

Subpart B—Commencement of Proceedings, Pleadings

§ 386.11 Commencement of proceedings.

(a) *Driver qualification proceedings.* These proceedings are commenced by the issuance of a determination by the Director, Office of Truck and Bus Standards and Operations, in a case arising under § 391.47 of this chapter or by the issuance of a letter of disqualification.

(1) Such determination and letters must be accompanied by the following:

(i) A citation of the regulation under which the action is being taken;

(ii) A copy of all documentary evidence relied on or considered in taking such action, or in the case of voluminous evidence a summary of such evidence;

(iii) Notice to the driver and motor carrier involved in the case that they may petition for review of the action;

(iv) Notice that a hearing will be granted if the Assistant Administrator determines there are material factual issues in dispute;

(v) Notice that failure to petition for review will constitute a waiver of the right to contest the action; and

(vi) Notice that the burden or proof will be on the petitioner in cases arising under § 391.47 of this chapter.

(2) At any time before the close of hearing, upon application of a party, the letter or determination may be amended at the discretion of the administrative law judge upon such terms as he/she approves.

(b) *Civil forfeitures.* These proceedings are commenced by the issuance of a Claim Letter or a Notice of Investigation.

(1) Each claim letter must contain the following:

(i) A statement of the provisions of law alleged to have been violated;

(ii) A brief statement of the facts constituting each violation;

(iii) Notice of the amount being claimed, and notice of the maximum amount authorized to be claimed under the statute;

(iv) The form in which and the place where the respondent may pay the claim; and

(v) Notice that the respondent may, within 15 days of service, notify the claimant that the respondent intends to contest the notice, and that if the notice is contested the respondent will be afforded an opportunity for a hearing.

(2) In addition to the information required by paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the letter may contain such other matters as the FMCSA deems appropriate, including a notice to abate.

(3) In proceedings for collection of civil penalties for violations of the motor carrier safety regulations under the Motor Carrier Safety Act of 1984, the claimant may require the respondent to post a copy of the claim letter in such place or places and for such duration as the claimant may determine appropriate to aid in the enforcement of the law and regulations.

(c) *Notice of investigation.* This is a notice to respondent that the FMCSA has discovered violations of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, Hazardous Materials Regulations, or Commercial Regulations under circumstances which may require a compliance order and/or monetary penalties. The proposed form of the compliance order will be included in the notice. The Assistant Administrator may issue a Notice of Investigation in his or her own discretion or upon a complaint filed pursuant to § 386.12.

(1) Each notice of investigation must include the following:

(i) A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction for the institution of the proceedings;

(ii) The name and address of each motor carrier, broker, or freight forwarder against whom relief is sought;

(iii) One or more clear, concise, and separately numbered paragraphs stating the facts alleged to constitute a violation of the law;

(iv) The relief demanded which, where practical, should be in the form of an order for the Assistant Administrator's signature, and which shall fix a reasonable time for abatement of the violations and may specify actions to be taken in order to abate the violations;

(v) A statement that the rules in this part require a reply to be filed within

30 days of service of the notice of investigation, and

(vi) A certificate that the notice of investigation was served in accordance with §386.31.

(2) At any time before the close of hearing or upon application of a party, the notice of investigation may be amended at the discretion of the administrative law judge upon such terms as he/she deems appropriate.

(3) A Claim Letter may be combined with a Notice of Investigation in a single proceeding. In such proceeding, the 30-day reply period in paragraph (c)(1) of this section shall apply.

(4) A notice to abate contained in a Claim Letter or Notice of Investigation shall specify what must be done by the respondent, a reasonable time within which abatement must be achieved, and that failure to abate subjects the respondent to additional penalties as prescribed in subpart G of this part.

[50 FR 40306, Oct. 2, 1985, as amended at 53 FR 2036, Jan. 26, 1988; 56 FR 10182, Mar. 11, 1991; 65 FR 7756, Feb. 16, 2000]

§ 386.12 Complaint.

(a) *Filing of a complaint.* Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c) of this section, any person, State board, organization, or body politic may file a written complaint with the Assistant Administrator, requesting the issuance of a notice of investigation under §386.11(c). Each complaint must contain:

(1) The name and address of the party who files it, and a statement specifying the authority for a party (other than a natural person) to file the complaint;

(2) A statement of the interest of the party in the proceedings;

(3) The name and address of each motor carrier against who relief is sought;

(4) The reasons why the party believes that a notice of investigation should be issued;

(5) A statement of any prior action which the party has taken to redress the violations of law alleged in the complaint and the results of that action; and

(6) The relief which the party believes the Administration should seek.

(b) *Action on paragraph (a) complaint.* Upon the filing of a complaint under

paragraph (a) of this section, the Assistant Administrator shall determine whether it states reasonable grounds for investigation and action by the Administration. If he/she determines that the complaint states such grounds, the Assistant Administrator shall issue, or authorize the issuance of, a notice of investigation under §386.11(c). If he/she determines that the complaint does not state reasonable grounds for investigation and action by the Administration, the Assistant Administrator shall dismiss it.

(c) *Complaint of substantial violation.* Any person may file a written complaint with the Assistant Administrator alleging that a substantial violation of any regulation issued under the Motor Carrier Safety Act of 1984 is occurring or has occurred within the preceding 60 days. A substantial violation is one which could reasonably lead to, or has resulted in, serious personal injury or death. Each complaint must be signed by the complainant and must contain:

(1) The name, address, and telephone number of the person who files it;

(2) The name and address of the alleged violator and, with respect to each alleged violator, the specific provisions of the regulations that the complainant believes were violated; and

(3) A concise but complete statement of the facts relied upon to substantiate each allegation, including the date of each alleged violation.

(d) *Action on complaint of substantial violation.* Upon the filing of a complaint of a substantial violation under paragraph (c) of this section, the Assistant Administrator shall determine whether it is nonfrivolous and meets the requirements of paragraph (c) of this section. If the Assistant Administrator determines that the complaint is nonfrivolous and meets the requirements of paragraph (c), he/she shall investigate the complaint. The complainant shall be timely notified of findings resulting from such investigation. The Assistant Administrator shall not be required to conduct separate investigations of duplicative complaints. If the Assistant Administrator determines that the complaint is frivolous or does