

**§ 1603.103**

(e) *Misfiled complaint.* A charge filed pursuant to 29 CFR part 1601 or part 1626, that is later deemed to be a matter under this part, shall be processed as a complaint under this part and shall relate back to the date of the initial charge or complaint. A complaint filed under this part that is later deemed to be a matter under 29 CFR part 1601 or part 1626 shall be processed as a charge under the appropriate regulation and shall relate back to the date of the initial complaint.

**§ 1603.103 Referral of complaints.**

(a) The Commission will notify an FEP agency, as defined in 29 CFR 1601.3(a), when a complaint is filed by a state or local government employee or applicant under this part concerning an employment practice within the jurisdiction of the FEP agency. The FEP agency will be entitled to process the complaint exclusively for a period of not less than 60 days if the FEP agency makes a written request to the Commission within 10 days of receiving notice that the complaint has been filed, unless the complaint names the FEP agency as the respondent.

(b) The Commission may enter into an agreement with an FEP agency that authorizes the FEP agency to receive complaints under this part on behalf of the Commission, or waives the FEP agency's right to exclusive processing of complaints.

**§ 1603.104 Service of the complaint.**

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Commission shall promptly serve the respondent with a copy of the complaint.

**§ 1603.105 Withdrawal of a complaint.**

The complainant may withdraw a complaint at any time by so advising the Commission in writing.

**§ 1603.106 Computation of time.**

(a) All time periods in this part that are stated in terms of days are calendar days unless otherwise stated.

(b) A document shall be deemed timely if it is delivered by facsimile not exceeding 20 pages, in person or post-marked before the expiration of the applicable filing period, or, in the absence of a legible postmark, if it is received

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by mail within five days of the expiration of the applicable filing period.

(c) All time limits in this part are subject to waiver, estoppel and equitable tolling.

(d) The first day counted shall be the day after the event from which the time period begins to run and the last day of the period shall be included unless it falls on a Saturday, Sunday or federal holiday, in which case the period shall be extended to include the next business day.

**§ 1603.107 Dismissals of complaints.**

(a) Where a complaint on its face, or after further inquiry, is determined to be not timely filed or otherwise fails to state a claim under this part, the Commission shall dismiss the complaint.

(b) Where the complainant cannot be located, the Commission may dismiss the complaint provided that reasonable efforts have been made to locate the complainant and the complainant has not responded within 30 days to a notice sent by the Commission to the complainant's last known address.

(c) Where the complainant fails to provide requested information, fails or refuses to appear or to be available for interviews or conferences as necessary, or otherwise refuses to cooperate, the Commission, after providing the complainant with notice and 30 days in which to respond, may dismiss the complaint.

(d) Written notice of dismissal pursuant to paragraphs (a), (b), or (c) of this section shall be issued to the complainant and the respondent. The Commission hereby delegates authority to the Program Director, Office of Field Programs, or to his or her designees, and District Directors, or to their designees, to dismiss complaints.

(e) A complainant who is dissatisfied with a dismissal issued pursuant to paragraphs (a), (b), or (c) of this section may appeal to the Commission in accordance with the procedures in subpart C of this part.

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**§ 1603.108 Settlement and alternative dispute resolution.**

(a) The parties are at all times free to settle all or part of a complaint on

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terms that are mutually agreeable. Any settlement reached shall be in writing and signed by both parties and shall identify the allegations resolved. A copy of any settlement shall be served on the Commission.

(b) With the agreement of the parties, the Commission may refer a complaint to a neutral mediator or to any other alternative dispute resolution process authorized by the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act, 5 U.S.C. 571 to 583, or other statute.

(c) The Commission may use the services of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, other federal agencies, appropriate professional organizations, employees of the Commission and other appropriate sources in selecting neutrals for alternative dispute resolution processes.

(d) The alternative dispute resolution process shall be strictly confidential, and no party to a complaint or neutral shall disclose any dispute resolution communication or any information provided in confidence to the neutral except as provided in 5 U.S.C. 584.

### § 1603.109 Investigations.

(a) Before referring a complaint to an administrative law judge under section 201 of this part, the Commission may conduct investigation using an exchange of letters, interrogatories, fact-finding conferences, interviews, on-site visits or other fact-finding methods that address the matters at issue.

(b) During an investigation of a complaint under this part, the Commission shall have the authority to sign and issue a subpoena requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses, the production of evidence and access to evidence for the purposes of examination and the right to copy. The subpoena procedures contained in 29 CFR 1601.16 shall apply to subpoenas issued pursuant to this section.

### Subpart B—Hearings

#### § 1603.201 Referral and scheduling for hearing.

(a) Upon request by the complainant under paragraph (b) of this section or if the complaint is not dismissed or resolved under subpart A of this part, on behalf of the Commission, the Office of

Federal Operations shall transmit the complaint file to an administrative law judge, appointed under 5 U.S.C. 3105, for a hearing.

(b) If the complaint has not been referred to an administrative law judge within 180 days after filing, the complainant may request that the complaint be immediately transmitted to an administrative law judge for a hearing.

(c) The administrative law judge shall fix the time, place, and date for the hearing with due regard for the convenience of the parties, their representatives or witnesses and shall notify the parties of the same.

#### § 1603.202 Administrative law judge.

The administrative law judge shall have all the powers necessary to conduct fair, expeditious, and impartial hearings as provided in 5 U.S.C. 556(c). In addition, the administrative law judge shall have the power to:

(a) Change the time, place or date of the hearing;

(b) Enter a default decision against a party failing to appear at a hearing unless the party shows good cause by contacting the administrative law judge and presenting arguments as to why the party or the party's representative could not appear either prior to the hearing or within two days after the scheduled hearing; and

(c) Take any appropriate action authorized by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (28 U.S.C. appendix).

#### § 1603.203 Unavailability or withdrawal of administrative law judges.

(a) In the event the administrative law judge designated to conduct the hearing becomes unavailable or withdraws from the adjudication, another administrative law judge may be designated for the purpose of further hearing or issuing a decision on the record as made, or both.

(b) The administrative law judge may withdraw from the adjudication at any time the administrative law judge deems himself or herself disqualified. Prior to issuance of the decision, any party may move that the administrative law judge withdraw on the ground