

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
D.C. Department of Human Resources

District Personnel Manual Issuance System

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DPM Instruction No. 4-8

SUBJECT: Requirements for Pre-Employment Inquiries
for New (Initial) Appointments

Date: April 9, 2009

NOTE: This District Personnel Manual (DPM) instruction supersedes DPM Instruction No. 4-7, *same subject*, dated May 30, 2008, for the main purpose of providing updated versions of the *Authorization for Release of Information for Pre-Employment Check Form; Pre-Employment Check Form; and Pre-Employment Screening Checklist*.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this DPM instruction is to inform subordinate agencies of the rules and procedures for pre-employment inquiries (checks).

2. Regulatory Authority

Chapter 4 of the D.C. personnel regulations, Organization for Personnel Management.

3. Delegation of Recruitment and Selection Personnel Authority

- a. Mayor's Order 2008-81, *Joint Delegation of Personnel Authority* (Order), dated June 5, 2008, jointly delegated recruitment and selection personnel authority for all Career Service, Legal Service, and Management Supervisory Service (MSS) positions to the Director, D.C. Department of Human Resources (DCHR) and the heads of the 23 subordinate agencies listed in the Order.
- b. Because of the provisions of the Order, appropriate staff within the 23 subordinate agencies shall be responsible for completing the *pre-employment checks* discussed in this DPM instruction; except for the pre-employment checks discussed in paragraph 9 of this instruction, which are conducted by the DCHR.

4. Appointments Subject to Pre-Employment Checks

- a. *Pre-employment checks* must be conducted for ALL new appointments to positions in the Career Service (excluding new appointments to uniformed positions in the Fire and

NOTE: DPM instructions that are strictly procedural in nature have direct applicability only to agencies and employees under the personnel authority of the Mayor. Other personnel authorities or independent agencies may adopt any or all of these procedures or guidance materials for agencies and employees under their respective jurisdictions. [See DPM Chapter 2, Part II, Subpart 1, § 1.3]

Inquiries: Policy and Planning Administration, DCHR (202) 442-9700

Distribution: Heads of Departments and Agencies, HR Advisors and DPM Subscribers

Retain Until Superseded

Emergency Medical Services Department and Metropolitan Police Department), Legal Service, Excepted Service, and MSS.

- b. **Section 405.5** of Chapter 4 of the regulations provides that a check need not be conducted if the appointee is already employed with the District government in a position subject to a background check; and the nature of the personnel action for the new appointment is one (1) of the following:
- Promotion;
 - Demotion;
 - Reassignment; or
 - An appointment or conversion of an employee who has been serving continuously with a District government agency for at least one (1) year in a position or positions under an appointment subject to a background check.

5. Elements of a *Pre-Employment Check*

- a. **Section 405.1** of Chapter 4 of the regulations provides that the *suitability for employment* of an appointee/selectee shall be established by conducting *pre-employment checks* and background checks and investigations.
- b. Section **405.2** of Chapter 4 of the regulations specifies that the following *pre-employment checks* shall be conducted:

(1) Prior-Employment Checks

(a) Prior employment checks to verify:

- Dates of employment during the last 5 years;
- Salary or other compensation received;
- Titles held and nature of duties performed;
- Reasons for leaving employment; and
- Performance.

(b) Verification of possession of a college degree (if education was substituted for experience in qualifying the person for the position); or if education is required for the position). Acceptable methods for the verification of a college degree include:

- Obtaining an official copy of the appointee's college transcript [the appointee must contact college/university directly to obtain a copy];
- Contacting the college/university directly for verification; or

- Using a degree verification website¹ such as: www.degreeverify.org
 - (c) Verification of possession of a professional license or other type of license (if required for the position); and
 - (d) Optional miscellaneous checks, such as professional standing and other inquiries.
- (2) Reference Checks
- (a) Section **405.2 (f)** of Chapter 4 of the regulations provides that, in addition to the prior-employment checks required above, every appointee/selectee shall be subject to completion of at least 3 reference checks.
 - (b) *Reference checks* shall be made with the appointee/selectee's former employer, except that personal references may be utilized instead of or in addition to *reference checks* with former employers as deemed necessary by the personnel authority.

