



U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

SUBJECT: Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Procedures

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1. PURPOSE

This Order is the CSB's policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and establishes procedures for processing complaints of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or equal pay (sex-based) filed by employees of, or applicants for, employment with the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board. This Order provides general guidance only. Therefore, anyone who believes they have suffered discriminatory actions should also review 29 C.F.R. Part 1614.

2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Order is effective upon passage by the Board.

3. SCOPE

This Order applies to all CSB employees or applicants for employment.

4. REFERENCES

This Order is based upon 29 C.F.R. Part 1614.

5. POLICY

It is the policy of the CSB to provide equal opportunity in employment for all persons, to prohibit discrimination in employment because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information and to promote the full realization of equal employment opportunity through a continuing affirmative program.

6. COMPLAINT PROCESSING PROCEDURES

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.104(a), the CSB hereby adopts the procedures contained in the Appendix to this Order as its procedures for processing individual and class complaints of discrimination. The numbering of provisions in the Appendix conforms to the numbering in 29 C.F.R. §§1614.105 through 1614.110 and 1614.204, on which these procedures are based.

7. REVIEW & UPDATE

The EEO Director, in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel, will be responsible for reviewing this policy annually to determine if there are any required changes. The EEO Director will provide a brief report (one page maximum) to the Chairperson or Board Member with authority to oversee the EEO Office, no later than March 31st of each fiscal year setting forth any proposed revisions.

U.S. CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD

February 24, 2000; Amended, October 25, 2007; Amended, February 1, 2016.

Appendix A – Complaint Processing Procedures

1614.105 Pre-complaint Processing

- a. Aggrieved persons who believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information must consult a Counselor prior to filing a complaint in order to try to informally resolve the matter. The agency EEO Director, counselors, and all agency staff will conduct counseling activities in accordance with instructions contained in Commission Management Directives. The Agency’s EEO Director can help aggrieved persons initiate counseling; or, if an employee or applicant believes that his/her contact with the EEO Director to initiate counseling would create a conflict of interest, the aggrieved person may request a counseling referral from their supervisor or second line supervisor.
 - 1) An aggrieved person must initiate contact with a Counselor within 45 days of the date of the matter alleged to be discriminatory or, in the case of a personnel action, within 45 days of the effective date of the action.
 - 2) The agency or the Commission will extend the 45-day time limit in paragraph a.1) of this section when the individual shows that he or she was not notified of the time limits and was not otherwise aware of them, that he or she did not know and reasonably should not have known that the discriminatory matter or personnel action occurred, that despite due diligence he or she was prevented by circumstances beyond his or her control from contacting the counselor within the time limits, or for other reasons considered sufficient by the agency or the Commission.
- b.
 - 1) At the initial counseling session, Counselors must advise individuals in writing of their rights and responsibilities, including the right to request a hearing or an immediate final decision after an investigation by the agency in accordance with §1614.108(f), election rights pursuant to §1614.301 and §1614.302, the right to file a notice of intent to sue pursuant to §1614.201(a) and a lawsuit under the ADEA instead of an administrative complaint of age discrimination under this part, the duty to mitigate damages, administrative and court time frames, and that only the claims raised in pre-complaint counseling (or issues or claims like or related to issues or claims raised in pre-complaint counseling) may be alleged in a subsequent complaint filed with the agency. Counselors must advise individuals of their duty to keep the agency and Commission informed of their current address and to serve copies of appeal papers on the agency. The notice required by paragraphs d. or e. of this section will include a notice of the right to file a class complaint. If the aggrieved person informs the Counselor that he or she wishes to file a class complaint, the Counselor will explain the class complaint procedures and the responsibilities of a class agent.
 - 2) Counselors will advise aggrieved persons that, where the agency agrees to offer ADR in the particular case, they may choose between participation in the alternative

dispute resolution program and the counseling activities provided for in paragraph c. of this section.

