

§ 1261.406

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administrative proceedings required by contract or other applicable laws and implementing regulations (4 CFR 101.7).

§ 1261.406 Aggressive collection action; documentation.

(a) NASA shall take aggressive action, on a timely basis with effective followup, to collect all claims of the United States for money or property arising out of NASA activities, and to cooperate with the other Federal agencies in debt collection activities.

(b) All administrative collection action shall be documented and the bases for compromise, or for termination or suspension of collection action, should be set out in detail. Such documentation, including the Claims Collection Litigation Report under §1261.417(e), should be retained in the appropriate claims file.

§ 1261.407 Demand for payment; limitation periods.

(a) Appropriate written demands shall be made promptly upon a debtor of the United States in terms which inform the debtor of the consequences of failure to cooperate. A total of three progressively stronger written demands at not more than 30-day intervals will normally be made unless a response to the first or second demand indicates that a further demand would be futile and the debtor's response does not require rebuttal. In determining the timing of demand letters, NASA will give due regard to the need to act promptly so that, as a general rule, if necessary to refer the debt to the Department of Justice for litigation, such referral can be made within one year of the agency's final determination of the fact and the amount of the debt. When necessary to protect the Government's interests (for example, to prevent the statute of limitations, 28 U.S.C. 2415, from expiring), written demand may be preceded by other appropriate actions, including immediate referral for litigation.

(b) The initial demand letter should inform the debtor of:

(1) The basis for the indebtedness and whatever rights the debtor may have to seek review within the agency;

(2) The applicable standards for assessing interest, penalties, and administrative costs (§1261.412); and

(3) The date by which payment is to be made, which normally should be not more than 30 days from the date that the initial demand letter was mailed or hand delivered. The responsible official should exercise care to ensure that demand letters are mailed or hand delivered on the same day that they are actually dated. Apart from these requirements, there is no prescribed format for demand letters. However, as appropriate to the circumstances, the responsible official may consider including, either in the initial demand letter or in subsequent letters, such items the NASA's willingness to discuss alternative methods of payment, or intentions with respect to referral of the debt to the Department of Justice for litigation.

(c) NASA should respond promptly to communications from the debtor, within 30 days whenever feasible, and should advise debtors who dispute the debt to furnish available evidence to support their contentions.

(d) If either prior to the initiation of, any time during, or after completion of the demand cycle, a determination to pursue offset is made, then the procedures specified in subparts 1261.5 and 1261.6, as applicable, should be followed. The availability of funds for offset and NASA's determination to pursue it release the agency from the necessity of further compliance with paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section. If the agency has not already sent the first demand letter, the agency's written notification of its intent to offset must give the debtor the opportunity to make voluntary payment, a requirement which will be satisfied by compliance with the notice requirements of §1261.502 or §1261.603(a), as applicable.

(e) NASA should undertake personal interviews with its debtors whenever this is feasible, having regard for the amounts involved and the proximity of agency representatives to such debtors; and may attempt to effect compromise of the claim in accordance with §1261.414.

(f) When a debtor is employed by the Federal government or is a member of

the military establishment or the Coast Guard, and collection by offset cannot be accomplished in accordance with subpart 1261.6, the employing agency will be contacted for the purpose of arranging with the debtor for payment of the indebtedness by allotment or otherwise in accordance with section 206 of Executive Order 11222, May 8, 1965, 30 FR 6469, which provides that: "An employee is expected to meet all just financial obligations, especially those—such as Federal, State, or local taxes—which are imposed by law" (4 CFR 102.81).

§ 1261.408 Use of consumer reporting agency.

(a) The term *consumer reporting agency* has the meaning provided in the Federal Claims Collection Act of 1966, as amended (31 U.S.C. 3701(a)(3)):

(1) A consumer reporting agency as that term is defined in section 603(f) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681a(f)); or

(2) A person that, for money or on a cooperative basis, regularly—

(i) Gets information on consumers to give the information to a consumer reporting agency; or

(ii) Serves as a marketing agent under an arrangement allowing a third party to get the information from a consumer reporting agency.

(b) NASA Headquarters Financial Management Division, shall be the focal contact between NASA and consumer reporting agencies. The following procedures shall apply when such agencies are employed by NASA:

(1) After the appropriate notice pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(4) has been published, NASA may disclose, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(12), information about a debtor to a consumer reporting agency. Such information may include:

(i) That a claim has been determined to be valid and is overdue (including violation by debtor of a repayment plan or other claim settlement agreement);

(ii) The name, address, taxpayer identification number, and any other information necessary to establish the identity of the individual responsible for the claim;

(iii) Amount, status, and history of the claim;

(iv) Program or pertinent activity under which the claim arose.

