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§ 423.1 Suits against the Social Security Administration and its employees in their official capacities.

(a) *Suits involving individual claims arising under title II, VIII, XVI, or XVIII of the Social Security Act.* (1) In cases seeking judicial review of final decisions of the Commissioner of Social Security on individual claims for benefits under title II, VIII, or XVI of the Social Security Act, or on individual claims for a Medicare Part D subsidy under title XVIII of the Act, summonses and complaints to be served by mail on the Social Security Administration or the Commissioner of Social Security should be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, Office of Program Litigation, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.

(2) We also accept electronic service in these cases, as provided by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

(b) *Other suits.* In cases that do not involve claims described in paragraph (a) of this section, summonses and complaints to be served by mail on the Social Security Administration or the Commissioner of Social Security should be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.

[88 FR 1329, Jan. 10, 2023]

§ 423.3 Other process directed to the Social Security Administration or the Commissioner.

Subpoenas and other process (other than summonses and complaints) that are required to be served on the Social Security Administration or the Commissioner of Social Security in the Commissioner's official capacity should be served as follows:

(a) If authorized by law to be served by mail, any mailed process should be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.

(b) If served by an individual, the process should be delivered to the Office of the General Counsel, via the agency mail room at Social Security

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Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.

[88 FR 1330, Jan. 10, 2023]

§ 423.5 Process against Social Security Administration officials in their individual capacities.

Process to be served on Social Security Administration officials in their individual capacities must be served in compliance with the requirements for service of process on individuals who are not governmental officials. The Office of the General Counsel is authorized but not required to accept process to be served on Social Security Administration officials in their individual capacities if the suit relates to an employee's official duties.

§ 423.7 Acknowledgment of mailed process.

The Social Security Administration will not provide a receipt or other acknowledgment of process received, except for a return receipt associated with certified mail and where otherwise required by law.

[88 FR 1330, Jan. 10, 2023]

§ 423.9 Effect of regulations in this part.

The regulations in this part are intended solely to identify Social Security Administration officials who are authorized to accept service of process. Litigants must comply with all requirements pertaining to service of process that are established by statute and court rule even though they are not repeated in this part.

PARTS 424–428 [RESERVED]

PART 429—ADMINISTRATIVE CLAIMS UNDER THE FEDERAL TORT CLAIMS ACT AND RELATED STATUTES

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AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 902(a)(5); 28 U.S.C. 2672; 31 U.S.C. 3721; 28 CFR 14.11.

SOURCE: 69 FR 48768, Aug. 11, 2004, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—Claims Against the Government Under the Federal Tort Claims Act

§ 429.101 What is this subpart about?

(a) This subpart applies only to claims filed under the Federal Tort Claims Act, as amended, 28 U.S.C. 2671–2680 (FTCA), for money damages against the United States for damage to or loss of property or personal injury or death that is caused by the negligent or wrongful act or omission of an employee of the Social Security Administration (SSA). The loss, damage, injury or death must be caused by the employee in the performance of his or her official duties, under circumstances in which the United States, if a private person, would be

liable in accordance with the law of the place where the act or omission occurred. This subpart does not apply to any tort claims excluded from the FTCA under 28 U.S.C. 2680.

(b) This subpart is subject to and consistent with the regulations on administrative claims under the FTCA issued by the Attorney General at 28 CFR part 14.

§ 429.102 How do I file a claim under this subpart?

(a) *Filing an initial claim.* You must either file your claim on a properly executed Standard Form 95 or you must submit a written notification of the incident accompanied by a claim for the money damages in a sum certain for damage to or loss of property you believe occurred because of the incident. For purposes of this subpart, we consider your claim to be filed on the date we receive it at the address specified in paragraph (c) of this section. If you mistakenly send your claim to another Federal agency, we will not consider it to be filed until the date that we receive it. If you mistakenly file a claim meant for another Federal agency with SSA, we will transfer it to the appropriate Federal agency, if possible. If we are unable to determine the appropriate agency, we will return the claim to you.