- c. Counselors will conduct counseling activities in accordance with instructions contained in Commission Management Directives. When advised that a complaint has been filed by an aggrieved person, the Counselor will submit a written report within 15 days to the agency office that has been designated to accept complaints and the aggrieved person concerning the issues discussed and actions taken during counseling.
 - d. Unless the aggrieved person agrees to a longer counseling period under paragraph e. of this section, or the aggrieved person chooses an alternative dispute resolution procedure in accordance with paragraph b.2) of this section, the Counselor will conduct the final interview with the aggrieved person within 30 days of the date the aggrieved person contacted the agency's EEO office to request counseling. If the matter has not been resolved, the aggrieved person will be informed in writing by the Counselor, not later than the thirtieth day after contacting the Counselor, of the right to file a discrimination complaint. The notice will inform the complainant of the right to file a discrimination complaint within 15 days of receipt of the notice, of the appropriate official with whom to file a complaint and of the complainant's duty to assure that the agency is informed immediately if the complainant retains counsel or a representative.
 - e. Prior to the end of the 30-day period, the aggrieved person may agree in writing with the agency to postpone the final interview and extend the counseling period for an additional period of no more than 60 days. If the matter has not been resolved before the conclusion of the agreed extension, the notice described in paragraph d. of this section will be issued.
 - f. Where the aggrieved person chooses to participate in an alternative dispute resolution procedure in accordance with paragraph b.2) of this section, the pre-complaint processing period will be 90 days. If the claim has not been resolved before the 90th day, the notice described in paragraph d. of this section will be issued.
 - g. The Counselor will not attempt in any way to restrain the aggrieved person from filing a complaint. The Counselor will not reveal the identity of an aggrieved person who consulted the Counselor, except when authorized to do so by the aggrieved person, or until the agency has received a discrimination complaint under this part from that person involving that same matter.
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1614. 106 Individual complaints

- a. A complaint must be filed with the agency that allegedly discriminated against the complainant.
 - b. A complaint must be filed within 15 days of receipt of the notice required by 1614.105(d), (e) or (f).
 - c. A complaint must contain a signed statement from the person claiming to be aggrieved or that person's attorney. This statement must be sufficiently precise to identify the aggrieved individual and the agency and to describe generally the action(s) or practice(s) that form the basis of the complaint. The complaint must also contain a telephone number and address where the complainant or the representative can be contacted.
 - d. A complainant may amend a complaint at any time prior to the conclusion of the investigation to include issues or claims like or related to those raised in the complaint. After requesting a hearing, a complainant may file a motion with the administrative judge to amend a complaint to include issues or claims like or related to those raised in the complaint.
 - e. The agency will acknowledge receipt of a complaint or an amendment to a complaint in writing and inform the complainant of the date on which the complaint or amendment was filed. The agency will advise the complainant in the acknowledgment of the EEOC office and its address where a request for a hearing is to be sent. Such acknowledgment will also advise the complainant that:
 - 1) The complainant has the right to appeal the final action on or dismissal of a complaint; and
 - 2) The agency is required to conduct an impartial and appropriate investigation of the complaint within 180 days of the filing of the complaint unless the parties agree in writing to extend the time period. When a complaint has been amended, the agency will complete its investigation within the earlier of 180 days after the last amendment to the complaint or 360 days after the filing of the original complaint, except that the complainant may request a hearing from an administrative judge on the consolidated complaints any time after 180 days from the date of the first filed complaint.
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1614.107 Dismissals of Complaints

- a. Prior to a request for a hearing in a case, the agency will dismiss an entire complaint:
- 1) That fails to state a claim under §1614.103 or §1614.106(a) or states the same claim that is pending before or has been decided by the agency or Commission;
 - 2) That fails to comply with the applicable time limits contained in §1614.105, §1614.106 and §1614.204(c), unless the agency extends the time limits in accordance with §1614.604(c), or that raises a matter that has not been brought to the attention of a Counselor and is not like or related to a matter that has been brought to the attention of a Counselor;
 - 3) That is the basis of a pending civil action in a United States District Court in which the complainant is a party provided that at least 180 days have passed since the filing of the administrative complaint, or that was the basis of a civil action decided by a United States District Court in which the complainant was a party;
 - 4) Where the complainant has raised the matter in a negotiated grievance procedure that permits allegations of discrimination or in an appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board and §1614.301 or §1614.302 indicates that the complainant has elected to pursue the non-EEO process;
 - 5) That is moot or alleges that a proposal to take a personnel action, or other preliminary step to taking a personnel action, is discriminatory;
 - 6) Where the complainant cannot be located, provided that reasonable efforts have been made to locate the complainant and the complainant has not responded within 15 days to a notice of proposed dismissal sent to his or her last known address;
 - 7) Where the agency has provided the complainant with a written request to provide relevant information or otherwise proceed with the complaint, and the complainant has failed to respond to the request within 15 days of its receipt or the complainant's response does not address the agency's request, provided that the request included a notice of the proposed dismissal. Instead of dismissing for failure to cooperate, the complaint may be adjudicated if sufficient information for that purpose is available;
 - 8) That alleges dissatisfaction with the processing of a previously filed complaint;
or
 - 9) Where the agency, strictly applying the criteria set forth in Commission decisions, finds that the complaint is part of a clear pattern of misuse of the EEO process for a purpose other than the prevention and elimination of employment discrimination.

