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(4) An employee who was serving when his name was reached for certification on a civil service register appropriate for the position in which he was serving: *Provided*, That the recommendation for competitive status is made prior to expiration of the register on which his name appears or is made during a period of continuous service since his name was reached: *Provided further*, That the register was being used for appointments conferring competitive status at the time his name was reached.

(b) Upon recommendation by the employing agency, and subject to such requirements as the Office of Personnel Management may prescribe, the following classes of handicapped employees may acquire competitive status without competitive examination:

(1) A severely physically handicapped employee who completes at least two years of satisfactory service in a position excepted from the competitive service.

(2) A mentally retarded employee who completes at least two years of satisfactory service in a position excepted from the competitive service.

(3) An employee with a psychiatric disability who completes at least 2 years of satisfactory service in a position excepted from the competitive service.

[28 FR 10023, Sept. 14, 1963, as amended by E.O. 12125, 3 CFR, 1979 Comp., p. 375; 65 FR 41868, July 7, 2000]

§ 3.2 Appointments without competitive examination in rare cases.

Subject to receipt of satisfactory evidence of the qualifications of the person to be appointed, OPM may authorize an appointment in the competitive service without competitive examination whenever it finds that the duties or compensation of the position are such, or that qualified persons are so rare, that, in the interest of good civil-service administration, the position cannot be filled through open competitive examination. Any person heretofore or hereafter appointed under this section shall acquire a competitive status upon completion of at least one year of satisfactory service and compliance with such requirements as OPM may prescribe. Detailed statements of

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the reasons for the noncompetitive appointments made under this section shall be published in OPM's annual reports.

§ 3.3 Conversion of appointments.

Any person who acquires a competitive status under this part shall have his appointment converted to career-conditional appointment unless he meets the service requirement for career appointment prescribed under § 2.2(a) of this subchapter.

PART 4—PROHIBITED PRACTICES (RULE IV)

Sec.

4.1 Prohibition against political activity.

4.2 Prohibition against racial, political or religious discrimination.

4.3 Prohibition against securing withdrawal from competition.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 3301, 3302.

§ 4.1 Prohibition against political activity.

No person employed in the executive branch of the Federal Government, or any agency or department thereof, shall use his official authority or influence for the purpose of interfering with an election or affecting the result thereof. No person occupying a position in the competitive service shall take any active part in political management or in political campaigns, except as may be provided by or pursuant to statute. All such persons shall retain the right to vote as they may choose and to express their opinions on all political subjects and candidates.

[28 FR 10024, Sept. 14, 1963]

§ 4.2 Prohibition against racial, political or religious discrimination.

No person employed in the executive branch of the Federal Government who has authority to take or recommend any personnel action with respect to any person who is an employee in the competitive service or any eligible or applicant for a position in the competitive service shall make any inquiry concerning the race, political affiliation, or religious beliefs of any such employee, eligible, or applicant. All disclosures concerning such matters shall be ignored, except as to such

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membership in political parties or organizations as constitutes by law a disqualification for Government employment. No discrimination shall be exercised, threatened, or promised by any person in the executive branch of the Federal Government against or in favor of any employee in the competitive service, or any eligible or applicant for a position in the competitive service because of his race, political affiliation, or religious beliefs, except as may be authorized or required by law.

[28 FR 10024, Sept. 14, 1963]

§ 4.3 Prohibition against securing withdrawal from competition.

No person shall influence another person to withdraw from competition for any position in the competitive service for the purpose of either improving or injuring the prospects of any applicant for appointment.

[28 FR 10024, Sept. 14, 1963, as amended at 45 FR 4337, Jan. 22, 1980]

PART 5—REGULATIONS, INVESTIGATION, AND ENFORCEMENT (RULE V)

Sec.

- 5.1 Civil Service regulations.
- 5.2 Investigation and evaluations.
- 5.3 Enforcement.
- 5.4 Information and testimony.

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 3301, 3302; E.O. 12107.

SOURCE: 45 FR 4337, Jan. 22, 1980, unless otherwise noted.

§ 5.1 Civil Service regulations.

The Director, Office of Personnel Management, shall promulgate and enforce regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of the Civil Service Act and the Veterans' Preference Act, as reenacted in title 5, United States Code, the Civil Service Rules, and all other statutes and Executive orders imposing responsibilities on the Office. The Director is authorized, whenever there are practical difficulties and unnecessary hardships in complying with the strict letter of the regulation, to grant a variation from the strict letter of the regulation if such a variation is within the spirit of the regulations, and the efficiency of the Government and the integrity of the competitive

service are protected and promoted. Whenever a variation is granted the Director shall note the official record to show:

(a) The particular practical difficulty or hardship involved, (b) what is permitted in place of what is required by regulations, (c) the circumstances which protect or promote the efficiency of the Government and the integrity of the competitive service, and (d) a statement limiting the application of the variation to the continuation of the conditions which gave rise to it. Like variations shall be granted whenever like conditions exist. All such decisions and information concerning variations noted in the official record shall be published promptly in a Federal Personnel Manual Letter or Bulletin and in the Director's next annual report.

§ 5.2 Investigation and evaluations.

The Director may secure effective implementation of the civil service laws, rules, and regulations, and all Executive orders imposing responsibilities on the Office by:

(a) Investigating the qualifications, suitability, and fitness of applicants for positions in the competitive service, positions in the excepted service where the incumbent can be non-competitively converted to the competitive service, career appointments to positions in the Senior Executive Service, and any other positions in the excepted service of the executive branch for which the Director has standard-setting responsibility under Civil Service Rule II.

(i) The Director may require appointments to be made subject to investigation to enable the Director to determine, after appointment, that the requirements of law or the Civil Service Rules and Regulations have been met.

(ii) The Director may cause positions to be designated based on risk to determine the appropriate level of investigation, and may prescribe investigative standards, policies, and procedures.

(iii) The Director may prescribe standards for reciprocal acceptance by agencies of investigations and adjudications of suitability and fitness, except to the extent authority to apply