Rule 24. Effective Date

These rules and addendums are applicable to appeals processed under the Contract Disputes Act (CDA), 41 U.S.C. 7101-7109, and other appeals to the extent consistent with law. They apply to all appeals filed on or after the date of final publication in the Federal Register, and to those appeals filed before that date, unless that application is inequitable or unfair.

ADDENDUM I

EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT PROCEDURES

(a) Definitions—

For the purpose of these procedures:

(1) "Equal Access to Justice Act," or "EAJA," means 5 U.S.C. 504, as amended;

(2) "Board" means the Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals; and

(3) "Contract Disputes Act" means the Contract Disputes Act, 41 U.S.C. 71017109 (CDA).

(b) Scope of procedures—These procedures are intended to assist the parties in the processing of EAJA applications for award of fees and other expenses incurred in connection with appeals pursuant to the CDA.

(c) Eligibility of applicants—

(1) To be eligible for an EAJA award, an applicant must be a party appellant that has prevailed in a CDA appeal before the Board and must be one of the following:

(i) An individual with a net worth which did not exceed $2,000,000 at the time the appeal was filed; or

(ii) Any owner of an unincorporated business, or any partnership, corporation, association, unit of local Government, or organization, the net worth of which does not exceed $7,000,000 and which does not have more than 500 employees; except:

(A) Certain charitable organizations or cooperative associations; and

(B) For the purposes of 5 U.S.C. 504(a)(4), a small entity as defined in 5 U.S.C. 601, need not comply with any net worth requirement (see 5 U.S.C. 504(b)(1)(B)).

(2) For the purpose of eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant shall be determined as of the date the underlying CDA appeal was filed with the Board.

(d) Standards of awards—A prevailing eligible applicant shall receive an award of fees and expenses incurred in connection with a CDA appeal, unless the position of the Government over which the applicant prevailed was substantially justified, or if special circumstances make the award unjust.

(e) Allowable fees and other expenses—

(1) Fees and other expenses must be reasonable. Awards will be based upon the prevailing market

rates, subject to paragraph (e)(2) of this section, for the kind and quality of services furnished by attorneys, agents, and expert witnesses.

(2) No award for the fee of an attorney or agent may exceed $125 per hour. No expert witness shall be compensated at a rate in excess of the highest rate of compensation for expert witnesses paid by the agency involved.

(3) The reasonable cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, or project, prepared on behalf of a party may be awarded, to the extent that the study or other matter was necessary in connection with the appeal and the charge for the service does not exceed the prevailing rate for similar services.

(f) Time for filing of applications—An application may be filed after an appellant has prevailed in the CDA appeal within 30 days after the Board's disposition of the appeal has become final.

(g) Application contents—

(1) An EAJA application shall comply with each of the following:

(i) Show that the applicant is a prevailing party;

(ii) Show that the applicant is eligible to receive an award;

(iii) Allege that the position of the government was not substantially justified; and

(iv) Show the amount of fees and other expenses sought, including an itemized statement thereof.

(2) An original and one copy of the application and exhibits should be filed with the Board. The applicant will forward one copy to the Government.

(3) When a compliant application has been timely filed, the Board, in order to obtain more detailed information, may require supplementation of the application.

(h) Net worth exhibit—Each applicant for which a determination of net worth is required under the EAJA should provide with its application a detailed net worth exhibit showing the net worth of the applicant when the CDA appeal was filed. The exhibit may be in any form convenient to the applicant that provides full disclosure of assets, liabilities, and net worth.

(i) Fees and other expenses exhibit—The application should be accompanied by a detailed fees and other expenses exhibit fully documenting the fees and other expenses, including the cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, or project, for which an award is sought. The date and a description of all services rendered or costs incurred should be indicated. A separate itemized statement should be submitted for each professional firm or individual whose services are covered by the application showing the hours spent in connection with the CDA appeal by each individual, a description of the particular services performed by specific date, the rate at which each fee has been computed, any expenses for which reimbursement is sought, the total amount claimed, and the total amount paid or payable by the applicant or by any other person or entity for the services provided. The Board may require the applicant to provide vouchers, receipts, or other substantiation for any expenses sought.

