

### § 537.3

claims waived by treaty, for example, North Atlantic Treaty Association Status of Forces Agreement (NATO SOFA), Article VIII, paragraph 1.

#### § 537.3 Claims collectible.

(a) *Claims for medical expenses.* Claims for the value of medical care furnished to active or retired members of the uniformed services, family members of either category, employees of the Department of the Army (DA) or Department of Defense (DOD), or other persons to whom care was furnished because authorized or required by law and resulting in injury, death or disease, including those:

(1) Arising out of a tort under local law,

(2) Arising out of an on-the-job injury compensable under workers' compensation law except for Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA) recoveries,

(3) Based on the United States being a third-party beneficiary of the insurance contract of the injured party to include medical payment coverage, lost wages, as well as uninsured, underinsured, and no-fault coverage.

(b) *Claims for lost military pay.* Claims for the value of lost pay of active members of the uniformed services arising out of a tort under local law resulting in injury, death or disease.

(c) *Claims for property loss.* Claims arising out of a tort under local law for the value of lost or missing DA or DOD property, including non-appropriated fund instrumentality (NAFI) property, or for the cost of repairs of such property, including damage to assigned quarters, are not collectible under 10 U.S.C. 2775. (See § 537.4).

#### § 537.4 Claims not collectible.

(a) Where the tortfeasor is a department, agency or instrumentality of the United States. (See § 536.27(g) of this chapter).

(b) Where the tortfeasor is a member of the uniformed services or an employee of the DA or DOD, acting within the scope of employment, who damages or loses property. See AR 735-5, chapter 13.

(c) Where the damage or loss of property falls under a contractor bill of lading and recovery is pursued by the contracting agency, e.g., Surface Deploy-

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ment and Distribution Command (SDDC), formerly the Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), for lost or destroyed shipments.

(d) Where damage to assigned quarters, or equipment or furnishings therein, is collectible from a member of the uniformed services under 10 U.S.C. 2775.

(e) Where the medical care is furnished by a Department of Veterans Affairs facility to other than active duty members of the uniformed services for service-connected disabilities.

#### § 537.5 Applicable law.

(a) *Basis for recovery.* (1) Most recovery assertions are based on the negligence or wrongful acts or omissions of the person or entity that caused the loss. These actions or omissions must constitute a tort as determined by the law of place of occurrence, except in no-fault jurisdictions where the no-fault law permits recovery. Where the tort is not complete within the jurisdiction where it originally occurred, the law of the original jurisdiction is nevertheless applicable. For example, if a plane crashes in Virginia due to the negligence of a Federal Aviation Administration controller in Maryland, Maryland law determines the extent and nature of the tort. However, as to what law of damages is applicable, Maryland or Virginia depeage (choice of law) theory may apply. For example, if the flight originated in Indiana and the destination was Virginia, the conflict law of both Maryland and Virginia must be applied. See DA Pam 27-162, paragraph 2-35.

(2) Recovery assertions based on the United States being a third-party beneficiary or subrogee are not based on tort, but on the right to recover under local law, for example, the right of a third party to recover workers' compensation benefits is based on local law. However, the right of a third-party beneficiary to recover under an insurance contract may turn on whether an exclusionary clause is valid under the law of the jurisdiction where the contract was made.

(b) *Statute of limitations.* (1) Federal law determines when a recovery assertion must be made. Assertions for the

value of medical expenses, lost military pay or property loss or damage based on a tort must be made not later than three years from the date of accrual, 28 U.S.C. 2415(b). The date of accrual is usually the date of the occurrence giving rise to the recovery, for example, the date of injury or death for medical expenses and lost military pay or the date of damage or loss for a government property assertion. There are exceptions. For example, the loss of property in rightful possession of another accrues when that person claims ownership or converts the property to his own use.

(2) Recovery assertions based on an implied-in-law contract against a no-fault or personal-injury-protection insured must be brought no later than six years from the date of accrual, 28 U.S.C. 2415(a), *United States v. Limbs*, 524 F.2d 799 (9th Cir. 1975). The date of accrual is usually the date of occurrence.

(3) Actions asserted on a third-party beneficiary basis against an insurer or workers compensation fund must comply with the state notice requirement, which varies from one to six years, or the insurer's notice requirement set forth in the policy. *United States v. Hartford Acci. & Indem. Co.*, 460 F.2d 17 (9th Cir. 1972), cert. den. 409 U.S. 979 (1972).

(4) The statute of limitations is tolled or does not start running until the responsible federal official is notified of the existence of a recoverable loss, *Jankowitz v. United States*, 533 F.2d 538 (D.C. Cir. 1976), *United States v. Golden Acres, Inc.*, 684 F. Supp. 96 (D. Del. 1986). The responsible federal official can be the area claims office (ACO), the claims processing office (CPO), a command claims service or USARCS, depending on who receives the notice under this regulation. However, because of the responsibility to notify the MTF or TRICARE fiscal intermediary, and by regulation the notice must be expeditious, delayed notification could start the statute of limitations running. Additionally, when an ACO or CPO discovers the existence of an assertion, the statute of limitations will begin to run regardless of when the MTF or the TRICARE intermediary sends a notice. The date

of receipt of a notice must be entered into the affirmative claims management program/database (ACMP) and the notice must be date-stamped and initialed.

#### § 537.6 Identification of recovery incidents.

(a) *Responsibilities.* Each command claims service and ACO will develop means to identify recovery incidents arising in its geographic area of responsibility. See §§ 536.10 and 536.11 of this chapter and paragraph 2-2 of DA Pam 27-162. This requires publication of a claims directive to all DOD and Army installations, units and activities in its area, emphasizing the importance of reporting serious incidents to recovery judge advocates (RJAs) or civilian recovery attorneys.

(b) *Screening procedures.* (1) Establish a point of contact in each unit and activity in the area of responsibility and screen their sources periodically, including motor pools, family housing, departments of public works, safety offices, provost marshals, and criminal investigation divisions. Review civilian news and police reports, military police blotters and reports, court proceedings, line of duty and AR 15-6 investigations and similar sources to identify potential medical care recovery claims.

(2) The MTF commander will ensure that the claims office is notified of instances in which the MTF provides, or is billed by a civilian facility for, inpatient or outpatient care resulting from injuries (such as broken bones or burns arising from automobile accidents, gas explosions, falls, civilian malpractice, and similar incidents) that do not involve collections from a health benefits or Medicare supplemental insurer. Claims personnel will coordinate with MTF personnel to ensure that inpatient and outpatient records and emergency room and clinic logs are properly screened to identify potential cases. The RJA or recovery attorney will screen the MTF comptroller records database and division records as well as ambulance logs to identify potential medical care recovery cases. The RJA or recovery attorney will also coordinate with Navy and Air Force claims