6. **Conducting Pre-Employment Checks**

- a. ***WHO conducts the pre-employment check?*** – As applicable, *pre-employment checks* are conducted by either staff in the DCHR or staff in the twenty three (23) subordinate agencies delegated recruitment and selection personnel authority.
- b. ***WHEN is the check conducted?*** – Each *pre-employment check* shall be conducted after a selection is made and a written tentative job offer is made. *Checks* are to be completed, to the extent possible, before employment commences. A job offer made contingent upon the completion of the *pre-employment check* shall be considered non-binding on the DCHR or employing agency.
- c. ***HOW is the appointee/selectee notified that a check will be conducted?*** – All offer letters issued to appointees/selectees must include language informing the appointee that employment is contingent upon the completion of a satisfactory pre-employment check. The tentative job offer letter must include a copy of *D.C. Standard Form (DCSF) No. 04-05, Authorization for Release of Information for Pre-Employment Check Form* (this form was previously numbered *DCSF No. 04-01*).
- d. ***WHAT forms must be completed to conduct the check?*** – The following forms shall be completed when conducting the *pre-employment check*:
 - ***DCSF No. 04-06, Pre-Employment Check Form*** (this form was previously numbered *DCSF No. 04-02*) – this form is used to document the inquiries conducted in completing the *pre-employment check**;

¹ Verifications can be obtained for a nominal fee (via major credit card or a Degree verification account) at www.degreeverify.org.

- **DCSF 22, Personal References Questionnaire** (copy attached) – this form is used to document the personal reference information obtained; and
- **DCSF No. 04-07, Pre-Employment Screening Checklist** (this form was previously numbered *DCSF No. 04-03*) – this form is used to document the results of the *pre-employment check* and filed in the Official Personnel Folder (OPF).

***Note:** A **Sample Employment Verification Letter** is attached for cases in which the information cannot be verified via telephone.

e. **WHAT steps are taken after the check is completed?**

- (1) The person conducting the *pre-employment check* will inform the selecting official of the results of the check. Specifically, that:
 - The result of the check was satisfactory and the person is suitable for employment; or
 - The result of the check was unsatisfactory, and the person is unsuitable for employment and will be denied examination for or appointment to the position for which he or she had been considered; or terminated from District government service in the case of a person who began employment before the *pre-employment check* was completed.
- (2) *Pre-employment checks* that may result in disqualification must be elevated to the Audit and Compliance Administration within the DCHR for review and approval before any further action is taken concerning the final (formal) offer appointment. After consulting the guidelines on disqualification, the DCHR will make a final suitability determination. (See paragraph 7 below).

7. **Guidelines for Determining Disqualification due to Unsuitability**

- a. In accordance with section **405.8** of Chapter 4 of the regulations, the reasons that may be used by the DCHR in making a determination of disqualification of an appointee/selectee due to *unsuitability* may include but shall not be limited to the following:
 - (1) Delinquency or misconduct in prior employment;
 - (2) Criminal, dishonest, or other conduct of a nature that would cause discredit to the District government;
 - (3) A false statement of any material fact, or engagement in deception or fraud in the examination or appointment process;
 - (4) Illegal use of drugs; or

- (5) Any other legal disqualification for appointment.
- b. In accordance with section **405.9** of Chapter 4 of the regulations, in making a determination of disqualification of an appointee/selectee due to *unsuitability*, the following additional factors shall be considered by the DCHR, to the extent that these factors are deemed pertinent to the individual case:
- (1) The kind of position for which the person is being considered or in which the person is employed, including its sensitivity;
 - (2) The nature and seriousness of the conduct, occurrence, or information;
 - (3) The circumstances surrounding the conduct or occurrence;
 - (4) The recency of the conduct or information;
 - (5) The age of the appointee/selectee at the time of the conduct or occurrence;
 - (6) Contributing social or environmental conditions;
 - (7) The absence or presence of rehabilitation or efforts toward rehabilitation; or
 - (8) In the case of criminal conduct, its relevance or relationship to the duties of the position.
- c. In accordance with section **405.7** of Chapter 4 of the regulations, before taking *suitability disqualification action* against an appointee/selectee, and at the discretion of the DCHR, the appointee/selectee may be notified of the derogatory information, and given an opportunity to explain the derogatory information, in writing, within 15 days of being notified. The appointee/selectee so notified must provide information to explain any discrepancies, omissions, or misinformation, or mitigating circumstances that may exist which are unknown to the DCHR.

