

**§ 171.12 Petitions acted on at Customs Headquarters.**

Upon receipt of a petition for relief filed pursuant to the provisions of section 618 of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1618), section 5321(c) of title 31, United States Code (31 U.S.C. 5321(c)), or section 320 of title 46, United States Code App. (46 U.S.C. App. 320), involving fines, penalties, and forfeitures which are outside of his or her delegated authority, the Fines, Penalties, and Forfeitures Officer will refer that petition to the Chief, Penalties Branch, Office of Regulations and Rulings, Customs Headquarters, who is empowered to remit or mitigate on such terms and conditions as, under law and in view of the circumstances, he or she deems appropriate, unless there has been no delegation to act by the Secretary of the Treasury or his designee. In those cases where there has been no delegation to act by the Secretary, the Chief, Penalties Branch, will forward the matter to the Department with a recommendation.

**§ 171.13 Limitations on consideration of petitions.**

(a) *Cases referred for institution of legal proceedings.* No action will be taken on any petition after the case has been referred to the Department of Justice for institution of legal proceedings. The petition will be forwarded to the Department of Justice.

(b) *Conveyance awarded for official use.* No petition for remission of forfeiture of a seized conveyance which has been forfeited and retained for official use will be considered unless it is filed before final disposition of the property is made. This does not affect petitions for restoration of proceeds of sale filed pursuant to the provisions of section 613 of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1613).

**§ 171.14 Headquarters advice.**

The advice of the Director, International Trade Compliance Division, Office of Regulations and Rulings, Customs Headquarters, may be sought in any case (except as provided in this section), without regard to delegated authority to act on a petition or offer, when a novel or complex issue concerning a ruling, policy, or procedure is

presented concerning a Customs action(s) or potential Customs action(s) relating to seizures and forfeitures, penalties, or mitigating or remitting any claim. This section does not apply to actual duty loss tenders determined by Customs pursuant to §162.74(c) of this Chapter relating to prior disclosure and to actual duty loss demands made under §162.79b of this Chapter. The request for advice may be initiated by the alleged violator or any Customs officer, but must be submitted to the Fines, Penalties, and Forfeitures Officer. The Fines, Penalties, and Forfeitures Officer retains the authority to refuse to forward any request that fails to raise a qualifying issue and to seek legal advice from the appropriate Associate or Assistant Chief Counsel in any case.

**Subpart C—Disposition of Petitions**

SOURCE: T.D. 00-57, 65 FR 53577, Sept. 5, 2000, unless otherwise noted.

**§ 171.21 Written decisions.**

If a petition for relief relates to a violation of sections 592, 593A or 641, Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1592, 19 U.S.C. 1593a, or 19 U.S.C. 1641), the petitioner will be provided with a written statement setting forth the decision on the matter and the findings of fact and conclusions of law upon which the decision is based.

**§ 171.22 Decisions effective for limited time.**

A decision to mitigate a penalty or to remit a forfeiture upon condition that a stated amount is paid will be effective for not more than 60 days from the date of notice to the petitioner of such decision unless the decision itself prescribes a different effective period. If payment of the stated amount or arrangements for such payment are not made, or a supplemental petition is not filed in accordance with regulation, the full penalty or claim for forfeiture will be deemed applicable and will be enforced by promptly referring the matter, after required collection action, if appropriate, to the appropriate Office of the Chief Counsel for preparation for referral to the Department of Justice

unless other action has been directed by the Commissioner of Customs.

**§ 171.23 Decisions not protestable.**

(a) *Mitigation decision not subject to protest.* Any decision to remit a forfeiture or mitigate a penalty is not a protestable decision as defined under the provisions of 19 U.S.C. 1514. Any payment made in compliance with any decision to remit a forfeiture or mitigate a penalty is not a charge or exaction and therefore is not a protestable action as defined under the provisions of 19 U.S.C. 1514.

(b) *Payment of mitigated amount as accord and satisfaction.* Payment of a mitigated amount in compliance with an administrative decision on a petition or supplemental petition for relief will be considered an election of administrative proceedings and full disposition of the case. Payment of a mitigated amount will act as an accord and satisfaction of the Government claim. Payment of a mitigated amount will never serve as a bar to filing a supplemental petition for relief.

**§ 171.24 Remission of forfeitures and payment of fees, costs or interest.**

Any seizure subject to forfeiture may be remitted or mitigated pursuant to the provisions of 19 U.S.C. 1618 or 31 U.S.C. 5321, as applicable. Any person who accepts a remission or mitigation decision will not be considered to have substantially prevailed in a civil forfeiture proceeding for purposes of collection of any fees, costs or interest from the Government.

[T.D. 00-88, 65 FR 78093, Dec. 14, 2000]

**Subpart D—Offers in Compromise**

SOURCE: T.D. 00-57, 65 FR 53577, Sept. 5, 2000, unless otherwise noted.

**§ 171.31 Form of offers.**

Offers in compromise submitted pursuant to the provisions of section 617 of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1617) must expressly state that they are being submitted in accordance with the provisions of that section. The amount of the offer must be deposited with Customs in accordance with the provisions of § 161.5 of this chapter.

**§ 171.32 Acceptance of offers in compromise.**

An offer in compromise will be considered accepted only when the offeror is so notified in writing. As a condition to accepting an offer in compromise, the offeror may be required to enter into any collateral agreement or to post any security which is deemed necessary for the protection of the interest of the United States.

**Subpart E—Restoration of Proceeds of Sale**

SOURCE: T.D. 00-57, 65 FR 53577, Sept. 5, 2000, unless otherwise noted.

**§ 171.41 Application of provisions for petitions for relief.**

The general provisions of subpart A of this part on filing and content of petitions for relief apply to petitions for restoration of proceeds of sale except insofar as modified by this subpart.

**§ 171.42 Time limit for filing petition for restoration.**

A petition for the restoration of proceeds of sale under section 613, Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1613) must be filed within 3 months after the date of the sale.

**§ 171.43 Evidence required.**

In addition to such other evidence as may be required under the provisions of subpart A of this part, the petition for restoration of proceeds of sale under section 613, Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1613), must show the interest of the petitioner in the property. The petition must be supported by satisfactory proof that the petitioner did not know of the seizure prior to the declaration or decree of forfeiture and was in such circumstances as prevented him from knowing of it.

**§ 171.44 Forfeited property authorized for official use.**

If forfeited property which is the subject of a claim under section 613, Tariff Act of 1930, as amended (19 U.S.C. 1613) has been authorized for official use, retention or delivery will be regarded as