(2) Shall state any defense on which the defendant intends to rely;

(3) May state any reasons why the defendant contends that the penalties and assessments should be less than the statutory maximum; and

(4) Shall state the name, address, and telephone number of the person authorized by the defendant to act as defendant's representative, if any.

(c) If the defendant is unable to file an answer meeting the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section within the time provided, the defendant may, before the expiration of 30 days from service of the complaint, file with the reviewing official a general answer denying liability and requesting a hearing, and a request for an extension of time within which to file an answer meeting the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section. The reviewing official shall file promptly with the ALJ the complaint, the general answer denying liability, and the request for an extension of time as provided in § 224.11. For good cause shown, the ALJ may grant the defendant up to 30 additional days within which to file an answer meeting the requirements of paragraph (b) of this section.

§ 224.10 Default upon failure to file an answer.

(a) If the defendant does not file an answer within the time prescribed in § 224.9(a), the reviewing official may refer the complaint to the ALJ.

(b) Upon the referral of the complaint, the ALJ shall promptly serve on defendant in the manner prescribed in § 224.8, a notice that an initial decision will be issued under this section.

(c) The ALJ shall assume the facts alleged in the complaint to be true, and, if such facts establish liability under § 224.3, the ALJ shall issue an initial decision imposing the maximum amount of penalties and assessments allowed under the statute.

(d) Except as otherwise provided in this section, by failing to file a timely answer, the defendant waives any right to further review of the penalties and assessments imposed under paragraph (c) of this section, and the initial decision shall become final and binding upon the parties 30 days after it is issued.

(e) If, before such an initial decision becomes final, the defendant files a motion with the ALJ seeking to reopen on the grounds that extraordinary circumstances prevented the defendant from filing an answer, the initial decision shall be stayed pending the ALJ's decision on the motion.

(f) If, on such motion, the defendant can demonstrate extraordinary circumstances excusing the failure to file a timely answer the ALJ shall withdraw the initial decision in paragraph (c) of this section, if such a decision has been issued, and shall grant the defendant an opportunity to answer the complaint.

(g) A decision of the ALJ denying defendant's motion under paragraph (e) of this section is not subject to reconsideration under § 224.38.

(h) The defendant may appeal to the A.I.D. Administrator the decision denying a motion to reopen by filing a notice of appeal with the A.I.D. Administrator within 15 days after the ALJ denies the motion. The timely filing of a notice of appeal shall stay the initial decision until the A.I.D. Administrator decides the issue.

(i) If the defendant files a timely notice of appeal with the A.I.D. Administrator, the ALJ shall forward the record of the proceeding to the A.I.D. Administrator.

(j) The A.I.D. Administrator shall decide expeditiously whether extraordinary circumstances excuse the defendant's failure to file a timely answer based solely on the record before the ALJ.

(k) If the A.I.D. Administrator decides that extraordinary circumstances excused the defendant's failure to file a timely answer, the A.I.D. Administrator shall remand the case to the ALJ with instructions to grant the defendant an opportunity to answer.

(l) If the A.I.D. Administrator decides that the defendant's failure to file a timely answer is not excused, the A.I.D. Administrator shall reinstate the initial decision of the ALJ, which shall become final and binding upon the parties 30 days after the A.I.D. Administrator issues such decision.