

therefor, including any affirmative defenses, with respect to the violations and/or debarment, as appropriate.

(3) Upon receipt of a timely request for a hearing, the Administrator shall refer the case to the Chief Administrative Law Judge by Order of Reference, to which shall be attached a copy of the letter from the Administrator and response thereto, for designation of an Administrative Law Judge to conduct such hearings as may be necessary to resolve the disputed matters. The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth in 29 CFR part 6.

(c)(1) In the event of a dispute described in paragraph (a) of this section in which it appears that there are no relevant facts at issue, and where there is not at that time reasonable cause to institute debarment proceedings under § 5.12, the Administrator shall notify the contractor and subcontractor(s) (if any), by registered or certified mail to the last known address, of the investigation findings, and shall issue a ruling on any issues of law known to be in dispute.

(2)(i) If the contractor and/or subcontractor(s) disagree with the factual findings of the Administrator or believe that there are relevant facts in dispute, the contractor or subcontractor(s) shall so advise the Administrator by letter postmarked within 30 days of the date of the Administrator's letter. In the response, the contractor and/or subcontractor(s) shall explain in detail the facts alleged to be in dispute and attach any supporting documentation.

(ii) Upon receipt of a response under paragraph (c)(2)(i) of this section alleging the existence of a factual dispute, the Administrator shall examine the information submitted. If the Administrator determines that there is a relevant issue of fact, the Administrator shall refer the case to the Chief Administrative Law Judge in accordance with paragraph (b)(3) of this section. If the Administrator determines that there is no relevant issue of fact, the Administrator shall so rule and advise the contractor and subcontractor(s) (if any) accordingly.

(3) If the contractor and/or subcontractor(s) desire review of the ruling

issued by the Administrator under paragraph (c)(1) or (2) of this section, the contractor and/or subcontractor(s) shall file a petition for review thereof with the Administrative Review Board within 30 days of the date of the ruling, with a copy thereof the Administrator. The petition for review shall be filed in accordance with part 7 of this title.

(d) If a timely response to the Administrator's findings or ruling is not made or a timely petition for review is not filed, the Administrator's findings and/or ruling shall be final, except that with respect to debarment under the Davis-Bacon Act, the Administrator shall advise the Comptroller General of the Administrator's recommendation in accordance with § 5.12(a)(1). If a timely response or petition for review is filed, the findings and/or ruling of the Administrator shall be inoperative unless and until the decision is upheld by the Administrative Law Judge or the Administrative Review Board.

#### § 5.12 Debarment proceedings.

(a)(1) Whenever any contractor or subcontractor is found by the Secretary of Labor to be in aggravated or willful violation of the labor standards provisions of any of the applicable statutes listed in § 5.1 other than the Davis-Bacon Act, such contractor or subcontractor or any firm, corporation, partnership, or association in which such contractor or subcontractor has a substantial interest shall be ineligible for a period not to exceed 3 years (from the date of publication by the Comptroller General of the name or names of said contractor or subcontractor on the ineligible list as provided below) to receive any contracts or subcontracts subject to any of the statutes listed in § 5.1.

(2) In cases arising under contracts covered by the Davis-Bacon Act, the Administrator shall transmit to the Comptroller General the names of the contractors or subcontractors and their responsible officers, if any (and any firms in which the contractors or subcontractors are known to have an interest), who have been found to have disregarded their obligations to employees, and the recommendation of the Secretary of Labor or authorized representative regarding debarment.

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The Comptroller General will distribute a list to all Federal agencies giving the names of such ineligible person or firms, who shall be ineligible to be awarded any contract or subcontract of the United States or the District of Columbia and any contract or subcontract subject to the labor standards provisions of the statutes listed in § 5.1.

