

§ 1261.405

(2) If it were found that there is no such indication of fraud, the presentation of a false claim, or misrepresentation, return the claim to the official from whom it was received.

§ 1261.405 Subdivision of claims not authorized; other administrative proceedings.

(a) *Subdivision of claims.* Claims may not be subdivided to avoid the \$20,000 ceiling, exclusive of interest, penalties, and administrative costs, for purposes of compromise (§ 1261.414) or suspension or termination of collection (§ 1261.416). The debtor's liability arising from a particular transaction or contract shall be considered a single claim (4 CFR 101.6).

(b) Required administrative proceedings. Nothing contained in these regulations is intended to require NASA to omit, foreclose, or duplicate administrative proceedings required by contract or other applicable laws and implementing regulations (4 CFR 101.7).

§ 1261.406 Aggressive collection action; documentation.

(a) NASA shall take aggressive action, on a timely basis with effective followup, to collect all claims of the United States for money or property arising out of NASA activities, and to cooperate with the other Federal agencies in debt collection activities.

(b) All administrative collection action shall be documented and the bases for compromise, or for termination or suspension of collection action, should be set out in detail. Such documentation, including the Claims Collection Litigation Report under § 1261.417(e), should be retained in the appropriate claims file.

§ 1261.407 Demand for payment; limitation periods.

(a) Appropriate written demands shall be made promptly upon a debtor of the United States in terms which inform the debtor of the consequences of failure to cooperate. A total of three progressively stronger written demands at not more than 30-day intervals will normally be made unless a response to the first or second demand indicates that a further demand would

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be futile and the debtor's response does not require rebuttal. In determining the timing of demand letters, NASA will give due regard to the need to act promptly so that, as a general rule, if necessary to refer the debt to the Department of Justice for litigation, such referral can be made within one year of the agency's final determination of the fact and the amount of the debt. When necessary to protect the Government's interests (for example, to prevent the statute of limitations, 28 U.S.C. 2415, from expiring), written demand may be preceded by other appropriate actions, including immediate referral for litigation.

(b) The initial demand letter should inform the debtor of:

(1) The basis for the indebtedness and whatever rights the debtor may have to seek review within the agency;

(2) The applicable standards for assessing interest, penalties, and administrative costs (§ 1261.412); and

(3) The date by which payment is to be made, which normally should be not more than 30 days from the date that the initial demand letter was mailed or hand delivered. The responsible official should exercise care to ensure that demand letters are mailed or hand delivered on the same day that they are actually dated. Apart from these requirements, there is no prescribed format for demand letters. However, as appropriate to the circumstances, the responsible official may consider including, either in the initial demand letter or in subsequent letters, such items the NASA's willingness to discuss alternative methods of payment, or intentions with respect to referral of the debt to the Department of Justice for litigation.

(c) NASA should respond promptly to communications from the debtor, within 30 days whenever feasible, and should advise debtors who dispute the debt to furnish available evidence to support their contentions.

(d) If either prior to the initiation of, any time during, or after completion of the demand cycle, a determination to pursue offset is made, then the procedures specified in subparts 1261.5 and

1261.6, as applicable, should be followed. The availability of funds for offset and NASA's determination to pursue it release the agency from the necessity of further compliance with paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section. If the agency has not already sent the first demand letter, the agency's written notification of its intent to offset must give the debtor the opportunity to make voluntary payment, a requirement which will be satisfied by compliance with the notice requirements of § 1261.502 or § 1261.603(a), as applicable.

(e) NASA should undertake personal interviews with its debtors whenever this is feasible, having regard for the amounts involved and the proximity of agency representatives to such debtors; and may attempt to effect compromise of the claim in accordance with § 1261.414.

(f) When a debtor is employed by the Federal government or is a member of the military establishment or the Coast Guard, and collection by offset cannot be accomplished in accordance with subpart 1261.6, the employing agency will be contacted for the purpose of arranging with the debtor for payment of the indebtedness by allotment or otherwise in accordance with section 206 of Executive Order 11222, May 8, 1965, 30 FR 6469, which provides that: "An employee is expected to meet all just financial obligations, especially those—such as Federal, State, or local taxes—which are imposed by law" (4 CFR 102.81).

§ 1261.408 Use of consumer reporting agency.

(a) The term *consumer reporting agency* has the meaning provided in the Federal Claims Collection Act of 1966, as amended (31 U.S.C. 3701(a)(3)):

(1) A consumer reporting agency as that term is defined in section 603(f) of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. 1681a(f)); or

(2) A person that, for money or on a cooperative basis, regularly—

(i) Gets information on consumers to give the information to a consumer reporting agency; or

(ii) Serves as a marketing agent under an arrangement allowing a third

party to get the information from a consumer reporting agency.

(b) NASA Headquarters Financial Management Division, shall be the focal contact between NASA and consumer reporting agencies. The following procedures shall apply when such agencies are employed by NASA:

(1) After the appropriate notice pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(e)(4) has been published, NASA may disclose, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(12), information about a debtor to a consumer reporting agency. Such information may include:

(i) That a claim has been determined to be valid and is overdue (including violation by debtor of a repayment plan or other claim settlement agreement);

(ii) The name, address, taxpayer identification number, and any other information necessary to establish the identity of the individual responsible for the claim;

(iii) Amount, status, and history of the claim;

(iv) Program or pertinent activity under which the claim arose.

(2) Before disclosing the information specified in paragraph (b)(1) of this section, NASA shall comply with 31 U.S.C. 3711(f) by:

(i) Taking reasonable action to locate the individual if a current address is not available;

(ii) If a current address is available, noticing the individual by certified mail, return receipt requested, that: The designated NASA official has reviewed the claim and determined that it is valid and overdue; within not less than 60 days after sending this notice, NASA intends to disclose to a consumer reporting agency the specific information to be disclosed under paragraph (b)(1) of this section; the individual may request a complete explanation of the claim, dispute the information in the records of NASA about the claim, and file for an administrative review or repeal of the claim or for reconsideration of the initial decision on the claim.

(3) If an administrative review or reconsideration is requested, the responsible official or designee shall refer the request to the appropriate NASA legal