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(c) The official symbolism of the seal shall be the following: The ship is a symbol of commerce; the blue denotes uprightness and constancy; the lighthouse is a well-known symbol representing guidance from the darkness which is translated to commercial enlightenment; and the gold denotes purity. The crest is the American bald eagle denoting the national scope of the Department's activities. (The above is a modification of the original symbolism issued with the President's approval of the seal, made necessary by changes in the functions of the Department.)

§ 1.3 Delegation of authority.

(a) Pursuant to authority vested in the Secretary of Commerce by law, (1) the Chief Administrative Officer of each operating unit, and (2) the Director, Office of Administrative Services in the Office of the Secretary, are hereby authorized to sign as Certifying Officers certifications as to the official nature of copies of correspondence and records from the files, publications and other documents of the Department and to affix the seal of the Department of Commerce to such certifications or documents for all purposes, including the purpose authorized by 28 U.S.C. 1733(b).

(b) Delegations of authority to persons other than those named in paragraph (a) of this section may be made by the Assistant Secretary for Administration.

(c) This delegation shall not affect or prejudice the use of properly author-

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ized office or bureau seals in appropriate cases.

PART 2—PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING AND SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS UNDER THE FEDERAL TORT CLAIMS ACT

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AUTHORITY: 28 U.S.C. 2672.

§ 2.1 Purpose.

(a) The purpose of this part is to delegate authority to settle or deny claims under the Federal Tort Claims Act (in part, 28 U.S.C. 2671-2680) as amended by Pub. L. 89-506, 80 Stat. 306, and to establish procedures for the administrative adjudication of such claims accruing on or after January 18, 1967.

[32 FR 3769, Mar. 7, 1967, as amended at 48 FR 31636, July 11, 1983]

§ 2.2 Provisions of law and regulations thereunder.

(a) Section 2672 of Title 28, U.S. Code, as above amended, provides that:

The head of each Federal agency or his designee, in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Attorney General, may consider, ascertain, adjust, determine, compromise, and settle any claim for money damages against the United States for injury or loss of property or personal injury or death caused by the negligent or wrongful act or omission of any employee of the agency while acting within the scope of his office or employment, under circumstances where the United States, if a private person, would be liable to the claimant in accordance with the law of the place where the act or omission occurred: *Provided*, that any award, compromise, or settlement in excess of \$25,000 shall be effected only with the prior written approval of the Attorney General or his designee.

Subject to the provisions of this title relating to civil actions on tort claims against the United States, any such award, compromise, settlement, or determination shall be final and conclusive on all officers of the Government, except when procured by means of fraud.

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Any award, compromise, or settlement in an amount of \$2,500 or less made pursuant to this section shall be paid by the head of the Federal agency concerned out of appropriations available to that agency. Payment of any award, compromise, or settlement in an amount in excess of \$2,500 made pursuant to this section or made by the Attorney General in any amount pursuant to section 2677 of this title shall be paid in a manner similar to judgments and compromises in like causes and appropriations or funds available for the payment of such judgments and compromises are hereby made available for the payment of awards, compromises, or settlements under this chapter.

The acceptance by the claimant of any such award, compromise, or settlement shall be final and conclusive on the claimant, and shall constitute a complete release of any claim against the United States and against the employee of the Government whose act or omission gave rise to the claim, by reason of the same subject matter.

(b) Subsection (a) section 2675 of said Title 28 provides that:

An action shall not be instituted upon a claim against the United States for money damages for injury or loss of property or personal injury or death caused by the negligent or wrongful act or omission of any employee of the Government while acting within the scope of his office or employment, unless the claimant shall have first presented the claim to the appropriate Federal agency and his claim shall have been finally denied by the agency in writing and sent by certified or registered mail. The failure of an agency to make final disposition of a claim within 6 months after it is filed shall, at the option of the claimant any time thereafter, be deemed a final denial of the claim for purposes of this section. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to such claims as may be asserted under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure by third party complaint, crossclaim, or counterclaim.

(c) Section 2678 of said Title 28 provides that no attorney shall charge fees in excess of 25 percent of a judgment or settlement after litigation, or over 20 percent of administrative settlements.

