

## § 19.6-10

## 22 CFR Ch. I (4-1-01 Edition)

circumstances, shall be in whole dollars.

(c) In honoring and complying with a court order, the Department shall not be required to disrupt the scheduled method of accruing retirement benefits or the normal timing for making such payments, despite the existence of any special schedule relating to a previous spouse or other beneficiary.

(d) In cases where the court order apportions a percentage of the retirement benefits, PER/ER/RET will initially determine the amount of proper payment. That amount will only be increased by future cost-of-living increases unless the court directs otherwise.

### § 19.6-10 Liability.

(a) The Department shall not be liable for any payment made from retirement benefits pursuant to a court order if such payment is made in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(b) In the event that the Secretary is served with more than one court order with respect to the same retirement benefits, the benefits shall be available to satisfy the court orders on a first-come, first-served basis.

(c) A previous spouse or other beneficiary may request that an amount be withheld from the retirement benefits of a principal or survivor of a principal which is less than the amount stipulated in a court order, or otherwise scheduled to be paid to the beneficiary under this chapter. This lower amount will be deemed a complete fulfillment of the obligation of the Department for the period in which the request is in effect. See § 19.14.

### § 19.7 Spousal agreements.

#### § 19.7-1 Purpose.

A spousal agreement may be used by both parties to establish an agreed-upon level of benefits to a spouse or a former spouse and to relieve the participant of responsibility for providing a higher level of benefits.

#### § 19.7-2 Agreement with spouse.

(a) A spousal agreement between a participant and a spouse may waive or fix the level of a regular survivor annu-

ity under § 19.11-3. If an agreement is filed, it will assure the spouse that the agreed-upon level of survivor annuity will be paid, irrespective of a future divorce provided the survivor meets the definition of "former spouse" in § 19.2(k). If an agreement is not filed, the participant's annuity will be reduced under § 19.10-2 to provide the maximum regular survivor annuity for the spouse, but in the event of a future divorce if the spouse meets the definition of "former spouse," that person will be entitled only to a pro rata share of the survivor annuity. An agreement under this paragraph may be filed with PER/ER/RET at any time prior to retirement (commencement of the principal's annuity).

(b) A spousal agreement between an annuitant and a spouse filed with PER/ER/RET before commencement of a supplemental annuity for recall service may waive a supplemental survivor annuity that would otherwise be provided for a spouse under § 19.10-6.

(c) A spousal agreement between a participant or former participant and a spouse may be filed with PER/ER/RET at any time in accordance with § 19.10-5 and provide for an additional survivor annuity for the spouse.

(d) A spousal agreement filed under paragraph (a), (b), or (c) remains valid and binding in the event of divorce if the spouse qualifies as a former spouse.

#### § 19.7-3 Agreement with former spouse.

(a) A spousal agreement between a participant or former participant and a former spouse may waive, reduce or increase the following benefits for a former spouse;

(1) A pension under § 19.9;

(2) A regular survivor annuity under § 19.11-2;

(3) A supplemental survivor annuity under § 19.10-6;

(4) A lump sum payment for regular or recall service under § 19.13.

A spousal agreement shall also be used by a participant or former participant who has a former spouse on February 15, 1981, to elect a regular survivor annuity for such former spouse in accordance with § 19.11-2(e). An agreement to establish or increase any benefit for a former spouse entered into while the

principal is married to someone else, must be signed and agreed to by both the spouse and the former spouse. An agreement affecting pension benefits may be filed at any time and will govern payments made after its acceptance by PER/ER/RET. An agreement affecting a regular survivor annuity must be filed before the end of the 12-month period after the divorce involving that former spouse or at the time of retirement, whichever occurs first, except as authorized in §19.11-2(b) for persons retired on February 15, 1981, or in §19.11-2(e) with respect to persons who were former spouses on February 15, 1981. This filing requirement stated in the Act makes it impossible to adjust, other than by court order, a regular survivor annuity for a former spouse when the divorce occurs after a retirement which occurs on or after February 15, 1981. The survivor annuity for the former spouse in such case is fixed by any spousal agreement entered into prior to the divorce, by §19.11-2 or by court order. An agreement affecting supplemental survivor benefits or lump-sum payments must be filed before the supplemental annuity of the principal begins or lump-sum payment is made.

(b) A spousal agreement between a participant or former participant and a former spouse may be filed with PER/ER/RET at any time in accordance with §19.10-5 to provide an additional survivor annuity for the former spouse.

#### § 19.7-4 Form of agreement.

(a) A spousal agreement is any legal agreement between the parties accepted by PER/ER/RET as meeting the requirements of this section. If in accordance with the regulations, PER/ER/RET will accept as a valid spousal agreement a property settlement agreed to by the parties and approved by a court regardless of the date of the agreement.

(b) A spousal agreement must either be authenticated by a court or notarized.

#### § 19.7-5 Limitations.

(a) A spousal agreement may not provide for any payment from the Fund in excess of the amount otherwise authorized to be paid, or at a time not author-

ized by these regulations, or to a person other than a spouse or former spouse.

(b) A spousal agreement must be filed with the Department, Attention PER/ER/RET, and accepted by that office as in conformance with the Act and these regulations prior to the times specified in §§19.7-2 and 19.7-3. That office will provide advice to the parties on the validity of any proposed agreement and on proper format.

(c) A spousal agreement may apply only to payments from the Fund for periods after receipt of a valid agreement by the Department.

(d) Paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of §§19.6-9 and 19.6-10 apply to spousal agreements and payments made pursuant to spousal agreements to the same extent that they apply to court orders and court ordered payments.

#### § 19.7-6 Duration and precedence of spousal agreements.

(a) A spousal agreement may be revised or voided by agreement of the parties (by filing a new agreement under this section) at any time prior to the last day for filing an agreement determined in accordance with §19.7-2 or §19.7-3, except spousal agreements for additional survivor annuities are irrevocable. After the last day for filing a particular agreement, such agreement is irrevocable.

(b) A valid spousal agreement entered into subsequent to the issuance of a court order affecting the same parties will override the court order, and shall govern payments from the Fund.

(c) A spousal agreement may not override a previous spousal agreement involving the same principal but a different spouse or former spouse without agreement of such spouse or former spouse.

#### § 19.8 Obligations of members.

Participants and former participants are obligated by the Act and these regulations to provide the following benefits to others and must accept the necessary reductions in their own retirement benefits to meet these obligations:

(a) A pension to a former spouse pursuant to §19.9;