

§ 15.202

§ 15.202 Production or disclosure prohibited unless approved by the Secretary.

(a) Any demand of a court or other authority or any request to an employee of the Department to produce any material contained in the files of the Department, or to disclose any information relating to material contained in the files of the Department, or to disclose any information or produce any material acquired as a part of the performance of the employee's official duties or because of the employee's official status for use in a legal proceeding, shall state with particularity the material sought to be obtained or the information sought to be disclosed.

(b) No employee of the Department shall comply with any such demand or request without the prior approval of the Secretary.

(c) In determining whether to grant approval for an employee of the Department to testify in a legal proceeding, the Secretary shall follow the standards set forth in subpart I.

(d) Where the demand or request seeks only the production of documents, the Department's procedure for authenticating documents by a keeper of the records shall be the Department's method for response. That authentication shall be evidence that the documents are true copies of documents in the Department's files.

[52 FR 12160, Apr. 15, 1987]

§ 15.203 Procedure in the event of a demand for production or disclosure.

(a) Whenever a demand is made upon an employee of the Department for the production of material or the disclosure of information described in § 15.201, the employee shall immediately notify the Secretary and either the General Counsel or the appropriate Regional Counsel. The *appropriate Regional Counsel* shall mean the Regional Counsel for the Regional Office having delegated authority over the project or activity with respect to which the information is sought. If possible, the Secretary shall be notified before the employee concerned replies to or appears before the court or other authority.

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(b) If response to the demand is required before the instructions from the Secretary are received, the U.S. Attorney or such other attorney as may be designated for the purpose, will appear with the employee of the Department upon whom the demand has been made, and will furnish the court or other authority with a copy of the regulations contained in this subpart and inform the court or other authority that the demand has been or is being, as the case may be, referred for prompt consideration of the Secretary. The court or other authority shall be requested respectfully to stay the demand pending receipt of the requested instructions from the Secretary.

[52 FR 12160, Apr. 15, 1987, as amended at 66 FR 6973, Jan. 22, 2001]

§ 15.204 Procedure in the event of an adverse ruling.

If the court or other authority declines to stay the effect of the demand in response to a request made in accordance with § 15.203(b) pending receipt of instructions from the Secretary, or if the court or other authority rules that the demand must be complied with irrespective of the instructions from the Secretary not to produce the material or disclose the information sought, the employee upon whom the demand has been made shall respectfully decline to comply with the demand (*United States ex rel. Toughy v. Ragen*, 340 U.S. 462).

[52 FR 12161, Apr. 15, 1987, as amended at 66 FR 6973, Jan. 22, 2001]

Subpart D—Testimony of Employees in Legal Proceedings

SOURCE: 52 FR 12161, Apr. 15, 1987, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 66 FR 6973, Jan. 22, 2001.

§ 15.301 Purpose.

(a) This subpart prescribes the policies and procedures of the Department with respect to testimony of its employees as witnesses in legal proceedings with respect to material contained in the files of the Department or information learned as part of the performance of their official duties or because of their official status.