

## Office of the Secretary, Interior

## § 4.450-5

be taken in any proceeding before the Bureau will be deemed to be a protest and such action thereon will be taken as is deemed to be appropriate in the circumstances.

### § 4.450-3 Initiation of contest.

Any person desiring to initiate a private contest must file a complaint in the proper land office (see § 1821.2-1 of chapter II of this title). The contestant must serve a copy of the complaint on the contestee not later than 30 days after filing the complaint and must file proof of such service, as required by § 4.422(c), in the office where the complaint was filed within 30 days after service.

### § 4.450-4 Complaints.

(a) *Contents of complaint.* The complaint shall contain the following information, under oath:

(1) The name and address of each party interested;

(2) A legal description of the land involved;

(3) A reference, so far as known to the contestant, to any proceedings pending for the acquisition of title to, or an interest, in such land;

(4) A statement in clear and concise language of the facts constituting the grounds of contest;

(5) A statement of the law under which contestant claims or intends to acquire title to, or an interest in, the land and of the facts showing that he is qualified to do so;

(6) A statement that the proceeding is not collusive or speculative but is instituted and will be diligently pursued in good faith;

(7) A request that the contestant be allowed to prove his allegations and that the adverse interest be invalidated;

(8) The office in which the complaint is filed and the address to which papers shall be sent for service on the contestant; and

(9) A notice that unless the contestee files an answer to the complaint in such office within 30 days after service of the notice, the allegations of the complaint will be taken as confessed.

(b) *Amendment of complaint.* Except insofar as the manager, administrative law judge, Director, Board or Secretary

may raise issues in connection with deciding a contest, issues not raised in a complaint may not be raised later by the contestant unless the administrative law judge permits the complaint to be amended after due notice to the other parties and an opportunity to object.

(c) *Corroboration required.* All allegations of fact in the complaint which are not matters of official record or capable of being judicially noticed and which, if proved, would invalidate the adverse interest must be corroborated under oath by the statement of witnesses. Each such allegation of fact must be corroborated by the statement of at least one witness having personal knowledge of the alleged fact and such fact must be set forth in the statement. All statements by witnesses shall be attached to the complaint.

(d) *Filing fee.* Each complaint must be accompanied by a filing fee of \$10 and a deposit of \$20 toward reporter's fees. Any complaint which is not accompanied by the required fee and deposit will not be accepted for filing.

(e) *Waiver of issues.* Any issue not raised by a private contestant in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (b) of this section, which was known to him, or could have been known to him by the exercise of reasonable diligence, shall be deemed to have been waived by him, and he shall thereafter be forever barred from raising such issue.

### § 4.450-5 Service.

The complaint must be served upon every contestee in the manner provided in § 4.422(c)(1). Proof of service must be made in the manner provided in § 4.422(c)(2). In certain circumstances, service may be made by publication as provided in paragraph (b)(1) of this section. When the contest is against the heirs of a deceased entryman, the notice must be served on each heir. If the person to be personally served is an infant or a person who has been legally adjudged incompetent, service of notice must be made by delivering a copy of the notice to the legal guardian or committee, if there is one, of such infant or incompetent person. If there is no guardian or committee, then service

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must be by delivering a copy of the notice to the person having the infant or incompetent person in charge.

(a) *Summary dismissal; waiver of defect in service.* If a complaint when filed does not meet all the requirements of § 4.450-4(a) and (c), or if the complaint is not served upon each contestee as required by this section, the complaint will be summarily dismissed by the manager and no answer need be filed. However, where prior to the summary dismissal of a complaint a contestee answers without questioning the service or proof of service of the complaint, any defect in service will be deemed waived as to such answering contestee.

(b) *Service by publication—(1) When service may be made by publication.* When the contestant has made diligent search and inquiry to locate the contestee, and cannot locate him, the contestant may proceed with service by publication after first filing with the manager an affidavit which shall:

(i) State that the contestee could not be located after diligent search and inquiry made within 15 days prior to the filing of the affidavit;

(ii) Be corroborated by the affidavits of two persons who live in the vicinity of the land which state that they have no knowledge of the contestee's whereabouts or which give his last known address;

(iii) State the last known address of the contestee; and

(iv) State in detail the efforts and inquiries made to locate the party sought to be served.

(2) *Contents of published notice.* The published notice must give the names of the parties to the contest, legal description of the land involved, the substance of the charges contained in the complaint, the office in which the contest is pending, and a statement that upon failure to file an answer in such office within 30 days after the completion of publication of such notice, the allegations of the complaint will be taken as confessed. The published notice shall also contain a statement of the dates of publication.

(3) *Publication, mailing and posting of notice.* (i) Notice by publication shall be made by publishing notice at least once a week for 5 successive weeks in some newspaper of general circulation

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in the county in which the land in contest lies.

(ii) Within 15 days after the first publication of a notice, the contestant shall send a copy of the notice and the complaint by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the contestee at his last known address and also to the contestee in care of the post office nearest the land. The return receipts shall be filed in the office in which the contest is pending.

(iii) A copy of the notice as published shall be posted in the office where the contest is pending and also in a conspicuous place upon the land involved. Such postings shall be made within 15 days after the first publication of the notice.

(c) *Proof of service.* (1) Proof of publication of the notice shall be made by filing in the office where the contest is pending a copy of the notice as published and the affidavit of the publisher or foreman of the newspaper publishing the same showing the publication of the notice in accordance with paragraph (b)(3) of this section.

(2) Proof of posting of the notice shall be by affidavit of the person who posted the notice on the land and by the certificate of the manager or the Director of the Bureau of Land Management as to posting in his office.

(3) Proof of the mailing of notice shall be by affidavit of the person who mailed the notice to which shall be attached the return receipt.

[36 FR 7186, Apr. 15, 1971, as amended at 68 FR 33803, June 5, 2003]

**§ 4.450-6 Answer to complaint.**

Within 30 days after service of the complaint or after the last publication of the notice, the contestee must file in the office where the contest is pending an answer specifically meeting and responding to the allegations of the complaint, together with proof of service of a copy of the answer upon a contestant as provided in § 4.450-5(b)(3). The answer shall contain or be accompanied by the address to which all notices or other papers shall be sent for service upon contestee.