

§ 3905. Payment provisions relating to construction contracts

(a) In the event that a contractor, after making a certified payment request to an agency pursuant to section 3903(b) of this title, discovers that a portion or all of such payment request constitutes a payment for performance by such contractor that fails to conform to the specifications, terms, and conditions of its contract (hereafter in this subsection referred to as the “unearned amount”), then the contractor shall—

(1) notify the agency of such performance deficiency; and

(2) be obligated to pay the Government an amount equal to interest on the unearned amount (computed in the manner provided in section 3903(c) of this title), from the date of the contractor’s receipt of such unearned amount until—

(A) the date the contractor notifies the agency that the performance deficiency has been corrected; or

(B) the date the contractor reduces the amount of any subsequent certified application for payment to such agency by an amount equal to the unearned amount.

(b) Each construction contract awarded by an agency shall include a clause that requires the prime contractor to include in each subcontract for property or services entered into by the prime contractor and a subcontractor (including a material supplier) for the purpose of performing such construction contract—

(1) a payment clause which obligates the prime contractor to pay the subcontractor for satisfactory performance under its subcontract within 7 days out of such amounts as are paid to the prime contractor by the agency under such contract; and

(2) an interest penalty clause which obligates the prime contractor to pay to the subcontractor an interest penalty on amounts due in the case of each payment not made in accordance with the payment clause included in the subcontract pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection—

(A) for the period beginning on the day after the required payment date and ending on the date on which payment of the amount due is made; and

(B) computed at the rate specified by section 3902(a) of this title.

(c) The construction contract awarded by the agency shall further require the prime contractor to include in each of its subcontracts (for the purpose of performance of such construction contract) a provision requiring the subcontractor to include a payment clause and an interest penalty clause conforming to the standards of subsection (b) of this section in each of its subcontracts and to require each of its subcontractors to include such clauses in their subcontracts with each lower-tier subcontractor or supplier.

(d) The clauses required by subsections (b) and (c) of this section shall not be construed to impair the right of a prime contractor or a subcontractor at any tier to negotiate, and to include in their subcontract, provisions which—

(1) permit the prime contractor or a subcontractor to retain (without cause) a specified percentage of each progress payment otherwise due to a subcontractor for satisfactory performance under the subcontract, without incurring any obligation to pay a late payment interest penalty, in accordance with terms and conditions agreed to by the parties to the subcontract, giving such recognition as the parties deem appropriate to the ability of a subcontractor to furnish a performance bond and a payment bond;

(2) permit the contractor or subcontractor to make a determination that part or all of the subcontractor’s request for payment may be withheld in accordance with the subcontract agreement; and

(3) permit such withholding without incurring any obligation to pay a late payment penalty if—

(A) a notice conforming to the standards of subsection (g) of this section has been previously furnished to the subcontractor; and

(B) a copy of any notice issued by a prime contractor pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this paragraph has been furnished to the Government.

(e) If a prime contractor, after making application to an agency for payment under a contract but before making a payment to a subcontractor for the subcontractor’s performance covered by such application, discovers that all or a portion of the payment otherwise due such subcontractor is subject to withholding from the subcontractor in accordance with the subcontract agreement, then the prime contractor shall—

(1) furnish to the subcontractor a notice conforming to the standards of subsection (g) of this section as soon as practicable upon ascertaining the cause giving rise to a withholding, but prior to the due date for subcontract payment;

(2) furnish to the Government, as soon as practicable, a copy of the notice furnished to the subcontractor pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection;

(3) reduce the subcontractor’s progress payment by an amount not to exceed the amount specified in the notice of withholding furnished under paragraph (1) of this subsection;

(4) pay the subcontractor as soon as practicable after the correction of the identified subcontract performance deficiency, and—

(A) make such payment within—

(i) 7 days after correction of the identified subcontract performance deficiency (unless the funds therefor must be recovered from the Government because of a reduction under paragraph (5)(A)); or

(ii) 7 days after the contractor recovers such funds from the Government; or

(B) incur an obligation to pay a late payment interest penalty computed at the rate specified by section 3902(a) of this title;

(5) notify the Government, upon—

(A) reduction of the amount of any subsequent certified application for payment; or

(B) payment to the subcontractor of any withheld amounts of a progress payment, specifying—

(i) the amounts of the progress payments withheld under paragraph (1) of this subsection; and

(ii) the dates that such withholding began and ended; and

(6) be obligated to pay to the Government an amount equal to interest on the withheld payments (computed in the manner provided in section 3903(c) of this title), from the 8th day after receipt of the withheld amounts from the Government until—

(A) the day the identified subcontractor performance deficiency is corrected; or

(B) the date that any subsequent payment is reduced under paragraph (5)(A).

