

may mitigate or aggravate the offense for which penalties and assessments are imposed.

§ 2554.41 Can a party request reconsideration of the initial decision?

(a) Any party may file a motion for reconsideration of the initial decision with the ALJ within 20 days of receipt of the initial decision. If the initial decision was served by mail, there is a rebuttable presumption that the initial decision was received by the party 5 days from the date of mailing.

(b) A motion for reconsideration must be accompanied by a supporting brief and must describe specifically each allegedly erroneous decision.

(c) Any response to a motion for reconsideration will only be allowed if it is requested by the ALJ.

(d) The ALJ will dispose of a motion for reconsideration by denying it or by issuing a revised initial decision.

(e) If the ALJ issues a revised initial decision upon motion of a party, that party may not file another motion for reconsideration.

§ 2554.42 When does the initial decision of the ALJ become final?

(a) The initial decision of the ALJ becomes the final decision of the Corporation, and shall be binding on all parties 30 days after it is issued, unless any party timely files a motion for reconsideration or any defendant adjudged to have submitted a false claim or statement timely appeals to the Corporation's authority head, as set forth in § 2554.43.

(b) If the ALJ disposes of a motion for reconsideration by denying it or by issuing a revised initial decision, the ALJ's order on the motion for reconsideration becomes the final decision of the Corporation 30 days after the order is issued, unless a defendant adjudged to have submitted a false claim or statement timely appeals to the authority head, within 30 days of the ALJ's order, as set forth in § 2554.43.

§ 2554.43 What are the procedures for appealing the ALJ decision?

(a) Any defendant who submits a timely answer and is found liable for a civil penalty or assessment in an initial decision may appeal the decision.

(b) The defendant may file a notice of appeal with the authority head within 30 days following issuance of the initial decision, serving a copy of the notice of appeal on all parties and the ALJ. The authority head may extend this deadline for up to an additional 30 days if an extension request is filed within the initial 30-day period and shows good cause.

(c) The defendant's appeal will not be considered until all timely motions for reconsideration have been resolved.

(d) If a timely motion for reconsideration is denied, a notice of appeal may be filed within 30 days following such denial or issuance of a revised initial decision, whichever applies.

(e) A notice of appeal must be supported by a written brief specifying why the initial decision should be reversed or modified.

(f) The Corporation's representative may file a brief in opposition to the notice of appeal within 30 days of receiving the defendant's notice of appeal and supporting brief.

(g) If a defendant timely files a notice of appeal, and the time for filing motions for reconsideration has expired, the ALJ will forward the record of the proceeding to the authority head.

§ 2554.44 What happens if an initial decision is appealed?

(a) An initial decision is stayed automatically pending disposition of a motion for reconsideration or of an appeal to the authority head.

(b) No administrative stay is available following a final decision of the authority head.

§ 2554.45 Are there any limitations on the right to appeal to the authority head?

(a) A defendant has no right to appear personally, or through a representative, before the authority head.

(b) There is no right to appeal any interlocutory ruling.

(c) The authority head will not consider any objection or evidence that was not raised before the ALJ unless the defendant demonstrates that the failure to object was caused by extraordinary circumstances. If the appealing

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defendant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the authority head that extraordinary circumstances prevented the presentation of evidence at the hearing, and that the additional evidence is material, the authority head may remand the matter to the ALJ for consideration of the additional evidence.

§ 2554.46 How does the authority head dispose of an appeal?

(a) The authority head may affirm, reduce, reverse, compromise, remand, or settle any penalty or assessment imposed by the ALJ in the initial decision or reconsideration decision.

(b) The authority head will promptly serve each party to the appeal and the ALJ with a copy of his or her decision. This decision must contain a statement describing the right of any person, against whom a penalty or assessment has been made, to seek judicial review.

§ 2554.47 What judicial review is available?

31 U.S.C. 3805 authorizes judicial review by the appropriate United States District Court of any final Corporation decision imposing penalties or assessments, and specifies the procedures for such review. To obtain judicial review, a defendant must file a petition with the appropriate court in a timely manner.

§ 2554.48 Can the administrative complaint be settled voluntarily?

(a) Parties may make offers of compromise or settlement at any time. Any compromise or settlement must be in writing.

(b) The reviewing official has the exclusive authority to compromise or settle the case from the date on which the reviewing official is permitted to issue a complaint until the ALJ issues an initial decision.

(c) The authority head has exclusive authority to compromise or settle the case from the date of the ALJ's initial decision until initiation of any judicial review or any action to collect the penalties and assessments.

(d) The Attorney General has exclusive authority to compromise or settle the case while any judicial review or

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any action to recover penalties and assessments is pending.

(e) The investigating official may recommend settlement terms to the reviewing official, the authority head, or the Attorney General, as appropriate. The reviewing official may recommend settlement terms to the authority head or the Attorney General, as appropriate.

§ 2554.49 How are civil penalties and assessments collected?

Section 3806 and 3808(b) of title 31, United States Code, authorize actions for collection of civil penalties and assessments imposed under this Part and specify the procedures for such actions.

§ 2554.50 What happens to collections?

All amounts collected pursuant to this part shall be deposited as miscellaneous receipts in the Treasury of the United States, except as provided in 31 U.S.C. 3806(g).

§ 2554.51 What if the investigation indicates criminal misconduct?

(a) Any investigating official may:

(1) Refer allegations of criminal misconduct directly to the Department of Justice for prosecution or for suit under the False Claims Act or other civil proceeding;

(2) Defer or postpone a report or referral to the reviewing official to avoid interference with a criminal investigation or prosecution; or

(3) Issue subpoenas under other statutory authority.

(b) Nothing in this part limits the requirement that the Corporation employees report suspected violations of criminal law to the Corporation's Office of Inspector General or to the Attorney General.

§ 2554.52 How does the Corporation protect the rights of defendants?

These procedures separate the functions of the investigating official, reviewing official, and the ALJ, each of whom report to a separate organizational authority in accordance with 31 U.S.C. 3801. Except for purposes of settlement, or as a witness or a representative in public proceedings, no investigating official, reviewing official, or Corporation employee or agent who