



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240



APR 28 1994

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 94-7 (582)

SUBJECT: Departmental Policy on Garnishment of Employee Salaries

This Personnel Management Letter establishes the Department's policy on garnishment of employee salaries as the result of Public Law 103-94. This law permits commercial garnishment of the salaries of Federal employees, whereas previously garnishment was permitted only in child support and alimony cases. This policy is issued to supplement Office of Personnel Management (OPM) regulations published on March 29, 1994, in 59 Federal Register 14541.

When a garnishment order is received, it should be forwarded without delay to the Chief, Payroll Operations Division (POD), Administrative Service Center, Bureau of Reclamation, in Denver, Colorado. We are requesting OPM to revise 5 CFR 581 and 5 CFR 582 to designate the Chief, POD, as agent for service of process.

As the Department's agent, the Chief, POD, Administrative Service Center, has the following responsibilities, which may be delegated within the Division:

1. In consultation with the Office of the Solicitor, make a substantive determination regarding the acceptability of the garnishment order;
2. Notify the employee of the garnishment as soon as possible, but no later than fifteen days after service, and provide specific information concerning withholdings, effective dates, etc.;

Establish time frames within which various actions are required once an acceptable order is served;

Identify the offices or officials responsible for meeting these time frames; and

Publish procedures in the Payroll Client Interface Manual.


INQUIRIES: Division of Employee Relations, Mail Stop 5203

Administrative Fee Structure

Fees received from payees by the Department will be credited to the overall administrative fee charged for processing the garnishment. There will be a one-time charge of \$30.00 per garnishment regardless of the size of the judgment. All administrative fees will be collected separately from and in addition to the garnished amount. This fee structure will be re-evaluated after a sufficient time period to assure its validity.

Miscellaneous Provisions

1. The agent will develop standard language for use in employee notices.
2. Employees under garnishment may not increase their Federal or state tax withholdings (Form W-4) without certification by the taxing authority that the withholdings are necessary to meet valid tax liabilities.
3. In cases of multiple garnishments on an employee, the agent will process garnishments in the order received and in accordance with applicable state law, except that child support or alimony garnishments shall have priority over commercial garnishments.


Patricia Hastings
Acting Director of Personnel