

(c) Whenever a civil penalty has been assessed under these regulations, and whether or not such penalty has been paid, the Secretary may request the Attorney General to institute a civil action in an appropriate United States District Court to compel forfeiture of such seized property or the monetary value thereof to the Secretary for disposition by him in such manner as he deems appropriate. If no judicial action to compel forfeiture is commenced within 30 days after final decision-making assessment of a civil penalty, pursuant to §216.60, such seized property shall immediately be returned to the respondent.

(d) If the final decision of the Secretary under these regulations is that respondent has committed no violation of the MMPA or of any permit or regulations issued thereunder, any marine mammal, marine mammal product, or other cargo seized from respondent in connection with the proceedings under these regulations, or the bond or other monetary value substituted therefor, shall immediately be returned to the respondent.

(e) If the Attorney General commences criminal proceedings pursuant to section 105(b) of the MMPA, and such proceedings result in a finding that the person accused is not guilty of a criminal violation of the MMPA, the Secretary may institute proceedings for the assessment of a civil penalty under this part: *Provided*, That if no such civil penalty proceedings have been commenced by the Secretary within 30 days following the final disposition of the criminal case, any property seized pursuant to section 107 of the MMPA shall be returned to the respondent.

(f) If any seized property is to be returned to the respondent, the Regional Director shall issue a letter authorizing such return. This letter shall be dispatched to the respondent by registered mail, return receipt requested, and shall identify the respondent, the seized property, and, if appropriate, the bailee of the seized property. It shall also provide that upon presentation of the letter and proper identification, the seized property is authorized to be released. All charges for storage, care, or handling of the seized property ac-

cruing 5 days or more after the date of the return receipt shall be for the account of the respondent: *Provided*, That if it is the final decision of the Secretary under these regulations that the respondent has committed the alleged violation, all charges which have accrued for the storage, care, or handling of the seized property shall be for the account of the respondent.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974. Redesignated at 46 FR 61652, Dec. 18, 1981, and amended at 59 FR 50375, Oct. 3, 1994]

§216.7 Holding and bonding.

(a) Any marine mammal, marine mammal product, or other cargo seized pursuant to section 107 of the MMPA shall be delivered to the appropriate Regional Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service (see §201.2 of this title) or his designee, who shall either hold such seized property or arrange for the proper handling and care of such seized property.

(b) Any arrangement for the handling and care of seized property shall be in writing and shall state the compensation to be paid. Subpart F of 15 CFR part 904 contains additional procedures that govern seized property that is subject to forfeiture or has been forfeited under the MMPA.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974. Redesignated at 46 FR 61652, Dec. 18, 1981, and amended at 50 FR 12785, Apr. 1, 1985; 59 FR 50375, Oct. 3, 1994]

§216.8 Enforcement officers.

Enforcement Agents of the National Marine Fisheries Service shall enforce the provisions of the MMPA and may take any actions authorized by the MMPA with respect to enforcement. In addition, the Secretary may utilize, by agreement, the personnel, services, and facilities of any other Federal Agency for the purposes of enforcing this MMPA. Pursuant to the terms of section 107(b) of the MMPA, the Secretary may also designate officers and employees of any State or of any possession of the United States to enforce the provisions of this MMPA.

[39 FR 1852, Jan. 15, 1974. Redesignated at 46 FR 61652, Dec. 18, 1981, and amended at 59 FR 50375, Oct. 3, 1994]