

Department of State

§ 17.5

(e) *Secretary* means the Secretary of State.

§ 17.2 General provisions.

Section 822(d) of the Act (22 U.S.C. 1076(d)) provides recovery of overpayments by the Department of State of benefits to annuitants may not be made when, in the judgment of the Secretary, the individual recipient is without fault and recovery would be against equity and good conscience or administratively infeasible. This part establishes procedures for notification to annuitants of their rights, for administrative determination of those rights and for appeals of negative determinations. This part also establishes procedures by which an annuitant can contest a determination that the annuitant has been overpaid.

§ 17.3 Notice to annuitants.

The Office of Finance, Department of State, shall give written notification to any person who has received an overpayment, the cause of the overpayment, the intention of the Department to seek repayment of the overpayment, and the basis for that action, the right of the annuitant to contest the alleged overpayment or to request a waiver of recovery, and the procedure to follow in case of such contest or appeal. The notification shall allow at least 30 days from its date within which the annuitant may file a written response, which may include evidence, argument, or both.

§ 17.4 Initial determination.

(a) The Director of the Office of Finance will be responsible for preparing an administrative file as a basis for determination in each case where an annuitant contests a claim to recover overpayment or requests waiver of recovery. This file shall include: all correspondence with the annuitant; documentation on the computation of the annuity or annuities in question; and any information available to the Department which bears on the application of the standards of waiver of recovery to the particular case.

(b) On the basis of the administrative file, the Director, after consultation with and review of the preliminary findings by the Office of the Legal Ad-

viser and Office of Employee Relations, Bureau of Personnel, shall prepare a preliminary finding. This preliminary finding shall contain a positive or negative determination on all material issues raised by the contest or request for waiver. In the latter case, there shall be a determination of the applicability or non-applicability of each of the standards set forth in § 17.5.

(c) The Director shall make the final administrative determination.

(d) At any time before the final administrative decision, the Director may request the annuitant to supplement his or her submission with additional factual information and may request that the annuitant authorize the Department of State to have access to bank and other financial records bearing on the application of these regulations.

§ 17.5 Standards.

(a) *General.* (1) Waiver of overpayment will not be allowed in any case prior to receipt and evaluation of a statement of financial responsibility, duly sworn by the recipient of the overpayment, except in those cases where the facts make it obvious that the individual has no capacity to repay. Such statement will be waived in the latter case.

(2) Waiver of overpayment will not be allowed when overpayment has been made to an estate.

(b) *Fault.* (1) Determinations of "fault" or the absence thereof, will be made according to the commonly understood and standard concepts of equity applicable thereto.

(2) A prerequisite to waiver of overpayment shall be clear and convincing showing that the person from whom recovery would otherwise be made did not cause, or was not otherwise responsible for the overpayment, i.e., he or she performed no act of commission or omission that resulted in the overpayment. Pertinent consideration to be made in this area are:

(i) Whether payment resulted from the individual's incorrect (not necessarily fraudulent) statement.

(ii) Whether he or she knew the payment was erroneous and, if so, whether his or her subsequent failure to act resulted from desire or ignorance.