

7.1 Moving and Relocation Policy

Policy Statement

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to locating new employees, upon appointment, and relocating employees, upon transfer, in a manner that is most efficient with the most reasonable cost for the employing or appointing department and having minimum detrimental effect on the employee.

Definitions

APPOINTEE

A person appointed to a civil service position on a continuing full-time basis and others deemed by the Public Service Commission to be appointees for the purpose of this policy.

DAY

A calendar day.

DEPARTMENT

Department, office or public service entity established by the Government of Nova Scotia, as identified under Category I in Appendix I-A of the Management Manuals Policy.

DEPARTMENT HEAD

The member of Executive Council presiding over a department.

DEPENDENTS

The spouse of an appointee or an employee; an appointee's or employee's child who has not passed his or her 19th birthday, or in respect of whom the appointee or employee is entitled to an exemption under the *Income Tax Act*; or any relative of an appointee or employee who is a member of the appointee's or employee's household and who is dependent on him or her for support by reason of incapacity or ill health, provided the appointee or employee certifies that he or she is entitled to an exemption under the *Income Tax Act* with respect to that relative or member of the household.

DEPUTY HEAD

The deputy of the member of the Executive Council presiding over a department and all others whom Governor in Council from time to time designates as having that status of deputy head.

HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS

The furniture, household equipment, and personal effects of an employee or appointee and his or her dependents used in the regular dwelling, excluding livestock, lumber, heavy equipment, or similar items and any items used in connection with a secondary source of family income.

PLACE OF DUTY

The location of the official station or headquarters at or from which an employee or appointee ordinarily performs his or her duties.

REMOVAL EXPENSE

The cost incurred by an employee or appointee, who has been appointed or transferred, to effect the appointment or transfer, subject to prescribed limitations.

SPOUSE

A person who is married to another person and includes persons who, not being married to another, lives together with another person as the other person's spouse and has done so for at least one year.

TRANSFER

The transfer of civil service employees, and others deemed by the Public Service Commission to be transferring employees, that are initiated by the employing department.

Where an employee is required to change his or her residence by reason that:

- a) the employee is granted a transfer at his or her request, or
- b) the employee is successful through competitive examination for appointment to a vacant position,

the employee is entitled to claim only those expenses and allowances which are authorized by the deputy head.

Application

This policy applies to all non-bargaining unit civil service employees and to new appointees. Bargaining unit employees are covered by the Memorandum of Agreement on Removal Expense under the Civil Service Master Agreement between the Public Service Commission and the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union.

Policy Directives

DIRECTIVES APPLICABLE TO BOTH TRANSFERS AND APPOINTMENTS

Self Move

A transferring employee or an appointee may move his or her household effects in a manner that is efficient, safe and economical, but in no case shall the cost exceed the amount that would be charged by a licensed, certified carrier.

Moving Company

All employee moves using a moving company regardless of dollar value must be coordinated through the Procurement Services Division of Economic and Rural Development (902 424-3333). For a list of Procurement Officers and Senior Consultants, please visit <<https://www.gov.ns.ca/tenders/>>. Procurement Services staff will work directly with the employee to obtain a minimum of three quotes from a local (Nova Scotia) moving company which has a “Certificate of Recognition” (COR) recognized by the Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia. A Certificate of Recognition will ensure the moving company has successfully developed effective health and safety programs that demonstrates an organization’s commitment to a safe work environment on or near the work site. Should the local moving company not have an affiliate in the employee’s current place of residence, other moving companies may be considered.

In all cases, unless otherwise authorized by the Deputy Head, the contract will be awarded to the carrier meeting the qualifications and providing the best value to government.

Method of Travel

The employee/appointee and his or her dependents may travel by automobile, and charge the allowable kilometrage rate, as set out in the Kilometrage Rates, Monthly Allowances and Transportation Allowances Regulations under the *Civil Service Act*, or by bus, train or aircraft, in accordance with provisions set out in the Government of Nova Scotia Travel Policy.

Other Expenses

Expenses not outlined in this policy may be reimbursed, if deemed necessary under the circumstances, by the deputy head of the employing/appointing department. Such expenses must be first approved by the Public Service Commissioner and receive final approval by the Minister of the employing/appointing department.

