

basis to a request for an informal hearing, he/she must serve the objection, a copy of the Notice of Claim, and a copy of respondent's reply, on the respondent and Assistant Administrator, pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section. Based upon the Notice of Claim, the reply, and the objection with basis, the Assistant Administrator will issue an order granting or denying the request for informal hearing.

(A) *Informal hearing granted.* If the request for informal hearing is granted by the Assistant Administrator, a Hearing Officer will be assigned to hear the matter and will set forth the date, time and location for hearing. No further motions will be entertained, and no discovery will be allowed. At hearing, all parties may present evidence, written and oral, to the Hearing Officer, following which the Hearing Officer will issue a report to the Assistant Administrator containing findings of fact and recommending a disposition of the matter. The report will serve as the sole record of the proceedings. The Assistant Administrator may issue a Final Agency Order adopting the report, or issue other such orders as he/she may deem appropriate. By participating in an informal hearing, respondent waives its right to a formal hearing.

(B) *Informal hearing denied.* If the request for informal hearing is denied, the Field Administrator must serve a motion for Final Agency Order pursuant to §386.36, unless otherwise directed by the Assistant Administrator. The motion must set forth the reasons why the Field Administrator is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. Respondent must, within 45 days of service of the motion for Final Agency Order, submit and serve a response to the Field Administrator's motion. After reviewing the record, the Assistant Administrator will set the matter for formal hearing by referral to the Office of Hearings, or will issue a Final Agency Order based upon the submissions.

(C) Nothing in this section shall limit the Assistant Administrator's authority to refer any matter for formal hearing, even in instances where respondent seeks only an informal hearing.

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§ 386.17 Intervention.

After the matter is called for hearing and before the date set for the hearing to begin, any person may petition for leave to intervene. The petition is to be served on the administrative law judge. The petition must set forth the reasons why the petitioner alleges he/she is entitled to intervene. The petition must be served on all parties in accordance with §386.31. Any party may file a response within 10 days of service of the petition. The administrative law judge shall then determine whether to permit or deny the petition. The petition will be allowed if the administrative law judge determines that the final decision could directly and adversely affect the petitioner or the class he/she represents, and if the petitioner may contribute materially to the disposition of the proceedings and his/her interest is not adequately represented by existing parties. Once admitted, a petitioner is a party for the purpose of all subsequent proceedings.

§ 386.18 Payment of the claim.

(a) Payment of the full amount claimed may be made at any time before issuance of a Final Agency Order. After the issuance of a Final Agency Order, claims are subject to interest, penalties, and administrative charges in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3717; 49 CFR part 89; and 31 CFR 901.9.

(b) If respondent elects to pay the full amount as its response to the Notice of Claim, payment must be served upon the Field Administrator at the Service Center designated in the Notice of Claim within 30 days following service of the Notice of Claim. No written reply is necessary if respondent elects the payment option during the 30-day reply period. Failure to serve full payment within 30 days of service of the Notice of Claim when this option has been chosen may constitute a default and may result in the Notice of Claim, including the civil penalty assessed by the Notice of Claim, becoming the Final Agency Order in the proceeding pursuant to §386.14(c).

(c) Unless objected to in writing, submitted at the time of payment, payment of the full amount in response to the Notice of Claim constitutes an admission by the respondent of all facts

alleged in the Notice of Claim. Payment waives respondent's opportunity to further contest the claim, and will result in the Notice of Claim becoming the Final Agency Order.

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Subpart C—Settlement Agreements

§ 386.22 Settlement agreements and their contents.

(a) *Settlement agreements.* (1) When negotiations produce an agreement as to the amount or terms of payment of a civil penalty or the terms and conditions of an order, a settlement agreement shall be drawn and signed by the respondent and the Field Administrator or his/her designee. Such settlement agreement must contain the following:

- (i) The statutory basis of the claim;
- (ii) A brief statement of the violations;
- (iii) The amount claimed and the amount paid;
- (iv) The date, time, and place and form of payment;
- (v) A statement that the agreement is not binding on the Agency until executed by the Field Administrator or his/her designee;
- (vi) A statement that failure to pay in accordance with the terms of the agreement or to comply with the terms of the agreement may result in the reinstatement of any penalties held in abeyance and may also result in the loss of any reductions in civil penalties asserted in the Notice of Claim, in which case the original amount asserted will be due immediately; and
- (vii) A statement that the agreement is the Final Agency Order.

(2) A settlement agreement may contain any conditions, actions, or provisions agreed by the parties to redress the violations cited in the Notice of Claim or notice of violation.

(3) A settlement agreement accepted and approved by the Assistant Administrator or Administrative Law Judge is a Final Agency Order which is binding on all parties according to its terms. Consent to a settlement agreement which has not yet been approved by the Assistant Administrator or Ad-

ministrative Law Judge may not be withdrawn for a period of 30 days.

(b) *Civil Penalty Proceedings not before Agency Decisionmaker.* When the parties have agreed to a settlement at any time prior to the case coming before the Agency decisionmaker, the parties may execute an appropriate agreement for disposing of the case. The agreement does not require approval by the Agency decisionmaker. The agreement becomes the Final Agency Order upon execution by the Field Administrator or his/her designee.

(c) *Civil Penalty Proceedings before Agency Decisionmaker.* When a respondent has agreed to a settlement of a civil penalty before a Final Agency Order has been issued, the parties may execute an appropriate agreement for disposal of the case by consent for the consideration of the Assistant Administrator. The agreement is filed with the Assistant Administrator, who may accept it, reject it and direct that proceedings in the case continue, or take such other action as he/she deems appropriate. If the Assistant Administrator accepts the agreement, he/she shall enter an order in accordance with its terms. The settlement agreement becomes the Final Agency Order as of the date the Assistant Administrator enters an order accepting the settlement agreement.

(d) *Civil Penalty Proceedings before Administrative Law Judge (ALJ).* When a respondent has agreed to a settlement of a civil penalty before the hearing is concluded, the parties may execute an appropriate agreement for disposing of the case by consent for the consideration of the ALJ. The agreement is filed with the ALJ who may accept it, reject it, and direct that proceedings in the case continue, or take such other action as he/she deems appropriate. If the ALJ accepts the agreement, he/she shall enter an order in accordance with its terms. The settlement agreement becomes the Final Agency Order as per § 386.61.

(e) *Civil Penalty Proceedings before Hearing Officer.* When a respondent has agreed to a settlement of a civil penalty before the hearing is concluded, the parties may execute an appropriate agreement for disposal of the case for