A clear pattern of misuse of the EEO process requires:

- i. Evidence of multiple complaint filings; and
 - ii. Allegations that are similar or identical, lack specificity or involve matters previously resolved; or
 - iii. Evidence of circumventing other administrative processes, retaliating against the agency's in-house administrative processes or overburdening the EEO complaint system.
- b. Where the agency believes that some but not all of the claims in a complaint should be dismissed for the reasons contained in paragraphs a.1) through 9) of this section, the agency will notify the complainant in writing of its determination, the rationale for that determination and that those claims will not be investigated, and will place a copy of the notice in the investigative file. A determination under this paragraph is reviewable by an administrative judge if a hearing is requested on the remainder of the complaint, but is not appealable until final action is taken on the remainder of the complaint.
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1614.108 Investigation of complaints

- a. The investigation of complaints will be conducted by the agency against which the complaint has been filed.
- b. In accordance with instructions contained in Commission Management Directives, the agency will develop an impartial and appropriate factual record upon which to make findings on the claims raised by the written complaint. An appropriate factual record is one that allows a reasonable fact finder to draw conclusions as to whether discrimination occurred. Agencies may use an exchange of letters or memoranda, interrogatories, investigations, fact-finding conferences or any other fact-finding methods that efficiently and thoroughly address the matters at issue. Agencies are encouraged to incorporate alternative dispute resolution techniques into their investigative efforts in order to promote early resolution of complaints.
- c. The procedures in paragraphs c.1) through 3) of this section apply to the investigation of complaints:
 - 1) The complainant, the agency, and any employee of a Federal agency will produce such documentary and testimonial evidence as the investigator deems necessary.
 - 2) Investigators are authorized to administer oaths. Statements of witnesses will be made under oath or affirmation or, alternatively, by written statement under penalty of perjury.
 - 3) When the complainant, or the agency against which a complaint is filed, or its employees fail without good cause shown to respond fully and in timely fashion to requests for documents, records, comparative data, statistics, affidavits, or the attendance of witness(es), the investigator may note in the investigative record that the decisionmaker should, or the Commission on appeal may, in appropriate circumstances:
 - i. Draw an adverse inference that the requested information, or the testimony of the requested witness, would have reflected unfavorably on the party refusing to provide the requested information;
 - ii. Consider the matters to which the requested information or testimony pertains to be established in favor of the opposing party;
 - iii. Exclude other evidence offered by the party failing to produce the requested information or witness;
 - iv. Issue a decision fully or partially in favor of the opposing party; or
 - v. Take such other actions as it deems appropriate.
- d. Any investigation will be conducted by investigators with appropriate security clearances. The Commission will, upon request, supply the agency with the name of an investigator with appropriate security clearances.
- e. The agency will complete its investigation within 180 days of the date of filing of an individual complaint or within the time period contained in an order from the Office of

Federal Operations on an appeal from a dismissal pursuant to 1614.107. By written agreement within those time periods, the complainant and the respondent agency may voluntarily extend the time period for not more than an additional 90 days. The agency may unilaterally extend the time period or any period of extension for not more than 30 days where it must sanitize a complaint file that may contain information classified pursuant to Exec. Order No. 12356, or successor orders, as secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy, provided the investigating agency notifies the parties of the extension.

- f. Within 180 days from the filing of the complaint, or where a complaint was amended, within the earlier of 180 days after the last amendment to the complaint or 360 days after the filing of the original complaint, within the time period contained in an order from the Office of Federal Operations on an appeal from a dismissal, or within any period of extension provided for in paragraph e. of this section, the agency will provide the complainant with a copy of the investigative file, and will notify the complainant that, within 30 days of receipt of the investigative file, the complainant has the right to request a hearing and decision from an administrative judge or may request an immediate final decision pursuant to 1614.110 from the agency with which the complaint was filed.
 - g. If the agency does not send the notice required in paragraph f. of this section within the applicable time limits, it will, within those same time limits, issue a written notice to the complainant informing the complainant that it has been unable to complete its investigation within the time limits required by §1614.108(f) and estimating a date by which the investigation will be completed. Further, the notice must explain that if the complainant does not want to wait until the agency completes the investigation, he or she may request a hearing in accordance with paragraph h. of this section, or file a civil action in an appropriate United States District Court in accordance with § 1614.407(b). Such notice must contain information about the hearing procedures.
 - h. Where the complainant has received the notice required in paragraph f. of this section or at any time after 180 days have elapsed from the filing of the complaint, the complainant may request a hearing by submitting a written request for a hearing directly to the EEOC office indicated in the agency's acknowledgment letter. The complainant must send a copy of the request for a hearing to the agency EEO office. Within 15 days of receipt of the request for a hearing, the agency will provide a copy of the complaint file to EEOC and, if not previously provided, to the complainant.
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1614.109 Hearings