(b)(1) In addition to cases under which debarment action is initiated pursuant to § 5.11, whenever as a result of an investigation conducted by the Federal agency or the Department of Labor, and where the Administrator finds reasonable cause to believe that a contractor or subcontractor has committed willful or aggravated violations of the labor standards provisions of any of the statutes listed in § 5.1 (other than the Davis-Bacon Act), or has committed violations of the Davis-Bacon Act which constitute a disregard of its obligations to employees or subcontractors under section 3(a) thereof, the Administrator shall notify by registered or certified mail to the last known address, the contractor or subcontractor and its responsible officers, if any (and any firms in which the contractor or subcontractor are known to have a substantial interest), of the finding. The Administrator shall afford such contractor or subcontractor and any other parties notified an opportunity for a hearing as to whether debarment action should be taken under paragraph (a)(1) of this section or section 3(a) of the Davis-Bacon Act. The Administrator shall furnish to those notified a summary of the investigative findings. If the contractor or subcontractor or any other parties notified wish to request a hearing as to whether debarment action should be taken, such a request shall be made by letter postmarked within 30 days of the date of the letter from the Administrator, and shall set forth any findings which are in dispute and the reasons therefor, including any affirmative defenses to be raised. Upon receipt of such request for a hearing, the Administrator shall refer the case to the Chief Administrative Law Judge by Order of Reference, to which shall be attached a copy of the letter from the Administrator and the response there-

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to, for designation of an Administrative Law Judge to conduct such hearings as may be necessary to determine the matters in dispute. In considering debarment under any of the statutes listed in § 5.1 other than the Davis-Bacon Act, the Administrative Law Judge shall issue an order concerning whether the contractor or subcontractor is to be debarred in accordance with paragraph (a)(1) of this section. In considering debarment under the Davis-Bacon Act, the Administrative Law Judge shall issue a recommendation as to whether the contractor or subcontractor should be debarred under section 3(a) of the Act.

(2) Hearings under this section shall be conducted in accordance with 29 CFR part 6. If no hearing is requested within 30 days of receipt of the letter from the Administrator, the Administrator's findings shall be final, except with respect to recommendations regarding debarment under the Davis-Bacon Act, as set forth in paragraph (a)(2) of this section.

(c) Any person or firm debarred under § 5.12(a)(1) may in writing request removal from the debarment list after six months from the date of publication by the Comptroller General of such person or firm's name on the ineligible list. Such a request should be directed to the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 20210, and shall contain a full explanation of the reasons why such person or firm should be removed from the ineligible list. In cases where the contractor or subcontractor failed to make full restitution to all underpaid employees, a request for removal will not be considered until such underpayments are made. In all other cases, the Administrator will examine the facts and circumstances surrounding the violative practices which caused the debarment, and issue a decision as to whether or not such person or firm has demonstrated a current responsibility to comply with the labor standards provisions of the statutes listed in § 5.1, and therefore should be removed from the ineligible list. Among the factors to be considered in reaching such a decision are the severity of the violations, the contractor or

subcontractor's attitude towards compliance, and the past compliance history of the firm. In no case will such removal be effected unless the Administrator determines after an investigation that such person or firm is in compliance with the labor standards provisions applicable to Federal contracts and Federally assisted construction work subject to any of the applicable statutes listed in § 5.1 and other labor statutes providing wage protection, such as the Service Contract Act, the Walsh-Healey Public Contracts Act, and the Fair Labor Standards Act. If the request for removal is denied, the person or firm may petition for review by the Administrative Review Board pursuant to 29 CFR part 7.

(d)(1) Section 3(a) of the Davis-Bacon Act provides that for a period of three years from date of publication on the ineligible list, no contract shall be awarded to any persons or firms placed on the list as a result of a finding by the Comptroller General that such persons or firms have disregarded obligations to employees and subcontractors under that Act, and further, that no contract shall be awarded to "any firm, corporation, partnership, or association in which such persons or firms have an interest." Paragraph (a)(1) of this section similarly provides that for a period not to exceed three years from date of publication on the ineligible list, no contract subject to any of the statutes listed in § 5.1 shall be awarded to any contractor or subcontractor on the ineligible list pursuant to that paragraph, or to "any firm, corporation, partnership, or association" in which such contractor or subcontractor has a "substantial interest." A finding as to whether persons or firms whose names appear on the ineligible list have an interest (or a substantial interest, as appropriate) in any other firm, corporation, partnership, or association, may be made through investigation, hearing, or otherwise.

(2)(i) The Administrator, on his/her own motion or after receipt of a request for a determination pursuant to paragraph (d)(3) of this section may make a finding on the issue of interest (or substantial interest, as appropriate).

(ii) If the Administrator determines that there may be an interest (or substantial interest, as appropriate), but finds that there is insufficient evidence to render a final ruling thereon, the Administrator may refer the issue to the Chief Administrative Law Judge in accordance with paragraph (d)(4) of this section.