(j) Answer to application—

(1) Within 30 days after receipt by the Government of an application, the Government may file an

answer. Unless the Government requests an extension of time for filing or files a statement of intent to negotiate under paragraph (2) below, failure to file an answer within the 30-day period may be treated by the Board at its discretion as a general denial to the application on behalf of the Government.

(2) If the Government and the applicant believe that the matters raised in the application can be resolved by mutual agreement, they may jointly file a statement of intent to negotiate a settlement. Filing of this statement will extend the time for filing an answer for an additional 30 days. Further extensions may be requested by the parties.

(3) The answer will explain in detail any objections to the award requested and identify the facts relied upon in support of the Government's position.

(4) An original and one copy of the answer should be filed with the Board. The Government will forward one copy to the applicant.

(k) Reply—Within 15 days after receipt of an answer, the applicant may file a reply. An original and one copy of the reply will be filed with the Board. The applicant will forward one copy to the Government.

(l) Award proceedings—

(1) The Board may enter an order prescribing the procedure to be followed or take such other action as may be deemed appropriate under the EAJA. Further proceedings will be held only when necessary for full and fair resolution of the issues arising from the application.

(2) A request that the Board order further proceedings under this paragraph will describe the disputed issues, explain why the additional proceedings are deemed necessary to resolve the issues and specifically identify any information sought and its relationship to the disputed issues.

(m) Evidence—

(1) Decisions on the merits—When a CDA appeal is decided on the merits, other than by a consent judgment, the record relating to whether the Government's position under the EAJA was substantially justified will be limited to the record in the CDA appeal. Evidence relevant to other issues in the award proceeding may be submitted.

(2) Other dispositions—When a CDA appeal is settled, or decided by a consent judgment, either party in proceedings under the EAJA may, for good cause shown, supplement the record established in the CDA appeal with affidavits and other supporting evidence relating to whether the position of the agency was substantially justified or other issues in the award proceeding.

(n) Decision—Decisions under the EAJA will be rendered by the Administrative Judge or a majority of the judges who would have participated in a motion for reconsideration of the underlying CDA appeal. The decision of the Board will include written findings and conclusions and the basis therefor. The Board's decision on an application for fees and other expenses under the EAJA will be the final administrative decision regarding the EAJA application.

(o) Motions for reconsideration—Either party may file a motion for reconsideration. Motions for reconsideration must be filed within 30 days of receipt of the Board's EAJA decision. Extensions in the period to file a motion will not be granted. Extensions to file a memorandum in support of a timely filed motion may be granted.

(p) Payment of Awards—The Board's EAJA awards will be paid directly by the contracting agency over which the applicant prevailed in the underlying CDA appeal.

ADDENDUM II

ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION

1. The Contract Disputes Act (CDA), 41 U.S.C. 7105(g)(1), states that boards of contract appeals "shall ... to the fullest extent practicable provide informal, expeditious, and inexpensive resolution of disputes". Resolution of a dispute at the earliest stage feasible, by the fastest and least expensive method possible, benefits both parties. To that end, the parties are encouraged to consider Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedures for pre-claim and pre-final decision matters, as well as appeals pending before the Board. The Board may also conduct ADRs for any Federal agency. However, if the matter is not pending before the Board under its CDA jurisdiction, any settlement may not be paid out of the Judgment Fund.

2. The ADR methods described in this Addendum are intended to suggest techniques that have worked in the past. Any appropriate method that brings the parties together in settlement, or partial settlement, of their disputes is a good method. The ADR methods listed are not intended to preclude the parties' use of other ADR techniques that do not require the Board's participation, such as settlement negotiations, fact-finding conferences or procedures, mediation, or minitrials not involving use of the Board's personnel. Any method, or combination of methods, including one that will result in a binding decision, may be selected by the parties without regard to the dollar amount in dispute.