(2) Before disclosing the information specified in paragraph (b)(1) of this section, NASA shall comply with 31 U.S.C. 3711(f) by:

(i) Taking reasonable action to locate the individual if a current address is not available;

(ii) If a current address is available, noticing the individual by certified mail, return receipt requested, that: The designated NASA official has reviewed the claim and determined that it is valid and overdue; within not less than 60 days after sending this notice, NASA intends to disclose to a consumer reporting agency the specific information to be disclosed under paragraph (b)(1) of this section; the individual may request a complete explanation of the claim, dispute the information in the records of NASA about the claim, and file for an administrative review or repeal of the claim or for reconsideration of the initial decision on the claim.

(3) If an administrative review or reconsideration is requested, the responsible official or designee shall refer the request to the appropriate NASA legal counsel for an impartial review and determination by counsel or designee based on the entire written record. If the reviewer cannot resolve the question of indebtedness based upon the available documentary evidence, verified written statements by the debtor or the responsible official may be requested on any pertinent matter not addressed by the available record.

(c) If the information is to be submitted to a consumer reporting agency, the responsible official shall obtain a verified statement from such agency which gives satisfactory assurances that the particular agency is complying with all laws of the United States related to providing consumer credit information; and thereafter ensure that the consumer reporting agency is promptly informed of any substantial change in the condition or amount of the claim, or, on request of such agency, promptly verify or correct information about the claim.

§ 1261.409 Contracting for collection services.

(a) When NASA determines that there is a need to contract for collection services, the following conditions must attach:

(1) The authority to resolve disputes, compromise claims, suspend or terminate collection action, and refer the matter for litigation must be retained by NASA.

(2) The contractor shall be subject to the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, to the extent specified in 5 U.S.C. 552a(m), and to applicable Federal and State laws and regulations pertaining to debt collection practices—for example, the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (15 U.S.C. 1692), and 26 U.S.C. 6103(p)(4) and applicable regulations of the Internal Revenue Service;

(3) The contractor must be required to account strictly for all amounts collected; and

(4) The contractor must agree to provide any data contained in its files relating to collection actions and related reports, current address of debtor, and reasonably current credit information upon returning an account to NASA for subsequent referral to the Department of Justice for litigation.

(b) Funding of collection service contracts:

(1) NASA may fund a collection service contract on a fixed-fee basis—that is, payment of a fixed fee determined without regard to the amount actually collected under the contract. However, such contract may be entered into only if and to the extent provided in the appropriation act or other legislation, except that this requirement does not apply to the use of a revolving fund authorized by statute. Accordingly, payment of the fixed-fee must be charged to available agency appropriations. See 4 CFR 102.6(b)(1) and (3).

(2) NASA may also fund a collection service contract on a contingent-fee basis—that is, by including a provision in the contract permitting the contractor to deduct its fee from amounts collected under the contract. The fee should be based on a percentage of the amount collected, consistent with prevailing commercial practice. See 4 CFR 102.6(b)(2).

(3) Except as authorized under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, or unless otherwise specifically provided by law, NASA must deposit all amounts recovered under collection service contracts (or by NASA employees on behalf of the agency) in the Treasury Department as miscellaneous receipts pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3302. See 4 CFR 102.6(b)(4).

§ 1261.410 Suspension or revocation of license or eligibility; liquidation of collateral.

(a) In seeking the collection of statutory penalties, forfeitures, or debts provided for as an enforcement aid or for compelling compliance, NASA will give serious consideration to the suspension or revocation of licenses or other privileges for any inexcusable, prolonged, or repeated failure of a debtor to pay such a claim. In the case of a contractor under 48 CFR chapter 18, NASA will comply with the debarment, suspension, and ineligibility requirements of the NASA Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (NASA/FAR Supplement) at 48 CFR 1809.4. Likewise, in making, guaranteeing, insuring, acquiring, or participating in loans, NASA will give serious consideration to suspending or disqualifying any lender, contractor, broker, borrower, or other debtor from doing further business with it or engaging in programs sponsored by it if such a debtor fails to pay its debts to the Government within a reasonable time. The failure of any surety to honor its obligations in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 9305 must be reported to the Treasury Department at once. Notification that a surety's certificate of authority to do business with the Federal Government has been revoked or forfeited by the Treasury Department will be forwarded by that Department to all interested agencies.

(b) If NASA is holding security or collateral which may be liquidated and the proceeds applied on debts due it through the exercise of a power of sale in the security instrument or a non-judicial foreclosure, it should do so by such procedures if the debtor fails to pay the debt within a reasonable time