Return Service Commitment

A transferring employee or an appointee who receives reimbursement for relocation expenses for any transfer or appointment but does not remain in the continuous employ of the Government of Nova Scotia for a two-year period is responsible for repaying to the government prior to his or her departure a pro-rated proportion of the reimbursement received (Calculation: 104 weeks of service less the number of completed weeks of service divided by 104 weeks of service and multiplied by the total amount of travel and removal reimbursement). By accepting reimbursement, the employee or appointee is deemed to have accepted this condition. This requirement shall not apply, subject to the approval of the deputy head of the employing or appointing department, to any employee or appointee whose employment is terminated through no fault of the employee.

MOVING EXPENSES ON EMPLOYEE TRANSFER

Notification of Employee

For any transfer, the terms and conditions of reimbursement are to be discussed with the employee at the time of notification of transfer. No minister, deputy head, or departmental official shall make any commitment to any employee that contravenes the terms set out in this section.

Certification of Claims

The deputy head of the employing department shall certify all claims made under this policy as being (1) in accordance with this policy, and (2) just and reasonable, before any payment is made.

Transfer of Spouses

If an employee has a spouse who is also an employee and both parties are transferred to the same place, the terms and conditions of this policy apply as to an employee and spouse, not as two separate employees.

Minimum Distance Qualification

There is a minimum distance qualification that governs the eligibility of an employee for reimbursement of removal expenses. As a general rule, expenses will not be paid where the old and new places of duty are within the same metropolitan area or within reasonable commuting distance of each other.

Specifically, moving expenses will not be paid unless:

- the new place of duty is outside a radius of 32 kilometres (20 miles) from the old place of duty
- the new residence is outside a radius of 32 kilometres (20 miles) from the old residence.

Items Included in Removal Expenses

Locating New Accommodation

The employing department will pay traveling expenses incurred by the employee and his or her spouse, including living expenses for not more than 10 days for the purpose of locating new housing accommodations. Further extensions require the prior approval of Treasury Board.

Temporary Living Expenses

The employing department will pay temporary living expenses of a single employee without dependents to a maximum of 14 days, and for an employee and his or her dependents to a maximum of 30 days, extended if necessary for a further 14 days at the discretion of the department head. Further extensions require prior approval of Treasury Board.

Realty Agency Costs

The employing department will pay realty agency costs actually incurred by the employee in selling his or her old residence, including multiple listing charges, but not exceeding the prevailing rates in the area; as well as necessary legal fees and mortgage interest penalty costs, provided that the residence is listed for sale within 60 days of the relocation notification, or if not listed within 60 days of the relocation notification, the deputy head is satisfied that the expenses relate to the employee's transfer.

Rental Accommodation Costs

The employing department will pay the actual expenses of fulfilling the employee's legal liability under a lease for accommodation at the place from which he or she was relocated.

Purchase of a Home

The employing department will pay the actual legal fees and disbursements, including recording fees, deed transfer taxes and survey fees, paid by the employee pre-owning his or her own home, in the purchase of a new home due to relocation.

Moving and Storing Household Effects

The employing department will pay the cost of fees related to packing, unpacking, cartage, and freight of the employee's household effects and necessary storage of these effects to a maximum of 30 days, including insurance thereon while in storage and/or in transit.

Storage charges on household effects in excess of 30 days shall not be considered as removal expenses, unless the deputy head of the employing department certifies that the excess period of storage is necessary due to circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

Miscellaneous Expenses

The employing department will allow up to \$2,000 to cover documented allowable miscellaneous expenses, such as:

- disconnecting telephones, cable TV, computer equipment, stoves, and other household equipment
- connecting such equipment as was in use by the employee prior to his or her relocation
- cleaning drapes and rugs, or as an allowance towards the purchase of drapes and rugs similar to those in use by the employer prior to his or her relocation, at the discretion of the deputy head
- any other expenses authorized in this section or as approved by the Treasury Board.

Moving Expenses for a Mobile Home

The employing department shall pay removal expenses for a mobile home, including disconnecting and reconnecting services, provided that the total cost of such a move does not exceed the cost of comparable removal expenses involving conventional housing.

Cash Advance or Equivalent

Upon authorization of the deputy head of the department in which an employee is employed,

- an advance of the estimated cost of the removal expenses may be made to the employee, or
- the employing department may be requested to pay invoices for transportation, cartage and other eligible expenses; payments so made will be considered as an advance to the employee pending the approval of his or her account for removal expenses.

When an advance is made by either of the above methods, the employee shall account for it within 30 days after his or her date of arrival at the new place of duty. The employee shall refund any unexpended balance forthwith, failing which, the employing department shall recover the amount due from his or her salary.