8. Background Checks or Investigations; Background Investigations for IT Personnel

- a. Section **405.3** of Chapter 4 of the regulations provides that the Director, DCHR, is authorized to determine which positions shall be subject to background checks or investigations, or mandatory criminal background checks **in addition to** the *pre-employment checks* described above in this DPM instruction. Any such additional checks/investigations shall **only** be conducted:
- Based on the duties of the position; or
 - If required by law or regulation.
- b. Before any of the additional check/investigation is made or conducted, the Director, DCHR, shall publish in the DPM the positions in subordinate agencies subject to the additional checks/investigations.

c. **Background Investigations for IT Personnel**

***Section 406.1** of Chapter 4 of the regulations provides that background investigations shall be conducted for employees and persons being considered for employment in positions associated with the design, use, or operation of District government automated IT systems.

- Background investigations for IT personnel are conducted by the employing agency

*For additional information on background investigations for IT personnel, please refer to DPM Instruction No. 4-9, *Standards for Background Investigations Required for Information Technology (IT) Employees*, dated **April 9, 2009**

9. **Pre-Employment Criminal Background and Traffic Record Checks for the Protection of Children and Youth**

- a. The **DCHR** is responsible for conducting pre-employment criminal background checks and traffic record checks for selectees to positions covered under Title II of the Child and Youth, Safety and Health Omnibus Amendment Act of 2004 (Act), effective April 13, 2005 (D.C. Law 15-353; D.C. Official Code § 4-1501.01 *et seq.*) (2008 Repl.).
- b. The Act established criminal background and traffic record checks requirements for District government employees providing direct services to children or youth in District government agencies* considered “*covered child or youth services providers.*”

[*Note: Please refer to section 414 of Chapter 4 of the regulations for the list of the agencies considered *covered child or youth services providers.*]

[Note: Pursuant to Title I of the Act, new hires in positions designated as “safety-sensitive” are also subject to drug/alcohol testing. See Chapter 39 of the regulations, Testing for the Presence of Controlled Substances and Alcohol]

10. **Filing of Pre-Employment Check Forms in Official Personnel Folders**

DCSF No. 04-07 is to be filed on the right side of the respective employee’s Official Personnel Folder (OPF); *DCSF Form 22* and *DCSF Nos. 04-05* and *04-06* are to be filed in the employee’s Confidential File/Folder. [If the employee’s OPF has been **SCANNED** and maintained/stored electronically, these forms may also be scanned.]

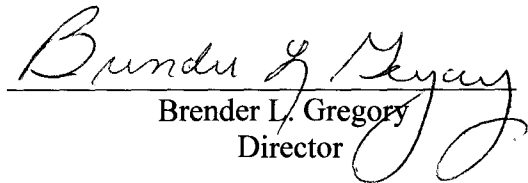
11. **Definitions**

Appointee/Selectee – An individual first employed with the District government.

Reference Check – Pre-employment check conducted by the personnel authority to ascertain character, reputation, relevant traits and characteristics, and other relevant personal qualities, and whether the reference would recommend the appointee for the position for which he or she is being considered.

Definitions (Cont.)

Suitability – The quality or state of being acceptable for District government employment with respect to the *character, reputation, and fitness* of the person under consideration.


