or suspension or termination of collection activity.

§900.7 Required administrative proceedings.

Agencies are not required to omit, foreclose, or duplicate administrative proceedings required by contract or other laws or regulations.

§900.8 No private rights created.

The standards in this chapter do not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any other person, nor shall the failure of an agency to comply with any of the provisions of parts 900–904 of this chapter be available to any debtor as a defense.

PART 901—STANDARDS FOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE COLLECTION OF CLAIMS

Sec.

901.1 Aggressive agency collection activity.
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901.11 Use and disclosure of mailing addresses.
901.12 Exemptions.

AUTHORITY: 31 U.S.C. 3701, 3711, 3716, 3717, 3718, and 3720B.

SOURCE: 65 FR 70396, Nov. 22, 2000, unless otherwise noted.

§901.1 Aggressive agency collection activity.

(a) Federal agencies shall aggressively collect all debts arising out of activities of, or referred or transferred for collection services to, that agency. Collection activities shall be undertaken promptly with follow-up action taken as necessary. Nothing contained in parts 900–904 of this chapter requires the Department of Justice, Treasury, or other Treasury-designated debt collection centers, to duplicate collection activities previously undertaken by other agencies or to perform collection activities that other agencies should have undertaken.

(b) Debts referred or transferred to Treasury, or Treasury-designated debt collection centers under the authority of 31 U.S.C. 3711(g), shall be serviced, collected, or compromised, or the collection action will be suspended or terminated, in accordance with the statutory requirements and authorities applicable to the collection of such debts.

(c) Agencies shall cooperate with one another in their debt collection activities.

(d) Agencies should consider referring debts that are less than 180 days delinquent to Treasury or to Treasury-designated ''debt collection centers'' to accomplish efficient, cost effective debt collection. Treasury is a debt collection center, is authorized to designate other Federal agencies as debt collection centers based on their performance in collecting delinquent debts, and may withdraw such designations. Referrals to debt collection centers shall be at the discretion of, and for a time period acceptable to, the Secretary. Referrals may be for servicing, collection, compromise, suspension, or termination of collection action.

(e) Agencies shall transfer to the Secretary any debt that has been delinquent for a period of 180 days or more so that the Secretary may take appropriate action to collect the debt or terminate collection action. *See* 31 CFR 285.12 (Transfer of Debts to Treasury for Collection). This requirement does not apply to any debt that:

(1) Is in litigation or foreclosure;

(2) Will be disposed of under an approved asset sale program;

(3) Has been referred to a private collection contractor for a period of time acceptable to the Secretary;

(4) Is at a debt collection center for a period of time acceptable to the Secretary (see paragraph (d) of this section);

(5) Will be collected under internal offset procedures within three years after the debt first became delinquent; or

(6) Is exempt from this requirement based on a determination by the Secretary that exemption for a certain class of debt is in the best interest of the United States. Agencies may request that the Secretary exempt specific classes of debts.

(f) Agencies operating Treasury-designated debt collection centers are authorized to charge a fee for services rendered regarding referred or transferred debts. The fee may be paid out of amounts collected and may be added to the debt as an administrative cost (see § 901.10).

§ 901.2 Demand for payment.

(a) Written demand as described in paragraph (b) of this section shall be made promptly upon a debtor of the United States in terms that inform the debtor of the consequences of failing to cooperate with the agency to resolve the debt. The specific content, timing, and number of demand letters shall depend upon the type and amount of the debt and the debtor's response, if any, to the agency's letters or telephone calls. Generally, one demand letter should suffice. In determining the timing of the demand letter(s), agencies should give due regard to the need to refer debts promptly to the Department of Justice for litigation, in accordance with § 904.1 of this chapter or otherwise. When necessary to protect the Government's interest (for example, to prevent the running of a statute of limitations), written demand may be preceded by other appropriate actions under parts 900–904 of this chapter, including immediate referral for litigation.

(b) Demand letters shall inform the debtor of:

(1) The basis for the indebtedness and the rights, if any, the debtor may have to seek review within the agency;

(2) The applicable standards for imposing any interest, penalties, or administrative costs;

(3) The date by which payment should be made to avoid late charges (*i.e.* interest, penalties, and administrative costs) and enforced collection, which generally should not be more than 30 days from the date that the demand letter is mailed or hand-delivered; and

(4) The name, address, and phone number of a contact person or office within the agency.

(c) Agencies should exercise care to ensure that demand letters are mailed or hand-delivered on the same day that they are dated. There is no prescribed format for demand letters. Agencies should utilize demand letters and procedures that will lead to the earliest practicable determination of whether the debt can be resolved administratively or must be referred for litigation.

(d) Agencies should include in demand letters such items as the agency's willingness to discuss alternative methods of payment; its policies with respect to the use of credit bureaus, debt collection centers, and collection agencies; the agency's remedies to enforce payment of the debt (including assessment of interest, administrative costs and penalties, administrative garnishment, the use of collection agencies, Federal salary offset, tax refund offset, administrative offset, and litigation); the requirement that any debt delinquent for more than 180 days be transferred to the Department of the Treasury for collection; and, depending on applicable statutory authority, the debtor's entitlement to consideration of a waiver.

(e) Agencies should respond promptly to communications from debtors, within 30 days whenever feasible, and should advise debtors who dispute debts to furnish available evidence to support their contentions.

(f) Prior to the initiation of the demand process or at any time during or after completion of the demand process, if an agency determines to pursue, or is required to pursue, offset, the procedures applicable to offset should be followed (see § 901.3). The availability of funds or money for debt satisfaction by offset and the agency's determination to pursue collection by offset shall release the agency from the necessity of further compliance with paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

(g) Prior to referring a debt for litigation, agencies should advise each person determined to be liable for the debt that, unless the debt can be collected administratively, litigation may be initiated. This notification should