(b) *Filing an amendment to your claim.* You may file an amendment to your properly filed claim at any time before the SSA Claims Officer (as defined in § 429.201(d)(3)) makes a final decision on your claim or before you bring suit under 28 U.S.C. 2675(a). You must submit an amendment in writing and sign it. If you file a timely amendment, SSA has 6 months in which to finally dispose of the amended claim. Your option to file suit does not begin until 6 months after you file the amendment.

(c) *Where to obtain claims forms and file claims.* You can obtain claims forms by writing to the Office of the General Counsel, Office of General Law, Social Security Administration, Attn: FTCA Claims, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.

[69 FR 48768, Aug. 11, 2004, as amended at 74 FR 16327, Apr. 10, 2009; 79 FR 7577, Feb. 10, 2014; 88 FR 1330, Jan. 10, 2023]

§ 429.103 Who may file my claim?

(a) *Claims for damage to or loss of property.* If you are the owner of the property interest that is the subject of the claim, you, your duly authorized agent, or your legal representative may file the claim.

(b) *Claims for personal injury.* If you suffered the injury, you, your duly authorized agent, or your legal representative may file the claim.

(c) *Claims based on death.* The executor or administrator of your estate or any other person legally entitled to do so may file the claim.

(d) *Claims for loss wholly compensated by an insurer with the rights of a subrogee.* The insurer may file the claim. When an insurer presents a claim asserting the rights of a subrogee, the insurer must present with the claim appropriate evidence that it has the rights of a subrogee.

(e) *Claims for loss partially compensated by an insurer with the rights of a subrogee.* You and the insurer may file, jointly or separately. When an insurer presents a claim asserting the rights of a subrogee, the insurer must present with the claim appropriate evidence that it has the rights of a subrogee.

(f) *Claims by authorized agents or other legal representatives.* Your duly authorized agent or other legal representative may submit your claim, provided satisfactory evidence is submitted establishing that person has express authority to act on your behalf. A claim presented by an agent or legal representative must be presented in your name. If the claim is signed by the agent or legal representative, it must show the person's title or legal capacity and must be accompanied by evidence that the person has the authority to file the claim on your behalf as agent, executor, administrator, parent, guardian or other representative.

§ 429.104 What evidence do I need to submit with my claim?

(a) *Property damage.* To support a claim for property damage, either real or personal, you may be required to submit the following evidence or information:

(1) Proof of ownership.

(2) A detailed statement of the amount claimed with respect to each item of property.

(3) An itemized receipt of payment for necessary repairs or itemized written estimates of the cost of such repairs.

(4) A statement listing date of purchase, purchase price, market value of the property as of date of damage, and salvage value, where repair is not economical.

(5) Any other evidence or information that may have a bearing either on the responsibility of the United States for the injury to or loss of property or the damages claimed.

(b) *Personal injury.* To support a claim for personal injury, including pain and suffering, you may be required to submit the following evidence or information:

(1) A written report from your attending physician or dentist setting forth the nature and extent of your injury, nature and extent of treatment, any degree of temporary or permanent disability, your prognosis, period of hospitalization, and any diminished earning capacity. You may also be required to submit to a physical or mental examination by a physician employed or designated by SSA. If you submit a written request, we will provide you with a copy of the report of the examining physician provided you agree to make available to SSA any other physician's reports made of the physical or mental condition that is the subject of your claim.

(2) Itemized bills for medical, dental, and hospital expenses incurred, or itemized receipts of payment for such expenses.

(3) If your prognosis reveals that you will need future treatment, a statement of expected duration of and expenses for such treatment.

(4) If you claim a loss of time from employment, a written statement from your employer showing actual time lost from employment, whether you are a full or part-time employee, and wages or salary you actually lost.

(5) If you claim a loss of income and are self-employed, documentary evidence showing the amount of earnings you actually lost. For example, we may use income tax returns for several

years prior to the injury in question and the year in which the injury occurred to indicate or measure lost income. A statement of how much it cost you to hire someone to do the same work you were doing at the time of the injury might also be used in measuring lost income.

(6) Any other evidence or information that may have a bearing on either the responsibility of the United States for the personal injury or the damages claimed.

