

alleging discrimination prohibited by the Act or these regulations occurring after the date of final adoption of this rule. A complainant shall file a complaint within 180 days from the date the complainant first had knowledge of the alleged act of discrimination. However, for good cause showing, FEMA may extend this time limit.

(b) FEMA will consider the date a complaint is filed to be the date upon which the complaint is sufficient to be processed. A complaint is deemed "sufficient" when it contains particulars (e.g., names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parties involved; date(s) of alleged discrimination; kind(s) of alleged discrimination) upon which to begin an investigation.

(c) FEMA will attempt to facilitate the filing of complaints wherever possible, including taking the following measures:

(1) Accepting as a sufficient complaint any written statement which identifies the parties involved and the date the complainant first had knowledge of the alleged violation, describes generally the action or practice complained of, and is signed by the complainant.

(2) Freely permitting a complainant to add information to the complaint to meet the requirements of a sufficient complaint.

(3) Notifying the complainant and the recipient of their rights and obligations under the complaint procedure, including the right to have a representative at all stages of the complaint procedure.

(4) Notifying the complainant and the recipient (or their representatives) of their right to contact FEMA for information and assistance regarding the complaint resolution process.

(d) FEMA will return to the complainant any complaint outside the jurisdiction of this regulation, and will state the reason(s) why it is outside the jurisdiction of this regulation.

#### § 7.942 Mediation.

(a) FEMA will promptly refer to a mediation agency designated by the Director all sufficient complaints that:

(1) Fall within the jurisdiction of the Act and this regulation, unless the age

distinction complained of is clearly within an exception; and,

(2) Contain all information necessary for further processing.

(b) Both the complainant and the recipient shall participate in the mediation process to the extent necessary to reach an agreement or for the mediator to make an informed judgment that an agreement is not possible.

(c) If the complainant and the recipient reach an agreement, the mediator shall prepare a written statement of the agreement and have the complainant and the recipient sign it. The mediator shall send a copy of the agreement to FEMA. FEMA will take no further action on the complaint unless the complainant or the recipient fails to comply with the agreement.

(d) The mediator shall protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of the mediation process. No mediator shall testify in any adjudicative proceeding, produce any document, or otherwise disclose any information obtained in the course of the mediation process without prior approval of the head of the mediation agency.

(e) The mediation will proceed for a maximum of 60 days after a complaint is filed with FEMA. Mediation ends if:

(1) Sixty days elapse from the time the complaint is filed; or

(2) Prior to the end of that 60 day period, an agreement is reached; or

(3) Prior to the end of that 60 day period, the mediator determines that an agreement cannot be reached. This 60 day period may be extended by the mediator, with the concurrence of FEMA, for not more than 30 days if the mediator determines agreement will likely be reached during such extended period.

(f) The mediator shall return unresolved complaints to FEMA.

#### § 7.943 Investigation.

(a) *Informal investigation.* (1) FEMA will investigate complaints that are unresolved after mediation or are reopened because of a violation of a mediation agreement.

(2) As part of the initial investigation, FEMA will use informal fact finding methods, including joint or separate discussion with the complainant