

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

38 CFR Part 20

RIN 2900-AL45

Board of Veterans' Appeals: Rules of Practice—Notice Procedures Relating to Withdrawal of Services by a Representative

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: This document proposes to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Board of Veterans' Appeals Rules of Practice to simplify notice procedures relating to withdrawal of services by a representative after certification of an appeal. We believe that these simplified notice procedures would be adequate for establishing proof of service.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before August 4, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Mail or hand-deliver written comments to: Director, Office of Regulations Management (02D), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave., NW., Room 1154, Washington, DC 20420; or fax comments to (202) 273-9289; or e-mail comments to *OGCRegulations@mail.va.gov*. Comments should indicate that they are submitted in response to "RIN 2900-AL45." All comments received will be available for public inspection in the Office of Regulations Management, Room 1158, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steven L. Keller, Senior Deputy Vice Chairman, Board of Veterans' Appeals, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420 (202-565-5978).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Board of Veterans' Appeals (Board) is an administrative body that decides appeals from denials by agencies of original jurisdiction (AOJs) of claims for veterans' benefits. This document proposes to amend the Board's Rules of Practice for the purpose of simplifying notice procedures in connection with motions to withdraw services by a representative after certification of an appeal.

Rule 608(b)(2) (38 CFR 20.608(b)(2)) contains various requirements relating to withdrawal of services by a representative after certification of an appeal. The only requirements we propose amending concern the notice procedures. Currently, a representative must send the appellant a copy of the

representative's motion to withdraw services by mailing the motion, return receipt requested; after the representative receives the signed receipt showing that the motion was received, the representative must file the signed receipt with the Board. If the appellant files a response, the appellant is required to send the representative a copy of the response by mailing it, return receipt requested, and is required to file the signed receipt with the Board.

We do not believe that the current level of proof of notice is appropriate. First-class mail is used for other important documents affecting the appellants and representatives involved in these appeals, including the AOJ decisions that are the subject of the appeals and the Board's decisions. We are proposing a change to require merely use of first-class mail, postage prepaid, with a certificate of service. This proposed change would be in line with general rules of proof of service in the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. Fed. R. Civ. P. 5(d) (generally, a certificate of service by a party (or attorney) is sufficient proof of service). We believe these simplified procedures would provide adequate assurance of receipt, when considered in light of the benefits of simplification of the notice procedures. These proposed procedures would remove the extra steps of the current return receipt requirements and would more easily enable the appellant to file a response, either opposing or supporting the representative's motion. Also, these proposed procedures would shorten the time before the motion is ripe for determination by the Board, expediting the possibility of a transition, if appropriate, to a new representative.

Accordingly, we propose amending the rule in cases involving a motion to withdraw services by a representative after certification of an appeal, to provide that proof of service will be accomplished by filing a statement with the Board certifying that the motion has been sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the appellant or that the response has been sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the representative, as applicable.

Unfunded Mandates

The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act requires, at 2 U.S.C. 1532, that agencies prepare an assessment of anticipated costs and benefits before developing any rule that may result in an expenditure by State, local, or tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector of \$100 million or more in any given year. This rule would have no consequential effect on State, local, or tribal governments.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This document contains no provisions constituting a new collection of information under the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501-3521).

Executive Order 12866

This regulatory amendment has been reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget under the provisions of Executive Order 12866.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Secretary hereby certifies that this regulatory amendment would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities as they are defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA), 5 U.S.C. 601-612. This rule would merely concern requirements for proof of service of motions for withdrawal of services by a representative after certification of an appeal before the Board, and for proof of service of responses to such motions. Moreover, such motions and responses are events that occur in only a minor proportion of the cases before the Board. Any economic impact on small entities would be minimal. Therefore, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 605(b), this amendment is exempt from the initial and final regulatory flexibility analysis requirements of sections 603 and 604.

List of Subjects in 38 CFR Part 20

Administrative practice and procedure, Attorneys, Lawyers, Legal services, Procedural rules, Veterans.

Approved: May 27, 2003.

Anthony J. Principi,

Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

For the reasons set out in the preamble, 38 CFR part 20 is proposed to be amended as set forth:

PART 20—BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS: RULES OF PRACTICE

1. The authority citation for part 20 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a) and as noted in specific sections.

