

Code of Federal Regulations, Title 31, Money and Finance, Treasury

Federal Claims Collection Standards

§ 900.1 Prescription of standards.

(a) The Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General of the United States are issuing the regulations in parts 900–904 of this chapter under the authority contained in 31 U.S.C. 3711(d)(2). The regulations in this chapter prescribe standards for Federal agency use in the administrative collection, offset, compromise, and the suspension or termination of collection activity for civil claims for money, funds, or property, as defined by 31 U.S.C. 3701(b), unless specific Federal agency statutes or regulations apply to such activities or, as provided for by Title 11 of the United States Code, when the claims involve bankruptcy. Federal agencies include agencies of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Government, including Government corporations. The regulations in this chapter also prescribe standards for referring debts to the Department of Justice for litigation. Additional guidance is contained in the Office of Management and Budget's Circular A–129 (Revised), "Policies for Federal Credit Programs and Non-Tax Receivables," the Department of the Treasury's "Managing Federal Receivables," and other publications concerning debt collection and debt management. These publications are available from the Debt Management Services, Financial Management Service, Department of the Treasury, 401 14th Street SW., Room 151, Washington, DC 20227.

(b) Additional rules governing centralized administrative offset and the transfer of delinquent debt to the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) or Treasury-designated debt collection centers for collection (cross-servicing) under the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, Public Law 104–134, 110 Stat. 1321, 1358 (April 26, 1996), are issued in separate regulations by Treasury. Rules governing the use of certain debt collection tools created under the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, such as administrative wage garnishment, also are issued in separate regulations by Treasury. See generally 31 CFR part 285.

(c) Agencies are not limited to the remedies contained in parts 900–904 of this chapter and are encouraged to use all authorized remedies, including alternative dispute resolution and arbitration, to collect civil claims, to the extent that such remedies are not inconsistent with the Federal Claims Collection Act, as amended, Public Law 89–508, 80 Stat. 308 (July 19, 1966), the Debt Collection Act of 1982, Public Law 97–365, 96 Stat. 1749 (October 25, 1982), the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, or other relevant statutes. The regulations in this chapter are not intended to impair agencies' common law rights to collect debts.

(d) Standards and policies regarding the classification of debt for accounting purposes (for example, write off of uncollectible debt) are contained in the Office of Management and Budget's Circular A–129 (Revised), "Policies for Federal Credit Programs and Non-Tax Receivables."

§ 900.2 Definitions and construction.

(a) For the purposes of the standards in this chapter, the terms "claim" and "debt" are synonymous and interchangeable. They refer to an amount of money, funds, or property that has been determined by an agency official to be due the United States from any person, organization, or entity, except another Federal agency. For the purposes of administrative offset under 31 U.S.C. 3716, the terms "claim" and "debt" include an amount of money, funds, or property owed by a person to a State (including past-due support being enforced by a State), the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the United States Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(b) A debt is "delinquent" if it has not been paid by the date specified in the agency's initial written demand for payment or applicable agreement or instrument (including a post-delinquency payment agreement), unless other satisfactory payment arrangements have been made.

(c) In parts 900–904 of this chapter, words in the plural form shall include the singular and vice versa, and words signifying the masculine gender shall include the feminine and vice versa. The terms "includes" and "including" do not exclude matters not listed but do include matters that are in the same general class.

(d) Recoupment is a special method for adjusting debts arising under the same transaction or occurrence. For example, obligations arising under the same contract generally are subject to recoupment.

(e) For purposes of the standards in this chapter, unless otherwise stated, "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Treasury or the Secretary's delegate.

§ 900.3 Antitrust, fraud, and tax and interagency claims excluded.

(a) The standards in parts 900–904 of this chapter relating to compromise, suspension, and termination of collection activity do not apply to any debt based in whole or in part on conduct in violation of the antitrust laws or to any debt involving fraud, the presentation of a false claim, or misrepresentation on the part of the debtor or any party having an interest in the claim. Only the Department of Justice has the authority to compromise, suspend, or terminate collection activity on such claims. The standards in parts 900–904 of this chapter relating to the administrative collection of claims do apply, but only to the extent authorized by the Department of Justice in a particular case. Upon identification of a claim based in whole or in part on conduct in violation of the antitrust laws or any claim involving fraud, the presentation of a false claim, or misrepresentation on the part of the debtor or any party having an interest in the claim, agencies shall promptly refer the case to the Department of Justice for action. At its discretion, the Department of Justice may return the claim to the forwarding agency for further handling in accordance with the standards in parts 900–904 of this chapter.

(b) Parts 900–904 of this chapter do not apply to tax debts.

(c) Parts 900–904 of this chapter do not apply to claims between Federal agencies. Federal agencies should attempt to resolve interagency claims by negotiation in accordance with Executive Order 12146 (3 CFR, 1980 Comp., pp. 409–412).

§ 900.4 Compromise, waiver, or disposition under other statutes not precluded.

Nothing in parts 900–904 of this chapter precludes agency disposition of any claim under statutes and implementing regulations other than subchapter II of chapter 37 of Title 31 of the United States Code (Claims of the United States Government) and the standards in this chapter. See, e.g., the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act, Public Law 87–693, 76 Stat. 593 (September 25, 1962) (codified at 42 U.S.C. 2651 *et seq.*), and applicable regulations, 28 CFR part 43. In such cases, the laws and regulations that are specifically applicable to claims collection activities of a particular agency generally take precedence over parts 900–904 of this chapter.

§ 900.5 Form of payment.

Claims may be paid in the form of money or, when a contractual basis exists, the Government may demand the return of specific property or the performance of specific services.

§ 900.6 Subdivision of claims not authorized.

Debts may not be subdivided to avoid the monetary ceiling established by 31 U.S.C. 3711(a)(2). A debtor's liability arising from a particular transaction or contract shall be considered a single debt in determining whether the debt is one of less than \$100,000 (excluding interest, penalties, and administrative costs) or such higher amount as the Attorney General shall from time to time prescribe for purposes of compromise or suspension or termination of collection activity.

§ 900.7 Required administrative proceedings.

Agencies are not required to omit, foreclose, or duplicate administrative proceedings required by contract or other laws or regulations.

§ 900.8 No private rights created.

The standards in this chapter do not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any other person, nor shall the failure of an agency to comply with any of the provisions of parts 900–904 of this chapter be available to any debtor as a defense.