

## 7.2 Moving and Relocation Policy

### Policy Statement

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to locating appointees, upon appointment, and relocating employees, upon transfer, in the most efficient manner that is at the most reasonable cost for the government and with the minimum detrimental effect on the appointee or 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 directive.

#### **DAY**

A calendar day.

#### **DEPENDENTS**

The father, mother, brother, or sister of an employee or appointee who is a member of the employee's or appointee's household and who is dependent upon him/her for support by reason of incapacity or ill health, provided the employee or appointee certifies that he/she is entitled to an exemption for this relative under the *Income Tax Act*; or a child who is under the age of majority or, although over the age of majority, is unable, by reason of illness, disability or other cause, to withdraw from the charge of the parents or provide himself/herself with reasonable needs and includes a child 24 years of age or younger who is attending a post-secondary educational institution.

#### **DEPUTY HEAD**

The Deputy Minister or designate of a department, or the senior administrative officer of an agency not reporting through a Deputy Minister.

#### **HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS**

The furniture, household equipment, and personal effects of an employee or appointee and his/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.

**IMMEDIATE FAMILY**

The spouse and dependents of an employee or appointee.

**PLACE OF DUTY**

The location of the official station or headquarters at or from which an employee or appointee ordinarily performs his/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 married to another person and includes persons who, not being married to each other, live together as spouses and have done so for at least one year.

**TRANSFER**

The movement of an employee from one place of duty to another place of duty. Transfers fall into two general categories:

- An employer-requested transfer is initiated by the employer but does not include employment competitions (transfers of this kind are subject to the terms and conditions set out in this section).
- An employee may also be required by the Deputy Minister to change residence by reason that he/she has requested and been granted a transfer or is successful through competitive examination for appointment to a vacant position. Transfers of this kind entitle the employee to claim only those expenses and allowances that are authorized by the Deputy Minister.

**Application**

This policy applies to all non-bargaining unit employees and to new appointees. Bargaining unit employees are covered by the Memorandum of Agreement concerning removal expenses between the Public Service Commission and the Nova Scotia Government Employees Union.

## Policy Directives

### 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.

#### Arranging Movement of Household Effects

The Procurement Branch, Department of Transportation and Public Works, has established a pre-discounted tariff for government employee household moves. The tariff is applicable to all moves either within the Province or for moves to Nova Scotia from other provinces. The Procurement Branch, Purchasing Agency, has also established a registry of movers who have been pre-qualified to carry out these moves.

### **Method of Travel**

The employee and his/her immediate family may travel by automobile, and charge the allowable mileage rate for employees, or by bus, train, or aircraft, using the rules applicable in the Government of Nova Scotia Travel Policy.

### **Items Included in Removal Expenses**

#### **Locating New Accommodation**

The employer will pay travelling expenses incurred by the employee and his/her immediate family, including living expenses for not more than 10 days for the purpose of locating new housing accommodations. Further extensions require the prior approval of the deputy head of the employing department.

#### **Temporary Living Expenses**

The employer will pay temporary living expenses of a single employee without immediate family to a maximum of 14 days and for an employee and his/her immediate family to a maximum of 30 days, extended if necessary to a further 14 days at the discretion of the deputy head of the employing department.

#### **Realty Agency Costs**

The employer will pay the actual cost incurred in selling the employee's residence at the place from which the employee is transferred, including multiple listing charges, but not exceeding prevailing rates in that area. Necessary legal fees and mortgage interest penalty costs will also be covered by the employer, provided the residence is listed for sale within 60 days of the transfer notification.

#### **Rental Accommodation Costs**

The employer will pay the actual expenses incurred for fulfilment of the employee's legal liability under a lease for accommodation at the place from which he/she was transferred.

#### **Purchase of a Home**

The employer will pay the actual legal fees, deed transfer fees, deed transfer taxes, and survey fees paid by the employee who owns his/her own home in the purchase of a new home due to transfer.

### **Moving and Storing Household Effects**

The employer 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 Minister 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 employer will allow up to \$1,000.00 to cover documented allowable miscellaneous expenses, such as:

- disconnecting telephones, stoves, and other household equipment
- connecting such equipment as was in use by the employee prior to his/her transfer (not including television or radio aerials)
- 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/her relocation, at the discretion of the Deputy Minister
- any other expenses authorized in this section or as approved by the Deputy Minister of the employing department.

