

(1) Where the DRO or Special Master determines that there are complex factual issues in dispute that cannot adequately or efficiently be developed solely by means of written presentations and/or that resolution of the controversy will be dependent on his/her assessment of the credibility of statements provided by individuals with first-hand knowledge of the facts; or

(2) Upon request of any party to the protest, unless the DRO or Special Master finds specifically that a hearing is unnecessary and that no party will be prejudiced by limiting the record in the adjudication to the parties' written submissions. All witnesses at any such hearing shall be subject to cross-examination by the opposing party and to questioning by the DRO or Special Master.

(h) The Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition may review the status of any protest in the Default Adjudicative Process with the DRO or Special Master during the pendency of the process.

(i) Within thirty (30) business days of the commencement of the Default Adjudicative Process, or at the discretion of the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition, the DRO or Special Master will submit findings and recommendations to the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition that shall contain the following:

(1) Findings of fact;

(2) Application of the principles of the AMS, and any applicable law or authority to the findings of fact;

(3) A recommendation for a final FAA order; and

(4) If appropriate, suggestions for future FAA action.

(j) In arriving at findings and recommendations relating to protests, the DRO or Special Master shall consider whether or not the Product Team actions in question had a rational basis, and whether or not the Product Team decision under question was arbitrary, capricious or an abuse of discretion. Findings of fact underlying the recommendations must be supported by substantial evidence.

(k) The DRO or Special Master has broad discretion to recommend a remedy that is consistent with §17.21.

(1) A DRO or Special Master shall submit findings and recommendations only to the Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition. The findings and recommendations will be released to the parties and to the public, only upon issuance of the final FAA order in the case. Should an Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition protective order be issued in connection with the protest, a redacted version of the findings and recommendations, omitting any protected information, shall be prepared wherever possible and released to the public along with a copy of the final FAA order. Only persons admitted by the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition under the protective order and Government personnel shall be provided copies of the unredacted findings and recommendations.

(m) The time limitations set forth in this section may be extended by the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition for good cause.

§ 17.39 Default adjudicative process for contract disputes.

(a) The Default Adjudicative Process for contract disputes will commence on the latter of:

(1) The parties' submission to the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition of a joint statement pursuant to §17.27 which indicates that ADR will not be utilized; or

(2) The parties' submission to the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition of notification by any party that the parties have not settled some or all of the dispute issues via ADR, and it is unlikely that they can do so within the time period allotted and/or any reasonable extension.

(b) Within twenty (2) business days of the commencement of the Default Adjudicative Process, the Product Team shall prepare and submit to the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition, with a copy to the contractor, a chronologically arranged and indexed Dispute File, containing all documents which are relevant to the facts and issues in dispute. The contractor will be entitled to supplement such a Dispute File with additional documents.

(c) The Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition shall

assign a DRO or a Special Master to conduct fact-finding proceedings and provide findings and recommendations concerning the issues in dispute.

(d) The Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition may delegate authority to the DRO or Special Master to conduct a Status Conference within ten (10) business days of the commencement of the Default Adjudicative Process, and, may further delegate to the DRO or Special Master the authority to issue such orders or decisions to promote the efficient resolution of the contract dispute.

(e) At any such Status Conference, or as necessary during the Default Adjudicative Process, the DRO or Special Master will:

- (1) Determine the appropriate amount of discovery required to resolve the dispute;
- (2) Review the need for a protective order, and if one is needed, prepare a protective order pursuant to §17.9;
- (3) Determine whether any issue can be stricken; and
- (4) Prepare necessary procedural orders for the proceedings.

(f) At a time or at times determined by the DRO or Special Master, and in advance of the decision of the case, the parties shall make final submissions to the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition and to the DRO or Special Master, which submissions shall include the following:

- (1) A joint statement of the issues;
- (2) A joint statement of undisputed facts related to each issue;
- (3) Separate statements of disputed facts related to each issue, with appropriate citations to documents in the Dispute File, to pages of transcripts of any hearing or deposition, or to any affidavit or exhibit which a party may wish to submit with its statement;
- (4) Separate legal analyses in support of the parties' respective positions on disputed issues.

(g) Each party shall serve a copy of its final submission on the other party by means reasonable calculated so that the other party receives such submissions on the same day it is received by the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition.

