

General Services Administration

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the respondent of receipt and acceptance of the complaint.

(b) If the Official receives a complaint that is not complete, he or she shall notify the complainant within 30 days of receipt of the incomplete complaint that additional information is needed. If the complainant fails to complete the complaint within 30 days of receipt of this notice, the Official shall dismiss the complaint without prejudice.

(c) The Official may reject a complaint, or a position thereof, for any of the following reasons:

(1) It was not filed timely and the extension of the 180-day period as provided in § 105-8.170-4(c) is denied;

(2) It consists of an allegation identical to an allegation contained in a previous complaint filed on behalf of the same complainant(s) which is pending in the agency or which has been resolved or decided by the agency; or

(3) It is not within the purview of this part.

(d) If the Official receives a complaint over which the agency does not have jurisdiction, the Official shall promptly notify the complainant and shall make reasonable efforts to refer the complaint to the appropriate Government entity.

§ 105-8.170-7 Investigation/conciliation.

(a) Within 180 days of the receipt of a complete complaint, the Official shall complete the investigation of the complaint, attempt informal resolution, and if no informal resolution is achieved, issue a letter of findings. The 180-day time limit may be extended with the permission of the Assistant Attorney General. The investigation should include, where appropriate, a review of the practices and policies that led to the filing of the complaint, and other circumstances under which the possible noncompliance with this part occurred.

(b) The Official may require agency employees to cooperate in the investigation and attempted resolution of complaints. Employees who are required by the Official to participate in any investigation under this section shall do so as part of their official du-

ties and during the course of regular duty hours.

(c) The Official shall furnish the complainant and the respondent a copy of the investigative report promptly after receiving it from the investigator and provide the complainant and the respondent with an opportunity for informal resolution of the complaint.

(d) If a complaint is resolved informally, the terms of the agreement shall be reduced to writing and signed by the complainant and respondent. The agreement shall be made part of the complaint file with a copy of the agreement provided to the complainant and the respondent. The written agreement may include a finding on the issue of discrimination and shall describe any corrective action to which the complainant and the respondent have agreed.

(e) The written agreement shall remain in effect until all corrective actions to which the complainant and the respondent have agreed upon have been completed. The complainant may reopen the complaint in the event that the agreement is not carried out.

§ 105-8.170-8 Letter of findings.

If an informal resolution of the complaint is not reached, the Official shall, within 180 days of receipt of the complete complaint, notify the complainant and the respondent of the results of the investigation in a letter sent by certified mail, return receipt requested. The letter shall contain, at a minimum, the following:

(a) Findings of fact and conclusions of law;

(b) A description of a remedy for each violation found;

(c) A notice of the right of the complainant and the respondent to appeal to the Special Counsel for Ethics and Civil Rights; and

(d) A notice of the right of the complainant and the respondent to request a hearing.

§ 105-8.170-9 Filing an appeal.

(a) Notice of appeal to the Special Counsel for Ethics and Civil Rights, with or without a request for hearing, shall be filed by the complainant or the

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respondent with the Responsible Official within 30 days of receipt of the letter of findings required by § 105-8.170-7.

(b) If a timely appeal without a request for hearing is filed by a party, any other party may file a written request for a hearing within the time limit specified in § 105-8.170-9(a) or within 10 days of the date on which the first timely appeal without a request for hearing was filed, whichever is later.

(c) If no party requests a hearing, the Responsible Official shall promptly transmit the notice of appeal and investigative record to the Special Counsel for Ethics and Civil Rights.

(d) If neither party files an appeal within the time prescribed in § 105-8.170-9(a) the Responsible Official shall certify, at the expiration of the time, that the letter of findings is the final agency decision on the complaint.

§ 105-8.170-10 Acceptance of appeals.

The Special Counsel shall accept and process any timely appeal. A party may appeal to the Deputy Administrator from a decision of the Special Counsel that an appeal is untimely. This appeal shall be filed within 15 days of receipt of the decision from the Special Counsel.

§ 105-8.170-11 Hearing.

(a) Upon a timely request for a hearing, the Special Counsel shall take the necessary action to obtain the services of an Administrative law judge (ALJ) to conduct the hearing. The ALJ shall issue a notice to all parties specifying the date, time, and place of the scheduled hearing. The hearing shall be commenced no earlier than 15 days after the notice is issued and no later than 60 days after the request for a hearing is filed, unless all parties agree to a different date, or there are other extenuating circumstances.

(b) The complainant and respondent shall be parties to the hearing. Any interested person or organization may petition to become a party or amicus curiae. The ALJ may, in his or her discretion, grant such a petition if, in his or her opinion, the petitioner has a legitimate interest in the proceedings and the participation will not unduly

delay the outcome and may contribute materially to the proper disposition of the proceedings.

(c) The hearing, decision, and any administrative review thereof shall be conducted in conformity with 5 U.S.C. 554-557 (sections 5-8 of the Administrative Procedure Act). The ALJ shall have the duty to conduct a fair hearing, to take all necessary action to avoid delay, and to maintain order. He or she shall have all powers necessary to these ends, including (but not limited to) the power to—

(1) Arrange and change the date, time, and place of hearings and pre-hearing conferences and issue notices thereof;

(2) Hold conferences to settle, simplify, or determine the issue in a hearing, or to consider other matters that may aid in the expeditious disposition of the hearing;

(3) Require parties to state their position in writing with respect to the various issues in the hearing and to exchange such statements with all other parties;

(4) Examine witnesses and direct witnesses to testify;

(5) Receive, rule on, exclude, or limit evidence;

(6) Rule on procedural items pending before him or her; and

(7) Take any action permitted to the ALJ as authorized by this part, or by the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 551-559).

(d) Technical rules of evidence shall not apply to hearings conducted pursuant to § 105-8.170-11, but rules or principles designed to assure production of credible evidence available and to subject testimony to cross-examination shall be applied by the ALJ whenever reasonably necessary. The ALJ may exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence. All documents and other evidence offered or taken for the record shall be open to examination by the parties and opportunity shall be given to refute facts and arguments advanced on either side of the issues. A transcript shall be made of the oral evidence except to the extent the substance thereof is stipulated for the record. All decisions shall be based upon the hearing record.