- a. When a complainant requests a hearing, the Commission will appoint an administrative judge to conduct a hearing in accordance with this section. Upon appointment, the administrative judge will assume full responsibility for the adjudication of the complaint, including overseeing the development of the record. Any hearing will be conducted by an administrative judge or hearing examiner with appropriate security clearances.
- b. **Dismissals.** Administrative judges may dismiss complaints pursuant to 1614.107, on their own initiative, after notice to the parties, or upon an agency's motion to dismiss a complaint.
- c. **Offer of resolution.**
 - 1) Any time after the filing of the written complaint but not later than the date an administrative judge is appointed to conduct a hearing, the agency may make an offer of resolution to a complainant who is represented by an attorney.
 - 2) Any time after the parties have received notice that an administrative judge has been appointed to conduct a hearing, but not later than 30 days prior to the hearing, the agency may make an offer of resolution to the complainant, whether represented by an attorney or not.
 - 3) The offer of resolution will be in writing and will include a notice explaining the possible consequences of failing to accept the offer. The agency's offer, to be effective, must include attorney's fees and costs and must specify any non-monetary relief. With regard to monetary relief, an agency may make a lump sum offer covering all forms of monetary liability, or it may itemize the amounts and types of monetary relief being offered. The complainant will have 30 days from receipt of the offer of resolution to accept it. If the complainant fails to accept an offer of resolution and the relief awarded in the administrative judge's decision, the agency's final decision, or the Commission decision on appeal is not more favorable than the offer, then, except where the interest of justice would not be served, the complainant will not receive payment from the agency of attorney's fees or costs incurred after the expiration of the 30-day acceptance period. An acceptance of an offer must be in writing and will be timely if postmarked or received within the 30-day period. Where a complainant fails to accept an offer of resolution, an agency may make other offers of resolution and either party may seek to negotiate a settlement of the complaint at any time.
- d. **Discovery.** The administrative judge will notify the parties of the right to seek discovery prior to the hearing and may issue such discovery orders as are appropriate. Unless the parties agree in writing concerning the methods and scope of discovery, the party seeking discovery will request authorization from the administrative judge prior to commencing discovery. Both parties are entitled to reasonable development of evidence on matters relevant to the issues raised in the complaint, but the administrative judge may limit the quantity and timing of discovery. Evidence may be developed through interrogatories, depositions, and requests for admissions, stipulations or production of documents. It will be grounds for objection to producing evidence that the information sought by either party is irrelevant, over burdensome, repetitious, or privileged.

e. **Conduct of hearing.** Agencies will provide for the attendance at a hearing of all employees approved as witnesses by an administrative judge. Attendance at hearings will be limited to persons determined by the administrative judge to have direct knowledge relating to the complaint. Hearings are part of the investigative process and are thus closed to the public. The administrative judge will have the power to regulate the conduct of a hearing, limit the number of witnesses where testimony would be repetitious, and exclude any person from the hearing for contumacious conduct or misbehavior that obstructs the hearing. The administrative judge will receive into evidence information or documents relevant to the complaint. Rules of evidence will not be applied strictly, but the administrative judge will exclude irrelevant or repetitious evidence. The administrative judge or the Commission may refer to the Disciplinary Committee of the appropriate Bar Association any attorney or, upon reasonable notice and an opportunity to be heard, suspend or disqualify from representing complainants or agencies in EEOC hearings any representative who refuses to follow the orders of an administrative judge, or who otherwise engages in improper conduct.

