

reported, by requesting dispute resolution, as follows:

(1) By mailing, e-mailing, or otherwise delivering a written request for dispute resolution to the dispute resolution provider at the address or e-mail address provided either at <http://www.hud.gov>, or by contacting HUD's Office of Regulatory Affairs and Manufactured Housing at (202) 708-6423 or (800) 927-2891;

(2) By faxing a request for dispute resolution to the fax number provided either at <http://www.hud.gov>, or by contacting HUD's Office of Regulatory Affairs and Manufactured Housing at (202) 708-6423 or (800) 927-2891; or

(3) By telephoning a request for dispute resolution to the number provided either at <http://www.hud.gov>, or by contacting HUD's Office of Regulatory Affairs and Manufactured Housing at (202) 708-6423 or (800) 927-2891.

(c) *Requested information.* The dispute resolution provider will request at least the following information when a person seeks to initiate dispute resolution under the HUD Manufactured Home Dispute Resolution Program:

(1) The name, address, and contact information of the homeowner;

(2) The name and contact information of the manufacturer, retailer, and installer of the manufactured home, to the extent available;

(3) The date the report of the alleged defect was made;

(4) The name and contact information of the recipient or recipients of the report of the alleged defect;

(5) The date of installation of the manufactured home affected by the alleged defect; and

(6) A description of the alleged defect.

§ 3288.30 Screening of dispute resolution request.

(a) *Review for sufficiency.* When the request for dispute resolution has been received by the dispute resolution provider, a screening neutral will review the sufficiency of the information provided in the request for dispute resolution and determine if the dispute resolution process should proceed. If the screening neutral determines that a defect is properly alleged and timely reported, notice of the request will be

forwarded, as provided in § 3288.33, to the manufacturer, retailer, and installer, as appropriate and to the extent the appropriate parties can be identified based on the information in the request.

(b) *Insufficient information.* If a request for dispute resolution is lacking any information necessary to determine if the dispute resolution process should proceed, the screening neutral will contact the requester or the parties about supplementing the initial request. If information necessary to qualify the matter for the HUD Manufactured Home Dispute Resolution Program is not received within a reasonable time established by the screening neutral, the request for dispute resolution will be considered withdrawn.

(c) *Denial of a dispute.* Denial by all of the parties that there is a dispute does not preclude the dispute resolution process from going forward to mediation. A screening neutral's determination that a defect is properly alleged is prima facie evidence of a dispute. If the defect has not been corrected or repaired, the matter will be referred to mediation.

(d) *Determination of unreasonable risk.* If the screening neutral determines there is sufficient documentation of an alleged defect presenting an unreasonable risk of injury or death, he or she will send a copy of the request to HUD.

§ 3288.33 Notice of dispute resolution.

(a) Once the screening neutral determines that a defect is properly alleged and timely reported, notice about the request will be forwarded to the parties by overnight delivery, commercial carrier, or fax.

(b) If the parties have not initiated the Alternative Process in accordance with § 3288.105 of this part within 7 days of the screening neutral's notification, the screening neutral will refer the matter to mediation.

§ 3288.35 Mediation.

(a) *Mediator.* The dispute resolution provider will provide for the selection of a mediator. The selected mediator will not be the person who screened the

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dispute resolution request. The selected mediator will mediate the dispute and attempt to facilitate a settlement. If a party identifies any other party that should be included in the mediation, the mediator will contact the other party and provide information about the scheduled mediation meetings.

(b) *Time*—(1) *For reaching settlement.* Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the parties are allowed 30 days from the commencement of the mediation to reach a mediated settlement. In every case, the dispute resolution provider will notify the parties and the homeowner, in writing, of the date of the commencement of the mediation.

(2) *Alleged defects presenting an unreasonable risk of injury, death, or significant loss or damage to valuable personal property.* For mediations involving alleged defects that appear to present an unreasonable risk of injury, death, or significant loss or damage to valuable personal property as determined by the screening neutral, the parties have a maximum 10 days from the commencement of the mediation to reach a settlement.

(3) *For corrective repairs.* Unless a longer period is agreed to in writing by the parties to the mediated settlement and the homeowner, corrective repairs must be completed no later than 30 days after the date the settlement agreement is signed by the applicable parties.

(c) *Denial of dispute.* During mediation, denial of a dispute by all parties without acceptance of responsibility will result in the mediator referring the matter to arbitration for determination of the defect and responsibility for the defect.

(d) *Written settlement agreement.*

(1) Upon reaching an agreement, the parties will sign a written settlement agreement. The dispute resolution provider will forward copies of the agreements with the original signatures of the parties to the parties, the homeowner, and to HUD.

(2) Sample agreements will be made available to the parties as drafting guidance by the dispute resolution provider.

(e) *Failure of mediation.* If mediation is not successful, parties or the homeowner may proceed to nonbinding arbitration, as provided in §3288.40 of this part.

(f) *Confidentiality.* Except for the report of an alleged defect, any request for dispute resolution, and any written settlement agreement, all other documents and communications provided in confidence and used in the mediation will be confidential, in accordance with the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act of 1996 (5 U.S.C. 571 *et seq.*).

§ 3288.40 Nonbinding arbitration.

(a) *When initiated.* (1) If, following mediation under §3288.35, the parties fail to reach a settlement, any party or the homeowner may, within 15 days of the expiration of the deadline applicable under §3288.35(b), initiate nonbinding arbitration.

(2) In addition, arbitration may be initiated upon referral by the mediator pursuant to §3288.35(c).

(b) *Written request*—(1) *Submission to HUD.* A written request for arbitration must be submitted to the dispute resolution provider and how to make a request for dispute resolution will be available at <http://www.hud.gov> or by contacting HUD's Office of Manufactured Housing Programs at (202) 708-6423 or (800) 927-2891.

(2) *Contents of request.* The written request for arbitration must include:

- (i) The name and address of the party making the request;
- (ii) A brief description of the alleged defect or a copy of the report of the alleged defect; and
- (iii) A copy of the request for dispute resolution.

(c) *Appointment and authority of arbitrator.* Upon receipt of the request, the dispute resolution provider will select an arbitrator. The arbitrator will have the authority to:

- (1) Set hearing dates and deadlines;
- (2) Conduct on-site inspections;
- (3) Issue requests for documentation and information necessary to complete the record;
- (4) Dismiss frivolous allegations;
- (5) Make proposed findings, including findings of defect and culpability and a