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whether to place Federal observers on-board. If cruise plans are changed by more than 30 days from the date stated by the exploration or commercial recovery plan, the licensee or permittee shall notify NOAA as soon as such changes are made, or 90 days prior to the previously scheduled departure.

(e) *Duties of licensee, permittee, owner or operator.* Each licensee, permittee, owner or operator of a vessel aboard which an observer is assigned shall:

(1) Allow the observer access to and use of the vessel's communications equipment and personnel when the observer deems such access necessary for the transmission and receipt of messages;

(2) Allow the observer access to and use of the vessel's navigation equipment and personnel when the observer deems such access necessary to determine the vessel's location;

(3) Provide all other reasonable cooperation and assistance to enable the observer to carry out the observer's duties; and

(4) Provide temporary accommodations and food to the observer aboard the vessel which are equivalent to those provided to officers of the vessel.

(f) *Reasonableness of observer activities.*

(1) To the maximum extent practicable, observation duties will be planned and carried out in a manner that minimizes interference with the licensee's or permittee's activities under the license or permit.

(2) The Administrator will assure that equipment brought aboard a vessel by the observer is reasonable as to size, weight, and electric power and storage requirements, taking into consideration the necessity of the equipment for carrying out the observer's functions.

(3) The observer will have no authority over the operation of the vessel or its activities, or the officers, crew, or personnel of the vessel. The observer will comply with all rules and regulations issued by the licensee or permittee, and all orders of the Master or senior operations official, with respect to ensuring safe operation of the vessel and the safety of its personnel.

(g) *Non-interference with observer.* Licensees, permittees and other persons are reminded that the Act (see, for ex-

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ample, sections 301(3) and 301(4)) makes it unlawful for any person subject to section 301 of the Act to interfere with any observer in the performance of the observer's duties.

(h) *Confidentiality of information.* NOAA recognizes the possibility that an observer, in performing observer functions, will record information which the licensee or permittee considers to be proprietary. NOAA intends to protect such information consistent with applicable law. The Administrator may in appropriate cases provide the licensee or permittee an opportunity:

(1) To review those parts of the observer's report which may contain proprietary information; and

(2) To request confidential treatment of such information under § 971.802.

§ 971.1006 Proprietary enforcement information.

(a) Proprietary and privileged information seized or maintained under Title III of the Act concerning a person or vessel engaged in commercial recovery will not be made available for general or public use or inspection.

(b) Although presentation of evidence in a proceeding under this subpart is not deemed general or public use of information, the Administrator will, consistent with due process, move to have records sealed, under 15 CFR part 904 subpart C, or other applicable provisions of law, in any administrative or judicial proceeding where the use of proprietary or privileged information is required to serve the purpose of the Act.

§ 971.1007 Advance notice of civil actions.

(a) *Actions against alleged violators.* (1) No civil action may be filed in a United States District Court under section 117 of the Act against any person for alleged violation of the Act, or any regulation, or license or permit term, condition, or restriction issued under the Act, until 60 days after the Administrator and any alleged violator receive written and dated notice of alleged violation.

(2) The notice shall contain:

(i) A concise statement of the facts believed to show a violation;

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(ii) A specific reference to the provisions of the Act, regulation or license or permit allegedly violated; and

(iii) Any documentary or other evidence of the alleged violation.

(b) *Action against the Administrator.* (1) No civil action may be filed in a United States District Court under section 117 of the Act against the Administrator for an alleged failure to perform any act or duty under the Act which is not discretionary until 60 days after receipt by the Administrator of a written and dated notice of intent to file the action.

(2) The notice shall contain:

(i) A specific reference to the provisions of the Act, regulation or permit believed to require the Administrator to perform a nondiscretionary act or duty;

(ii) A precise description of the nondiscretionary act or duty believed to be required by such provision;

(iii) A concise statement of the facts believed to show a failure to perform the act or duty; and

(iv) Any documentary or other evidence of the alleged failure to perform the act or duty.