(d) Section 2401(b) of said Title 28 provides that:

A tort claim against the United States shall be forever barred unless it is presented in writing to the appropriate Federal agency within 2 years after such claim accrues or unless action is begun within 6 months after the date of mailing, by certified or registered mail, of notice of final denial of the claim by the agency to which it was presented.

(e) Pursuant to section 2672 as amended, the Attorney General has issued regulations (herein referred to as "the Regulations"; 28 CFR Part 14) prescribing standards and procedures for settlement of tort claims (31 FR 16616). Persons delegated authority under this part shall follow and be guided by such Regulations (28 CFR Part 14).

[32 FR 3769, Mar. 7, 1967, as amended at 63 FR 29945, June 2, 1998]

§ 2.3 Delegation of authority.

(a) The General Counsel is hereby named as the designee of the Secretary of Commerce with respect to tort claims filed under section 2672 of Title 28, U.S. Code, as described in § 2.2, with authority to act on such claims as provided in said section 2672, including denial thereof.

(b) Authority delegated under this section may, with the approval of the General Counsel, be redelegated to other designees.

(c) Settlement or denial of any claim under this part is final for the Department of Commerce.

[48 FR 31636, July 11, 1983]

§ 2.4 Procedure for filing claims.

(a) The procedure for filing and the contents of claims shall be pursuant to §§ 14.2, 14.3, and 14.4 of the Regulations (28 CFR Part 14).

(b) Claims shall be filed with the Assistant General Counsel for Finance and Litigation, Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C. 20230.

(c) If a claim is filed elsewhere in the Department, it shall immediately be recorded and transmitted to the Assistant General Counsel for Finance and Litigation.

[32 FR 3769, Mar. 7, 1967, as amended at 48 FR 31636, July 11, 1983; 63 FR 29945, June 2, 1998]

§ 2.5 Adjudication and settlement of claims.

(a) Upon receipt of a claim by the Assistant General Counsel for Finance and Litigation, the time and date of receipt shall be recorded. The Assistant General Counsel may, after recording the claim, transmit it to the Departmental office or primary operating unit involved in the claim and request

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that an investigation be conducted. The appropriate Departmental office or primary operating unit shall designate an official to conduct the investigation, who shall prepare a file, obtain additional information as necessary, and prepare for the Assistant General Counsel's signature a proposed award or denial of the claim. If the investigation capabilities of the office or unit are insufficient for a proper and complete investigation, the office or unit shall consult with the Departmental Office of Investigations and Security to:

(1) Have that Office conduct the investigation or

(2) Request another Federal agency to conduct the investigation as necessary, pursuant to §14.8 of the regulations (28 CFR Part 14), all on a reimbursable basis.

(b) If the amount of the proposed award exceeds \$25,000 (in which case, approval by the Attorney General is required), or if consultation with the Department of Justice is desired or required pursuant to §14.6 of the regulations, the Assistant General Counsel for Finance and Litigation will prepare and compile the material required by the Department of Justice under §14.7 of the Regulations.

(c) Denial of a claim shall be communicated as provided by §14.9 of the regulations (28 CFR Part 14).

(d) Designees hereunder are responsible for the control over and expeditious handling of claims, bearing in mind the applicable statutory time limitations for adjudications of claims.

[32 FR 3769, Mar. 7, 1967, as amended at 48 FR 31636, July 11, 1983; 63 FR 29945, June 2, 1998]

§ 2.6 Payment of claims.

When an award is made, the file on the case shall be transmitted to the appropriate fiscal office for payment by the Department or for transmittal for payment as prescribed by §14.10 of the Regulations (28 CFR Part 14). Prior to payment appropriate releases shall be obtained, as provided in said section.

[32 FR 3769, Mar. 7, 1967]

§ 2.7 Supplementary regulations.

(a) The Assistant General Counsel for Finance and Litigation may from time

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to time issue such supplementary regulations or instructions as he/she deems appropriate to carry out the purpose of this part.

(b) Any designee mentioned in paragraph (a) of §2.3 may issue regulations or instructions covering his/her area of responsibility hereunder which are consistent with this part and with those issued under paragraph (a) of this section, such regulations and instructions to be approved by the Assistant General Counsel for Finance and Litigation.

[32 FR 3769, Mar. 7, 1967, as amended at 48 FR 31636, July 11, 1983. Redesignated and amended at 63 FR 29945, June 2, 1998]

PART 3 [RESERVED]

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