

SUBPART IV -- ENFORCEMENT AND PENALTIES
CHAPTER 461 -- INVESTIGATIONS AND PROCEEDINGS

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Sec. 46101. Complaints and investigations

(a) General. -- (1) A person may file a complaint in writing with the Secretary of Transportation (or the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration with respect to aviation safety duties and powers designated to be carried out by the Administrator) about a person violating this part or a requirement prescribed under this part. Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, the Secretary or Administrator shall investigate the complaint if a reasonable ground appears to the Secretary or Administrator for the investigation.

(2) On the initiative of the Secretary of Transportation or the Administrator, as appropriate, the Secretary or Administrator may conduct an investigation, if a reasonable ground appears to the Secretary or Administrator for the investigation, about --

(A) a person violating this part or a requirement prescribed under this part; or

(B) any question that may arise under this part.

(3) The Secretary of Transportation or Administrator may dismiss a complaint without a hearing when the Secretary or Administrator is of the opinion that the complaint does not state facts that warrant an investigation or action.

(4) After notice and an opportunity for a hearing and subject to section 40105(b) of this title, the Secretary of Transportation or Administrator shall issue an order to compel compliance with this part if the Secretary or Administrator finds in an investigation under this subsection that a person is violating this part.

(b) Complaints Against Members of Armed Forces. -- The Secretary of Transportation or Administrator shall refer a complaint against a member of the armed forces of the United States performing official duties to the Secretary of the department concerned for action. Not later than 90 days after receiving the complaint, the Secretary of that department shall inform the Secretary of Transportation or Administrator of the action taken on the complaint, including any corrective or disciplinary action taken.

Sec. 46102. Proceedings

(a) Conducting Proceedings. -- Subject to subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5, the Secretary of Transportation (or the

Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration with respect to aviation safety duties and powers designated to be carried out by the Administrator) may conduct proceedings in a way conducive to justice and the proper dispatch of business.

(b) Appearance. -- A person may appear and be heard before the Secretary and the Administrator in person or by an attorney. The Secretary may appear and participate as an interested party in a proceeding the Administrator conducts under section 40113(a) of this title.

(c) Recording and Public Access. -- Official action taken by the Secretary and Administrator under this part shall be recorded. Proceedings before the Secretary and Administrator shall be open to the public on the request of an interested party unless the Secretary or Administrator decides that secrecy is required because of national defense.

(d) Conflicts of Interest. -- The Secretary, the Administrator, or an officer or employee of the Administration may not participate in a proceeding referred to in subsection (a) of this section in which the individual has a pecuniary interest.

Sec. 46103. Service of notice, process, and actions

(a) Designating Agents. -- (1) Each air carrier and foreign air carrier shall designate an agent on whom service of notice and process in a proceeding before, and an action of, the Secretary of Transportation (or the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration with respect to aviation safety duties and powers designated to be carried out by the Administrator) may be made.

(2) The designation --

(A) shall be in writing and filed with the Secretary or Administrator; and

(B) may be changed in the same way as originally made.

(b) Service.--(1) Service may be made --

(A) by personal service;

(B) on a designated agent; or

(C) by certified or registered mail to the person to be served or the designated agent of the person.

(2) The date of service made by certified or registered mail is the date of mailing.

(c) Serving Agents. -- Service on an agent designated under this section shall be made at the office or usual place of residence of the agent. If an air carrier or foreign air carrier does not have a designated agent, service may be made by posting the notice, process, or action in the office of the Secretary or Administrator.

Sec. 46104. Evidence

(a) General. -- In conducting a hearing or investigation under this part, the Secretary of Transportation (or the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration with respect to aviation safety duties and powers designated to be carried out by the Administrator) may --

(1) subpoena witnesses and records related to a matter involved in the hearing or investigation from any place in the United States to the designated place of the hearing or investigation;

(2) administer oaths;

(3) examine witnesses; and
(4) receive evidence at a place in the United States the Secretary or Administrator designates.

(b) Compliance With Subpenas. -- If a person disobeys a subpoena, the Secretary, the Administrator, or a party to a proceeding before the Secretary or Administrator may petition a court of the United States to enforce the subpoena. A judicial proceeding to enforce a subpoena under this section may be brought in the jurisdiction in which the proceeding or investigation is conducted. The court may punish a failure to obey an order of the court to comply with the subpoena as a contempt of court.

(c) Depositions. -- (1) In a proceeding or investigation, the Secretary or Administrator may order a person to give testimony by deposition and to produce records. If a person fails to be deposed or to produce records, the order may be enforced in the same way a subpoena may be enforced under subsection (b) of this section.

(2) A deposition may be taken before an individual designated by the Secretary or Administrator and having the power to administer oaths.

(3) Before taking a deposition, the party or the attorney of the party proposing to take the deposition must give reasonable notice in writing to the opposing party or the attorney of record of that party. The notice shall state the name of the witness and the time and place of taking the deposition.

(4) The testimony of a person deposed under this subsection shall be under oath. The person taking the deposition shall prepare, or cause to be prepared, a transcript of the testimony taken. The transcript shall be subscribed by the deponent. Each deposition shall be filed promptly with the Secretary or Administrator.

(5) If the laws of a foreign country allow, the testimony of a witness in that country may be taken by deposition --

(A) by a consular officer or an individual commissioned by the Secretary or Administrator or agreed on by the parties by written stipulation filed with the Secretary or Administrator; or

(B) under letters rogatory issued by a court of competent jurisdiction at the request of the Secretary or Administrator.

