

(iii) The hearing official's analysis (which address the employee's/agency's grounds, the amount and validity of the alleged debt, and, where applicable, the repayment schedule); and

(iv) The hearing official's findings and conclusions.

(7) The hearing official will notify the employee, the NASA Comptroller or designee, and the designated agency counsel of the decision.

(8) The decision of the hearing official shall constitute the Final Administrative Decision of the agency.

(d) Petition after time expiration. No petition for a hearing is to be granted if made after the 15-day period prescribed in paragraph (c)(1) of this section, unless the employee can show to the satisfaction of the agency official indicated on the notice that the delay was caused by circumstances beyond his or her control (for example, proven incapacity, illness, or hospitalization), or that the agency did not give notice of the time limit and the employee was otherwise unaware of such limit.

(e) *Limitation on amount and duration of deductions.* Ordinarily, debts must be collected in one lump-sum payment. However, if the employee is financially unable to pay in one lump sum or if the amount of the debt exceeds 15 percent of disposable pay for an officially established pay interval, collection must be made in installments. The size of installment deductions must bear a reasonable relationship to the size of the debt and the employee's ability to pay (see 14 CFR 1261.411), but the amount deducted for any period must not exceed 15 percent of the disposable pay from which the deduction is made (unless the employee has agreed in writing to the deduction of a greater amount). Deduction must commence with the next full pay interval (ordinarily, the next biweekly pay period). Such installment deductions must be made over a period not greater than the anticipated period of active duty or employment, as the case may be, except as provided in paragraph (f) of this section.

(f) *Determining ability to pay.* An offset may produce an extreme financial hardship for an employee if it prevents the employee from meeting costs necessarily incurred for essential subsistence

expenses for food, reasonable housing, clothing, transportation, and medical care. In determining whether an offset would prevent the employee from meeting the essential subsistence expenses, the employee may be required to show income from all sources (including spouse and dependents, if applicable), list all known assets, explain exceptional expenses, and produce any other relevant factors.

(g) *Liquidation from final check; other recovery.* If the employee retires or resigns from Federal service, or if his or her employment or period of active duty ends before collection of the debt is completed, the balance may be deducted from the final salary payment and any remaining balance from the lump-sum leave, if applicable. If the debt is not fully paid by offset from any final payment due the former employee as of the date of separation, offset may be made from later payments of any kind due the former employee from the United States (as provided in 14 CFR part 1261 subpart 1261.5, including offset from the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund under 14 CFR 1261.507).

(h) *Interest, penalties, and administrative costs.* Assessment of interest, penalties, and administrative costs, on debts being collected under this subpart, shall be in accordance with 14 CFR 1261.412 which implements 4 CFR 102.13.

#### **§ 1261.604 Nonwaiver of rights by involuntary setoff.**

The employee's involuntary payment of all or any portion of the debt, being collected under this subpart, must not be construed as a waiver of any rights which the employee may have under an existing written contract applicable to the specific debt or under any other pertinent statutory authority for the collection of claims of the United States or the agency.

#### **§ 1261.605 Refunds.**

(a) NASA will promptly refund to the employee amounts paid or deducted under this subpart when:

(1) A debt is waived or otherwise found not owing the United States (unless expressly prohibited by statute or regulation); or