(c) *Claim based on death.* To support the claim, we need the following evidence or information:

(1) An authenticated death certificate or other believable documentation showing cause of death, date of death, and age at the time of death.

(2) The decedent's employment or occupation at time of death, including monthly or yearly salary or earnings (if any), and the duration of last employment or occupation.

(3) Full names, addresses, birth dates, kinship, and marital status of the decedent's survivors, including identification of those survivors who were dependent upon the decedent for support at the time of death.

(4) Degree of support the decedent provided to each survivor dependent on the decedent for support at the time of death.

(5) The decedent's general physical and mental condition before death.

(6) Itemized bills for medical and burial expenses incurred, or itemized receipts of payments for such expenses.

(7) If damages for pain and suffering prior to death are claimed, a physician's detailed statement specifying the injuries suffered, duration of pain and suffering, any drugs administered for pain and the decedent's physical condition in the interval between injury and death.

(8) Any other evidence or information that may have a bearing on either the responsibility of the United States for the death or the damages claimed.

(d) *Time limit for submitting evidence.* You must furnish all the evidence required by this section within a reasonable time. If you fail to furnish all the evidence necessary to determine your claim within 60 days after being asked

to do so, we may find that you have decided to abandon your claim.

§ 429.105 What happens when you receive my claim?

When we receive your claim, we will investigate to determine its validity. After our investigation, we will forward your claim to the SSA Claims Officer with our recommendation as to whether your claim should be fully or partially allowed or denied.

§ 429.106 What happens if my claim is denied?

(a) If your claim is denied, the SSA Claims Officer will send you, your agent, or your legal representative a written notice by certified or registered mail. The notice will include an explanation of why your claim was denied and will advise you of your right to file suit in an appropriate U.S. District Court not later than 6 months after the date of the mailing of the notice if you disagree with the determination.

(b) Before filing suit and before expiration of the 6-month period after the date of the mailing of the denial notice, you, your duly authorized agent, or your legal representative may file a written request with SSA for reconsideration by certified or registered mail. If you file a timely request for reconsideration, SSA has 6 months from the date you file your request in which to finally dispose of your claim. Your right to file suit will not begin until 6 months after you file your request for reconsideration. Final SSA action on your request for reconsideration will occur in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section.

§ 429.107 If my claim is approved, how do I obtain payment?

(a) *Claims under \$2,500.* If your claim is approved, you must complete a "Voucher for Payment under the Federal Tort Claims Act," Standard Form 1145. If you are represented by an attorney, the voucher for payment (SF 1145) must designate both you and your attorney as "payees"; we will then mail the check to your attorney.

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(b) *Claims in excess of \$2,500.* If we approve your claim, we will send the appropriate Financial Management Service forms to the Department of the Treasury, which will mail the payment to you.

[69 FR 48768, Aug. 11, 2004, as amended at 88 FR 1330, Jan. 10, 2023]

§ 429.108 What happens if I accept an award, compromise, or settlement under this subpart?

If you, your agent, or your legal representative accept any award, compromise, or settlement under this subpart, your acceptance is final and conclusive on you, your agent or representative, and any other person on whose behalf or for whose benefit the claim was filed. The acceptance constitutes a complete release of any claim against the United States and against any employee of the Government whose act or omission gave rise to the claim, by reason of the same subject matter.

§ 429.109 Are there any penalties for filing false claims?

A person who files a false claim or makes a false or fraudulent statement in a claim against the United States may be imprisoned for not more than 5 years. (18 U.S.C. 287, 1001). In addition, that person may be liable for a civil penalty of not less than \$5,000 and not more than \$10,000 and damages of triple the loss or damage sustained by the United States, as well as the costs of a civil action brought to recover any penalty or damages. (31 U.S.C. 3729).

§ 429.110 Are there any limitations on SSA's authority under this subpart?

(a) An award, compromise or settlement of a claim under this subpart in excess of \$25,000 needs the prior written approval of the Attorney General or his designee. For the purposes of this paragraph, we treat a principal claim and any derivative or subrogated claim as a single claim.

