

with these regulations without further notice.

(b) Request for offset to a Federal agency: The Director or his or her designee may request that funds due and payable to a debtor by a Federal agency be administratively offset in order to collect a debt owned to OPM by that debtor. In requesting administrative offset OPM, as creditor, will certify in writing to the Federal agency holding funds of the debtor:

- (1) That the debtor owes the debt;
- (2) The amount and basis of the debt; and

(3) That OPM has complied with the requirements of 31 U.S.C. 3716, its own administrative offset regulations, and the applicable provisions of 4 CFR part 102 with respect to providing the debtor with due process.

(c) Request for offset from a Federal agency: When administrative offset is authorized, any Federal creditor agency may request OPM to make an administrative offset from any OPM funds that are due and payable to a creditor agency's debtor. OPM shall initiate the requested administrative offset only upon:

- (1) Receipt of written certification from the creditor agency:
 - (i) That the debtor owes the debt;
 - (ii) The amount and basis of the debt;
 - (iii) That the agency has prescribed regulations for the exercise of administrative offset; and

(iv) That the agency has complied with its own administrative offset regulations and with the applicable provisions of 4 CFR part 102, including providing any required hearing or review.

(2) A determination by OPM that collection by offset against funds payable by OPM would not otherwise be contrary to law.

§ 179.308 Accelerated procedures.

OPM may make an administrative offset against a payment to be made to the debtor prior to the completion of the procedures required by §§179.304 and 179.305 if failure to take the offset would substantially jeopardize OPM's ability to collect the debt, and the time before the payment is to be made does not reasonably permit the completion of those procedures. Such prior offset shall be promptly followed by

the completion of those procedures. Amounts recovered by offset but later found not to be owed to OPM shall be promptly refunded.

§ 179.309 Additional administrative procedures.

Nothing contained in this chapter is intended to preclude the use of any other administrative remedy which may be available.

Subpart D—Administrative Wage Garnishment

AUTHORITY: 15 U.S.C. 46; 31 U.S.C. 3720D; 31 CFR 285.11(f).

§ 179.401 Administrative wage garnishment.

General. OPM may use administrative wage garnishment to collect debts in accordance with the requirements of 31 U.S.C. 3720D and 31 CFR 285.11, including debts it refers to the Bureau of the Fiscal Service, Department of the Treasury, for cross-servicing pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3711. This part adopts and incorporates all of the provisions of 31 CFR 285.11 concerning administrative wage garnishment, including the hearing procedures described in 31 CFR 285.11(f). This section does not apply to collection of debt by Federal salary offset, under 5 U.S.C. 5514, the process by which OPM collects debts from the salaries of Federal employees.

[79 FR 29072, May 21, 2014]

PART 180—EMPLOYEES' PERSONAL PROPERTY CLAIMS

Sec.

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AUTHORITY: Sec. 3, 78 Stat. 767, as amended; 31 U.S.C. 241.

SOURCE: 43 FR 47163, Oct. 13, 1978, unless otherwise noted.

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§ 180.101 Scope and purpose.

(a) The Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claims Act of 1964, 31 U.S.C. 240 to 243, authorizes the Director, Office of Personnel Management to settle and pay (including replacement in kind) claims of officers and employees of OPM, amounting to not more than \$15,000, for damage to or loss of personal property incident to their service. Claims are payable only for such types, quantities, or amounts of tangible personal property (including money) as the approving authority shall determine to be reasonable, useful, or proper under the circumstances existing at the time and place of the loss. In determining what is reasonable, useful, or proper, the approving authority will consider the type and quantity of property involved, circumstances attending acquisition and use of the property, and whether possession or use by the claimant at the time of damage or loss was incident to service.

(b) The Government does not underwrite all personal property losses that a claimant may sustain and it does not underwrite individual tastes. While the Government does not attempt to limit possession of property by an individual, payment for damage or loss is made only to the extent that the possession of the property is determined to be reasonable, useful, or proper. If individuals possess excessive quantities of items, or expensive items, they should have such property privately insured.

§ 180.102 Claimants.

