

Environmental Protection Agency

§ 13.14

may be set at the Treasury rate in effect on the date a new agreement is executed.

(4) Interest will not be assessed on interest charges, administrative costs or later payment penalties. However, where a debtor defaults on a previous repayment agreement and interest, administrative costs and penalties charges have been waived under the defaulted agreement, these charges can be reinstated and added to the debt principal under any new agreement and interest charged on the entire amount of the debt.

(b) *Administrative costs of collecting overdue debts.* The costs of the Agency's administrative handling of overdue debts, based on either actual or average cost incurred, will be charged on all debts except those owed by State and local governments and Indian tribes. These costs include both direct and indirect costs. Administrative costs will be assessed monthly throughout the period the debt is overdue except as provided by § 13.12.

(c) *Penalties.* As provided by 31 U.S.C. 3717(e)(2), a penalty charge will be assessed on all debts, except those owned by State and local governments and Indian tribes, more than 90 days delinquent. The penalty charge will be at a rate not to exceed 6% per annum and will be assessed monthly.

(d) *Allocation of payments.* A partial payment by a debtor will be applied first to outstanding administrative costs, second to penalty assessments, third to accrued interest and then to the outstanding debt principal.

(e) *Waiver.* (1) The Administrator may (without regard to the amount of the debt) waive collection of all or part of accrued interest, penalty or administrative costs, where he determines that—

(i) Waiver is justified under the criteria of § 13.25;

(ii) The debt or the charges resulted from the Agency's error, action or inaction, and without fault by the debtor; or

(iii) Collection of these charges would be against equity and good conscience or not in the best interest of the United States.

(2) A decision to waive interest, penalty charges or administrative costs

may be made at any time prior to payment of a debt. However, where these charges have been collected prior to the waiver decision, they will not be refunded. The Administrator's decision to waive or not waive collection of these charges is a final agency action.

§ 13.12 Interest and charges pending waiver or review.

Interest, penalty charges and administrative costs will continue to accrue on a debt during administrative appeal, either formal or informal, and during waiver consideration by the Agency; *except*, that interest, penalty charges and administrative costs will not be assessed where a statute or a regulation specifically prohibits collection of the debt during the period of the administrative appeal or the Agency review.

§ 13.13 Contracting for collection services.

EPA will use private collection services where it determines that their use is in the best interest of the Government. Where EPA determines that there is a need to contract for collection services it will—

(a) Retain sole authority to resolve any dispute by the debtor of the validity of the debt, to compromise the debt, to suspend or terminate collection action, to refer the debt to DOJ for litigation, and to take any other action under this part which does not result in full collection of the debt;

(b) Require the contractor to comply with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, to the extent specified in 5 U.S.C. 552a(m), with applicable Federal and State laws pertaining to debt collection practices (*e.g.*, the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (15 U.S.C. 1692 *et seq.*)), and with applicable regulations of the Internal Revenue Service;

(c) Require the contractor to account accurately and fully for all amounts collected; and

(d) Require the contractor to provide to EPA, upon request, all data and reports contained in its files relating to its collection actions on a debt.

§ 13.14 Use of credit reporting agencies.

EPA reports delinquent debts to appropriate credit reporting agencies.