(b) An administrative claim may be adjusted, determined, compromised, or settled under this subpart only after consultation with the Department of Justice when, in the opinion of SSA:

(1) A new precedent or a new point of law is involved;

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(2) A question of policy is or may be involved;

(3) The United States is or may be entitled to indemnity or contribution from a third party and SSA is unable to adjust the third-party claim; or

(4) The compromise of a particular claim, as a practical matter, will or may control the disposition of a related claim in which the amount to be paid may exceed \$25,000.

(c) An administrative claim may be adjusted, determined, compromised or settled only after consultation with the Department of Justice when it is learned that the United States, or an employee, agent, or cost-plus contractor of the United States, is involved in litigation based on a claim arising out of the same incident or transaction.

Subpart B—Claims Under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claims Act of 1964

§ 429.201 What is this subpart about?

(a) *Scope and purpose.* This subpart applies to all claims filed by or on behalf of employees of SSA for loss of, or damage to, personal property incident to their service with SSA under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act of 1964, as amended, 31 U.S.C. 3721 (MPCECA). A claim must be substantiated and the possession of the property determined to be reasonable, useful, or proper.

(b) *Maximum payment under this part.* The maximum amount that can be paid for any claim under the Act is \$40,000 or, in extraordinary circumstances, \$100,000, and property may be replaced in kind at the discretion of the Government.

(c) *Policy.* SSA is not an insurer and does not underwrite all personal property losses that an employee may sustain incident to employment. We encourage employees to carry private insurance to the maximum extent practicable to avoid losses that may not be recoverable from SSA. The procedures set forth in this subpart are designed to enable you to obtain the proper amount of compensation from SSA and/or a private insurer for the loss or damage. If you fail to comply with

these procedures it could reduce or preclude payment of your claim under this subpart.

(d) *Definitions.* (1) “Quarters,” unless otherwise indicated, means a house, apartment, or other residence that is an SSA employee’s principal residence.

(2) “State,” unless otherwise indicated, is defined by §404.2(c)(5) of title 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

(3) “SSA Claims Officer” means the SSA official designated to determine claims under the MPCECA. The current designee is the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Office 1.

[69 FR 48768, Aug. 11, 2004, as amended at 88 FR 1330, Jan. 10, 2023]

§ 429.202 How do I file a claim under this subpart?

(a) *Who may file.* (1) You, your duly authorized agent, your legal representative, or your survivor may file the claim. If your survivor files the claim, the order of precedence for filing is spouse, child, parent, sibling.

(2) You may not file a claim on behalf of a subrogee, assignee, conditional vendor, or other third party.

(b) *Where to file.* You must file your claim with the Office of the General Counsel, Office of General Law, Social Security Administration, Attn: MPCECA Claims, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.

(c) *Evidence required.* You are responsible for proving ownership or possession, the facts surrounding the loss or damage, and the value of the property. Your claim must include the following:

(1) A written statement, signed by you or your authorized agent, explaining how the damage or loss occurred. This statement must also include:

(i) A description of the type, design, model number, or other identification of the property.

(ii) The date you purchased or acquired the property and its original cost.

(iii) The location of the property when the loss or damage occurred.

(iv) The value of the property when lost or damaged.

(v) The actual or estimated cost of the repair of any damaged item.

(vi) The purpose of and authority for travel, if the loss or damage occurred

while you were transporting your property or using a motor vehicle.

(vii) All available information as to who was responsible for the loss or damage, if it was not you, and all information as to insurance contracts, whether in your name or in the name of the responsible party.

(viii) Any other evidence about loss or damage that the SSA Claims Officer determines is necessary.

(2) Copies of all available and appropriate documents such as bills of sale, estimates of repairs, or travel orders. In the case of damage to an automobile, you must submit at least two estimates of repair or a certified paid bill showing the damage incurred and the cost of all parts, labor, and other items necessary to the repair of the vehicle or a statement from an authorized dealer or repair garage showing that the cost of such repairs exceeds the value of the vehicle.

(3) A copy of the power of attorney or other authorization if someone else files the claim on your behalf.

(4) A statement from your immediate supervisor confirming that possession of the property was reasonable, useful, or proper under the circumstances and that the damage or loss was incident to your service.