§ 20.608 [Amended]

2. Section 20.608, paragraph (b)(2) is amended by:

A. In the third sentence, removing "permitted." and adding, in its place, "permitted, and a signed statement certifying that a copy of the motion was sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the appellant, setting forth the address to which the copy was mailed."

B. Removing the sixth and seventh sentences.

C. In the eighth sentence, removing "motion." and adding, in its place, "motion and must include a signed

statement certifying that a copy of the response was sent by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the representative, setting forth the address to which the copy was mailed.”

D. Removing the ninth and tenth sentences.

[FR Doc. 03-13797 Filed 6-2-03; 8:45 am]

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 52

[MD131-3091b; FRL-7503-8]

Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; Amendments to the Control of Volatile Organic Compounds from Chemical Production and Polytetrafluoroethylene Installations

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: EPA proposes to approve the State Implementation Plan (SIP) revisions submitted by the State of Maryland. The revisions consist of amendments to Maryland's air pollution control regulations governing specific processes on volatile organic compound (VOC) requirements that initially included organic chemicals and are being expanded to include inorganic chemicals and polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) products. In the Final Rules section of this **Federal Register**, EPA is approving the State's SIP submittal as a direct final rule without prior proposal because the Agency views this as a noncontroversial submittal and anticipates no adverse comments. A detailed rationale for the approval is set forth in the direct final rule. If no adverse comments are received in response to this action, no further activity is contemplated. If EPA receives adverse comments, the direct final rule will be withdrawn and all public comments received will be addressed in a subsequent final rule based on this proposed rule. EPA will not institute a second comment period. Any parties interested in commenting on this action should do so at this time.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing by July 3, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to Makeba A. Morris, Branch Chief, Air Quality Planning and Information Services Branch, Mailcode 3AP21, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103.

Copies of the documents relevant to this action are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Air Protection Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103; and the Maryland Department of the Environment, 1800 Washington Blvd., Suite 730, Baltimore, Maryland 21230.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Betty Harris, (215) 814-2168, at the EPA Region III address above, or by e-mail at harris.betty@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: For further information, please see the information provided in the direct final action for Maryland's amendments to the control of VOCs from chemical production and PTFE installations, that is located in the "Rules and Regulations" section of this **Federal Register** publication. Please note that if EPA receives adverse comment on an amendment, paragraph, or section of this rule and if that provision may be severed from the remainder of the rule, EPA may adopt as final those provisions of the rule that are not the subject of an adverse comment.

Dated: May 20, 2003.

Abraham Ferdas,

Acting Regional Administrator, Region III.

[FR Doc. 03-13701 Filed 6-2-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 52

[WV038/053-6026b; FRL-7500-1]

Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; West Virginia; Regulation To Prevent and Control Air Pollution from the Emission of Sulfur Oxides

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: EPA proposes to approve the State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision submitted by the State of West Virginia for the purpose of establishing regulations to prevent and control air pollution from the emission of sulfur oxides. In the final rules section of this **Federal Register**, EPA is approving the State's SIP submittal as a direct final rule without prior proposal because the Agency views this as a noncontroversial submittal and anticipates no adverse comments. A more detailed description of the state submittal and EPA's evaluation are included in a Technical

Support Document (TSD) prepared in support of this rulemaking action. A copy of the TSD is available, upon request, from the EPA Regional Office listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this document. If no adverse comments are received in response to this action, no further activity is contemplated. If EPA receives adverse comments, the direct final rule will be withdrawn and all public comments received will be addressed in a subsequent final rule based on this proposed rule. EPA will not institute a second comment period. Any parties interested in commenting on this action should do so at this time.

DATES: Comments must be received in writing by July 3, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be addressed to Makeba Morris, Branch Chief, Air Quality Planning and Information Services Branch, Mailcode 3AP21, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103. Copies of the documents relevant to this action are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Air Protection Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103, and the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Air Quality, 7012 MacCorkle Avenue, S.E., Charleston, WV 25304-2943.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jill Webster (215) 814-2033, or Ellen Wentworth (215) 814-2034, or by e-mail at webster.jill@epa.gov or wentworth.ellen@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: For further information, please see the information provided in the direct final action of West Virginia's regulation to Prevent and Control Air Pollution from the Emission of Sulfur Oxides, that is located in the "Rules and Regulations" section of this **Federal Register** publication.

Dated: May 8, 2003.

James W. Newsom,

Acting Regional Administrator, Region III.

[FR Doc. 03-13703 Filed 6-2-03; 8:45 am]

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