Brender L. Gregory
Director

Attachments:

- *DCSF No. 04-05, Authorization for Release of Information for Pre-Employment Inquiry (Rev. 3/09)*
- *DCSF No. 04-06, Pre-Employment Check Form (Rev. 3/09)*
- *DCSF No. 04-07, Pre-Employment Screening Checklist (Rev. 3/09)*
- *DCSF 22, Personal References Questionnaire (Rev. 5/08)*
- *Sample Employment Verification Letter*
- *Sample Education Verification Form*
- *Quick Reference Guide – Pre-Employment Checks*

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
D.C. Department of Human Resources

AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION
FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECK

[Carefully read this authorization to release information about you, then sign and date it in ink.]

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

*Social Security Number: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Home Address: _____

This release, as transmitted to me by a duly authorized representative of the _____,
(DCHR or Employing Agency)

constitutes my consent and authority to the District government to examine and obtain copies, abstracts of records, or receive statements and information regarding my background. Specifically, I hereby authorize the release of the following information or records to a duly authorized representative of the District government agency considering me for employment:

- a. Information about my previous employment during the last 5 years;
- b. Information about my educational background (if relevant to the position tentatively offered to me);
- c. Reference checks from previous employers or personal reference checks;
- d. Professional or other type of license, if a prerequisite for the position; and
- e. Any other background information considered necessary by the agency (i.e., professional standing, if relevant to the position tentatively offered to me), provided that the basis for obtaining such information is not arbitrary or capricious.

I give this authorization for the release of the information above in connection with a tentative offer of appointment the District government made by the _____.
(DCHR or Employing Agency)

I further authorize the custodians of records and other sources of information pertaining to me to release the information upon formal request. I authorize the release of this information regardless of any previous agreement to the contrary. I understand that the information released by the custodians of records and other sources of information are for official use by the District government, only for the purposes of employment, and that it may be re-disclosed by the District government only as authorized by law or regulation.

I acknowledge that a telephone facsimile or copy of this release shall be as valid as the original. This release is valid for all federal, state, county, and local government agencies and authorities, and private organizations.

Copies of this authorization that show my signature are as valid as the original release signed by me. I understand that this authorization is **valid for 1 year** from the date signed, or upon the termination of my affiliation with the District government, whichever is sooner.

[*NOTE: Information regarding disclosure of your Social Security Number (SSN) is in accordance with section 3104.3 of Chapter 31 of the D.C. personnel regulations, Records Management and Privacy of Records. Disclosure of your SSN is mandatory to obtain the services and benefits of employment with the District government. The SSN is used as an identifier throughout your District government career. The SSN also will be used by the District government in connection with lawful requests for information about you directed to your former employees, educational institutions and financial or other organizations. The information gathered through the use of the SSN will be used only as necessary in personnel administration processes carried out in accordance with established regulations and published notices of systems of records.]

Signature of Appointee

Date

[File this Authorization Form on the RIGHT SIDE of Employee's OPF]

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
D.C. Department of Human Resources**

Pre-Employment Check Form

**[Section 405 of Chapter 4 of the D.C. Personnel Regulations,
Organization for Personnel Management]**

Name of Candidate: _____ **Agency:** _____

Position Title/Series/Grade: _____

Salary: _____ **Entrance-on-Duty Date:** _____

A. Verification of Employment (for at least 5 years):

1. **Name of Organization:** _____

Employment Dates: (From) _____ **(To):** _____

Position Title: _____ **Salary:** _____

Type of Work: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____ **Performance:** _____

Information Obtained by: _____ **Relationship w/Candidate:** _____

Date of Verification: _____ **Contact Number:** _____

2. **Name of Organization:** _____

Employment Dates: (From) _____ **(To):** _____

Position Title: _____ **Salary:** _____

Type of Work: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____ **Performance:** _____

Information Obtained by: _____ **Relationship w/Candidate:** _____

Date of Verification: _____ **Contact Number:** _____

(OVER)

3. Name of Organization: _____
Employment Dates: (From) _____ (To): _____
Position Title: _____ Salary: _____
Type of Work: _____
Reason for Leaving: _____ Performance: _____
Information Obtained by: _____ Relationship w/Candidate: _____
Date of Verification: _____ Contact Number: _____