(d) *Time limitations.* You must file a written claim within 2 years after accrual of the claim. For purposes of this subpart, your claim accrues at the later of:

(1) The time of the accident or incident causing the loss or damage;

(2) The time the loss or damage should have been discovered by the claimant by the exercise of due diligence; or

(3) Where valid circumstances prevented you from filing your claim earlier, the time that should be construed as the date of accrual because of a circumstance that prevents the filing of a claim. If war or armed conflict prevents you from filing the claim, your claim accrues on the date hostilities terminate and your claim must be filed within 2 years of that date.

[69 FR 48768, Aug. 11, 2004, as amended at 74 FR 16327, Apr. 10, 2009; 79 FR 7577, Feb. 10, 2014; 88 FR 1330, Jan. 10, 2023]

§ 429.203 When is a claim allowable?

(a) A claim is allowable only if you were using the property incident to your service with SSA, with the knowledge and consent of a superior authority, and:

(1) The damage or loss was not caused wholly or partially by the negligent or improper action or inaction of you, your agent, the members of your family, or your private employee (the standard to be applied is that of reasonable care under the circumstances); and

(2) The possession of the property lost or damaged and the quantity and the quality possessed is determined to have been reasonable, useful, or proper under the circumstances; and

(3) The claim is substantiated by proper and convincing evidence.

(b) Claims that are otherwise allowable under this subpart will not be disallowed solely because you were not the legal owner of the property for which the claim is made.

(c) Subject to the conditions in paragraph (a) of this section and the other provisions of this subpart, any claim you make for damage to, or loss of, personal property that occurs incident to your service with SSA may be considered and allowed. For the purpose of this subpart, if you were performing your official duties at an alternate work location under an approved flexiplace agreement, the alternate work location will be considered an official duty station even if it is located in your principal residence. The alternate work location is not considered to be quarters. The following are examples of the principal types of claims that are allowable, but these examples are not exclusive and other types of claims are allowable, unless specifically excluded under this subpart:

(1) *Property damage in quarters or other authorized places.* Claims are allowable for damage to, or loss of, property arising from fire, flood, hurricane, other natural disaster, theft, or other unusual occurrence, while such property is located at:

(i) Quarters within a state that were assigned to you or otherwise provided in kind by the United States; or

(ii) Any warehouse, office, working area, or other place (except quarters)

authorized or apparently authorized for the reception or storage of property.

(2) *Transportation or travel losses.* Claims are allowable for damage to, or loss of, property incident to transportation or storage of such property pursuant to order or in connection with travel under orders, including property in your custody or in the custody of a carrier, an agent or agency of the Government.

(3) *Mobile homes.* Claims may be allowed for damage to, or loss of, mobile homes and their contents under the provisions of paragraph (c)(2) of this section. Claims for structural damage to mobile homes, other than that caused by collision, and damage to contents of mobile homes resulting from such structural damage, must contain conclusive evidence that the damage was not caused by structural deficiency of the mobile home and that it was not overloaded. Claims for damage to, or loss of, tires mounted on mobile homes are not allowable, except in cases of collision, theft, or vandalism.

(4) *Enemy action or public service.* Claims are allowable for damage to, or loss of, property that directly result from:

(i) Enemy action or threat of enemy action, or combat, guerrilla, brigandage, or other belligerent activity, or unjust confiscation by a foreign power or its nationals.

(ii) Action you take to quiet a civil disturbance or to alleviate a public disaster.

(iii) Efforts you make to save human life or Government property.

(5) *Property used for the benefit of the Government.* Claims are allowable for damage to, or loss of, property when used for the benefit of the Government at the request of, or with the knowledge and consent of, superior authority, up to the amount not compensated by private insurance.

(6) *Clothing and accessories.* Claims are allowable for damage to, or loss of, clothing and accessories a person customarily wears and devices such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, or prosthetics.

(7) *Expenses incident to repair.* You may be reimbursed for the payment of any sales tax and other such fees incurred in connection with repairs to an

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item. The costs of obtaining estimates of repair (subject to the limitations set forth in § 429.204(c)) are also allowable.

§ 429.204 Are there any restrictions on what is allowable?

