

§ 501.6

37 CFR Ch. V (7-1-03 Edition)

§ 501.6 Criteria for the determination of rights in and to inventions.

(a) The following rules shall be applied in determining the respective rights of the Government and of the inventor in and to any invention that is subject to the provisions of this part:

(1) The Government shall obtain, except as herein otherwise provided, the entire right, title and interest in and to any invention made by any Government employee:

(i) During working hours, or

(ii) With a contribution by the Government of facilities, equipment, materials, funds or information, or of time or services of other Government employees on official duty, or

(iii) Which bears a direct relation to or is made in consequence of the official duties of the inventor.

(2) In any case where the contribution of the Government, as measured by any one or more of the criteria set forth in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, to the invention is insufficient equitably to justify a requirement of assignment to the Government of the entire right, title and interest in and to such invention, or in any case where the Government has insufficient interest in an invention to obtain the entire right, title and interest therein (although the Government could obtain same under paragraph (a)(1) of this section), the Government agency concerned shall leave title to such invention in the employee, subject however, to the reservation to the Government of a nonexclusive, irrevocable, royalty-free license in the invention with power to grant licenses for all governmental purposes. The terms of such reservation will appear, where practicable, in any patent, domestic or foreign, which may issue on such invention. Reference is made to section 15 of the Federal Technology Transfer Act of 1986 (15 U.S.C. 3710d) which requires a Government agency to allow the inventor to retain title to any covered invention when the agency does not intend to file a patent application or otherwise promote commercialization.

(3) In applying the provisions of paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section to the facts and circumstances relating to the making of a particular invention, it shall be presumed that an invention

made by an employee who is employed or assigned:

(i) To invent or improve or perfect any art or process, machine, design, manufacture, or composition of matter;

(ii) To conduct or perform research, development work, or both,

(iii) To supervise, direct, coordinate, or review Government financed or conducted research, development work, or both, or

(iv) To act in a liaison capacity among governmental or non-governmental agencies or individuals engaged in such research or development work, falls within the provisions of paragraph (a)(1) of this section, and it shall be presumed that any invention made by any other employee falls within the provisions of paragraph (a)(2) of this section. Either presumption may be rebutted by a showing of the facts and circumstances in the case and shall not preclude a determination that these facts and circumstances justify leaving the entire right, title and interest in and to the invention in the Government employee, subject to law.

(4) In any case wherein the Government neither:

(i) Obtains the entire right, title and interest in and to an invention pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (a)(1) of this section nor

(ii) Reserves a nonexclusive, irrevocable, royalty-free license in the invention, with power to grant licenses for all governmental purposes, pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (a)(2) of this section,

the Government shall leave the entire right, title and interest in and to the invention in the Government employee, subject to law.

[53 FR 39735, Oct. 11, 1988, as amended at 61 FR 40999, Aug. 7, 1996]

§ 501.7 Agency determination.

(a) If the agency determines that the Government is entitled to obtain title pursuant to § 501.6(a)(1) and the employee does not appeal, no further review is required.

(b) In the event that a Government agency determines, pursuant to paragraph (a)(2) or (a)(4) of § 501.6, that title to an invention will be left with the employee, the agency shall notify the

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employee of this determination. In cases pursuant to § 501.6(a)(2) where the Government's insufficient interest in the invention is evidenced by its decision not to file a patent application, the agency may impose on the employee any one or all of the following conditions or any other conditions that may be necessary in a particular case:

(1) That a patent application be filed in the United States and/or abroad, if the Government has determined that it has or may need to practice the invention;

(2) That the invention not be assigned to any foreign-owned or controlled corporation without the written permission of the agency; and

(3) That any assignment or license of rights to use or sell the invention in the United States shall contain a requirement that any products embodying the invention or produced through the use of the invention be substantially manufactured in the United States. The agency shall notify the employee of any conditions imposed.

(c) In the case of a determination under either paragraph (a) or (b) of this section, the agency shall promptly provide the employee with:

(1) A signed and dated statement of its determination and reasons therefor; and

(2) A copy of 37 CFR part 501.

[53 FR 39735, Oct. 11, 1988, as amended at 61 FR 40999, Aug. 7, 1996]

§ 501.8 Appeals by employees.

(a) Any Government employee who is aggrieved by a Government agency determination pursuant to §§ 501.6(a)(1) or (a)(2), may obtain a review of any agency determination by filing, within 30 days (or such longer period as the Secretary may, for good cause shown in writing, fix in any case) after receiving notice of such determination, two copies of an appeal with the Secretary. The Secretary then shall forward one copy of the appeal to the liaison officer of the Government agency.

(b) On receipt of a copy of an appeal filed pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, the agency liaison officer shall, subject to considerations of national security, or public health, safety or welfare, promptly furnish both the Secretary and the inventor with a copy

of a report containing the following information about the invention involved in the appeal:

(1) A copy of the agency's statement specified in § 501.7(c);

(2) A description of the invention in sufficient detail to identify the invention and show its relationship to the employee's duties and work assignments;

(3) The name of the employee and employment status, including a detailed statement of official duties and responsibilities at the time the invention was made; and

(4) A detailed statement of the points of dispute or controversy, together with copies of any statements or written arguments filed with the agency, and of any other relevant evidence that the agency considered in making its determination of Government interest.

(c) Within 25 days (or such longer period as the Secretary may, for good cause shown, fix in any case) after the transmission of a copy of the agency report to the employee, the employee may file a reply with the Secretary and file one copy with the agency liaison officer.

(d) After the time for the inventor's reply to the Government agency's report has expired and if the inventor has so requested in his or her appeal, a date will be set for hearing of oral arguments before the Secretary, by the employee (or by an attorney whom he or she designates by written power of attorney filed before, or at the hearing) and a representative of the Government agency involved. Unless it shall be otherwise ordered before the hearing begins, oral arguments will be limited to thirty minutes for each side. The employee need not retain an attorney or request an oral hearing to secure full consideration of the facts and his or her arguments. The employee may expedite such consideration by notifying the Secretary when he or she does not intend to file a reply to the agency report.

(e) After a hearing on the appeal, if a hearing was requested, or after expiration of the period for the inventor's reply to the agency report if no hearing is set, the Secretary shall issue a decision on the matter within 120 days, which decision shall be final after a