

(2) The arbitration agreement that sets forth the subject matter submitted to the arbitrator shall be in writing. Each such arbitration agreement shall specify a maximum award that may be issued by the arbitrator and may specify other conditions limiting the range of possible outcomes.

(3) An agency may not require any person to consent to arbitration as a condition of entering into a contract or obtaining a benefit.

(b) An officer or employee of an agency shall not offer to use arbitration for the resolution of issues in controversy unless such officer or employee—

(1) would otherwise have authority to enter into a settlement concerning the matter; or

(2) is otherwise specifically authorized by the agency to consent to the use of arbitration.

(c) Prior to using binding arbitration under this subchapter, the head of an agency, in consultation with the Attorney General and after taking into account the factors in section 572(b), shall issue guidance on the appropriate use of binding arbitration and when an officer or employee of the agency has authority to settle an issue in controversy through binding arbitration.

(Added Pub. L. 101-552, §4(b), Nov. 15, 1990, 104 Stat. 2742, §585; renumbered §575, Pub. L. 102-354, §3(b)(2), Aug. 26, 1992, 106 Stat. 944; amended Pub. L. 104-320, §8(c), Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3872.)

#### CODIFICATION

Section 575 of former Title 5, Executive Departments and Government Officers and Employees, was transferred to section 2259 of Title 7, Agriculture.

#### PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 575 was renumbered section 595 of this title.

#### AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 104-320, §8(c)(1), (2), substituted “The” for “Any” and inserted at end “Each such arbitration agreement shall specify a maximum award that may be issued by the arbitrator and may specify other conditions limiting the range of possible outcomes.”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 104-320, §8(c)(3), in introductory provisions substituted “shall not offer to use arbitration for the resolution of issues in controversy unless” for “may offer to use arbitration for the resolution of issues in controversy, if”, and in par. (1) substituted “would otherwise have authority” for “has authority”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 104-320, §8(c)(4), added subsec. (c).  
1992—Pub. L. 102-354 renumbered section 585 of this title as this section.

#### § 576. Enforcement of arbitration agreements

An agreement to arbitrate a matter to which this subchapter applies is enforceable pursuant to section 4 of title 9, and no action brought to enforce such an agreement shall be dismissed nor shall relief therein be denied on the grounds that it is against the United States or that the United States is an indispensable party.

(Added Pub. L. 101-552, §4(b), Nov. 15, 1990, 104 Stat. 2742, §586; renumbered §576, Pub. L. 102-354, §3(b)(2), Aug. 26, 1992, 106 Stat. 944.)

#### CODIFICATION

Section 576 of former Title 5, Executive Departments and Government Officers and Employees, was trans-

ferred to section 2260 of Title 7, Agriculture, and subsequently repealed by Pub. L. 107-171, title X, §10418(a)(3), May 13, 2002, 116 Stat. 507.

#### PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 576 was renumbered section 596 of this title.

#### AMENDMENTS

1992—Pub. L. 102-354 renumbered section 586 of this title as this section.

#### § 577. Arbitrators

(a) The parties to an arbitration proceeding shall be entitled to participate in the selection of the arbitrator.

(b) The arbitrator shall be a neutral who meets the criteria of section 573 of this title.

(Added Pub. L. 101-552, §4(b), Nov. 15, 1990, 104 Stat. 2742, §587; renumbered §577 and amended Pub. L. 102-354, §3(b)(2), (3), Aug. 26, 1992, 106 Stat. 944, 945.)

#### AMENDMENTS

1992—Pub. L. 102-354, §3(b)(2), renumbered section 587 of this title as this section.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 102-354, §3(b)(3), substituted “section 573” for “section 583”.

#### § 578. Authority of the arbitrator

An arbitrator to whom a dispute is referred under this subchapter may—

(1) regulate the course of and conduct arbitration hearings;

(2) administer oaths and affirmations;

(3) compel the attendance of witnesses and production of evidence at the hearing under the provisions of section 7 of title 9 only to the extent the agency involved is otherwise authorized by law to do so; and

(4) make awards.

(Added Pub. L. 101-552, §4(b), Nov. 15, 1990, 104 Stat. 2742, §588; renumbered §578, Pub. L. 102-354, §3(b)(2), Aug. 26, 1992, 106 Stat. 944.)

#### AMENDMENTS

1992—Pub. L. 102-354 renumbered section 588 of this title as this section.

#### § 579. Arbitration proceedings

(a) The arbitrator shall set a time and place for the hearing on the dispute and shall notify the parties not less than 5 days before the hearing.

(b) Any party wishing a record of the hearing shall—

(1) be responsible for the preparation of such record;

(2) notify the other parties and the arbitrator of the preparation of such record;

(3) furnish copies to all identified parties and the arbitrator; and

(4) pay all costs for such record, unless the parties agree otherwise or the arbitrator determines that the costs should be apportioned.

(c)(1) The parties to the arbitration are entitled to be heard, to present evidence material to the controversy, and to cross-examine witnesses appearing at the hearing.

(2) The arbitrator may, with the consent of the parties, conduct all or part of the hearing by

telephone, television, computer, or other electronic means, if each party has an opportunity to participate.

(3) The hearing shall be conducted expeditiously and in an informal manner.