(a) The following are proper claimants:

- (1) Officers and employees of OPM;
- (2) Former officers and employees of OPM whose claims arose out of incidents which occurred before their separation;
- (3) The authorized agent or legal representative of persons in §§ 180.102(a)(1) and 180.102(a)(2);
- (4) Survivors of persons in §§ 180.102(a)(1) and 180.102(a)(2) in the following order of precedence:
 - (i) Spouse,
 - (ii) Children,
 - (iii) Father or mother, or both,
 - (iv) Brothers or sisters, or both.

(b) A claim may not be presented by or for the benefit of a subrogee, assignee, conditional vendor, or other third party.

§ 180.103 Time limitations.

A claim must be presented in writing within 2 years after it accrues, except during war or armed conflict. If war or armed conflict occurs within the 2-year period following accrual, when claimant shows good cause, the claim may be presented within 2 years after the cause ceases to exist but not more than 2 years after termination of the war or armed conflict. A claim accrues when loss or damage is or should have been discovered by claimant even though such loss or damage occurred at a prior time.

§ 180.104 Allowable claims.

(a) A claim may be allowed only if:

- (1) The damage or loss was not caused wholly or partly by the negligent or wrongful act of the claimant, claimant's agent, a member of claimant's family, or claimant's private employee (the standard to be applied is that of reasonable care under the circumstances);
- (2) The possession of the property damaged or lost and the quantity 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 which are otherwise allowable under this part shall not be disallowed solely because the property was not in the possession of the claimant at the time of the damage or loss or solely because the claimant was not legal owner of the property for which the claim is made. For example, borrowed property may be the subject of a claim.

(c) Subject to the conditions in § 180.104(a) and the other provisions of this part, any claim for damage to or loss of personal property incident to service with OPM may be considered and allowed. The following are examples of the principal types of claims which may be allowed. These examples are not exclusive and other types of claims may be allowed unless excluded by § 180.106:

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(1) *Property damaged or lost in quarters.* Claims may be allowed for damage to or loss of property located at:

(i) Quarters within the 50 States and the District of Columbia that were assigned to the claimant or otherwise provided in kind by the United States;

(ii) Quarters outside the 50 States and the District of Columbia that were occupied by the claimant, whether or not they were assigned or otherwise provided in kind by the United States, except when the claimant is a local inhabitant; or

(iii) 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 may be allowed for damage to or loss of property incident to transportation or storage pursuant to orders, or in connection with travel under orders, including property in custody of a carrier, an agent or agency of the Government, or the claimant.

(3) *Motor vehicles.* Claims may be allowed for automobiles and other motor vehicles damaged or lost in overseas shipments provided by the Government. "Shipments provided by the Government" means via Government vessels, charter of commercial vessels, or by Government bills of lading on commercial vessels, and includes storage, unloading, and off-loading incident thereto. Other claims for damage to or loss of automobiles and other motor vehicles may be allowed only when use of the vehicle on a non-reimbursable basis was required by the claimant's supervisor.

(4) *Mobile homes.* Claims may be allowed for damage to or loss of mobile homes and their contents under the provisions of § 180.104(c)(2). 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 may be allowed only in cases of collision, theft, or vandalism.

(5) *Money.* Claims for money in an amount that is determined to be reasonable for the claimant to possess at the time of the loss are payable:

(i) Where personal funds were accepted by responsible Government personnel with apparent authority to receive them for safekeeping deposit, transmittal, or other authorized disposition, but were neither applied as directed by the owner nor returned;

(ii) When lost incident to a marine or aircraft disaster;

(iii) When lost by fire, flood, hurricane, or other natural disaster;

(iv) When stolen from the quarters of the claimant where it is conclusively shown that the money was in a locked container and that the quarters themselves were locked;

(v) When taken by force from the claimant's person.

(6) *Clothing.* Claims may be allowed for clothing and accessories worn on the person which are damaged or lost:

(i) During the performance of official duties in an unusual or extraordinary-risk situation;

(ii) In cases involving emergency action required by natural disaster such as fire, flood, hurricane, or by enemy or other belligerent action;

(iii) In cases involving faulty equipment or defective furniture maintained by the Government and used by the claimant as required by the job situation; or

(iv) When using a motor vehicle.

