

POV Shipment Damage Claims Tips

by CPT Dan O'Connor

One of the most stressful and frustrating aspects of a permanent change of duty station move comes from discovering that your POV was damaged during Government shipment. While we at the Claims Office cannot prevent such damage from occurring, we can help ensure that you are properly compensated if it does, as long as you promptly report the damage. Here's some advice on how to avoid having to personally foot the bill for repair costs.



Army guidelines state that claimants are required to note all new damage on DD Form 788 (Private Vehicle Shipping Document for Automobile), or the Vehicle Inspection and Shipping Form (VISF) provided by the carrier, when they pick up their vehicles at the Vehicle Processing Center (VPC). That means that it's on **you** to notice the damage; do not expect the carrier to tell you that he damaged your vehicle!

Obvious external damage (e.g., the graphic above) that you do not list as an exception on the 788 or VISF at time of pick-up may not be payable, so make sure to inspect your POV **very carefully** at pick-up and report any damage you notice on the form. If you could not reasonably be expected to notice the damage at the VPC (e.g., undercarriage damage or scratches that were not visible before you washed your vehicle), **immediately** go back to the VPC to report the damage to VPC personnel. Most denials of POV shipment claims result from the claimant's failure to promptly wash and inspect the vehicle and return to the VPC within a few hours of pick-up to report the newly-discovered damage. If you wait until the following day to report such damage, you will be out of luck.

Don't forget to:

- Take photos of your vehicle before you ship it so that it is easier to prove that the damage is new.
- Pick up your POV in the morning or early afternoon. If you are not able to bring your POV back to the VPC before it closes, it will be more difficult, if not impossible, to prove that the damages did not occur after you left the VPC.
- Thoroughly inspect the inside and outside of your vehicle at the joint pick-up inspection.
- Turn on and test all operating systems, such as wipers, air conditioners, heaters, radios, electric windows, and electric seats, during this inspection. Report anything that is not in good working order.
- Wash your vehicle immediately after you pick it up so that you notice any external damage that was not visible at time of pick-up.
- Be alert for any operating problems during the first few miles of operation and return to the VPC **immediately** if you notice anything wrong with your vehicle.

And, above all:

- **Contact your local Claims Office if you have any problems or questions!**

***The Kaiserslautern Claims Office is located in Room 112 of Building 3210 on Kleber Kaserne.
You can reach us by phone by dialing DSN 483-8855/8856 or Civilian 0631-411-8855/8856.***

Editor's Note: CPT O'Connor serves as Claims Judge Advocate for the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center.