f. **Procedures.**

- 1) The complainant, an agency, and any employee of a Federal agency will produce such documentary and testimonial evidence as the administrative judge deems necessary. The administrative judge will serve all orders to produce evidence on both parties.
- 2) Administrative judges are authorized to administer oaths. Statements of witnesses will be made under oath or affirmation or, alternatively, by written statement under penalty of perjury.
- 3) When the complainant, or the agency against which a complaint is filed, or its employees fail without good cause shown to respond fully and in timely fashion to an order of an administrative judge, or requests for the investigative file, for documents, records, comparative data, statistics, affidavits, or the attendance of witness(es), the administrative judge will, in appropriate circumstances:
 - i. Draw an adverse inference that the requested information, or the testimony of the requested witness, would have reflected unfavorably on the party refusing to provide the requested information;
 - ii. Consider the matters to which the requested information or testimony pertains to be established in favor of the opposing party; .
 - iii. Exclude other evidence offered by the party failing to produce the requested information or witness;
 - iv. Issue a decision fully or partially in favor of the opposing party; or
 - v. Take such other actions as appropriate.

g. **Decisions without hearing.**

- 1) If a party believes that some or all material facts are not in genuine dispute and there is no genuine issue as to credibility, the party may, at least 15 days prior to the date of the hearing or at such earlier time as required by the administrative judge, file a statement with the administrative judge prior to the hearing setting forth the fact or facts and

referring to the parts of the record relied on to support the statement. The statement must demonstrate that there is no genuine issue as to any such material fact. The party will serve the statement on the opposing party.

- 2) The opposing party may file an opposition within 15 days of receipt of the statement in paragraph g.1) of this section. The opposition may refer to the record in the case to rebut the statement that a fact is not in dispute or may file an affidavit stating that the party cannot, for reasons stated, present facts to oppose the request. After considering the submissions, the administrative judge may order that discovery be permitted on the fact or facts involved, limit the hearing to the issues remaining in dispute, issue a decision without a hearing or make such other ruling as is appropriate.
 - 3) If the administrative judge determines upon his or her own initiative that some or all facts are not in genuine dispute, he or she may, after giving notice to the parties and providing them an opportunity to respond in writing within 15 calendar days, issue an order limiting the scope of the hearing or issue a decision without holding a hearing.
- h. **Record of hearing.** The hearing will be recorded and the agency will arrange and pay for verbatim transcripts. All documents submitted to, and accepted by, the administrative judge at the hearing will be made part of the record of the hearing. If the agency submits a document that is accepted, it will furnish a copy of the document to the complainant. If the complainant submits a document that is accepted, the administrative judge will make the document available to the agency representative for reproduction.
- i. **Decisions by administrative judges.** Unless the administrative judge makes a written determination that good cause exists for extending the time for issuing a decision, an administrative judge will issue a decision on the complaint, and will order appropriate remedies and relief where discrimination is found, within 180 days of receipt by the administrative judge of the complaint file from the agency. The administrative judge will send copies of the hearing record, including the transcript, and the decision to the parties. If an agency does not issue a final order within 40 days of receipt of the administrative judge's decision in accordance with §1614.110, then the decision of the administrative judge will become the final action of the agency.
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1614.110 Final action by agencies

- a. **Final action by an agency following a decision by an administrative judge.** When an administrative judge has issued a decision under §1614.109(b), (g) or (i), the agency will take final action on the complaint by issuing a final order within 40 days of receipt of the hearing file and the administrative judge's decision. The final order will notify the complainant whether or not the agency will fully implement the decision of the administrative judge and will contain notice of the complainant's right to appeal to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the right to file a civil action in federal district court, the name of the proper defendant in any such lawsuit and the applicable time limits for appeals and lawsuits. If the final order does not fully implement the decision of the administrative judge, then the agency will simultaneously file an appeal in accordance with §1614.403 and append a copy of the appeal to the final order. A copy of EEOC Form 573 will be attached to the final order.

 - b. **Final action by an agency in all other circumstances.** When an agency dismisses an entire complaint under §1614.107, receives a request for an immediate final decision or does not receive a reply to the notice issued under §1614.108(f), the agency will take final action by issuing a final decision. The final decision will consist of findings by the agency on the merits of each issue in the complaint, or, as appropriate, the rationale for dismissing any claims in the complaint and, when discrimination is found, appropriate remedies and relief in accordance with subpart E of this part. The agency will issue the final decision within 60 days of receiving notification that a complainant has requested an immediate decision from the agency, or within 60 days of the end of the 30-day period for the complainant to request a hearing or an immediate final decision where the complainant has not requested either a hearing or a decision. The final action will contain notice of the right to appeal the final action to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the right to file a civil action in federal district court, the name of the proper defendant in any such lawsuit and the applicable time limits for appeals and lawsuits. A copy of EEOC Form 573 will be attached to the final action.
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1614.204 Class Complaints

a. **Definitions.**

- 1) A class is a group of employees, former employees or applicants for employment who, it is alleged, have been or are being adversely affected by an agency personnel management policy or practice that discriminates against the group on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information.
- 2) A class complaint is a written complaint of discrimination filed on behalf of a class by the agent of the class alleging that:
 - i. The class is so numerous that a consolidated complaint of the members of the class is impractical;
 - ii. There are questions of fact common to the class;
 - iii. The claims of the agent of the class are typical of the claims of the class;
 - iv. The agent of the class, or, if represented, the representative, will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class.
- 3) An agent of the class is a class member who acts for the class during the processing of the class complaint.