Claims of the type described in this section are only allowable subject to the restrictions noted:

(a) *Money or currency, including coin collections.* Allowable only when lost because of fire, flood, hurricane, other natural disaster, theft from quarters (as limited by § 429.203(c)(1)), or under other reasonable circumstances in which it would be in the Government's best interest to make payment. In cases involving theft from quarters, the evidence must conclusively show that your quarters were locked at the time of the theft. Reimbursement for loss of money or currency is limited to the amount it is determined reasonable for you to have had in your possession at the time of the loss.

(b) *Government property.* Allowable only for property owned by the United States for which you are financially responsible to an agency of the Government other than SSA.

(c) *Estimate fees.* Allowable for fees paid to obtain estimates of repairs only when it is clear that you could not have obtained an estimate without paying a fee. In that case, the fee is allowable only in an amount determined to be reasonable in relation to the value of the property or the cost of the repairs.

(d) *Automobiles and motor vehicles.* (1) Claims may only be allowed for damage to, or loss of, automobiles and other motor vehicles if:

(i) You were required by your supervisor to use a motor vehicle for official Government business (official Government business, as used here, does not include travel, or parking incident to travel, between quarters and office, quarters and an approved telecommuting center, or use of vehicles for the convenience of the owner. However, it does include travel, and parking incident thereto, between quarters and an assigned place of duty specifically authorized by your supervisor as being more advantageous to the Government); or

(ii) Shipment of such motor vehicles was being furnished or provided by the Government, subject to the provisions of § 429.206; or

(2) When a claim involves damage to or loss of automobile or other motor vehicle, you will be required to present proof of insurance coverage, the deductible amount, and the amount, if any, you recovered from the insurer. If your claim is for an amount that exceeds the deductible on the insurance policy, the maximum allowable recovery will be for the amount of the deductible. If the vehicle is uninsured, the maximum allowed will be \$500.00.

(e) *Computers and electronics.* Claims may be allowed for loss of, or damage to, cellular phones, fax machines, computers and related hardware and software only when lost or damaged incident to fire, flood, hurricane, other natural disaster, theft from quarters (as limited by § 429.203(c)(1)), other reasonable circumstances in which it would be in the Government's best interest to make payment, or unless being shipped as a part of a change of duty station paid for by the Agency. In incidents of theft from quarters, it must be conclusively shown that your quarters were locked at the time of the theft.

(f) *Alternate work locations.* When a claim is filed for property damage or loss at a non-Government alternate work location at which you are working pursuant to an approved flexiplace work agreement, you are required to present proof of insurance coverage, the deductible amount, and the amount, if any, you recovered from the insurer. If your claim is for an amount that exceeds the deductible on the insurance policy, the maximum allowable recovery will be for the amount of the deductible. If the property is uninsured, the maximum allowed will be \$1,000.00.

§ 429.205 What is not allowable under this subpart?

Claims are not allowable for the following:

(a) *Unassigned quarters in United States.* Property loss or damage in quarters you occupied within any state

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that were not assigned to you or otherwise provided in kind by the United States.

(b) *Business property.* Property used for business or profit.

(c) *Unserviceable property.* Wornout or unserviceable property.

(d) *Illegal possession.* Property acquired, possessed, or transferred in violation of the law or in violation of applicable regulations or directives.

(e) *Articles of extraordinary value.* Valuable articles, such as cameras, watches, jewelry, furs, or other articles of extraordinary value. This prohibition does not apply to articles in your personal custody or articles properly checked or inventoried with a common carrier, if you took reasonable protection or security measures.

(f) *Intangible property.* Loss of property that has no extrinsic and marketable value but is merely representative or evidence of value, such as non-negotiable stock certificates, promissory notes, bonds, bills of lading, warehouse receipts, insurance policies, baggage checks, and bank books, is not compensable. Loss of a thesis, or other similar item, is compensable only to the extent of the out-of-pocket expenses you incurred in preparing the item such as the cost of the paper or other materials. No compensation is authorized for the time you spent in its preparation or for supposed literary value.