(f)(1) If a prime contractor, after making payment to a first-tier subcontractor, receives from a supplier or subcontractor of the first-tier subcontractor (hereafter referred to as a “second-tier subcontractor”) a written notice in accordance with section 3133(b) of title 40, asserting a deficiency in such first-tier subcontractor’s performance under the contract for which the prime contractor may be ultimately liable, and the prime contractor determines that all or a portion of future payments otherwise due such first-tier subcontractor is subject to withholding in accordance with the subcontract agreement, then the prime contractor may, without incurring an obligation to pay an interest penalty under subsection (e)(6) of this section—

(A) furnish to the first-tier subcontractor a notice conforming to the standards of subsection (g) of this section as soon as practicable upon making such determination; and

(B) withhold from the first-tier subcontractor’s next available progress payment or payments an amount not to exceed the amount specified in the notice of withholding furnished under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph.

(2) As soon as practicable, but not later than 7 days after receipt of satisfactory written notification that the identified subcontract performance deficiency has been corrected, the prime contractor shall pay the amount withheld under paragraph (1)(B) of this subsection to such first-tier subcontractor, or shall incur an obligation to pay a late payment interest penalty to such first-tier subcontractor computed at the rate specified by section 3902(a) of this title.

(g) A written notice of any withholding shall be issued to a subcontractor (with a copy to the Government of any such notice issued by a prime contractor), specifying—

(1) the amount to be withheld;

(2) the specific causes for the withholding under the terms of the subcontract; and

(3) the remedial actions to be taken by the subcontractor in order to receive payment of the amounts withheld.

(h) A prime contractor may not request payment from the agency of any amount withheld or retained in accordance with subsection (d) of this section until such time as the prime contractor has determined and certified to the agency that the subcontractor is entitled to the payment of such amount.

(i) A dispute between a contractor and subcontractor relating to the amount or entitlement of a subcontractor to a payment or a late payment interest penalty under a clause included in the subcontract pursuant to subsection (b) or (c) of this section does not constitute a dispute to which the United States is a party. The United States may not be interpleaded in any judicial or administrative proceeding involving such a dispute.

(j) Except as provided in subsection (i) of this section, this section shall not limit or impair any contractual, administrative, or judicial remedies otherwise available to a contractor or a subcontractor in the event of a dispute involving late payment or nonpayment by a prime contractor or deficient subcontract performance or nonperformance by a subcontractor.

(k) A contractor’s obligation to pay an interest penalty to a subcontractor pursuant to the clauses included in a subcontract under subsection (b) or (c) of this section may not be construed to be an obligation of the United States for such interest penalty. A contract modification may not be made for the purpose of providing reimbursement of such interest penalty. A cost reimbursement claim may not include any amount for reimbursement of such interest penalty.

(Added Pub. L. 100–496, §9(a)(2), Oct. 17, 1988, 102 Stat. 2460; amended Pub. L. 107–217, §3(h)(7), Aug. 21, 2002, 116 Stat. 1300.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 3905 was renumbered section 3906 of this title.

AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (f)(1). Pub. L. 107–217 substituted “section 3133(b) of title 40” for “section 2 of the Act of August 24, 1935 (40 U.S.C. 270b)”.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE

Section applicable to payments under contracts awarded, contracts renewed, and contract options exercised during or after the first fiscal quarter which begins more than 90 days after Oct. 17, 1988, see section 14(a) of Pub. L. 100–496, set out as an Effective Date of 1988 Amendment note under section 3902 of this title.

[§ 3906. Repealed. Pub. L. 105–362, title XIII, § 1301(c)(1), Nov. 10, 1998, 112 Stat. 3293]

Section, added Pub. L. 97–452, §1(18)(A), Jan. 12, 1983, 96 Stat. 2476, §3905; renumbered §3906 and amended Pub. L. 100–496, §§9(a)(1), 10, Oct. 17, 1988, 102 Stat. 2460, 2463, required submission of reports to Director of the Office of Management and Budget by 60th day after end of fiscal year by head of each agency concerning agency’s payment practices during that fiscal year.

A prior section 3906 was renumbered section 3907 of this title.

§ 3907. Relationship to other laws

(a) A claim for an interest penalty not paid under this chapter may be filed under section 7103 of title 41.

(b)(1) An interest penalty under this chapter does not continue to accrue—