Section 6.7 of the Standardized Government Travel Regulations (SCTR) provides in part that an appropriate deduction is to be made from the authorized per diem rate when lodging is furnished without charge by the Government at a temporary duty station. The Department's travel regulations in effect at the time of our review stated that where lodging is furnished at no cost, the authorized per diem rate should be reduced by 45 percent. In such instances, the daily rate of \$16 should have been reduced by \$7.20. We estimate that for the above 11 month period, the deputy marshals concerned were overpaid about \$32,150 because the per diem rate had not been reduced.

11/13/37

We discussed this matter with officials of the United States Marshals Service who agreed that the per diem rate paid was not in accordance with the SGTR or the Department's travel regulations. They informed us that steps have been taken to reduce the per diem rate paid to deputy USMs on temporary duty assignments when meals and/or lodging are furnished by the Government.

The Department should recover the overpayments of per diem where appropriate reduction in the per diem rate had not been made. Inasmuch as reductions are also administratively required when meals are furnished, we believe reviews should be made by the Department to ascertain whether per diem rates on other temporary duty assignments were properly computed and paid when meals and/or lodging were furnished to deputy USMs by the Government.

Recommendations

We recommend that reviews be made of deputy USMs temporary duty assignments to determine whether overpayments of per diem have been or are being made where meals and/or lodging are or have been provided by the Government without appropriate reductions in the per diem rates, and that action be taken to recover overpayments.

- - - -

We will be pleased to discuss the matters presented in this report with you or your representatives. We wish to acknowledge the courtesies and cooperation extended to our representatives during the review.

Copies of this report are being furnished to the Assistant Attorney General for Administration and to the Director, United States Marshals Service.

We would appreciate receiving your comments concerning the action taken or planned on the matters discussed in this report.

Sincerely yours,

MAX A. NEUWIRTH

Max A. Neuwirth  
Associate Director

The Honorable  
The Attorney General