(7) *Property used for benefit of the Government.* Claims may be allowed for damage to or loss of property (except motor vehicles) used for the benefit of the Government at the request of, or with the knowledge and consent of, superior authority or by reason of necessity.

(8) *Enemy action or public service.* Claims may be allowed for damage to or loss of property as a direct consequence of:

(i) Enemy action or threat thereof, or combat, guerilla, brigandage, or other belligerent activity, or unjust confiscation by a foreign power or its nationals;

(ii) Action by the claimant to quiet a civil disturbance or to alleviate a public disaster; or

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(iii) Efforts by the claimant to save human life or Government property.

(9) *Marine or aircraft disaster.* Claims may be allowed for personal property damaged or lost as a result of marine or aircraft disaster or accident.

(10) *Government property.* Claims may be allowed for property owned by the United States only when the claimant is financially responsible to an agency of the Government other than OPM.

(11) *Borrowed property.* Claims may be allowed for borrowed property that has been damaged or lost.

§ 180.105 Claims not allowed.

(a) A claim is not allowable if:

(1) The damage or loss was caused wholly or partly by the negligent or wrongful act of the claimant, claimant's agent, claimant's employee, or a member of claimant's family;

(2) The damage or loss occurred in quarters occupied by the claimant within the 50 States and the District of Columbia that were not assigned to the claimant or otherwise provided in kind by the United States;

(3) Possession of the property lost or damaged was not incident to service or not reasonable or proper under the circumstances.

(b) In addition to claims falling within the categories of § 180.105(a), the following are examples of claims which are not payable:

(1) *Claims not incident to service.* Claims which arose during the conduct of personal business are not payable.

(2) *Subrogation claims.* Claims based upon payment or other consideration to a proper claimant are not payable.

(3) *Assigned claims.* Claims based upon assignment of a claim by a proper claimant are not payable.

(4) *Conditional vendor claims.* Claims asserted by or on behalf of a conditional vendor are not payable.

(5) *Claims by improper claimants.* Claims by persons not designated in § 180.102(a) are not payable.

(6) *Small items of substantial value.* Claims are not payable for money or for small articles of substantial value, such as watches or expensive jewelry, when shipped with household goods or as unaccompanied baggage.

(7) *Articles of extraordinary value.* Claims are not payable for expensive

articles of gold, silver, other precious metals, paintings, antiques other than bulky furnishings, relics, and other articles of extraordinary value when shipped with household goods by ordinary means or as unaccompanied baggage at normal released valuation. Claims for such articles are payable when their loss is incident to shipment by expedited mode in accordance with current joint travel regulations. This prohibition does not apply to articles in the personal custody of the claimant or articles properly checked, provided that reasonable protection or security measures have been taken by the claimant.

(8) *Articles acquired for other persons.* Claims are not payable for articles intended directly or indirectly for persons other than the claimant or members of the claimant's immediate household. This prohibition includes articles acquired at the request of others and articles for sale.

(9) *Property used for business.* Claims are not payable for property normally used for business or profit.

(10) *Unserviceable property.* Claims are not payable for wornout or unserviceable property.

(11) *Violation of law or directive.* Claims are not payable for property acquired, possessed, or transported in violation of law, regulation, or other directive. This does not apply to limitations imposed on the weight of shipments of household goods.

(12) *Intangible property.* Claims are not payable for intangible property such as bank books, checks, promissory notes, stock certificates, bonds, bills of lading, warehouse receipts, baggage checks, insurance policies, money order, and traveler's checks.

(13) *Government property.* Claims are not payable for property owned by the United States unless the claimant is financially responsible for the property to an agency of the Government other than OPM.

(14) *Motor vehicles.* Claims for motor vehicles, except as provided for by § 180.104(c)(3), will ordinarily not be paid. However, in exceptional cases, meritorious claims for damage to or loss of motor vehicles may be recommended to the Office of the General Counsel for

consideration and approval for payment.

(15) *Enemy property.* Claims are not payable for enemy property, including war trophies.