4. Name of Organization: _____
Employment Dates: (From) _____ (To): _____
Position Title: _____ Salary: _____
Type of Work: _____
Reason for Leaving: _____ Performance: _____
Information Obtained by: _____ Relationship w/Candidate: _____
Date of Verification: _____ Contact Number: _____

B. VERIFICATION OF EDUCATION (if used as substitute for experience; or if required for the position):

University/College: _____ Type of Degree: _____
Years of College: _____ Date Completed: _____ Major: _____
City/State: _____ Other Relevant Information: _____
Information Verified By: _____ Contact Number: _____

C. VERIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL LICENSE (if prerequisite for position):

Type of License: _____ Expiration Date: _____
State of Licensure: _____ License Number: _____
Information Verified By: _____ Contact Number: _____

(OVER)

D. MISCELLANEOUS CHECK (optional: professional standing, other inquiries):

Information Verified By: _____ Contact Number: _____

SUMMARY OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS COMPLETED:

	<i>Verified</i>	<i>Not Verified</i>
a. Employment during the last 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Education information (if prerequisite for employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Professional or other type of license (if prerequisite for employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Professional standing and other inquiries (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Personal References (a minimum of 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECK RESULTS:

SATISFACTORY – The appointee/selectee is suitable for employment. The HR representative who conducted the *pre-employment check* will: (1) inform the hiring official; make a final offer of appointment; and arrange for entrance-on-duty (EOD) processing; or (2) in the case of an individual who began employment before the pre-employment check was completed, inform the selecting official that the individual is suitable for employment.

UNSATISFACTORY* – The HR representative who conducted the check will inform the appointee/selectee and the hiring official of the result of the *pre-employment check* and either cancel the tentative job offer; or terminate employment, as applicable.

**Note:* The HR representative who conducted the *pre-employment check* must submit all pre-employment inquiries that may result in the suitability disqualification of an appointee to the Audit and Compliance Administration, DCHR, prior to notifying the selecting official of the suitability determination.

CERTIFIED BY:_____
HR Representative (Print Name)_____
HR Representative (Signature)_____
Date

[File this Form in the Employee's CONFIDENTIAL FILE/FOLDER]

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
D.C. Department of Human Resources

PRE-EMPLOYMENT SCREENING CHECKLIST

Name of Candidate: _____ Agency: _____

Position Title/Series/Grade: _____

Salary: _____ Entrance-on-Duty Date: _____

PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECK RESULTS:

	Verified	Not Verified
a. Employment during the last 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Educational information (if prerequisite for employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Professional or other type of license (if prerequisite for employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Professional standing and other inquiries (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Personal references (a minimum of 3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The results of the *Pre-Employment Check* conducted are:

SATISFACTORY: The appointee/selectee was found to be suitable for employment.

UNSATISFACTORY: The appointee/selectee was found to be unsuitable for employment. The person who conducted the check will inform the appointee/selectee and hiring official of the result.

CERTIFIED BY:

HR Representative (Print)

HR Representative (Signature)

Date

[File this Form on the RIGHT SIDE of Employee's OPF]

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
D.C. Department of Human Resources**

PERSONAL REFERENCES QUESTIONNAIRE

Applicant's Name: _____

Position for which being considered: _____ Salary: _____

Information provided by: _____ Date: _____

Relationship: _____ How long known: _____ To: _____
(Relative, supervisor, friend, co-worker, subordinate)

Information secured by: _____ Date: _____

Please evaluate the applicant on each of the following items on which you have knowledge. State title of position upon which this evaluation is based:	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
Quality of work					
Quantity of work					
Adaptability, initiative, resourcefulness					
Ability to get along with: (a) Supervisors (b) Co-Workers (c) Subordinates					
Supervisory ability					
(Number of employees supervised: _____)					
Technical knowledge and skill					
Dependability in completing assignments					
Dependability in attendance					
Ability to work under pressure					
Personal habits					

What is your overall assessment of the applicant? _____

Would you employ the applicant for this position? Why or Why not? _____

Would this applicant be eligible for rehire? _____. If not, please state reasons: _____

Any additional information regarding the applicant which would have a bearing on whether he/she should be employed: _____

SAMPLE EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION LETTER

Date

(Company's/Agency's Name)

(Address)

To Whom It May Concern:

(Applicant's Name) is being considered for employment with the (Agency), and has listed you or your organization as a former employer. In accordance with the enclosed release form, please confirm the below employment information that was provided by the applicant.