(h) The DRO or Special Master may decide the contract dispute on the

basis of the record and the submissions referenced in this section, or may, in the DRO or Special Master's discretion, allow the parties to make additional presentations in writing. The DRO or Special Master may conduct hearings, and may limit the hearings to the testimony of specific witnesses and/or presentations regarding specific issues. The DRO or Special Master shall control the nature and conduct of all hearings, including the sequence and extent of any testimony. Hearings on the record shall be conducted by the ODRA:

(1) Where the DRO or Special Master determines that there are complex factual issues in dispute that cannot adequately or efficiently be developed solely by means of written presentations and/or that resolution of the controversy will be dependent on his/her assessment of the credibility of statements provided by individuals with first-hand knowledge of the facts; or

(2) Upon request of any party to the contract dispute, unless the DRO or Special Master finds specifically that a hearing is unnecessary and that no party will be prejudiced by limiting the record in the adjudication to the parties written submissions. All witnesses at any such hearing shall be subject to cross-examination by the opposing party and to questioning by the DRO or Special Master.

(i) The DRO or Special Master shall prepare findings and recommendations within thirty (30) business days from receipt of the final submissions of the parties, unless that time is extended by the Officer of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition for good cause. The findings and recommendations shall contain findings of fact, application of the principles of the AMS and other law or authority applicable to the findings of fact, a recommendation for a final FAA order, and, if appropriate, suggestions for future FAA action.

(j) As a party of the findings and recommendations, the DRO or Special Master shall review the disputed issue or issues in the context of the contract, any applicable law and the AMS. Any finding of fact set forth in the findings and recommendation must be supported by substantial evidence.

(k) The Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition may review the status of any contract dispute in the Default Adjudicative Process with the DRO or Special Master during the pendency of the process.

(l) A DRO or Special Master shall submit findings and recommendations only to the Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition. The findings and recommendations will be released to the parties and to the public, upon issuance of the final FAA order in the case. Should an Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition protective order be issued in connection with the contract dispute, a redacted version of the findings and recommendations omitting any protected information, shall be prepared wherever possible and released to the public along with a copy of the final FAA order. Only persons admitted by the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition under the protective order and Government personal shall be provided copies of the unredacted findings and recommendation.

(m) The time limitations set forth in this section may be extended by the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition for good cause.

(n) Attorneys fees of a qualified prevailing contractor are allowable to the extent permitted by the EAJA, 5 U.S.C. 504 (a)(1).

[Doc. No. FAA-1998-4379, 64 FR 32936, June 18, 1999; 64 FR 47362, Aug. 31, 1999]

Subpart F—Finality and Review

§ 17.41 Final orders.

All final FAA orders regarding protests or contract disputes under this part are to be issued by the FAA Administrator or by a delegatee of the Administrator.

§ 17.43 Judicial review.

(a) A protestor or contractor may seek of a final FAA order, pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 46110, only after the administrative remedies of this part have been exhausted.

(b) A copy of the petition for review shall be filed with the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition and the FAA Chief Counsel on the date that the

petition for review is filed with the appropriate circuit court of appeals.

§ 17.45 Conforming amendments.

The FAA shall amend pertinent provisions of the AMS, standard contract forms and clauses, and any guidance to contracting officials, so as to conform to the provisions of this part.

APPENDIX A TO PART 17—ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)

A. The FAA dispute resolution procedures encourage the parties to protests and contract disputes to use ADR as the primary means to resolve protests and contract disputes, pursuant to the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-320, 5 U.S.C. 570-579, and Department of Transportation and FAA policies to utilize ADR to the maximum extent practicable. Under the procedures presented in this part, the Office of Dispute Resolution for Acquisition would encourage parties to consider ADR techniques such as case evaluation, mediation, or arbitration.

B. ADR encompasses a number of processes and techniques for resolving protests or contract disputes. The most commonly used types include:

(1) *Mediation*. The Neutral or Compensated Neutral ascertains the needs and interests of both parties and facilitates discussions between or among the parties and an amicable resolution of their differences, seeking approaches to bridge the gaps between the parties' respective positions. The Neutral or Compensated Neutral can meet with the parties separately, conduct joint meetings with the parties' representatives, or employ both methods in appropriate cases.

(2) *Neutral Evaluation*. At any stage during the ADR process, as the parties may agree, the Neutral or Compensated Neutral will provide a candid assessment and opinion of the strengths and weaknesses of the parties' positions as to the facts and law, so as to facilitate further discussion and resolution.

(3) *Minitrial*. The minitrial resembles adjudication, but is less formal. It is used to provide an efficient process for airing and resolving more complex, fact-intensive disputes. The parties select principal representatives who should be senior officials of their respective organizations, having authority to negotiate a complete settlement. It is preferable that the principals be individuals who were not directly involved in the events leading to the dispute and who, thus, may be able to maintain a degree of impartiality during the proceeding. In order to maintain such impartiality, the principals typically serve as "judges" over the mini-trial proceeding together with the Neutral or Compensated Neutral. The proceeding is aimed at