

fact, conclusions of law, and order together with a supporting brief expressing the reasons for such proposals. Such proposals and brief shall be served on all parties, and shall refer to all portions of the record and to all authorities relied upon in support of each proposal.

(b) *Decision of the administrative law judge.* Within a reasonable time after the time allowed for the filing of the proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order, or within thirty (30) days after receipt of an agreement containing consent findings and order disposing of the disputed matter in whole, the administrative law judge shall make his or her decision. The decision of the administrative law judge shall include findings of fact and conclusions of law with reasons therefor upon each material issue of fact of law presented on the record. The decision of the administrative law judge shall be based upon the whole record. In a contested case in which the Department and the Respondent have presented their positions to the administrative law judge pursuant to the procedures for prohibited transaction penalty proceedings as set forth in this part, the penalty (if any) which may be included in the decision of the administrative law judge shall be limited to the sanction expressly provided for in section 502(i) of ERISA. It shall be supported by reliable and probative evidence. The decision of the administrative law judge shall become final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 704 unless an appeal is made pursuant to the procedures set forth in §§2570.10 through 2570.12.

§ 2570.10 Review by the Secretary.

(a) The Secretary may review a decision of an administrative law judge. Such a review may occur only when a party files a notice of appeal from a decision of an administrative law judge within twenty (20) days of the issuance of such decision. In all other cases, the decision of the administrative law judge shall become final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 704.

(b) A notice of appeal to the Secretary shall state with specificity the issue(s) in the decision of the administrative law judge on which the party is

seeking review. Such notice of appeal must be served on all parties of record.

(c) Upon receipt of a notice of appeal, the Secretary shall request the Chief Administrative Law Judge to submit to him a copy of the entire record before the administrative law judge.

§ 2570.11 Scope of review.

The review of the Secretary shall not be a *de novo* proceeding but rather a review of the record established before the administrative law judge. There shall be no opportunity for oral argument.

§ 2570.12 Procedures for review by the Secretary.

(a) Upon receipt of a notice of appeal, the Secretary shall establish a briefing schedule which shall be served on all parties of record. Upon motion of one or more of the parties, the Secretary may, in his discretion, permit the submission of reply briefs.

(b) The Secretary shall issue a decision as promptly as possible after receipt of the briefs of the parties. The Secretary may affirm, modify, or set aside, in whole or in part, the decision on appeal and shall issue a statement of reasons and bases for the action(s) taken. Such decision by the Secretary shall be final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 704.

Subpart B—Procedures for Filing and Processing Prohibited Transaction Exemption Applications

SOURCE: 55 FR 32847, Aug. 10, 1990, unless otherwise noted.

§ 2570.30 Scope of rules.

(a)(1) The rules of procedure set forth in this subpart apply to all applications for exemption which the Department has authority to issue under:

(i) Section 408(a) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA);

(ii) Section 4975(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (the Code) (see Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1978); or

(iii) The Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986 (FERSA) (5 U.S.C. 8477(c)(3)).

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(b) The Department will generally treat any exemption application which is filed solely under section 408(a) of ERISA or solely under section 4975(c)(2) of the Code as an exemption filed under both section 408(a) and section 4975(c)(2) if it relates to a transaction that would be prohibited both by ERISA and by the corresponding provisions of the Code.

(c) The procedures set forth in this subpart represent the exclusive means by which the Department will issue administrative exemptions. The Department will not issue exemptions upon oral request alone. Likewise, the Department will not grant exemptions orally. An applicant for an administrative exemption may request and receive oral advice from Department employees in preparing an exemption application. However, such advice does not constitute part of the administrative record and is not binding on the Department in its processing of an exemption application or in its examination or audit of a plan.

§ 2570.31 Definitions.

For purposes of these procedures, the following definitions apply:

- (a) An *affiliate* of a person means—
 - (1) Any person directly or indirectly through one or more intermediaries, controlling, controlled by, or under common control with the person;
 - (2) Any director of, relative of, or partner in, any such person;
 - (3) Any corporation, partnership, trust, or unincorporated enterprise of which such person is an officer, director, or a 5 percent or more partner or owner; and
 - (4) Any employee or officer of the person who—
 - (i) Is highly compensated (as defined in section 4975(e)(2)(H) of the Code), or
 - (ii) Has direct or indirect authority, responsibility, or control regarding the custody, management, or disposition of plan assets.
- (b) A *class exemption* is an administrative exemption, granted under section 408(a) of ERISA, section 4975(c)(2) of the Code, and/or 5 U.S.C. 8477(c)(3), which applies to any parties in interest within the class of parties in interest specified in the exemption who meet the conditions of the exemption.

(c) *Department* means the U.S. Department of Labor and includes the Secretary of Labor or his delegate exercising authority with respect to prohibited transaction exemptions to which this subpart applies.

(d) *Exemption transaction* means the transaction or transactions for which an exemption is requested.

(e) An *individual exemption* is an administrative exemption, granted under section 408(a) of ERISA, section 4975(c)(2) of the Code, and/or 5 U.S.C. 8477(c)(3), which applies only to the specific parties in interest named or otherwise defined in the exemption.

(f) A *party in interest* means a person described in section 3(14) of ERISA or 5 U.S.C. 8477(a)(4) and includes a *disqualified person*, as defined in section 4975(e)(2) of the Code.

(g) *Pooled fund* means an account or fund for the collective investment of the assets of two or more unrelated plans, including (but not limited to) a pooled separate account maintained by an insurance company and a common or collective trust fund maintained by a bank or similar financial institution.

§ 2570.32 Persons who may apply for exemptions.

(a) The Department may initiate exemption proceedings on its own motion. In addition, the Department will initiate exemption proceedings upon the application of:

- (1) Any party in interest to a plan who is or may be a party to the exemption transaction;
- (2) Any plan which is a party to the exemption transaction; or
- (3) In the case of an application for an exemption covering a class of parties in interest or a class of transactions, in addition to any person described in paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section, an association or organization representing parties in interest who may be parties to the exemption transaction.

(b) An application by or for a person described in paragraph (a) of this section, may be submitted by the applicant or by his authorized representatives. If the application is submitted by a representative of the applicant, the representative must submit proof of his authority in the form of: