

(2) The Commission has complied with the applicable statutes, regulations, and procedures of the Office of Personnel Management; and

(3) The Commission has complied with the requirements of 31 CFR 901.3, including any required hearing or review.

(c) Once the Commission decides to request administrative offset under paragraph (a) of this section, it shall make the request as soon as practical after completion of the applicable procedures. This will satisfy any requirement that offset be initiated prior to expiration of the applicable statute of limitations. At such time as the debtor makes a claim for payments from the Fund, if at least a year has elapsed since the offset request was originally made, the debtor shall be permitted to offer a satisfactory repayment plan in lieu of offset upon establishing that changed financial circumstances would render the offset unjust.

(d) If the Commission collects part or all of the debt by other means before deductions are made or completed pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, the Commission shall act promptly to modify or terminate its request for offset under paragraph (a) of this section.

[62 FR 38019, July 16, 1997, as amended at 68 FR 32976, June 3, 2003]

§ 201.208 Tax refund offset.

(a) *Scope.* The provisions of 26 U.S.C. 6402(d) and 31 U.S.C. 3720A authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to offset a delinquent debt owed to the United States Government from the tax refund due a taxpayer when other collection efforts have failed to recover the amount due.

(b) *Definitions*—(1) *Debt.* Debt means money owed by an individual, organization or entity from sources which include loans insured or guaranteed by the United States and all other amounts due the United States from fees, leases, services, overpayments, civil and criminal penalties, damages, interest, fines, administrative costs, and all other similar sources. A debt becomes eligible for tax refund offset procedures if:

(i) It cannot currently be collected pursuant to the salary offset procedures of 5 U.S.C. 5514(a)(1);

(ii) The debt is ineligible for administrative offset under 31 U.S.C. 3716(a) by reason of 31 U.S.C. 3716(c)(2) or cannot currently be collected by administrative offset under 31 U.S.C. 3716(a); and

(iii) The requirements of this section are otherwise satisfied.

(2) *Dispute.* A dispute is a written statement supported by documentation or other evidence that all or part of an alleged debt is not past due or legally enforceable, that the amount is not the amount currently owed, that the outstanding debt has been satisfied, or, in the case of a debt reduced to judgment, that the judgment has been satisfied or stayed.

(3) *Notice.* Notice means the information sent to the debtor pursuant to § 201.208(d). The date of the notice is the date shown on the notice letter as its date of issuance.

(4) *Past due.* All judgment debts are past due for purposes of this section. Such debts remain past due until paid in full.

(c) The Commission may refer any past due, legally enforceable non-judgment debt of an individual, organization or entity to Treasury for offset if the Commission's or the referring agency's rights of action accrued more than three months but less than ten years before the offset is made. Debts reduced to judgment may be referred at any time. Debts in amounts lower than \$25.00 are not subject to referral.

(d) The Commission will provide the debtor with written notice of its intent to offset before initiating the offset. Notice will be mailed to the debtor at the current address of the debtor, as determined from information obtained from the IRS pursuant to 26 U.S.C. 6103(m)(2), (4), (5) or from information regarding the debt maintained by the Commission. The notice sent to the debtor will state the amount of the debt and inform the debtor that:

(1) The debt is past due;

(2) The Commission intends to refer the debt to Treasury for offset from tax refunds that may be due to the taxpayer;

(3) The Commission intends to provide information concerning the delinquent debt exceeding \$100 to a consumer reporting bureau unless such debt has already been disclosed; and

§ 201.208

19 CFR Ch. II (4–1–12 Edition)

(4) The debtor has 65 calendar days from the date of notice in which to present evidence that all or part of the debt is not past due, that the amount is not the amount currently owed, that the outstanding debt has been satisfied, or, if a judgment debt, that the debt has been satisfied, or stayed, before the debt is reported to a consumer reporting agency, if applicable, and referred to Treasury for offset from tax refunds.

(e) If the debtor neither pays the amount due nor presents evidence that the amount is not past due or is satisfied or stayed, the Commission will report the debt to a consumer reporting agency at the end of the notice period, if applicable, and refer the debt to Treasury for offset from the taxpayer's federal tax refund. The Commission shall certify to Treasury that reasonable efforts have been made by the Commission to obtain payment of such debt.

(f) A debtor may request a review by the Commission if the debtor believes that all or part of the debt is not past due or is not legally enforceable, or, in the case of a judgment debt, that the debt has been stayed or the amount satisfied, as follows:

(1) The debtor must send a written request for review to the Director at the address provided in the notice.

(2) The request must state the amount disputed and the reasons why the debtor believes that the debt is not past due, is not legally enforceable, has been satisfied, or, if a judgment debt, has been satisfied or stayed.

(3) The request must include any documents that the debtor wishes to be considered or state that additional information will be submitted within the time permitted.

(4) If the debtor wishes to inspect records establishing the nature and amount of the debt, the debtor must make a written request to the Director

for an opportunity for such an inspection. The office holding the relevant records not exempt from disclosure shall make them available for inspection during normal business hours within one week from the date of receipt of the request.

(5) The request for review and any additional information submitted pursuant to the request must be received by the Director at the address stated in the notice within 65 calendar days of the date of issuance of the notice.

(6) The Commission will review disputes and shall consider its records and any documentation and arguments submitted by the debtor. The Commission's decision to refer to Treasury any disputed portion of the debt shall be made by the Chairman. The Commission shall send a written notice of its decision to the debtor. There is no administrative appeal of this decision.

(7) If the evidence presented by the debtor is considered by a non-Commission agent or other entities or persons acting on the Commission's behalf, the debtor will be accorded at least 30 calendar days from the date the agent or other entity or person determines that all or part of the debt is past-due and legally enforceable to request review by an officer or employee of the Commission of any unresolved dispute.

(8) Any debt that previously has been reviewed pursuant to this section or any other section of this subpart, or that has been reduced to a judgment, may not be disputed except on the grounds of payments made or events occurring subsequent to the previous review or judgment.

(g) The Commission will notify Treasury of any change in the amount due promptly after receipt of payments or notice of other reductions.

(h) In the event that more than one debt is owed, the tax refund offset procedure will be applied in the order in which the debts became past due.