

the Assistant Secretary, and the Associate Solicitor, Division of Occupational Safety and Health, U.S. Department of Labor.

**§ 1978.115 Special circumstances; waiver of rules.**

In special circumstances not contemplated by the provisions of these rules, or for good cause shown, the ALJ or the ARB on review may, upon application, after three days notice to all parties, waive any rule or issue such orders as justice or the administration of STAA requires.

**PART 1979—PROCEDURES FOR THE HANDLING OF DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS UNDER SECTION 519 OF THE WENDELL H. FORD AVIATION INVESTMENT AND REFORM ACT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

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AUTHORITY: 49 U.S.C. 42121; Secretary of Labor's Order 5-2002, 67 FR 65008 (October 22, 2002).

SOURCE: 68 FR 14107, Mar. 21, 2003, unless otherwise noted.

**Subpart A—Complaints, Investigations, Findings and Preliminary Orders**

**§ 1979.100 Purpose and scope.**

(a) This part implements procedures under section 519 of the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century, 49 U.S.C. 42121 ("AIR21"), which provides for employee protection from discrimination by air carriers or contractors or subcontractors of air carriers because the employee has engaged in protected activity pertaining to a violation or alleged violation of any order, regulation, or standard of the Federal Aviation Administration or any other provision of Federal law relating to air carrier safety.

(b) This part establishes procedures pursuant to AIR21 for the expeditious handling of discrimination complaints made by employees, or by persons acting on their behalf. These rules, together with those rules codified at 29 CFR part 18, set forth the procedures for submission of complaints under AIR21, investigations, issuance of findings and preliminary orders, objections to findings and orders, litigation before administrative law judges, post-hearing administrative review, and withdrawals and settlements.

**§ 1979.101 Definitions.**

*Act* or *AIR21* means section 519 of the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century, Public Law 106-181, April 5, 2000, 49 U.S.C. 42121.

*Air carrier* means a citizen of the United States undertaking by any means, directly or indirectly, to provide air transportation.

*Assistant Secretary* means the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health or the person or persons to whom he or she delegates authority under the Act.

*Complainant* means the employee who filed a complaint under the Act or on whose behalf a complaint was filed.

*Contractor* means a company that performs safety-sensitive functions by contract for an air carrier.

*Employee* means an individual presently or formerly working for an air carrier or contractor or subcontractor

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of an air carrier, an individual applying to work for an air carrier or contractor or subcontractor of an air carrier, or an individual whose employment could be affected by an air carrier or contractor or subcontractor of an air carrier.

*Named person* means the person alleged to have violated the Act.

*OSHA* means the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of the United States Department of Labor.

*Person* means one or more individuals, partnerships, associations, corporations, business trusts, legal representatives, or any group of persons.

*Secretary* means the Secretary of Labor or persons to whom authority under the Act has been delegated.

### § 1979.102 Obligations and prohibited acts.

(a) No air carrier or contractor or subcontractor of an air carrier may discharge any employee or otherwise discriminate against any employee with respect to the employee's compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because the employee, or any person acting pursuant to the employee's request, engaged in any of the activities specified in paragraphs (b)(1) through (4) of this section.

(b) It is a violation of the Act for any air carrier or contractor or subcontractor of an air carrier to intimidate, threaten, restrain, coerce, blacklist, discharge or in any other manner discriminate against any employee because the employee has:

(1) Provided, caused to be provided, or is about to provide (with any knowledge of the employer) or cause to be provided to the air carrier or contractor or subcontractor of an air carrier or the Federal Government, information relating to any violation or alleged violation of any order, regulation, or standard of the Federal Aviation Administration or any other provision of Federal law relating to air carrier safety under subtitle VII of title 49 of the United States Code or under any other law of the United States;

(2) Filed, caused to be filed, or is about to file (with any knowledge of the employer) or cause to be filed a proceeding relating to any violation or

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alleged violation of any order, regulation, or standard of the Federal Aviation Administration or any other provision of Federal law relating to air carrier safety under subtitle VII of title 49 of the United States Code, or under any other law of the United States;

(3) Testified or is about to testify in such a proceeding; or

(4) Assisted or participated or is about to assist or participate in such a proceeding.

(c) This part shall have no application to any employee of an air carrier, contractor, or subcontractor who, acting without direction from an air carrier, contractor, or subcontractor (or such person's agent) deliberately causes a violation of any requirement relating to air carrier safety under Subtitle VII Aviation Programs of Title 49 of the United States Code or any other law of the United States.

### § 1979.103 Filing of discrimination complaint.

(a) *Who may file.* An employee who believes that he or she has been discriminated against by an air carrier or contractor or subcontractor of an air carrier in violation of the Act may file, or have filed by any person on the employee's behalf, a complaint alleging such discrimination.

(b) *Nature of filing.* No particular form of complaint is required, except that a complaint must be in writing and should include a full statement of the acts and omissions, with pertinent dates, which are believed to constitute the violations.

(c) *Place of filing.* The complaint should be filed with the OSHA Area Director responsible for enforcement activities in the geographical area where the employee resides or was employed, but may be filed with any OSHA officer or employee. Addresses and telephone numbers for these officials are set forth in local directories and at the following Internet address: <http://www.osha.gov>.

(d) *Time for filing.* Within 90 days after an alleged violation of the Act occurs (*i.e.*, when the discriminatory decision has been both made and communicated to the complainant), an employee who believes that he or she has