Name of Organization: _____

Employment Dates: (From): _____ (To): _____

Position Title: _____ Salary: _____

Type of Work: _____

Reason for Leaving: _____ Performance: _____

Verification Conducted By:

Name - PRINT

Date

Position Title

Contact Number

Please Return this Document to:

EMPLOYING AGENCY (or D.C. Department of Human Resources, as appropriate)

Attention: _____

Should you have any questions regarding this request, I can be reached on (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Name
Position Title

Enclosure

SAMPLE EDUCATION VERIFICATION FORM

[This sample can be used when conducting verification of education by phone.]

Candidate's Name: _____

Verification of Education:

Name of College/University: _____

Major: _____ **Minor:** _____

Degree(s) Obtained (e.g., A.A., B.S.): _____ **Attended From** _____ **To** _____
(Month/Year) (Month/Year)

Verification Provided by: _____ **Telephone No.:** _____

Verification Conducted By:

Name – PRINT

Date

Position Title

Contact Number

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE – PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

[Section 405, *Pre-Employment Checks and Background Checks and Investigations*, of Chapter 4 of the D.C. Personnel Regulations, Organization for Personnel Management]

REQUIREMENT

- Pre-employment inquiries (checks) shall be conducted after a selection is made and a TENTATIVE JOB OFFER is made to the appointee/selectee, in writing. Checks are to be completed, to the extent possible, before employment commences. A job offer made contingent upon the completion of a check shall be considered non-binding on the employing agency or the D.C. Department of Human Resources.

APPLICABILITY

- This requirement applies to ALL new appointments to positions in the Career Service, Excepted Service, and Management Supervisory Service, excluding new appointments to uniformed positions in the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department and Metropolitan Police Department.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT INQUIRIES (CHECKS)

Pre-employment inquiries (checks) for each appointee/selectee shall consist of **PRIOR EMPLOYMENT CHECKS** and **REFERENCE CHECKS**, and shall include ALL of the following:

A. Prior Employment Checks:

- Employment during the last 5 years: dates, salary, titles held, reasons for leaving, performance;
- College degree (if used to substitute for experience; or if required for the position);
- Professional or other type of license (if prerequisite for position); and
- [Optional] miscellaneous checks (such as professional standing, and other inquiries).

B. Reference Checks:

In addition to the prior employment checks, a minimum of 3 *reference checks* are to be made with the selectee's former employer, except that *personal references* may be utilized instead of or in addition to *reference checks* with former employers as deemed necessary by the personnel authority.

Documentation for Pre-Employment/Reference Checks:

The following *forms* are used in conducting pre-employment inquiries:

- DCSF No. 04-05, *Authorization for Release of Information for Pre-Employment Check Form*
- DCSF No. 04-06 *Pre-Employment Check Form*
- DCSF No. 22, *Personal References Questionnaire*
- DCSF No. 04-07, *Pre-Employment Screening Checklist*

PRIOR EMPLOYMENT CRIMINAL BACKGROUND/TRAFFIC RECORD CHECKS AND DRUG TESTING FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN/YOUTH

In addition to the *pre-employment checks* listed above, appointees/selectees to positions that require the provision of direct services that affect the health, safety, and welfare of children/youth; or services for the benefit of children/youth, shall be subject to these additional *pre-employment checks/testing*. [See sections 412 – 425 of Chapter 4, and sections 3901 – 3910 of Chapter 39 of the regulations.]