(16) *Losses recoverable from carrier.* Claims are not payable for losses, or any portion thereof, which have been recovered or are recoverable from a carrier, except as permitted under § 180.106.

(17) *Losses recoverable from insurer.* Claims are not payable for losses, or any portion thereof, which have been recovered or are recoverable from an insurer, except as permitted under § 180.106.

(18) *Losses recoverable from contractor.* Claims are not payable for losses, or any portion thereof, which have been recovered or are recoverable under contract, except as permitted under § 180.106.

(19) *Fees for estimates.* Claims are not normally payable for fees paid to obtain estimates of repair in conjunction with submitting a claim under this part. However, where, in the opinion of the approving authority, the claimant could not obtain an estimate without paying a fee, such a claim may be considered in an amount reasonable in relation to the value or the cost of repairs of the articles involved, provided that the evidence furnished clearly indicates that the amount of the fee paid will not be deducted from the cost of repairs if the work is accomplished by the estimator.

(20) *Items fraudulently claimed.* Claims are not payable for items fraudulently claimed. When investigation discloses that a claimant, claimant's agent, claimant's employee, or member of claimant's family has intentionally misrepresented an item claimed as to cost, condition, cost to repair, etc., the item will be disallowed in its entirety even though some actual damage has been sustained. However, if the remainder of the claim is proper it will be paid. This does not preclude appropriate disciplinary action if warranted.

§ 180.106 Claims involving carriers and insurers.

(a) Claimants must comply with the following before presenting claims involving a carrier or insurer:

(1) Whenever property is damaged or lost while being shipped pursuant to authorized travel orders, the owner must file a written claim for reimbursement with the carrier according to the terms of its bill of lading or contract before submitting a claim against the Government. The claimant may present a claim to the Government immediately after making demand on the carrier.

(2) Whenever property which is damaged or lost incident to the claimant's service is insured in whole or in part, the claimant must make a written demand against the insurer for reimbursement under the terms and conditions of the insurance coverage. Such demand should be made within the time limit provided in the policy and prior to the filing of a claim against the Government. The claimant may present a claim to the Government immediately after making demand on the insurer.

(b) If the claimant fails to make the required demand on the carrier or insurer or make reasonable efforts to collect the amount recoverable, the amount payable under the provisions of these regulations shall be reduced by the maximum amount recoverable. However, no deduction will be made if the circumstances of the claimant's service were such as to preclude timely filing of the claim with the carrier or insurer and it is determined that a demand would have been impracticable or unavailing in any event.

(c) When a claim is paid by OPM, the claimant will assign to the United States, to the extent of any payment on the claim accepted by claimant, all rights, title, and interest in any claim against any carrier, insurer, or other party arising out of the incident on which the claim against the United States is based. On request, the claimant also will furnish such evidence as may be required to enable the United States to enforce the claim.

(d) After payment of a claim by the United States, if the claimant receives any payment from a carrier, contractor, insurer, or other third party, the claimant will pay the proceeds to the United States to the extent of the payment received by the claimant from the United States.

§ 180.107 Claims procedure.

(a) *Filing a claim.* Claims not exceeding \$500 shall be filed with the appropriate bureau or regional director. Claims in excess of \$500 shall be filed with the Office of the General Counsel, Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street NW., Washington, DC 20415. Claims shall be in writing, using G.C. Form 33 when available, and shall contain as a minimum:

- (1) Name, address, and place of employment of the claimant;
- (2) Place and date of the damage or loss;
- (3) A brief statement of the facts and circumstances surrounding the damage or loss;
- (4) Cost, date, and place of acquisition of each piece of property damaged or lost;
- (5) Two itemized repair estimates, or value estimates, whichever is applicable;
- (6) Copies of police reports, if applicable;
- (7) A statement from the claimant's supervisor that the loss was incident to service;
- (8) A statement that the property was or was not insured;
- (9) With respect to claims involving thefts or losses in quarters or other places where the property was reasonably kept, a statement as to what security precautions were taken to protect the property involved;
- (10) With respect to claims involving property being used for the benefit of the Government, a statement by the claimant's supervisor that the claimant was required to provide such property or that the claimant's providing it was in the interest of the Government; and
- (11) Other evidence as may be required.