(iii) If the Administrator finds that no interest (or substantial interest, as appropriate) exists, or that there is not sufficient information to warrant the initiation of an investigation, the requesting party, if any, will be so notified and no further action taken.

(iv)(A) If the Administrator finds that an interest (or substantial interest, as appropriate) exists, the person or firm affected will be notified of the Administrator's finding (by certified mail to the last known address), which shall include the reasons therefor, and such person or firm shall be afforded an opportunity to request that a hearing be held to render a decision on the issue.

(B) Such person or firm shall have 20 days from the date of the Administrator's ruling to request a hearing. A detailed statement of the reasons why the Administrator's ruling is in error, including facts alleged to be in dispute, if any, shall be submitted with the request for a hearing.

(C) If no hearing is requested within the time mentioned in paragraph (d)(2)(iv)(B) of this section, the Administrator's finding shall be final and the Administrator shall so notify the Comptroller General. If a hearing is requested, the ruling of the Administrator shall be inoperative unless and until the administrative law judge or the Administrative Review Board issues an order that there is an interest (or substantial interest, as appropriate).

(3)(i) A request for a determination of interest (or substantial interest, as appropriate), may be made by any interested party, including contractors or prospective contractors and associations of contractor's representatives of employees, and interested Government agencies. Such a request shall be submitted in writing to the Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration,

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U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 20210.

(ii) The request shall include a statement setting forth in detail why the petitioner believes that a person or firm whose name appears on the debarred bidders list has an interest (or a substantial interest, as appropriate) in any firm, corporation, partnership, or association which is seeking or has been awarded a contract of the United States or the District of Columbia, or which is subject to any of the statutes listed in §5.1. No particular form is prescribed for the submission of a request under this section.

(4) *Referral to the Chief Administrative Law Judge.* The Administrator, on his/her own motion under paragraph (d)(2)(ii) of this section or upon a request for hearing where the Administrator determines that relevant facts are in dispute, will by order refer the issue to the Chief Administrative Law Judge, for designation of an Administrative Law Judge who shall conduct such hearings as may be necessary to render a decision solely on the issue of interest (or substantial interest, as appropriate). Such proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth at 29 CFR part 6.

(5) *Referral to the Administrative Review Board.* If the person or firm affected requests a hearing and the Administrator determines that relevant facts are not in dispute, the Administrator will refer the issue and the record compiled thereon to the Administrative Review Board to render a decision solely on the issue of interest (or substantial interest, as appropriate). Such proceeding shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures set forth at 29 CFR part 7.

[48 FR 19541, Apr. 29, 1983, as amended at 48 FR 50313, Nov. 1, 1983]

### §5.13 Rulings and interpretations.

All questions relating to the application and interpretation of wage determinations (including the classifications therein) issued pursuant to part 1 of this subtitle, of the rules contained in this part and in parts 1 and 3, and of the labor standards provisions of any of the statutes listed in §5.1 shall be referred to the Administrator for appropriate ruling or interpretation. The

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rulings and interpretations shall be authoritative and those under the Davis-Bacon Act may be relied upon as provided for in section 10 of the Portal-to-Portal Act of 1947 (29 U.S.C. 259). Requests for such rulings and interpretations should be addressed to the Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 20210.

### §5.14 Variations, tolerances, and exemptions from parts 1 and 3 of this subtitle and this part.

The Secretary of Labor may make variations, tolerances, and exemptions from the regulatory requirements of this part and those of parts 1 and 3 of this subtitle whenever the Secretary finds that such action is necessary and proper in the public interest or to prevent injustice and undue hardship. Variations, tolerances, and exemptions may not be made from the statutory requirements of any of the statutes listed in §5.1 unless the statute specifically provides such authority.

### §5.15 Limitations, variations, tolerances, and exemptions under the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act.

(a) *General.* Upon his or her own initiative or upon the request of any Federal agency, the Secretary of Labor may provide under section 105 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act reasonable limitations and allow variations, tolerances, and exemptions to and from any or all provisions of that Act whenever the Secretary finds such action to be necessary and proper in the public interest to prevent injustice, or undue hardship, or to avoid serious impairment of the conduct of Government business. Any request for such action by the Secretary shall be submitted in writing, and shall set forth the reasons for which the request is made.

(b) *Exemptions.* Pursuant to section 105 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, the following classes of contracts are found exempt from all provisions of that Act in order to prevent injustice, undue hardship, or serious impairment of Government business: