

§ 1210.22

owed to the United States. The activities covered include: Collecting claims in any amount; compromising claims, or suspending or terminating the collection of claims that do not exceed \$20,000 exclusive of interest and charges; and referring debts that cannot be disposed of by the MSPB to the Department of Justice or to the General Accounting Office for further administrative action or litigation.

§ 1210.22 Definitions.

(a) *Claim or debt.* An amount or property owed to the United States which includes, but is not limited to: Overpayments to program beneficiaries; overpayments to contractors and grantees, including overpayments arising from audit disallowances; excessive cash advances to grantees and contractors; and civil penalties and assessments. A debt is overdue or delinquent if it is not paid by the due date specified in the initial notice of the debt (see § 1210.26) or if the debtor fails to satisfy his or her obligation under a repayment agreement.

(b) *Debtor.* An individual, organization, group, association, partnership, or corporation indebted to the United States, or the person or entity with legal responsibility for assuming the debtor's obligation.

(c) *MSPB.* The Merit Systems Protection Board.

(d) *Administrative offset.* Satisfying a debt by withholding money payable by the United States to or held by the United States for a debtor.

§ 1210.23 Other remedies.

The remedies and sanctions available to the MSPB under this part are not intended to be exclusive. The Chairman of the MSPB or his designee may impose other appropriate sanctions upon a debtor for prolonged or repeated failure to pay a debt. For example, the Chairman or his designee may place the debtor's name on a list of debarred, suspended, or ineligible contractors. In such cases the debtor will be advised of the MSPB's action.

§ 1210.24 Claims involving criminal activity or misconduct.

(a) A debtor whose indebtedness involves criminal activity such as fraud,

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embezzlement, theft, or misuse of government funds or property is subject to punishment by fine or imprisonment as well as to a civil claim by the United States for compensation for the misappropriated funds. The MSPB will refer these cases to the appropriate law enforcement agency for prosecution.

(b) Debts involving fraud, false claims, or misrepresentation shall not be compromised, terminated, suspended, or otherwise disposed of under this rule. Only the Department of Justice is authorized to compromise, terminate, suspend, or otherwise dispose of such debts.

§ 1210.25 Collection.

(a) The MSPB will take aggressive action to collect debts and reduce delinquencies. Collection efforts shall include sending to the debtor's last known address a total of three progressively stronger written demands for payment at not more than 30 day intervals. When necessary to protect the Government's interest, written demand may be preceded by other appropriate action, including immediate referral for litigation. Other contact with the debtor or his or her representative or guarantor by telephone, in person and/or in writing may be appropriate to demand prompt payment, to discuss the debtor's position regarding the existence, amount and repayment of the debt, and to inform the debtor of his or her rights and effect of nonpayment or delayed payment. A debtor who disputes a debt must promptly provide available supporting evidence.

(b) If a debtor is involved in insolvency proceedings, the debt will be referred to the appropriate United States Attorney to file a claim. The United States may have a priority over other creditors under 31 U.S.C. 3713.

§ 1210.26 Notices to debtor.

The first written demand for payment must inform the debtor of the following:

(a) The amount and nature of the debt;

(b) The date payment is due, which will generally be 30 days from the date the notice was mailed;

(c) The assessment of interest under § 1210.27 from the date the notice was