(b) *Single claim.* A single claim shall be presented for all lost or damaged property resulting from the same incident. If this procedure causes a hardship, the claimant may present an initial claim with notice that it is a partial claim, an explanation of the circumstances causing the hardship, and an estimate of the balance of the claim and the date it will be submitted. Payment may be made on a partial claim if

the approving authority determines that a genuine hardship exists.

(c) *Claims investigator.* When a claim is filed, the appropriate associate or regional director, or the General Counsel, shall appoint a claims investigator to evaluate the claim and make a recommendation as to its disposition. Where the cost to repair damaged property does not exceed \$100 per item and the claims investigator has inspected the damaged property, the claimant and the approving authority may agree upon a reasonable amount to be claimed for repair of an individual item in lieu of an independent estimate by a qualified repairman. In such a case, the claims investigator and the approving authority will certify that the property has been examined and that the amount claimed is a reasonable allowance for the cost of the repairs.

(d) *Loss in quarters.* Claims for property loss in quarters or other authorized places should be accompanied by a statement indicating:

- (1) Geographical location;
- (2) Whether the quarters were assigned or provided in kind by the Government;
- (3) Whether the quarters are regularly occupied by the claimant;
- (4) Name of the authority, if any, who designated the place of storage of the property if other than quarters;
- (5) Measures taken to protect the property; and
- (6) Whether the claimant is a local inhabitant.

(e) *Loss by theft or robbery.* Claims for property loss by theft or robbery should be accompanied by a statement indicating:

- (1) Geographical location;
- (2) Facts and circumstances surrounding the loss, including evidence of the crime such as breaking and entering, capture of the thief or robber, or recovery of part of the stolen goods; and
- (3) Evidence that the claimant exercised due care in protecting the property prior to the loss, including information as to the degree of care normally exercised in the locale of the loss due to any unusual risks involved.

(f) *Transportation losses.* Claims for transportation losses should be accompanied by the following:

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(1) Copies of orders authorizing the travel, transportation, or shipment or a certificate explaining the absence of orders and stating their substance;

(2) Statement in cases where property was turned over to a shipping officer, supply officer, or contract packer indicating:

(i) Name (or designation) and address of the shipping officer, supply officer, or contract packer;

(ii) Date the property was turned over;

(iii) Inventoried condition when the property was turned over;

(iv) When and where the property was packed and by whom;

(v) Date of shipment;

(vi) Copies of all bills of lading, inventories, and other applicable shipping documents;

(vii) Date and place of delivery to the claimant;

(viii) Date the property was unpacked by the carrier, claimant, or Government;

(ix) Statements of disinterested witnesses as to the condition of the property when received and delivered, or as to handling or storage;

(x) Whether the negligence of any Government employee acting within the scope of his employment caused the damage or loss;

(xi) Whether the last common carrier or local carrier was given a clear receipt, except for concealed damages;

(xii) Total gross, tare, and net weight of shipment;

(xiii) Insurance certificate or policy if losses are privately insured;

(xiv) Copy of the demand on carrier or insured, or both, when required, and the reply, if any;

(xv) Action taken by the claimant to locate missing baggage or household effects, including related correspondence.

(g) *Marine or aircraft disaster.* Claims for property losses due to marine or aircraft disaster should be accompanied by a copy of orders or other evidence to establish the claimant's right to be, or to have property, on board.

(h) *Enemy action, public disaster, or public service.* Claims for property losses due to enemy action, public disaster, or public service should be accompanied by:

(1) Copies of orders or other evidence establishing the claimant's required presence in the area involved, and

(2) A detailed statement of facts and circumstances showing an applicable case enumerated in § 180.104(c)(8).

(i) *Property used for benefit of Government.* Claims for property loss when the property was used for the benefit of the Government should be accompanied by:

(1) A statement from the proper authority that the property was supplied by the claimant in the performance of official business at the request of, or with the knowledge and consent of, superior authority or by reason of necessity; and

(2) If the property being used for the benefit of the Government was damaged or lost while not in use, evidence that the loss occurred in an authorized storage area.

