

action. If the commodities are normally made available to the household within a specific period of time (for example, from the first day of the month through the tenth day of the month), the effective date of the disqualification will be the first day of that period. The State agency must apply the disqualification period (that is, 12 months, 24 months, or permanent) specified in the notice of disqualification. The State agency must advise any remaining household members if the household's benefits will change or if the household is no longer eligible as a result of the disqualification.

(2) If the household member requested a fair hearing and the disqualification was upheld by the fair hearing official, the disqualification must begin with the next scheduled distribution of commodities that follows the date the hearing decision is issued. If the commodities are normally made available to the household within a specific period of time (for example, from the first day of the month through the tenth day of the month), the effective date of the disqualification will be the first day of that period. The State agency must apply the disqualification period (that is, 12 months, 24 months, or permanent) specified in the notice of disqualification. No further administrative appeal procedure exists after an adverse fair hearing decision. The decision by a fair hearing official is binding on the State agency. The household member, however, may seek relief in a court having appropriate jurisdiction. As provided under § 253.7(h)(11)(iii)(B), the State agency must advise any remaining household members if the household's benefits will change, or if the household is no longer eligible as a result of the disqualification.

(3) Once a disqualification has begun, it must continue uninterrupted for the duration of the penalty period (that is, 12 months; 24 months; or permanent). Changes in the eligibility of the disqualified household member's household will not interrupt or shorten the disqualification period.

(4) The same act of intentional program violation continued over a period of time will not be separated so that more than one penalty can be imposed.

For example, a household intentionally fails to report that a household member left the household, resulting in an overissuance of benefits for 5 months. Although the violation occurred over a period of 5 months, only one penalty will apply to this single act of intentional program violation.

(5) If the case was referred for Tribal, Federal, State, or local prosecution and the court of appropriate jurisdiction imposed a disqualification penalty, the State agency must follow the court order.

[64 FR 73384, Dec. 30, 1999.]

#### § 253.9 Claims against households.

(a) *What are the procedures for establishing a claim against a household for an overissuance?*

(1) The State agency must establish a claim against any household that has received more Food Distribution Program commodities than it was entitled to receive.

(2) The procedures for establishing and collecting claims against households are specified in FNS Handbook 501, The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.

(b) *Who is responsible for repaying a household overissuance claim?*

(1) All adult household members are jointly and separately liable for the repayment of the value of any overissuance of Food Distribution Program benefits to the household.

(2) Responsibility for repayment continues even in instances where the household becomes ineligible or is not participating in the program.

[64 FR 73385, Dec. 30, 1999]

#### § 253.10 Commodity control, storage and distribution.

(a) *Control and accountability.* The State agency shall be responsible for the issuance of commodities to households and the control of and accountability for the commodities upon its acceptance of the commodities at time and place of delivery.

(b) *Commodity inventories.* The State agency shall, in cooperation with the FNS Regional office, develop an appropriate procedure for determining and