(g) *Incidental expenses and consequential damages.* The MPCECA and this subpart authorize payment for loss of, or damage to, personal property only. Except as provided in § 429.203(c)(7), consequential damages or other types of loss or incidental expenses (such as loss of use, interest, carrying charges, cost of lodging or food while awaiting arrival of shipment, attorney fees, telephone calls, cost of transporting you or your family members, inconvenience, time spent in preparation of claim, or cost of insurance premiums) are not compensable.

(h) *Real property.* Damage to real property is not compensable. In determining whether an item is considered to be an item of personal property, as opposed to real property, normally, any movable item is considered personal property even if physically joined to the land.

(i) *Commercial property.* Articles acquired or held for sale or disposition by other commercial transactions on more than an occasional basis, or for use in a private profession or business enterprise.

(j) *Commercial storage.* Property stored at a commercial facility for your convenience and at your expense.

(k) *Claims for minimum amount.* Loss or damage amounting to less than \$25.

§ 429.206 What if my claim involves a commercial carrier or an insurer?

In the event the property that is the subject of the claim was lost or damaged while in the possession of a commercial carrier or was insured, the following procedures will apply:

(a) Whenever property is damaged, lost, or destroyed while being shipped pursuant to authorized travel orders, the owner must file a written claim for reimbursement with the last commercial carrier known or believed to have handled the goods, or the carrier known to be in possession of the property when the damage or loss occurred, according to the terms of its bill of lading or contract, before submitting a claim against the Government under this subpart.

(b) Whenever property is damaged, lost, or destroyed incident to your service and is insured in whole or in part, you must make demand in writing against the insurer for reimbursement under the terms and conditions of the insurance coverage, before filing a claim against the Government.

(c) Failure to make a demand on a carrier or insurer or to make all reasonable efforts to protect and prosecute rights available against a carrier or insurer and to collect the amount recoverable from the carrier or insurer may result in reducing the amount recoverable from the Government by the maximum amount that would have been recoverable from the carrier or insurer had the claim been timely or diligently prosecuted. However, no deduction will be made where the circumstances of your service preclude reasonable filing of a claim or diligent prosecution, or the evidence indicates a demand was impracticable or would have been unavailing.

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(d) After you file a claim against the carrier or insurer, you may immediately submit a claim under this subpart, without waiting until the carrier or insurer finally approves or denies your claim.

(1) Upon submitting your claim, you must certify whether you have not gained any recovery from a carrier or insurer, and enclose all pertinent correspondence.

(2) If the carrier or insurer has not taken final action on your claim, you must immediately tell the carrier or insurer to address all correspondence regarding the claim to the SSA Claims Officer, and you must provide a copy of this notice to the SSA Claims Officer.

(3) You must advise the SSA Claims Officer of any action the carrier or insurer takes on the claim and, upon request, must furnish all correspondence, documents, and other evidence pertinent to the matter.

(e) You must assign to the United States, to the extent you accept any payment on the claim, all rights, title, and interest in any claim you may have against any carrier, insurer, or other party arising out of the incident on which your claim against the United States is based. After payment of the claim by the United States, you must, upon receipt of any payment from a carrier or insurer, pay the proceeds to the United States to the extent of the payment you received from the United States.

(f) If you recover for the loss from the carrier or insurer before your claim under this subpart is settled, the amount of recovery will be applied to the claim as follows:

(1) If you recover an amount that is greater than or equal to your total loss as determined under this subpart, no compensation is allowable under this subpart.

(2) If you recover an amount that is less than such total loss, the allowable amount is determined by deducting the recovery from the amount of such total loss.

(3) For this purpose, your total loss is determined without regard to the maximum payment limitations set forth in § 429.201. However, if the resulting amount after making this deduction exceeds the maximum payment limita-

tions, you will only be allowed the maximum amount set forth in § 429.201.

(g) In a claim arising from damage to an automobile or other motor vehicle, in no event may recovery exceed the reasonable deductible on the insurance policy.

§ 429.207 What are the procedures for filing a claim?

(a) *Form of claim.* Your claim must be presented in writing (SSA Form 1481 is available for this purpose). Any writing received by the SSA Claims Officer within the time limits set forth in § 429.202(d) will be accepted and considered a claim under the MPCECA if it constitutes a demand for compensation from SSA. A demand is required to be for a specific sum of money.