b. **Pre-complaint processing.** An employee or applicant who wishes to file a class complaint must seek counseling and be counseled in accordance with §1614.105. A complainant may move for class certification at any reasonable point in the process when it becomes apparent that there are class implications to the claim raised in an individual complaint. If a complainant moves for class certification after completing the counseling process contained in §1614.105, no additional counseling is required. The administrative judge will deny class certification when the complainant has unduly delayed in moving for certification.

c. **Filing and presentation of a class complaint.**

- 1) A class complaint must be signed by the agent or representative and must identify the policy or practice adversely affecting the class as well as the specific action or matter affecting the class agent.
- 2) The complaint must be filed with the agency that allegedly discriminated not later than 15 days after the agent's receipt of the notice of right to file a class complaint.
- 3) The complaint will be processed promptly; the parties will cooperate and will proceed at all times without undue delay.

d. **Acceptance or dismissal.**

- 1) Within 30 days of an agency's receipt of a complaint, the agency will: Designate an agency representative who will not be any of the individuals referenced in §1614.102(b)(3), and forward the complaint, along with a copy of the Counselor's

report and any other information pertaining to timeliness or other relevant circumstances related to the complaint, to the Commission. The Commission will assign the complaint to an administrative judge or complaints examiner with a proper security clearance when necessary. The administrative judge may require the complainant or agency to submit additional information relevant to the complaint.

- 2) The administrative judge may dismiss the complaint, or any portion, for any of the reasons listed in §1614.107 or because it does not meet the prerequisites of a class complaint under §1614.204(a)(2).
- 3) If an allegation is not included in the Counselor's report, the administrative judge will afford the agent 15 days to state whether the matter was discussed with the Counselor and, if not, explain why it was not discussed. If the explanation is not satisfactory, the administrative judge will dismiss the allegation. If the explanation is satisfactory, the administrative judge will refer the allegation to the agency for further counseling of the agent. After counseling, the allegation will be consolidated with the class complaint.
- 4) If an allegation lacks specificity and detail, the administrative judge will afford the agent 15 days to provide specific and detailed information. The administrative judge will dismiss the complaint if the agent fails to provide such information within the specified time period. If the information provided contains new allegations outside the scope of the complaint, the administrative judge will advise the agent how to proceed on an individual or class basis concerning these allegations.
- 5) The administrative judge will extend the time limits for filing a complaint and for consulting with a Counselor in accordance with the time limit extension provisions contained in §1614.105(a)(2) and §1614.604.
- 6) When appropriate, the administrative judge may decide that a class be divided into subclasses and that each subclass be treated as a class, and the provisions of this section then will be construed and applied accordingly.
- 7) The administrative judge will transmit his or her decision to accept or dismiss a complaint to the agency and the agent. The agency will take final action by issuing a final order within 40 days of receipt of the hearing record and administrative judge's decision. The final order will notify the agent whether or not the agency will implement the decision of the administrative judge. If the final order does not implement the decision of the administrative judge, the agency will simultaneously appeal the administrative judge's decision in accordance with §1614.403 and append a copy of the appeal to the final order. A dismissal of a class complaint will inform the agent either that the complaint is being filed on that date as an individual complaint of discrimination and will be processed under subpart A or that the complaint is also dismissed as an individual complaint in accordance with §1614.107. In addition, it will inform the agent of the right to appeal the dismissal of the class complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or to file a civil action and will include EEOC Form 573, Notice of Appeal/Petition.

e. Notification.

- 1) Within 15 days of receiving notice that the administrative judge has accepted a class complaint or a reasonable time frame specified by the administrative judge, the agency will use reasonable means, such as delivery, mailing to last known address or distribution, to notify all class members of the acceptance of the class complaint.
- 2) Such notice will contain:
 - i. The name of the agency or organizational segment, its location, and the date of acceptance of the complaint;
 - ii. A description of the issues accepted as part of the class complaint;
 - iii. An explanation of the binding nature of the final decision or resolution of the complaint on class members; and
 - iv. The name, address and telephone number of the class representative.

f. Obtaining evidence concerning the complaint.

