

§ 20.26

indebtedness cannot be resolved by review of the documentary evidence, for example, when the validity of the debt turns on an issue of credibility or veracity; or

(3) In other situations in which the agency deems an oral hearing appropriate. Unless otherwise required by law, an oral hearing under this section is not required to be a formal evidentiary-type hearing, although the reviewing official should carefully document all significant matters discussed at the hearing.

(d) Agencies may effect an administrative offset against a payment to be made to a debtor prior to the completion of the due process procedures required by this subpart, if failure to take the offset would substantially prejudice the agency's ability to collect the debt; for example, if the time before the payment is to be made would not reasonably permit the completion of due process procedures. Offset prior to completion of due process procedures must be promptly followed by the completion of those procedures. Amounts recovered by offset but later found not owed to the agency should be promptly refunded.

(e) Upon completion of the review, the reviewing official shall transmit to the debtor a written notification of the decision. If appropriate, this notification shall inform the debtor of the scheduled date on or after which administrative offset will begin. The notification shall also, if appropriate, indicate any changes in the information to the extent such information differs from that provided in the initial notification under § 20.22.

(f) Nothing in this subpart shall preclude an agency, upon request of the debtor alleged by the agency to be responsible for a debt, or on its own initiative, from reviewing the obligation of such debtor, including an opportunity for reconsideration of the determination concerning the debt, and including the accuracy, timeliness, relevance, and completeness of the information on which the debt is based.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1225-0030)

29 CFR Subtitle A (7-1-06 Edition)

§ 20.26 Request for waiver or administrative review.

(a) If the statute under which waiver or administrative review is sought is *mandatory*, that is, if it prohibits the agency from collecting the debt prior to the agency's consideration of the request for waiver or review (see *Califano v. Yamasaki*, 442 U.S. 682 (1979)), then collection action must be suspended until either

(1) The agency has considered the request for waiver/review, or

(2) The applicable time limit for making the waiver/review request, as prescribed in the agency's regulations, has expired and the debtor, upon proper notice, has not made such a request.

(b) If the applicable waiver/review statute is *permissive*, that is, if it does not require all requests for waiver/review to be considered, and if it does not prohibit collection action pending consideration of a waiver/review request (for example, 5 U.S.C. 5584), collection action may be suspended pending agency action on a waiver/review request based upon appropriate consideration, on a case-by-case basis, as to whether:

(1) There is a reasonable possibility that waiver will be granted, or that the debt (in whole or in part) will be found not owing from the debtor;

(2) The Government's interests would be protected, if suspension were granted, by reasonable assurance that the debt could be recovered if the debtor does not prevail; and

(3) Collection of the debt will cause undue hardship.

(c) If the applicable statutes and regulations would not authorize refund by the agency to the debtor of amounts collected prior to agency consideration of the debtor's waiver/review request in the event the agency acts favorably on it, collection action should ordinarily be suspended, without regard to the factors specified in paragraph (b) of this section, unless it appears clear, based on the request and the surrounding circumstances, that the request is frivolous and was made primarily to delay collection.

§ 20.27 Cooperation with other DOL agencies and Federal agencies.

(a) Appropriate use should be made of the cooperative efforts of other DOL

agencies and Federal agencies in effecting collection by administrative offset. Generally, agencies should comply with requests from other agencies to initiate administrative offset to collect debts owed to the United States, unless the requesting agency has not complied with the applicable regulations or the request would otherwise be contrary to law or the best interests of the United States.

(b) Unless otherwise prohibited by law, a DOL agency may request that monies due and payable to a debtor by another DOL agency or a Federal agency outside the Department be administratively offset in order to collect debts owed the creditor DOL agency by the debtor. In requesting an administrative offset, the creditor DOL agency must provide the DOL agency or other Federal agency holding funds of the debtor with written certification stating

(1) That the debtor owes the creditor agency a debt (including the amount of debt); and

(2) That the creditor agency has complied with the applicable Federal Claims Collection Standards, including any hearing or review.

§ 20.28 DOL agency as organization holding funds of the debtor.

(a) Whenever a DOL agency is holding funds of a debtor from which administrative offset is sought by another DOL agency or other Federal agency, the DOL agency holding funds should not initiate the requested offset until it has been provided by the creditor organization with an appropriate written certification that the debtor owes a debt (including the amount) and that applicable provisions of the Federal Claims Collection Standards have been fully complied with.

(b) Moreover, the DOL agency holding funds of the debtor should determine whether collection by offset would be in the best interests of the United States; for example, if the debtor is a contractor for the DOL agency holding funds, whether administrative offset would impair the contractor's ability to perform under the terms of the contract. The creditor organization should be notified promptly of the determination.

§ 20.29 Notice of offset.

Prior to effecting an administrative offset, the agency holding funds of a debtor should advise the debtor of the impending offset. This notice should state that the debtor has been provided his/her rights under the Federal Claims Collection Standards, that a determination has been made that collection by administrative offset would be in the best interests of the United States, the amount of the offset, and the source of funds from which the offset will be made.

§ 20.30 Multiple debts.

When collecting multiple debts by administrative offset, agencies should apply the recovered amounts to those debts, in accordance with the best interests of the United States, as determined by the facts and circumstances of the particular case, paying special attention to applicable statutes of limitations.

§ 20.31 Administrative offset against amounts payable from Civil Service Retirement and Disability fund.

(a) Unless otherwise prohibited by law, agencies may request that moneys which are due and payable to a debtor from the Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund be administratively offset in reasonable amounts in order to collect debts owed to the United States by the debtor. Such requests shall be made to the appropriate officials of the Office of Personnel Management in accordance with such regulations as may be prescribed by the Director of that Office.

(b) When making a request for administrative offset under paragraph (a) of this section, an agency shall include a written certification that:

(1) The debtor owes the United States a debt, including the amount of the debt;

(2) The requesting agency has complied with all applicable statutes, regulations, and procedures of the Office of Personnel Management; and

(3) The requesting agency has complied with the requirements of the applicable provisions of the Federal Claims Collection Standards, including any required hearing or review.