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20 CFR Ch. II (4-1-01 Edition)

(5) An unusual or unavoidable circumstance existed which demonstrates that the claimant would not have known of the need to file timely or which prevented the claimant from filing in a timely manner.

(e) *Impartial review.* The reconsideration of the initial decision shall be conducted by a person who shall not have any interest in the parties or in the outcome of the proceedings, shall not have directly participated in the initial decision which has been requested to be reconsidered and shall not have any other interest in the matter which might prevent a fair and impartial decision.

(f) *Timely review.* The director of the bureau to whom a request for reconsideration is directed shall make every effort to issue a decision upon reconsideration and send a copy of the decision to the claimant within 60 days of the date that the request for reconsideration is filed.

(g) *Right to appeal adverse decision.* If the reconsideration decision is adverse to the claimant, annuitant or payee, he or she shall be notified of his or her right to appeal the decision to the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals, as provided in § 260.5.

[47 FR 36809, Aug. 24, 1982, as amended at 48 FR 51448, Nov. 9, 1983; 55 FR 39146, Sept. 25, 1990]

§ 260.4 Request for waiver of recovery of an erroneous payment and/or for reconsideration of an initial erroneous payment decision of the Bureau of Disability and Medicare Operations, Bureau of Retirement Benefits, Bureau of Survivor Benefits or Office of Retirement and Survivor Programs.

(a) *General.* A beneficiary who has been determined to have received an erroneous payment under § 260.1(a)(7) shall have the right, upon the filing of a timely request in accordance with the requirements of this section, to request waiver of recovery of the erroneous payment and/or reconsideration of the erroneous payment decision. The beneficiary shall have the right to an informal oral hearing on the issue of waiver of recovery and/or reconsideration of the erroneous payment decision, before an employee of the Board designated to conduct such a hearing,

prior to commencement of recovery by suspension or reduction of a monthly benefit.

(b) *Request for waiver of recovery and/or reconsideration of an erroneous payment decision and for an oral hearing.* A request for waiver of recovery and/or reconsideration of an erroneous payment decision and for an oral hearing under this section shall be in writing and addressed to the district office of the Board set forth in the initial decision letter or to the Director of the bureau or office which issued the erroneous payment decision. The request must be received by either the appropriate district office or the Director of the bureau or office which issued the erroneous payment decision within 30 calendar days from the date on which notice of the erroneous payment decision was sent to the beneficiary. The beneficiary shall state in the request whether he or she elects to have an oral hearing. If the beneficiary does not elect to have an oral hearing with respect to his or her request for waiver of recovery or for reconsideration of the erroneous payment decision, he or she may, along with the request, submit any evidence and argument which he or she would like to present in support of his or her case.

(c) *Right to further review of an initial erroneous payment decision.* The right to further review of an initial erroneous payment decision of the Bureau of Disability and Medicare Operations, Bureau of Retirement Benefits, Bureau of Survivor Benefits or Office of Retirement and Survivor Programs shall be forfeited unless a written request for reconsideration is filed within the time period prescribed in this section or good cause is shown by the beneficiary for failing to file a timely request for reconsideration. Good cause for failure to file a timely request shall be determined by the Director of the bureau or office which issued the erroneous payment decision in the manner described in § 260.3(d).

(d) *Delay in the commencement of recovery of erroneous payment.* Where a

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timely request for waiver or reconsideration is filed as provided in this section, the Director of the bureau or office which issued the erroneous payment decision shall not commence recovery of the erroneous payment by suspension or reduction of a monthly benefit payable by the Board until a decision with respect to such request for waiver or reconsideration has been made and notice thereof mailed to the claimant.

(e) *Impartial review.* Upon receipt of a timely request for an oral hearing under this section, the Director of the bureau or office which issued the erroneous payment decision or his or her delegatee shall promptly arrange for the selection of a Board employee to conduct a hearing in the case. The employee designated to conduct a hearing under this section shall not have had any prior involvement with the initial erroneous payment decision and shall conduct the hearing in a fair and impartial manner. The employee designated to conduct a hearing under this section shall promptly schedule a time and place for the hearing and promptly notify the beneficiary of such.

(f) *Oral hearing.* The beneficiary shall upon request have the opportunity to review, prior to the hearing, his or her claim folder and all documents pertinent to the issues raised. A hearing conducted under this section shall be informal. At the hearing the beneficiary shall be afforded the following rights:

(1) To present his or her case orally and to submit evidence, whether through witnesses or documents;

(2) To cross-examine adverse witnesses who appear at the hearing; and

(3) To be represented by counsel or other person.

(g) *Preparation of recommended decision.* Upon completion of the hearing, the employee who conducts the hearing shall prepare a summary of the case including a statement of the facts, the employee's findings of fact and law, and a recommended decision. The summary of the case shall then be submitted to the Director of the bureau or office which issued the erroneous payment decision.

(h) *Timely review.* The Director of the bureau or office which issued the erro-

neous payment decision shall make every effort to render a decision with respect to the beneficiary's request for reconsideration of the initial erroneous payment determination and/or waiver of recovery and notify the beneficiary of that decision within 60 days of the date that the request for reconsideration is filed or the date that the summary of the case is received from the employee who conducts the hearing, whichever is later.

(i) *Right to appeal adverse decision.* If the Director of the bureau or office which issued the erroneous payment decision renders a decision adverse to the beneficiary, he or she shall further notify the beneficiary of the basis for such determination and that the beneficiary may appeal the decision to the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals, as provided in §260.5.

(j) *Repayment is not a bar to requesting waiver and/or reconsideration.* The fact that a beneficiary may have notified the Board with respect to the method by which he or she could choose to have the recovery made, or the fact that such beneficiary may have actually tendered to the Board a portion or all of the amount of the erroneous payment, shall in no way operate to prejudice his or her right to request reconsideration of the initial erroneous payment determination or to request waiver of recovery.

[47 FR 36809, Aug. 24, 1982, as amended at 55 FR 39146, Sept. 25, 1990]

§260.5 Appeal from a reconsideration decision of the Bureau of Disability and Medicare Operations, Bureau of Retirement Benefits, Bureau of Survivor Benefits, Office of Retirement and Survivor Programs or the Bureau of Research and Employment Accounts.

(a) *General.* Every claimant shall have a right to appeal to the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals from any reconsideration decision of the Bureau of Disability and Medicare Operations, Bureau of Retirement Benefits, Bureau of Survivor Benefits, Office of Retirement and Survivor Programs or the Bureau of Research and Employment Accounts by which he or she claims to be aggrieved.