- 1) The administrative judge will notify the agent and the agency representative of the time period that will be allowed both parties to prepare their cases. This time period will include at least 60 days and may be extended by the administrative judge upon the request of either party. Both parties are entitled to reasonable development of evidence on matters relevant to the issues raised in the complaint. Evidence may be developed through interrogatories, depositions, and requests for admissions, stipulations or production of documents. It will be grounds for objection to producing evidence that the information sought by either party is irrelevant, over burdensome, repetitious, or privileged.
- 2) If mutual cooperation fails, either party may request the administrative judge to rule on a request to develop evidence. If a party fails without good cause shown to respond fully and in timely fashion to a request made or approved by the administrative judge for documents, records, comparative data, statistics or affidavits, and the information is solely in the control of one party, such failure may, in appropriate circumstances, cause the administrative judge:
 - i. To draw an adverse inference that the requested information would have reflected unfavorably on the party refusing to provide the requested information;
 - ii. To consider the matters to which the requested information pertains to be established in favor of the opposing party;
 - iii. To exclude other evidence offered by the party failing to produce the requested information;
 - iv. To recommend that a decision be entered in favor of the opposing party; or
 - v. To take such other actions as the administrative judge deems appropriate.
- 3) During the period for development of evidence, the administrative judge may, in his or

her discretion, direct that an investigation of facts relevant to the complaint or any portion be conducted by an agency certified by the Commission.

- 4) Both parties will furnish to the administrative judge copies of all materials that they wish to be examined and such other material as may be requested.

g. Opportunity for resolution of the complaint.

- 1) The administrative judge will furnish the agent and the representative of the agency a copy of all materials obtained concerning the complaint and provide opportunity for the agent to discuss materials with the agency representative and attempt resolution of the complaint.
- 2) The complaint may be resolved by agreement of the agency and the agent at any time pursuant to the notice and approval procedure contained in paragraph g.4) of this section.
- 3) If the complaint is resolved, the terms of the resolution will be reduced to writing and signed by the agent and the agency.
- 4) Notice of the resolution will be given to all class members in the same manner as notification of the acceptance of the class complaint and to the administrative judge. It will state the relief, if any, to be granted by the agency and the name and address of the EEOC administrative judge assigned to the case. It will state that within 30 days of the date of the notice of resolution, any member of the class may petition the administrative judge to vacate the resolution because it benefits only the class agent, or is otherwise not fair, adequate and reasonable to the class as a whole. The administrative judge will review the notice of resolution and consider any petitions to vacate filed. If the administrative judge finds that the proposed resolution is not fair, adequate and reasonable to the class as a whole, the administrative judge will issue a decision vacating the agreement and may replace the original class agent with a petitioner or some other class member who is eligible to be the class agent during further processing of the class complaint. The decision will inform the former class agent or the petitioner of the right to appeal the decision to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and include EEOC Form 573, Notice of Appeal/Petition. If the administrative judge finds that the resolution is fair, adequate and reasonable to the class as a whole, the resolution will bind all members of the class.

- h. Hearing.** On expiration of the period allowed for preparation of the case, the administrative judge will set a date for hearing. The hearing will be conducted in accordance with 29 CFR §1614.109(a) through (f).

i. Report of findings and recommendations.

- 1) The administrative judge will transmit to the agency a report of findings and recommendations on the complaint, including a recommended decision, systemic relief for the class and any individual relief, where appropriate, with regard to the personnel action or matter that gave rise to the complaint.

- 2) If the administrative judge finds no class relief appropriate, he or she will determine if a finding of individual discrimination is warranted and, if so, will recommend appropriate relief.
- 3) The administrative judge will notify the agent of the date on which the report of findings and recommendations was forwarded to the agency.

j. Agency decision.

- 1) Within 60 days of receipt of the administrative judge's decision on the complaint, the agency will take final action by issuing a final order. The final order will notify the class agent whether or not the agency will fully implement the decision of the administrative judge and shall contain notice of the class agent's right to appeal to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the right to file a civil action in federal district court, the name of the proper defendant in any such lawsuit, and the applicable time limits for appeals and lawsuits. If the final order does not fully implement the decision of the administrative judge, then the agency will simultaneously file an appeal in accordance with § 1614.403 and append a copy of the appeal to the final order. A copy of EEOC Form 573 shall be attached to the final order.
- (2) If an agency does not issue a final order within 60 days of receipt of the administrative judge's decision, then the decision of the administrative judge shall become the final action of the agency.
- (3) A final order on a class complaint shall, subject to subpart D of this part, be binding on all members of the class and the agency.

k. Notification of decision. The agency will notify class members of the final decision and relief awarded, if any, through the same media employed to give notice of the existence of the class complaint. The notice, where appropriate, will include information concerning the rights of class members to seek individual relief, and of the procedures to be followed. Notice will be given by the agency within 10 days of the transmittal of its final decision to the agent.

l. Relief for individual class members.

