

## U.S. DEPARTMENT

## OF THE

## INTERIOR

### *EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM*

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### OFFICIAL TIME IN THE EEO COMPLAINT PROCESS

### EMPLOYEE GUIDE



### Reasonable Amount of Official Time

#### **Can I have time to work on my EEO complaint?**

The EEO regulations provide that Complainants are entitled to a reasonable amount of official time to present the complaint and respond to agency requests for information, if otherwise on duty.

#### **How much time can I have to work on my EEO complaint?**

You can have a reasonable amount of official time to prepare and/or present your EEO complaint. The amount of time is in hours, not days, weeks, or months.

#### **How do I know how much time is reasonable?**

Reasonable is determined by what is involved in your complaint and what the need to work on your complaint is for; e.g., preparation for a meeting, filing the formal complaint, preparation for the hearing.

#### **Do I have to request approval for use of official time?**

Yes. You must make your request for use of official time to work on you EEO complaint to your supervisor or as may be stated in

your organization's policy for requesting approval of time.

#### **Can I use the office copy and fax machines?**

The use of government equipment by employees for personal use is determined by the organization. You must abide by your organization's policy.

#### **Do I have to tell my supervisor what I'm working on?**

In deciding the approval of official time, your supervisor may need to know the reason of your request. This will permit him or her to make and informed decision on how much time is reasonable.

#### **My supervisor did not approve all of my time requested. Can I file a complaint?**

The denial of official time may not be the subject of an EEO complaint. However, you can request review of the denial of official time to the Equal Opportunity Officer. The Equal Opportunity Officer will review your request and the reason for the denial and make a decision on whether the denial was proper. The EEO complaint file will be documented with your request, the denial, and the Equal Opportunity Officer's decision.

**Can I work on my complaint every day?**

It will not be necessary for you to work on your complaint every day. It is important that you are available to perform the duties of your position.

**Will I be able to attend meetings regarding my complaint?**

Yes. If your presence is required by the Department, Bureau or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, you must attend. The time you spend at any meetings required by the Department, Bureau or the Commission is considered reasonable and official time.

**Will I have to request approval of official time to attend meetings regarding my complaint?**

Any time you leave your office for a considerable period of time, you should inform your supervisor. This will eliminate any confusion concerning your whereabouts, particularly when your supervisor expects you to be at your work site performing your assignments.

**The hearing of my complaint is in another state. Will the Department or Bureau pay for my travel to the hearing site?**

If you are an employee of the Department, your office must pay for travel when your presence is required by the Department or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.