(d) Witness Fees and Mileage and Certain Foreign Country Expenses. -- A witness summoned before the Secretary or Administrator or whose deposition is taken under this section and the individual taking the deposition are each entitled to the same fee and mileage that the witness and individual would have been paid for those services in a court of the United States. Under regulations of the Secretary or Administrator, the Secretary or Administrator shall pay the necessary expenses incident to executing, in another country, a commission or letter rogatory issued at the initiative of the Secretary or Administrator.

(e) Designating Employees To Conduct Hearings. -- When designated by the Secretary or Administrator, an employee appointed under section 3105 of title 5 may conduct a hearing, subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, examine witnesses, and receive evidence at a place in the United States the Secretary

or Administrator designates. On request of a party, the Secretary or Administrator shall hear or receive argument.

Sec. 46105. Regulations and orders

(a) Effectiveness of Orders. -- Except as provided in this part, a regulation prescribed or order issued by the Secretary of Transportation (or the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration with respect to aviation safety duties and powers designated to be carried out by the Administrator) takes effect within a reasonable time prescribed by the Secretary or Administrator. The regulation or order remains in effect under its own terms or until superseded. Except as provided in this part, the Secretary or Administrator may amend, modify, or suspend an order in the way, and by giving the notice, the Secretary or Administrator decides.

(b) Contents and Service of Orders. -- An order of the Secretary or Administrator shall include the findings of fact on which the order is based and shall be served on the parties to the proceeding and the persons affected by the order.

(c) Emergencies. -- When the Administrator is of the opinion that an emergency exists related to safety in air commerce and requires immediate action, the Administrator, on the initiative of the Administrator or on complaint, may prescribe regulations and issue orders immediately to meet the emergency, with or without notice and without regard to this part and subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5. The Administrator shall begin a proceeding immediately about an emergency under this subsection and give preference, when practicable, to the proceeding.

Sec. 46106. Enforcement by the Secretary of Transportation and Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration The Secretary of Transportation (or the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration with respect to aviation safety duties and powers designated to be carried out by the Administrator) may bring a civil action against a person in a district court of the United States to enforce this part or a requirement or regulation prescribed, or an order or any term of a certificate or permit issued, under this part. The action may be brought in the judicial district in which the person does business or the violation occurred.

Sec. 46107. Enforcement by the Attorney General

(a) Civil Actions To Enforce Section 40106(b). -- The Attorney General may bring a civil action in a district court of the United States against a person to enforce section 40106(b) of this title. The action may be brought in the judicial district in which the person does business or the violation occurred.

(b) Civil Actions To Enforce This Part. -- (1) On request of the Secretary of Transportation (or the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration with respect to aviation safety duties and powers designated to be carried out by the Administrator), the Attorney General may bring a civil action in an appropriate court --

(A) to enforce this part or a requirement or regulation prescribed, or an order or any term of a certificate or permit issued, under this part; and

(B) to prosecute a person violating this part or a requirement or regulation prescribed, or an order or any term of a certificate or permit issued, under this part.

(2) The costs and expenses of a civil action shall be paid out of the appropriations for the expenses of the courts of the United States.

(c) Participation of Secretary or Administrator. -- On request of the Attorney General, the Secretary or Administrator, as appropriate, may participate in a civil action under this part.

Sec. 46108. Enforcement of certificate requirements by interested persons An interested person may bring a civil action in a district court of the United States against a person to enforce section 41101(a)(1) of this title. The action may be brought in the judicial district in which the defendant does business or the violation occurred.

Sec. 46109. Joinder and intervention

A person interested in or affected by a matter under consideration in a proceeding before the Secretary of Transportation or civil action to enforce this part or a requirement or regulation prescribed, or an order or any term of a certificate or permit issued, under this part may be joined as a party or permitted to intervene in the proceeding or civil action.

Sec. 46110. Judicial review

(a) Filing and Venue. -- Except for an order related to a foreign air carrier subject to disapproval by the President under section 41307 or 41509(f) of this title, a person disclosing a substantial interest in an order issued by the Secretary of Transportation (or the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration with respect to aviation safety duties and powers designated to be carried out by the Administrator) under this part may apply for review of the order by filing a petition for review in the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit or in the court of appeals of the United States for the circuit in which the person resides or has its principal place of business. The petition must be filed not later than 60 days after the order is issued. The court may allow the petition to be filed after the 60th day only if there are reasonable grounds for not filing by the 60th day.

(b) Judicial Procedures. -- When a petition is filed under subsection (a) of this section, the clerk of the court immediately shall send a copy of the petition to the Secretary or Administrator, as appropriate. The Secretary or Administrator shall file with the court a record of any proceeding in which the order was issued, as provided in section 2112 of title 28.

(c) Authority of Court. -- When the petition is sent to the Secretary or Administrator, the court has exclusive jurisdiction to affirm, amend, modify, or set aside any part of the order and may order the Secretary or Administrator to conduct further proceedings. After reasonable notice to the Secretary or Administrator, the court may grant interim relief by staying the order or taking other appropriate action when good cause for its action exists. Findings of fact by the Secretary or

Administrator, if supported by substantial evidence, are conclusive.

(d) Requirement for Prior Objection. -- In reviewing an order under this section, the court may consider an objection to an order of the Secretary or Administrator only if the objection was made in the proceeding conducted by the Secretary or Administrator or if there was a reasonable ground for not making the objection in the proceeding.

(e) Supreme Court Review. -- A decision by a court under this section may be reviewed only by the Supreme Court under section 1254 of title 28.