(4) The arbitrator may receive any oral or documentary evidence, except that irrelevant, immaterial, unduly repetitious, or privileged evidence may be excluded by the arbitrator.

(5) The arbitrator shall interpret and apply relevant statutory and regulatory requirements, legal precedents, and policy directives.

(d) No interested person shall make or knowingly cause to be made to the arbitrator an unauthorized ex parte communication relevant to the merits of the proceeding, unless the parties agree otherwise. If a communication is made in violation of this subsection, the arbitrator shall ensure that a memorandum of the communication is prepared and made a part of the record, and that an opportunity for rebuttal is allowed. Upon receipt of a communication made in violation of this subsection, the arbitrator may, to the extent consistent with the interests of justice and the policies underlying this subchapter, require the offending party to show cause why the claim of such party should not be resolved against such party as a result of the improper conduct.

(e) The arbitrator shall make the award within 30 days after the close of the hearing, or the date of the filing of any briefs authorized by the arbitrator, whichever date is later, unless—

(1) the parties agree to some other time limit; or

(2) the agency provides by rule for some other time limit.

(Added Pub. L. 101-552, §4(b), Nov. 15, 1990, 104 Stat. 2742, §589; renumbered §579, Pub. L. 102-354, §3(b)(2), Aug. 26, 1992, 106 Stat. 944.)

#### AMENDMENTS

1992—Pub. L. 102-354 renumbered section 589 of this title as this section.

### § 580. Arbitration awards

(a)(1) Unless the agency provides otherwise by rule, the award in an arbitration proceeding under this subchapter shall include a brief, informal discussion of the factual and legal basis for the award, but formal findings of fact or conclusions of law shall not be required.

(2) The prevailing parties shall file the award with all relevant agencies, along with proof of service on all parties.

(b) The award in an arbitration proceeding shall become final 30 days after it is served on all parties. Any agency that is a party to the proceeding may extend this 30-day period for an additional 30-day period by serving a notice of such extension on all other parties before the end of the first 30-day period.

(c) A final award is binding on the parties to the arbitration proceeding, and may be enforced pursuant to sections 9 through 13 of title 9. No action brought to enforce such an award shall be dismissed nor shall relief therein be denied on the grounds that it is against the United States or that the United States is an indispensable party.

(d) An award entered under this subchapter in an arbitration proceeding may not serve as an estoppel in any other proceeding for any issue that was resolved in the proceeding. Such an award also may not be used as precedent or otherwise be considered in any factually unrelated proceeding, whether conducted under this subchapter, by an agency, or in a court, or in any other arbitration proceeding.

(Added Pub. L. 101-552, §4(b), Nov. 15, 1990, 104 Stat. 2743, §590; renumbered §580 and amended Pub. L. 102-354, §§3(b)(2), 5(b)(3), Aug. 26, 1992, 106 Stat. 944, 946; Pub. L. 104-320, §8(a), Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3872.)

#### AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 104-320, §8(a), redesignated subsec. (d) as (c) and struck out former subsec. (c) which read as follows: “The head of any agency that is a party to an arbitration proceeding conducted under this subchapter is authorized to terminate the arbitration proceeding or vacate any award issued pursuant to the proceeding before the award becomes final by serving on all other parties a written notice to that effect, in which case the award shall be null and void. Notice shall be provided to all parties to the arbitration proceeding of any request by a party, nonparty participant or other person that the agency head terminate the arbitration proceeding or vacate the award. An employee or agent engaged in the performance of investigative or prosecuting functions for an agency may not, in that or a factually related case, advise in a decision under this subsection to terminate an arbitration proceeding or to vacate an arbitral award, except as witness or counsel in public proceedings.”

Subsecs. (d), (e). Pub. L. 104-320, §8(a)(2), redesignated subsec. (e) as (d). Former subsec. (d) redesignated (c).

Subsecs. (f), (g). Pub. L. 104-320, §8(a)(1), struck out subsecs. (f) and (g) which read as follows:

“(f) An arbitral award that is vacated under subsection (c) shall not be admissible in any proceeding relating to the issues in controversy with respect to which the award was made.

“(g) If an agency head vacates an award under subsection (c), a party to the arbitration (other than the United States) may within 30 days of such action petition the agency head for an award of fees and other expenses (as defined in section 504(b)(1)(A) of this title) incurred in connection with the arbitration proceeding. The agency head shall award the petitioning party those fees and expenses that would not have been incurred in the absence of such arbitration proceeding, unless the agency head or his or her designee finds that special circumstances make such an award unjust. The procedures for reviewing applications for awards shall, where appropriate, be consistent with those set forth in subsection (a)(2) and (3) of section 504 of this title. Such fees and expenses shall be paid from the funds of the agency that vacated the award.”

1992—Pub. L. 102-354, §3(b)(2), renumbered section 590 of this title as this section.

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 102-354, §5(b)(3), substituted “fees and other expenses” for “attorney fees and expenses”.

### § 581. Judicial Review<sup>1</sup>

(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person adversely affected or aggrieved by an award made in an arbitration proceeding conducted under this subchapter may bring an action for review of such award only pursuant to the provisions of sections 9 through 13 of title 9.

(b) A decision by an agency to use or not to use a dispute resolution proceeding under this

<sup>1</sup> So in original. Probably should not be capitalized.