- 1) When discrimination is found, an agency must eliminate or modify the employment policy or practice out of which the complaint arose and provide individual relief, including an award of attorney's fees and costs, to the agent in accordance with §1614.501.
- 2) When class-wide discrimination is not found, but it is found that the class agent is a victim of discrimination, §1614.501 will apply. The agency will also, within 60 days of the issuance of the final decision finding no class-wide discrimination, issue the acknowledgment of receipt of an individual complaint as required by §1614.106(d) and process in accordance with the provisions of subpart A of this part, each individual complaint that was subsumed into the class complaint.

- 3) When discrimination is found in the final decision and a class member believes that he or she is entitled to individual relief, the class member may file a written claim with the head of the agency or its EEO Director within 30 days of receipt of notification by the agency of its final decision. Administrative judges will retain jurisdiction over the complaint in order to resolve any disputed claims by class members. The claim must include a specific, detailed showing that the claimant is a class member who was affected by the discriminatory policy or practice, and that this discriminatory action took place within the period of time for which the agency found class-wide discrimination in its final decision. Where a finding of discrimination against a class has been made, there will be a presumption of discrimination as to each member of the class. The agency must show by clear and convincing evidence that any class member is not entitled to relief. The administrative judge may hold a hearing or otherwise supplement the record on a claim filed by a class member. The agency or the Commission may find class-wide discrimination and order remedial action for any policy or practice in existence within 45 days of the agent's initial contact with the Counselor. Relief otherwise consistent with this Part may be ordered for the time the policy or practice was in effect. The agency will issue a final decision on each such claim within 90 days of filing. Such decision must include a notice of the right to file an appeal or a civil action in accordance with subpart D of this part and the applicable time limits.

PRE-COMPLAINT COUNSELING



Incident Occurrence

You must contact the EEO Director within 45 days of the incident. If you request traditional counseling, you will be assigned an EEO counselor, who will have 30 days to attempt resolution.

The 30-day counseling period may be extended to up to 60 days if you and the agency agree to such an extension in writing. If you choose traditional counseling and a successful resolution is not reached, the EEO counselor will issue a notice of the right to file a formal complaint. You will have 15 days to file a formal complaint.

You may request to participate in an Alternative Dispute Resolution Program (i.e., Mediation Program), in which case the agency will have up to 90 days to resolve the matter. If you choose mediation, pre-complaint counseling will not occur. If mediation is not successful and a resolution is not reached within 90 days, the EEO counselor will issue a notice of the right to file a formal complaint. You will have 15 days to file a formal complaint.

If mediation is successful within 90 days, the EEO Director will inform the EEO counselor that the claim was resolved.

FORMAL COMPLAINT PROCESS



EEOC regulations require that you seek pre-complaint counseling before filing a formal complaint.

You must file a formal complaint within 15 days of receiving the notice of the right to file a formal complaint. The EEO Director will acknowledge receiving the formal complaint and notify you of the claims accepted for investigation. If the claims asserted and those accepted for investigation differ, the EEO Director will explain the reasons for such differences, including whether the agency is dismissing the entire complaint, or part of the complaint.



The EEO Director will assign an investigator to develop impartial and appropriate factual information on the claims accepted for processing. The agency must complete the investigation, within 180 days of the date the formal complaint was filed.

After the investigation is completed, you will receive a copy of the investigation report. The EEO Director will notify you of the right to either request a hearing before an EEOC Administrative Judge (AJ) or receive a final agency decision without a hearing.



The EEO Director will issue a final agency decision within 60 days of receiving notice of the request for a final agency decision.



You may request an EEOC hearing within 30 days of receiving the report of investigation.



If you are not satisfied with the agency's final decision, you may appeal to EEOC within 30 days of receipt.

An EEOC AJ will make a decision on the matter.

Within 40 days of receiving the AJ's decision, the agency must issue a final order.



If you are not satisfied with EEOC's appellate decision, you may file a request for reconsideration or you may file in Federal district court within 90 days of receipt.

If you are not satisfied with the agency's final order, you may appeal to EEOC within 30 days of receipt.