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structural changes in facilities are necessary, such changes shall be made within three years of the effective date of this part, but in any event as expeditiously as possible.

(d) *Transition plan.* In the event that structural changes to facilities are necessary to achieve program accessibility, the agency shall develop, within six months of the effective date of this part, a transition plan setting forth the steps necessary to complete such changes. The plan shall be developed with the assistance of interested persons, including handicapped persons or organizations representing handicapped persons. A copy of the transition plan shall be made available for public inspection. The plan shall, at a minimum—

(1) Identify physical obstacles in the agency's facilities that limit the accessibility of its programs or activities to handicapped persons;

(2) Describe in detail the methods that will be used to make the facilities accessible;

(3) Specify the schedule for taking the steps necessary to achieve compliance with this section and, if the time period of the transition plan is longer than one year, identify steps that will be taken during each year of the transition period;

(4) Indicate the official responsible for implementation of the plan; and

(5) Identify the persons or groups with whose assistance the plan was prepared.

§ 17.551 Program accessibility: New construction and alterations.

Each building or part of a building that is constructed or altered by, on behalf of, or for the use of the agency shall be designed, constructed, or altered so as to be readily accessible to and usable by handicapped persons. The definitions, requirements, and standards of the Architectural Barriers Act (42 U.S.C. 4151–4157) as established in 41 CFR 101–19.600 to 101–19.607 apply to buildings covered by this section.

§§ 17.552–17.559 [Reserved]

§ 17.560 Communications.

(a) The agency shall take appropriate steps to ensure effective communica-

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tion with applicants, participants, personnel of other Federal entities, and members of the public.

(1) The agency shall furnish appropriate auxiliary aids where necessary to afford a handicapped person an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a program or activity conducted by the agency.

(i) In determining what type of auxiliary aid is necessary, the agency shall give primary consideration to the requests of the handicapped person.

(ii) The agency need not provide individually prescribed devices, readers for personal use or study, attendant services, or other devices of a personal nature.

(2) Where the agency communicate with applicants and beneficiaries by telephone, telecommunications devices for deaf persons (TDD's) or equally effective telecommunication systems shall be used.

(b) The agency shall ensure that interested persons, including persons with impaired vision or hearing, can obtain information as to the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities.

(c) The agency shall provide signage at a primary entrance to each of its inaccessible facilities, directing users to a location at which they can obtain information about accessible facilities. The international symbol for accessibility shall be used at each primary entrance of an accessible facility.

(d) This section does not require the agency to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of a program or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens. In those circumstances where agency personnel believe that the proposed action would fundamentally alter the program or activity or would result in undue financial and administrative burdens, the agency has the burden of proving that compliance with § 17.560 would result in such alteration or burdens. The decision that compliance would result in such alteration or burdens must be made by the agency head or his or her designee after considering all agency

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resources available for use in the funding and operation of the conducted program or activity, and must be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion. If an action required to comply with this section would result in such alteration or such burdens, the agency shall take any other action that would not result in such an alteration or such burdens but would nevertheless ensure that, to the maximum extent possible, handicapped persons receive the benefits and services of the program or activity.

§§ 17.561–17.569 [Reserved]

§ 17.570 Compliance procedures.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, this section applies to all allegations of discrimination on the basis of handicap in programs or activities conducted by the agency.

(b) The agency shall process complaints alleging violations of section 504 with respect to employment according to the procedures established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1613 pursuant to section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 791).

(c) Responsibility for implementation and operation of this section shall be vested in the Director of the Office for Equal Opportunity. Complaints filed pursuant to this section shall be delivered or mailed to the Director, Office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240. If any agency official other than the Director of the Office for Equal Opportunity receives a complaint, he or she shall immediately forward the complaint to the agency's Director of the Office for Equal Opportunity.

(d)(1) The agency shall accept and investigate all complete complaints for which it has jurisdiction. All complete complaints must be filed within 180 days of the alleged act of discrimination. The agency may extend this time period for good cause.

(2) If the agency Director for the Office of Equal Opportunity receives a complaint that is not complete, he or she shall notify the complainant, within thirty (30) days of receipt of the incomplete complaint, that additional

information is needed. If the complainant fails to complete and submit the requested information within thirty (30) days of receipt of this notice the agency Director of the Office for Equal Opportunity shall dismiss the complaint without prejudice.

(3) The agency Director of the Office for Equal Opportunity may require agency employees to cooperate and participate in the investigation and resolution of complaints. Employees who are required to cooperate and participate in any investigation under this section shall do so as part of their official duties.

(e) If the agency receives a complaint over which it does not have jurisdiction, it shall promptly notify the complainant and shall refer the complaint to the appropriate government entity.

(f) The agency shall notify the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board upon receipt of any complaint alleging that a building or facility that is subject to the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4151–4157), or section 502 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 792), is not readily accessible to and usable by handicapped persons.

(g) Within 180 days of the receipt of a complete complaint for which it has jurisdiction, the agency shall notify the complainant of the results of the investigation in a letter containing—

(1) Findings of fact and conclusions of law;

(2) A description of a remedy for each violation found; and

(3) A notice of the right to appeal.

(h) Appeals of the findings of fact and conclusions of law or remedies must be filed by the complainant within ninety (90) days of receipt from the agency of the letter required by § 17.570(g). The agency may extend this time for good cause.

(i) Timely appeals shall be accepted and processed by the Under Secretary.

(j) The agency shall notify the complainant of the results of the appeal within sixty (60) days of the receipt of the request. If the agency determines that it needs additional information from the complainant, it shall have sixty (60) days from the date it receives