

completion of a period of service greater than 180 days, or if submitting such application within such period is impossible or unreasonable through no fault of the person, the next first full calendar day when submission of such application becomes possible.

(d) *Waiver of notice requirements.* A person who has not given notice, or who fails to report or apply for employment or re-employment within the appropriate period specified in paragraph (c) of this section shall not automatically forfeit such person's entitlement to the rights and benefits referred to in § 349.5(e), but shall be subject to the rules of conduct, established by policy, and the general practices of the employer pertaining to explanations and discipline with respect to absence from scheduled work. MARAD will make a determination on the issue of whether notice of service was required in acting on the application for certification.

(e) *Exception to reemployment rights.* An employer is not required to reemploy an individual if the employer satisfies the burden of proving that, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 4312(d)—

(1) The employer's circumstances have so changed as to make such reemployment impossible or unreasonable, or such reemployment, if required, would impose an undue hardship on the employer, as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4303(15); or

(2) The employment which the individual left for employment as a merchant seaman was for a brief, nonrecurrent period and there was not at the time of leaving such employment any reasonable expectation that such employment would continue indefinitely or for a significant period.

(f) *Reemployment benefits.* An individual certified by MARAD to be entitled to reemployment shall also be entitled to other "benefits of employment" (other than wages or salary for work performed), as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4303(2), that would have accrued to that individual by reason of an employment contract or agreement or an employer policy, plan or practice and includes rights and benefits under a pension plan, a health plan, an employee stock ownership plan, insurance coverage and awards, bonuses, severance pay, supplemental unemployment

and benefits, vacations and the opportunity to select work hours or location of employment.

(g) *Reemployment position.* (1) An individual certified by MARAD as being entitled to reemployment shall be promptly reemployed by the former employer, according to the order of priority specified in 38 U.S.C. 4313(a), after submitting an application for reemployment. The three categories of priority, in ascending order, are for a merchant seaman who:

(i) Served for 90 days or less;

(ii) Served for more than 90 days; or

(iii) Has a disability incurred in, or aggravated during, the performance of such merchant service.

(2) For a person with such service related disability, the employer shall make "reasonable efforts", as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4303(10), "to accommodate the disability" to allow that person to be employed in the position that would have been occupied had the employment with the employer been continuous, or in the position in which employed on the date service began as a merchant seaman, and if that person is "not qualified" for either position, in a substantially equivalent position, as specified in 38 U.S.C. 4313 (a)(3) and (a)(4).

§ 349.6 Enforcement.

MARAD shall provide administrative assistance to any individual certified to be entitled to reemployment rights and benefits pursuant to chapter 43 of title 38, United States Code, made applicable by 46 App. U.S.C. 1132(a) and these regulations, who alleges in writing to MARAD the failure, refusal, or imminent failure or refusal of an employer to grant such rights or other benefits. The complaint must be sent to MARAD at the address in § 349.3. Such complaint may be in any format and shall include the name and address of the employer against whom the complaint is filed and a summary of the allegations that form the basis for the complaint. MARAD will review, investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint by taking one or more of the following actions:

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(a) *Consultation with claimant.* MARAD will communicate with the individual filing the complaint, in writing and/or by telephone or other means, to provide assistance in pursuing reemployment rights and benefits with the employer.

(b) *Employer contact.* MARAD may contact the employer and attempt to resolve the complaint to the mutual satisfaction of the complainant and the employer.

(c) *Consultation with Department of Labor.* If attempts by MARAD to resolve the complaint are unsuccessful,

MARAD may seek advice on the matter from the U.S. Department of Labor.

(d) *Referral to Attorney General or Merit Systems Protection Board.* MARAD will notify the complainant of an unsuccessful effort to resolve a complaint. Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 4323 and 4324, if the complainant so requests, MARAD will refer to the Attorney General a complaint relating to a private or State employer, or to the Merit Systems Protection Board, for litigation, a complaint relating to a Federal executive agency employer.