3. The parties must jointly request ADR procedures at the Board. The request must be approved by the Board. The Board may also schedule a conference to explore the desirability and selection of an ADR method and related procedures. If an ADR involving the Board's participation is requested and approved by the Board, a Neutral will be appointed. If an Administrative Judge has already been assigned to an appeal, the same judge will normally be assigned to be the Neutral in an ADR. If an Administrative Judge has not yet been assigned to the appeal, or if the subject of the ADR is a matter pending before the contracting officer prior to any appeal, the Board will appoint an Administrative Judge to be the Neutral. In such instances, as well as situations in which the parties prefer that an assigned Administrative Judge not be appointed to serve as the Neutral, the parties may submit a list of at least three preferred Administrative Judges and the Board will endeavor to accommodate their preferences.

4. To facilitate full, frank and open discussion and presentations, any Neutral who has participated in a non-binding ADR procedure that has failed to resolve the underlying dispute will be recused from further participation in the matter unless the parties expressly agree otherwise in writing and the Board concurs. Further, the recused Neutral will not discuss the merits of the dispute or substantive matters involved in the ADR proceedings with other Board personnel.

5. Written material prepared specifically for use in an ADR proceeding, oral presentations made at an ADR proceeding, and all discussions in connection with such proceedings between the parties and the Neutral are confidential and, unless otherwise specifically agreed by the parties, inadmissible as evidence in any pending or future Board proceeding involving the parties or matter in dispute. However, evidence otherwise admissible before the Board is not rendered inadmissible because of its use in the ADR proceeding.

6. The ADR method and the procedures and requirements implementing the ADR method will be prescribed by the written agreement of the parties and approved by the Board. ADR methods can be

used successfully at any stage of the litigation.

7. The following are examples of ADR methods commonly used at the Board:

(a) Nonbinding—

Mediations: A Neutral is an Administrative Judge who will not normally hear or have any formal or informal decision-making authority in the matter and who is appointed for the purpose of facilitating settlement. In many circumstances, settlement can be fostered by a frank, in-depth discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each party's position with the Neutral. The agenda for meetings with the Neutral will be flexible to accommodate the requirements of the case. To further the settlement effort, the Neutral may meet with the parties either jointly or individually. A Neutral's recommendations are not binding on the parties. When this method is selected, the ADR agreement must contain a provision in which the parties and counsel agree not to subpoena the Neutral in any legal action or administrative proceeding of any kind to produce any notes or documents related to the ADR proceeding or to testify concerning any such notes or documents or concerning his/her thoughts or impressions.

(b) Binding—

Summary Proceeding With Binding Decision: A summary proceeding with binding decision is a procedure whereby the resolution of the appeal is expedited and the parties try their appeal informally before an Administrative Judge. A binding "bench" decision may be issued upon conclusion of the proceeding, or a binding summary written decision will be issued by the judge no later than ten days following the later of conclusion of the proceeding or receipt of a transcript. The parties must agree in the ADR agreement that all decisions, rulings, and orders by the Board under this method shall be final, conclusive, not appealable, and may not be set aside, except for fraud. All such decisions, rulings, and orders will have no precedential value. Prehearing, hearing, and post-hearing procedures and rules applicable to appeals generally will be modified or eliminated to expedite resolution of the appeal.

(c) Other Agreed Methods—

The parties and the Board may agree upon other informal methods, binding or nonbinding that are structured and tailored to suit the requirements of the individual case.

8. The above-listed ADR procedures are intended to shorten and simplify the Board's more formalized procedures. Generally, if the parties resolve their dispute by agreement, they benefit in terms of cost and time savings and maintenance or restoration of amicable relations. The Board will not view the parties' participation in ADR proceedings as a sign of weakness. Any method adopted for dispute resolution depends upon both parties having a firm, good faith commitment to resolve their differences. Absent such intention, the best structured dispute resolution procedure is unlikely to be successful.

ARMED SERVICES BOARD OF CONTRACT APPEALS

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