

§ 1210.30

subject to paragraph (b)(2) of this section, determines, in its sole, exclusive, and unreviewable discretion, that the return or presence of the employee would be unduly disruptive to the work environment.

(2) If the Department makes a determination under paragraph (b)(1)(ii) of this section that prevents the return or presence of an employee at the place of employment, such employee must receive pay, compensation, and all other benefits as terms and conditions of employment pending the outcome of any petition for review.

(3) Nothing in the provisions of this section may be construed to require that any award of back pay or attorney fees be paid before the decision is final.

Subpart C—Petitions for Review of Initial Decisions and Petitions for Reconsideration

§ 1210.30 Filing petition and cross petition for review.

(a) *Who may file.* Any party to the proceeding or the Director may file a petition for review of the decision by the adjudicating official. The Director may request review when he or she believes that the decision is erroneous and will have a substantial impact on a civil service law, rule, regulation or policy directive. All submissions to the Board must contain the signature of the party or of the party's designated representative. The requirements for an electronic signature are set forth in 5 CFR 1201.14(i).

(b) *Time for filing.* Any petition for review must be filed within 30 days after receipt of the initial decision. Absent evidence to the contrary, the Board presumes that a decision delivered by regular mail is received by the addressee 5 days after its issuance. If regular mail is not delivered on the fifth day following the issuance of the decision, the presumed date of receipt is the next date on which mail is delivered. A cross petition for review must be filed within 25 days of the date of service of the petition for review. Any response to a petition for review or to a cross petition for review must be filed within 25 days after the date of service of the petition or cross peti-

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tion. The Board may extend the filing period for good cause shown.

(c) *Place for filing.* A petition for review, cross petition for review, responses to those petitions, and all motions and pleadings associated with them must be filed with the Clerk of the Merit Systems Protection Board, Washington, DC 20419, by commercial or personal delivery, by facsimile, by mail, or by electronic filing in accordance with 5 CFR 1201.14.

(d) *Time for decision by the Board.* MSPB must render its decision no later than 90 days after the close of the record before MSPB on petition for review as defined in 5 CFR 1201.114(i).

(e) *Effect of late decision.* The Board's failure to meet the requirement that decisions be rendered no later than 90 days after the close of the record will not prejudice any party to the case and will not form the basis for any legal action by any party. See 5 CFR 9701.706(1).

§ 1210.31 OPM petition for reconsideration.

(a) If the Director seeks reconsideration of a final Board order, the Board must render its decision no later than 60 days after receipt of the opposition to the Director's petition in support of such reconsideration. The Board's failure to meet this requirement will not prejudice any party to the case and will not form the basis for any legal action by any party. See 5 CFR 9701.706(1).

(b) The Board shall state the reasons for any decision rendered in response to a petition for reconsideration filed by the Director.

Subpart D—Review of Mandatory Removal Action Appeals

§ 1210.40 Filing a request for Board review.

(a) *Who may file.* Any party to the proceeding or OPM may file a request for review. All submissions to the Board must contain the signature of the party or of the party's designated representative. The requirements for an electronic signature are set forth in 5 CFR 1201.14(i).

(b) *Time for filing.* Any request for review must be filed within 15 days after issuance of the MRP's decision. Any

party's response to the request for review, cross request for review, or OPM's request for review must be filed within 15 days of the Board's receipt of the request for review. If OPM does not file a request for review, it may intervene within 15 days after MSPB's receipt of a request for review of the record. A party or OPM may submit, and the Board may grant for good cause shown, a request for a single extension of time not to exceed 15 days.

(c) *Record for review.* The Board will establish, in conjunction with the MRP, standards for the contents of the record and the administrative process for review, including notice to the parties and OPM and procedures for the transfer of records from the Department to the Board.

§ 1210.41 Decision of the Board.

(a) *Board review of an MRP decision.* The Board must accept the findings of fact and interpretations of law of the MRP and sustain the MRP's decision unless the party appealing the MRP's decision shows that the MRP's decision was:

- (1) Arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with law;
- (2) Caused by harmful error in the application of the MRP's procedures in arriving at such decision; or
- (3) Unsupported by substantial evidence.

(b) *Definitions.* The following definitions apply to this part:

(1) *Harmful error.* Error by the MRP in the application of its procedures that is likely to have caused it to reach a conclusion different from the one it would have reached in the absence or cure of the error. The burden is upon the party appealing the MRP's decision to show that the error was harmful, *i.e.*, that it caused substantial harm or prejudice to his or her rights.

(2) *Substantial evidence.* The degree of relevant evidence that a reasonable person, considering the record as a whole, might accept as adequate to support a conclusion, even though other reasonable persons might disagree. This is a lower standard of proof than preponderance of the evidence.

(c)(1) *Mandatory time limit for decision.* The Board must complete its review of

the record and issue a final decision within 30 days after receiving any party's response to the request for review, cross request for review, or OPM's intervention brief, whichever is filed later. The Board may extend the period for review by a single extension of time not to exceed 15 days, if it determines that:

- (i) The case is unusually complex; or
 - (ii) An extension is necessary to prevent any prejudice to the parties that would otherwise result.
- (2) No further extension of time will be permitted.

§ 1210.42 Intervenors.

The Director may intervene as a matter of right under 5 CFR 9701.707(f) or otherwise participate in any proceeding brought under this subpart, if the Director believes that an erroneous decision will have a substantial impact on a civil service law, rule, regulation, or policy directive.

§ 1210.43 Finality.

Final decision of the Board. A decision of the Board on a request for review of an MRP decision shall constitute a final decision subject to judicial review in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 7703.

§ 1210.44 Request for reconsideration.

A decision of the Board under this subpart is final unless the Director petitions the Board for review within 30 days after the receipt of the decision. The Director may petition the Board for review only if he or she believes the decision is erroneous and will have a substantial impact on a civil service law, rule, regulation, or policy directive. The Board may extend the filing period for good cause shown.

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