(b) *Award.* The SSA Claims Officer is authorized to settle claims filed under this subpart.

(c) *Notification.* The deciding official will provide you with a written determination on your claim.

§ 429.208 How do you determine the award? Is the settlement of my claim final?

(a) The amount allowable for damage to or loss of any item of property may not exceed the lowest of:

(1) The amount you requested for the item as a result of its loss, damage, or the cost of its repair;

(2) The actual or estimated cost of its repair; or

(3) The actual value at the time of its loss, damage, or destruction. The actual value is determined by using the current replacement cost or the depreciated value of the item since you acquired it, whichever is lower, less any salvage value of the item in question, if you retain the item.

(b) Depreciation in value is determined by considering the type of article involved, its cost, its condition when damaged or lost, and the time elapsed between the date you acquired it and the date of damage or loss.

(c) Current replacement cost and depreciated value are determined by use of publicly available adjustment rates or through use of other reasonable methods at the discretion of the SSA Claims Officer.

§ 429.209

(d) Replacement of lost or damaged property may be made in kind wherever appropriate at the discretion of the SSA Claims Officer.

(e) At the discretion of the SSA Claims Officer, you may be required to turn over an item alleged to have been damaged beyond economical repair to the United States, in which case no deduction for salvage value will be made in the calculation of actual value.

(f) Settlement of claims under the Act are final and conclusive.

§ 429.209 Are there any restrictions on attorney's fees?

No more than 10 percent of the amount in settlement of each individual claim submitted and settled under this subpart shall be paid or delivered to, or received by, any agent or attorney on account of services rendered in connection with that claim. A person violating this subsection shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00 (31 U.S.C. 3721(i)).

§ 429.210 Do I have any appeal rights under this subpart?

(a) *Deciding Official.* While you may not appeal the decision of the SSA Claims Officer in regard to claims under the MPCECA, the SSA Claims Officer may, at his or her discretion, reconsider his or her determination of a claim.

(b) *Claimant.* You may request reconsideration from the SSA Claims Officer by sending a written request for reconsideration to the SSA Claims Officer within 30 days of the date of the original determination. You must clearly state the factual or legal basis upon which you base your request for a more favorable determination. Reconsideration will be granted only for reasons not available or not considered during the original decision.

(c) *Notification.* The SSA Claims Officer will send you a written determination on your request for reconsideration. If the SSA Claims Officer elects to reconsider your claim, the final determination on reconsideration is final and conclusive.

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§ 429.211 Are there any penalties for filing false claims?

A person who files a false claim or makes a false or fraudulent statement in a claim against the United States may be imprisoned for not more than 5 years (18 U.S.C. 287, 1001). In addition, that person may be liable for a civil penalty of not less than \$5,000 and not more than \$10,000 and damages of triple the loss or damage sustained by the United States, as well as the costs of a civil action brought to recover any penalty or damages (31 U.S.C. 3729).

PART 430—PERSONNEL

AUTHORITY: Section 702(a)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 902(a)(5)).

INDEMNIFICATION OF SSA EMPLOYEES

§ 430.101 Policy.

(a) The Social Security Administration (SSA) may indemnify, in whole or in part, its employees (which for the purpose of this regulation includes former employees) for any verdict, judgment or other monetary award which is rendered against any such employee, provided that the conduct giving rise to the verdict, judgment or award was taken within the scope of his or her employment with SSA and that such indemnification is in the interest of the United States, as determined by the Commissioner, or his or her designee, in his or her discretion.

(b) SSA may settle or compromise a personal damage claim against its employee by the payment of available funds, at any time, provided the alleged conduct giving rise to the personal damage claim was taken within the scope of employment and that such settlement or compromise is in the interest of the United States, as determined by the Commissioner, or his or her designee, in his or her discretion.

(c) Absent exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Commissioner or his or her designee, SSA will not entertain a request either to agree to indemnify or to settle a personal damage claim before entry of an adverse verdict, judgment or monetary award.