(j) *Money.* Claims for loss of money deposited for safekeeping, transmittal, or other authorized disposition, should be accompanied by:

(1) Name, grade, and address of the person or persons who received the money and any others involved;

(2) Name and designation of the authority who authorized such person or persons to accept personal funds, and the disposition required; and

(3) Receipts and written sworn statements explaining the failure to account for funds or return them to the claimant.

(k) *Motor vehicles in transit.* Claims for damage to motor vehicles in transit should be accompanied by a copy of orders or other available evidence to establish the claimant's lawful right to have the property shipped and evidence to establish damage in transit.

[43 FR 47163, Oct. 13, 1978, as amended at 44 FR 76747, Dec. 28, 1979]

§ 180.108 Settlement of claims.

(a) *Authority.* Associate Directors and Regional Directors are authorized to settle and pay any claim not exceeding \$500 and arising under this part. The General Counsel is authorized to settle and pay any claim not exceeding \$15,000 and arising under this part. Unless cognizable under § 180.104(c)(3), claims for damage to or loss of motor vehicles may be settled and paid only by the General Counsel.

(b) *Redelegation.* The approving authorities may establish such procedures and make such redelegations as may be required to fulfill the objectives of this part.

(c) *Cost or value.* The amount awarded on any item of property will not exceed the cost of the item (either the price paid in cash or property) or the value at the time of acquisition if not acquired by purchase or exchange. The amount payable will be determined by applying the principles of depreciation to the adjusted dollar value or other base price of property lost or damaged beyond economical repair; by allowing the cost of repairs when an item is economically repairable, provided the cost of repairs does not exceed the depreciated value of the item; and by deducting salvage value, if appropriate.

(d) *Depreciation.* Depreciation in value of an item is determined by considering the type of article involved, its cost, condition when damaged beyond economical repair or lost, and the time elapsed between the date of acquisition and the date of damage or loss.

(e) *Appreciation.* There will be no allowance for appreciation in the value of the property except that the cost of the item may be adjusted to reflect changes in the purchasing power of the dollar before depreciation is computed. Appreciation will not be allowed solely because the loss occurred or the claimant now resides in an area remote from the place of purchase of the property.

(f) *Expensive articles.* Allowance for expensive items (including heirlooms and antiques) or for items purchased at unreasonably high prices will be based on the fair and reasonable purchase price for substitute articles of a similar nature.

(g) *Acquisition.* Allowance for articles acquired by barter will not exceed the cost of the articles tendered in barter. No reimbursement will be made for articles acquired in black market or other prohibited activities.

(h) *Replacement.* Replacement of damaged or lost property may be made in kind whenever appropriate.

(i) *Amount allowable.* Subject to the limitations of §§180.108(c) through 180.108(h), the amount allowable in settlement of a claim is either:

(1) The depreciated value immediately prior to damage or loss of property damaged beyond economical repair or lost, less any salvage value; or

(2) The reasonable cost of repairs when property is economically repairable, provided that the cost of repairs does not exceed the depreciated value.

(j) *Notification.* The approving authority shall notify the claimant in writing of the action taken on the claim and, if the claim is disapproved or only partially approved, the reasons therefor.

(k) *Carrier or insurer.* In the event a claim submitted against a carrier or insurer under §180.106 had not been settled before settlement of a claim against the Government under this part, the approving authority shall notify such carrier or insurer to pay the proceeds of the claim to OPM to the extent OPM has made payment to the claimant.

(l) *Review.* The action of the approving authority is final; however, the decision may be reconsidered if the claimant so requests and submits a written explanation why reconsideration is appropriate.

(m) *Attorney's fees.* No more than 10 per centum of the amount paid 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 and the same shall be unlawful, any contract to the contrary notwithstanding. Any person violating this or any other provision of sections 240 to 243 of title 31, United States Code, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof shall be fined in any sum not exceeding \$1000.

[43 FR 47163, Oct. 13, 1978, as amended at 44 FR 76747, Dec. 28, 1979]

PART 185—PROGRAM FRAUD CIVIL REMEDIES

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