

§ 5.31 Designation.

The heads of bureaus and offices and their delegates are designated as designees of the Secretary of the Treasury authorized to perform all the duties for which the Secretary is responsible under the foregoing statutes: *Provided, however,* That no compromise of a claim shall be effected or collection action terminated except upon recommendation of the General Counsel or the appropriate bureau counsel or the designee of either. Notwithstanding the foregoing proviso, no such recommendation shall be required with respect to the termination of collection activity on any claim in which the unpaid amount of the debt is \$300 or less.

§ 5.32 Definitions.

(a) *Administrative offset*, as defined in 31 U.S.C. 3701(a)(1), means “withholding money payable by the United States Government to, or held by the Government for, a person to satisfy a debt the person owes the Government.

(b) *Person* includes a natural person or persons, profit or non-profit corporation, partnership, association, trust, estate, consortium, or other entity which is capable of owing a debt to the United States Government except that agencies of the United States, or of any State or local government shall be excluded.

§ 5.33 General.

(a) The Secretary or his or her designee, after attempting to collect a debt from a person under section 3(a) of the Federal Claims Collection Act of 1966, as amended (31 U.S.C. 3711(a)), may collect the debt by administrative offset subject to the following:

(1) The debt is certain in amount; and
 (2) It is in the best interests of the United States to collect the debt by administrative offset because of the decreased costs of collection and the acceleration in the payment of the debt;

(b) The Secretary, or his or her designee, may initiate administrative offset with regard to debts owed by a person to another agency of the United States Government, upon receipt of a request from the head of another agency or his or her designee, and a certification that the debt exists and that the

person has been afforded the necessary due process rights.

(c) The Secretary, or his or her designee, may request another agency that holds funds payable to a Treasury debtor to offset the debt against the funds held and will provide certification that:

(1) The debt exists; and
 (2) The person has been afforded the necessary due process rights.

(d) If the six-year period for bringing action on a debt provided in 28 U.S.C. 2415 has expired, then administrative offset may be used to collect the debt only if the costs of bringing such action are likely to be less than the amount of the debt.

(e) No collection by administrative offset shall be made on any debt that has been outstanding for more than 10 years unless facts material to the Government’s right to collect the debt were not known, and reasonably could not have been known, by the official or officials responsible for discovering and collecting such debt.

(f) These regulations do not apply to:

(1) A case in which administrative offset of the type of debt involved is explicitly provided for or prohibited by another statute; or

(2) Debts owed by other agencies of the United States or by any State or local government.

§ 5.34 Notification procedures.

Before collecting any debt through administrative offset, a notice of intent to offset shall be sent to the debtor by certified mail, return receipt requested, at the most current address that is available to the Department. The notice shall provide:

(a) A description of the nature and amount of the debt and the intention of the Department to collect the debt through administrative offset;

(b) An opportunity to inspect and copy the records of the Department with respect to the debt;

(c) An opportunity for review within the Department of the determination of the Department with respect to the debt; and

(d) An opportunity to enter into a written agreement for the repayment of the amount of the debt.