

§ 400.135 Written agreement to repay debt as an alternative to salary offset.

The employee may propose, in response to a notice of intent, a written agreement to repay the debt as an alternative to salary offset. The proposed written agreement to repay the debt must be received by the FCIC official within 30 calendar days of the date of the notice of intent. The FCIC official will notify the employee whether the employee's proposed written agreement for repayment is acceptable. The FCIC official may accept a repayment agreement instead of proceeding by offset. In making this determination, the FCIC official will balance the FCIC interest in collecting the debt against hardship to the employee. If the debt is delinquent and the employee has not disputed its existence or amount, the FCIC official will accept a repayment agreement, instead of offset, for good cause such as, if the employee establishes that offset would result in undue financial hardship, or would be against equity and good conscience.

[53 FR 5, Jan. 4, 1988, and 53 FR 10527, Apr. 1, 1988]

§ 400.136 Procedures for salary offset; when deductions may begin.

(a) Deductions to liquidate an employee's debt will be made by the method and in the amount outlined in the Notice of Intent to collect from the employee's salary, as provided for in § 400.130.

(b) If the employee files a petition for a hearing before the expiration of the period provided for in § 400.130, then deductions will begin after the hearing officer has provided the employee with a final written decision in favor of FCIC.

(c) If an employee retires or resigns before collection of the amount of the indebtedness is completed, the remaining indebtedness will be collected in accordance with procedures for administrative offset.

[53 FR 5, Jan. 4, 1988, and 53 FR 10527, Apr. 1, 1988]

§ 400.137 Procedures for salary offset; types of collection.

A debt will be collected in a lump-sum or in installments. Collection will be by lump-sum collection unless the employee is financially unable to pay in one lump-sum, or if the amount of the debt exceeds 15 percent of the disposable pay for an ordinary pay period. In these cases, deduction will be by installments as set forth in § 400.138.

[53 FR 5, Jan. 4, 1988, and 53 FR 10527, Apr. 1, 1988]

§ 400.138 Procedures for salary offset; methods of collection.

(a) *General.* A debt will be collected by deductions at officially-established pay intervals from an employee's current pay account, unless the employee and the hearing official agree to alternative arrangements for repayment under § 400.135.

(b) *Installment deductions.* Installment deductions will be made over a period not greater than the anticipated period of employment. The size and frequency of the installment deductions will bear a reasonable relation to the size of the debt and the employee's ability to pay. If possible, the installment payment will be sufficient in size and frequency to liquidate the debt in no more than three years. Installment payments of less than \$25.00 per pay period, or \$50.00 per month, will be accepted only in the most unusual circumstances.

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§ 400.139 Nonwaiver of rights.

So long as there are no statutory or contractual provisions to the contrary, no employee payment (or all or portion of a debt) collected under these regulations will be interpreted as a waiver of any rights that the employee may have under the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 5514.

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§ 400.140 Refunds.

FCIC will promptly refund to the appropriate individual amounts offset under these regulations when:

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(a) A debt is waived or otherwise found not owing to the United States (unless expressly prohibited by statute or regulation); or

(b) FCIC is directed by an administrative or judicial order to refund amounts deducted from an employee's current pay.

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§ 400.141 Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Tax Refund Offset.

Under the provisions of 31 U.S.C. 3720A, the (IRS) may be requested to collect a legally enforceable debt owing to any Federal agency by offset against a taxpayer's Federal income tax refund. This section provides policies and procedures to implement IRS tax refund offsets in accordance with the provisions set forth in §301.6402-6T of 26 CFR chapter I.

(a) Any person who is indebted to the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) is entitled to the extent of FCIC's administrative due process including review and appeal of the debt under the Appeal Regulations in 7 CFR part 400, subpart J.

(b) If, after such administrative due process is exhausted, the debt is still outstanding with no other means of collection, the debtor will be notified by letter of FCIC's intention to refer such debt to the IRS for collection by tax refund offset. The notification letter will inform the debtor that their account is delinquent and that IRS will be requested to reduce the amount of any tax refund check due the debtor by the amount of the delinquency. The debtor will be given 60 days in which to write to the Manager, FCIC, providing written evidence that the debt is not legally enforceable. FCIC will refer the debt to IRS for collection by offset after the 60-day period if no response is received from the debtor. Decisions made under the provisions of this section are not appealable under the provisions of the Appeal Regulations in 7 CFR part 400, subpart J.

(c) If the debtor has requested a review, and has provided written evidence that the debt is not legally enforceable, the Manager, with the assistance of the Office of General Counsel, USDA, will review the debtor's reasons

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for believing that the debt is not legally enforceable. The debtor will then be notified of the results of the review.

(d) FCIC will notify IRS of those accounts against which offset action is to be taken.

(e) If, during the period of review, the debtor pays the debt in full, the collection of the debt by tax refund offset procedure will be halted. Changes in debtor status that eliminate the debtor from IRS offset will be reported to IRS by FCIC and the debtor's refund will not be offset.

(f) Amounts offset for delinquent debt which are later found to be not owed to FCIC, will be promptly refunded.

(g) Debtors will not be subject to IRS offset for any of the following reasons:

(1) Debtors who are discharged in bankruptcy or who are under the jurisdiction of a bankruptcy court;

(2) Debtors who are employed by the Federal Government;

(3) Debtors whose cases are in suspense because of actions pending by or taken by FCIC;

(4) Debtors who have not provided a Social Security Number (SSN) and no SSN can be obtained;

(5) Debtors whose indebtedness is less than \$25;

(6) Debtors whose account is more than ten (10) years delinquent; except in the case of a judgment debt; or

(7) Debtors whose account has not been first reported to a consumer credit reporting agency.

[53 FR 5, Jan. 4, 1988, and 53 FR 10527, Apr. 1, 1988]

§ 400.142 Past-due legally enforceable debt eligible for refund offset.

For purposes of this section, a past-due, legally enforceable debt which may be referred by FCIC to IRS for offset is a debt which:

(a) Except in the case of a judgment debt, has been delinquent for at least three months but has not been delinquent for more than 10 years at the time the offset is made;

(b) Cannot be currently collected pursuant to the salary offset provisions of 5 U.S.C. 5514(a)(1);

(c) Is ineligible for administrative offset under 31 U.S.C. 3716(a) by reason