### **Moving Expenses for a Mobile Home**

Moving expenses for a mobile home, including disconnecting and reconnecting services, may be paid provided that the total cost of such a move does not exceed comparable removal expenses involving conventional housing.

### **Cash Advance or Equivalent**

The Deputy Head of the department in which the transferred employee works may:

- authorize issuance of a cash advance of the estimated cost of the removal expenses
- on receipt of invoices for transportation, cartage, and other eligible expenses, request that the Minister of Finance pay the invoices. Such payments are considered an advance to the employee pending approval of his/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 the date of arrival at the place of duty to which he/she has been transferred. Any unexpended balance must be refunded forthwith, failing which the amount due will be recovered from the employee's salary.

If the employee incurs expenses related to his/her transfer before receiving written confirmation of transfer, the employer shall not be liable for such expenses.

### **Financial Hardship**

Where, in the opinion of the deputy head, an employee suffers financial hardship by reason of transfer, additional assistance may be granted in compensation for such hardship by the deputy head of the employing department.

#### **Duplicate Housing Costs**

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

The reimbursement will be limited to the lesser of the actual costs for a period not to exceed three months or \$1,000.00.

#### **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/her former residence. Reimbursement may be claimed for the lesser of interest charges for a maximum of three months or \$2,500.00. 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.

#### **Other Expenses**

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

### **Return Service Commitment**

An employee who receives reimbursement for relocation expenses for any transfer 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/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 is deemed to have accepted this condition. This requirement shall not, subject to the approval of the Deputy Head of the employing department, apply to any employee whose employment is terminated through no fault of the employee.

## **MOVING EXPENSES ON APPOINTMENT**

### **Reimbursement**

The province 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. Expenses not outlined in this policy may be reimbursed if deemed necessary by the deputy head of the appointing department under the circumstances and such expenses are first approved by the Public Service Commissioner and receive final approval by the Minister of the appointing department.

### **Distance**

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**

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 advisement from the Minister of the appointing department, the province shall not be liable for such expenses.

### **Movement of Persons**

Appointees eligible for removal assistance under this directive must use the most efficient and economical means of travel, accommodation, and removal of household effects, and all claims must be in conformity with the Nova Scotia Government Travel Policy.

#### **Expenses in Advance of Removal**

The employer will pay for the expenses of the appointee and spouse associated with securing accommodation in advance of removal for a term not to exceed five days.

#### **Removal of Appointee and Dependents**

The employer will provide coverage for a one-way trip for the appointee and his/her immediate family from the appointee's present residence to the location of the appointment with the government or the appointee's future residence for a duration not to exceed four days.

### **Arranging Movement of Household Effects**

The Department of Transportation and Public Works Procurement Branch has established a pre-discounted tariff for government employee household moves. The tariff is applicable to all moves either within the province or for moves to Nova Scotia from other provinces. The Procurement Branch, Purchasing Agency, has also established a registry of movers who have been pre-qualified to carry out these moves.

### **Claimable Expenses**

The government is responsible for household effects removal cost as follows:

- loading from the former residence
- cartage and transportation
- delivery to and unloading at the new residence
- cost of mattress and wardrobe cartons and china barrels packed by the carrier
- crating, packing, and unpacking of china, glass, and breakable items, which shall be done by the mover provided that the appointee makes articles to be packed and moved readily available for the movers
- comprehensive transit protection at the standard tariff rate for a minimum declared value—excess coverage is the responsibility of the appointee
- storage of household effects not to exceed 30 days.



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 government responsibility above, including any charges for connecting and disconnecting of appliances.

#### **Realty Agency Costs**

The government 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.

#### **Method of Travel**

The appointee and his/her immediate family may travel by automobile, and charge the allowable mileage rate for employees, or by bus, train, or aircraft, using the rules applicable in the Nova Scotia Government Travel Policy.

#### **Return Service Commitment**

An appointee who receives reimbursement for relocation expenses on 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/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 appointee is deemed to have accepted this condition. This requirement shall not apply to any appointee whose employment is terminated through no fault of the appointee.

## **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**

The deputy head of the employing department is responsible for approving all claims made under this policy.

**Monitoring**

Departments are responsible for complying with the terms of this policy. The Public Service Commission may periodically conduct audits of departmental practices to ascertain compliance by departments with this policy.

**References**

Nova Scotia *Civil Service Act* and regulations

Collective agreements between the Public Service Commission and NSGEU

Government of Nova Scotia Travel Policy

**Enquiries**

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

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