

Office of Government Ethics

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(2) If after such consultation the Criminal Division determines that a criminal investigation will be undertaken, the Director shall take no further action with regard to that request pending a determination by the Criminal Division not to prosecute.

(3) Upon receipt of a determination by the Criminal Division not to prosecute, the Director shall then follow the procedures for all other requests for formal advisory opinions set forth in this part.

§ 2638.306 Notice of requests.

The Director shall provide notice to interested parties identified in a request which will be the subject of a formal advisory opinion that such an opinion will be rendered. Generally, the designated agency ethics official of the agency involved shall be notified of the request.

§ 2638.307 Written comment on requests.

(a) To the extent practicable, the Director shall provide interested parties with an opportunity to submit written comment on a request for a formal advisory opinion. A time by which the comment should be received to be considered will be indicated with the notice that the request has been made.

(b) Additional time in which to comment may be granted upon written request to or at the discretion of the Director. Such requests and all written comments shall be sent to the Office of Government Ethics, Suite 500, 1201 New York Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20005-3917.

[46 FR 2583, Jan. 9, 1981. Redesignated at 54 FR 50231, Dec. 5, 1989, and amended at 55 FR 27180, July 2, 1990]

§ 2638.308 Issuance.

(a) A formal advisory opinion,

(1) Which involves the application of any conflict of interest law embodied in 18 U.S.C. 202-209 to a transaction or activity which does not raise a question of an actual or apparent violation of this law but which raises an important matter of first impression, or

(2) Which is issued following the procedure set forth in § 2638.305(d),

requires consultation by the Office of Government Ethics with the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice before it is issued.

(b) An advisory opinion shall be considered issued when it is dated, numbered, and signed by the Director. Unless released by the person who made the request, the opinion will not become publicly available until information which identifies individuals involved and which is unnecessary to the complete understanding of the opinion has been deleted from the opinion and this version of the opinion is placed in a public reading file at the Office of Government Ethics. (See § 2638.310)

§ 2638.309 Reliance on formal advisory opinions.

(a) Any formal advisory opinion referred to in § 2638.308(a) or any provisions or finding of a formal advisory opinion involving the application of the Act, Executive Order 11222 and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act or Executive Order, may be relied upon by:

(1) Any person directly involved in the specific transaction or activity with respect to which such advisory opinion has been rendered, and

(2) Any person directly involved in any specific transaction or activity which is indistinguishable in all its material aspects from the transaction or activity with respect to which such advisory opinion was rendered.

(b) Any person who relies upon any provision or finding of any formal advisory opinion in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section and who acts in good faith in accordance with the provisions and findings of such opinion, shall not, as a result of such act, be subject to prosecution under 18 U.S.C. 202-209 or, in the case where the opinion is exculpatory, be subject to any administrative adverse action or civil action based upon legal authority cited in that opinion.

§ 2638.310 Public availability and publication of formal advisory opinions.

(a) The Director shall make sufficient deletions in any formal advisory opinion so that unless necessary to the complete understanding of the opinion,

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the identity of any person involved is not disclosed. No deletion shall in any way affect the substance of the opinion.

(b) A copy of this version of the opinion shall then be made available for public inspection within 10 working days after the issuance of the opinion at the Office of Government Ethics, Suite 500, 1201 New York Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20005-3917.

(c) The Director shall thereafter publish this version of the opinion.

[46 FR 2583, Jan. 9, 1981. Redesignated at 54 FR 50231, Dec. 5, 1989, and amended at 55 FR 27180, July 2, 1990]

§ 2638.311 Copies of published formal advisory opinions.

Each designated agency ethics official shall receive a copy of each published opinion. Copies will also be available to the public from the Office of Government Ethics upon request at no more than cost.

§ 2638.312 Referral of requests.

(a) If a designated agency ethics official receives a request for advice from a person and determines that the request may come within the criteria set forth in § 2638.303, he or she shall contact the Office of Government Ethics concerning the request before referring the request to the Office. If after such consultation the Office of Government Ethics determines that the request should be the subject of a formal advisory opinion, the designated agency ethics official shall notify the person making the request of that determination and request the person's permission to refer the request to the Office of Government Ethics.

(b) If the Director receives a request for an opinion which does not fulfill the criteria set forth in § 2638.303, he or she may:

(1) Furnish informational assistance to the person as provided in § 2638.305(a), or

(2) Refer the request to the appropriate designated agency ethics official.

(c) In all instances covered by paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, a referral will not be made in the case of questions regarding possible future employment plans of an individual mak-

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ing the request unless he or she is first notified and gives his or her consent or the request itself indicates that such a referral may be made.

§ 2638.313 Agency opinions.

If the designated agency ethics official issues a written opinion concerning the application of 18 U.S.C. 202-209, he or she shall transmit a copy of that opinion to the Office of Government Ethics.

Subpart D—Correction of Executive Branch Agency Ethics Programs

SOURCE: 55 FR 1666, Jan. 18, 1990, unless otherwise noted.

§ 2638.401 In general.

The Director of the Office of Government Ethics has authority under subsections 402(b)(9) and 402(f)(1) of the Ethics in Government Act to order action to correct deficiencies in agency ethics programs. These procedures are intended to be used to correct deficiencies in agency ethics programs that are not being addressed adequately by the agency. They are not intended to be used to deal with cases involving individual employees or former employees. See subpart E of this part. For purposes of this section, an agency ethics program shall include those matters that are the responsibility of agency heads and designated agency ethics officials under subpart B of this part and shall include the requirements under part 2634 of this chapter and part 735 of this title to establish public and nonpublic financial disclosure systems. In implementing these procedures, the Director may use any authority contained in the Ethics Act.

§ 2638.402 Corrective orders.

(a) *Notice.* Where the Director has information indicating that an agency ethics program is not in full compliance with the requirements set forth in applicable statutes or regulations, the Director may issue a Notice of Deficiency to the designated agency ethics official and request an agency report under paragraph (b) of this section.