If the employee incurs expenses related to his or her transfer or relocation before receiving written notification or confirmation of transfer or relocation, the employing department may reimburse the employee for such expenses where the employing department is satisfied the expenses were incurred in anticipation of the transfer or relocation.

Financial Hardship

Where, in the opinion of the department head, an employee suffers financial hardship by reason of transfer, additional assistance may be approved in compensation for such hardship by Treasury Board, upon recommendation of the department head.

Duplicate Housing Costs

An employee may be reimbursed for part or all of duplicate housing costs, consisting of the interest portion of a mortgage, property insurance, and utility costs paid in respect of the employee's former residence for a period for which the employee is also occupying and paying mortgage or other interest for a new residence.

Such reimbursement shall be limited to the lesser of the actual costs for a period not to exceed three months or \$2,000.

Bridging Loan

An employee may be reimbursed for all or part of interest payments for a bridging loan to enable the employee to meet the down payment of a new residence pending the sale of his or her former residence. Such interest charges may be claimed for a period not to exceed three months or \$5,000, whichever is less. The maximum principal amount of the bridging loan that can be claimed shall not exceed a figure equivalent to 25 per cent of the purchase price of the new residence.

MOVING EXPENSES ON APPOINTMENT

Reimbursement

The appointing department may provide reimbursement for reasonable travel and relocation expenses to an appointee when in the opinion of the deputy head of the appointing department it is deemed necessary and/or advisable to effect the recruitment of the individual. Appointees are eligible for an accountable advance to assist in defrayal of expenses.

Minimum Distance Qualification

Appointees do not qualify for assistance towards relocation expenses where the appointee is a resident of the Province of Nova Scotia and lives within 160 kilometres of the place of duty.

Variation in Allowable Expenses

Increased expenses associated with travel and relocation will be permitted only following approval in writing from the deputy head of the appointing department.

Approval by Minister

Appointees are to be advised of entitlement towards travel and removal expenses only following approval by the minister of the appointing department. Where appointees incur expenses related to relocation before receiving written confirmation from the minister of the appointing department, the appointing department shall not be liable for such expenses.

Movement of Persons

Appointees eligible for removal assistance under this policy must use the most efficient and economical means of travel, accommodation, and removal of household effects. All claims must also be consistent with the provisions of the Nova Scotia Government Travel Policy.

Expenses in Advance of Removal

The appointing department will pay for the expenses of the appointee and spouse, including living expenses for not more than 5 days, for the purpose of locating new housing accommodations.

Removal of Appointee and Dependents

The appointing department will provide coverage for a one-way trip for the appointee and his or her dependents from the appointee's present residence to the location of the appointment with the government or the appointee's future residence. The appointing department will pay temporary living expenses for an appointee and his or her dependents to a maximum of 4 days.

Moving and Storing Household Effects

The appointing department will pay the cost of fees related to packing, unpacking, cartage, and freight of the employee's household effects and necessary storage of these effects to a maximum of 30 days, including insurance thereon while in storage and/or in transit.

The appointee will be responsible for;

- all costs for the removal of items not considered to be household effects
- all removal costs not specifically designated as appointing department responsibility above, including any charges for connecting and disconnecting of telephones, cable TV, computer equipment, stoves and other household equipment.

Realty Agency Costs

The appointing department will reimburse the appointee for real estate sales commission and legal fees incurred in the disposal of the appointee's home. The appointee will be responsible for all legal and realty costs associated with the acquisition of new accommodations.

Accountability

APPOINTEES

Appointees are responsible for making claims for moving expenses on appointment in accordance with the terms of this policy.

EMPLOYEES

Employees are responsible for making claims for moving expenses on transfer in accordance with terms of this policy.

MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS

Managers/supervisors are responsible for ensuring that no commitment is made to any employee/appointee that contravenes the terms set out in this policy.

DEPUTY HEAD

Deputy heads are responsible for ensuring compliance with the terms of this policy and for approving all claims made under this policy.

Monitoring

The Public Service Commission is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and consistent application of this policy. The Public Service Commission, jointly with the Internal Audit and Risk Management Centre, may periodically conduct audits of departmental practices and request access to data maintained by departments with respect to this policy.

References

- Nova Scotia *Civil Service Act* and regulations
 - Kilometrage Rates, Monthly Allowances and Transportation Allowances Regulations
- NSGEU Civil Service Master Agreement
- Management Manuals Policy
- Travel Policy

Enquiries

General Enquiries, Public Service Commission (902) 424-7660

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