

(5) The name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address of the employee and their representative (if applicable); and

(6) The name, mailing address, telephone number, and email address of the VA official who issued the order pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 723(a)(3).

(c) *VA submission of evidence file.* OPM will notify the VA upon receipt of a complete, timely appeal. The VA must provide OPM a copy of the evidence file as soon as possible but no later than five business days. If necessary, OPM may request VA provide information in addition to the evidence file. Any additional information requested by OPM must be provided to OPM within five business days after OPM's request. VA must also furnish a copy of any additional information requested by and provided to OPM to the employee. VA's failure to provide the evidence file or any requested additional information to OPM will result in a finding against VA.

(d) *Employee representative.* An employee may select a representative of their choice to assist in the preparation and submission of an appeal. An appeal filed by their representative must be supported by a duly executed power of attorney or other written documentation by the employee designating the representative. OPM may disallow as an employee's representative an individual whose activities as representative would cause a conflict of interest or position; an employee of any agency who cannot be released from official duties because of the priority needs of the Government; or an employee of any agency whose release would give rise to unreasonable costs to the Government.

§ 755.203 Basis of appeal decision.

The burden is upon the employee to establish the timeliness of the appeal and to explain why the VA's order is in error. OPM's decision is based upon the written record only, which will include the submissions by the employee and the agency. OPM will accept the facts found by the VA regarding the disciplinary or adverse action, performance-based action, or other type of finding or action, if any, which was relied upon by the VA in making its recoupment decision. OPM may uphold the VA order if the employee or their designated representative fails to provide requested information. OPM's review of the VA order is limited to whether the procedures in VA's policies on recoupment of relocation expenses pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 723 were followed. In the absence of such policies, OPM's review is limited to compliance with 38 U.S.C. 723.

§ 755.204 Form of appeal decision.

Within 30 business days after receiving an appeal, OPM will make a decision on the employee's appeal. OPM will then send a written appeal decision to the employee or their representative advising whether the VA order is upheld by OPM. OPM will send the agency a copy of the appeal decision.

§ 755.205 Finality of appeal decision.

Pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 723(b)(2), the OPM appeal decision is final; no further administrative review is available within OPM.

[FR Doc. 2025-00583 Filed 1-14-25; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6325-39-P

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT ETHICS

5 CFR Parts 2634 and 2636

RIN 3209-AA71

2025 Civil Monetary Penalties Inflation Adjustments for Ethics in Government Act Violations

AGENCY: Office of Government Ethics.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, the U.S. Office of Government Ethics is issuing this final rule to make the 2025 annual adjustments to the Ethics in Government Act civil monetary penalties.

DATES: This final rule is effective January 15, 2025.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Margaret Dylus-Yukins, Assistant Counsel, General Counsel and Legal Policy Division, Office of Government Ethics, Telephone: 202-482-9300; TTY: 800-877-8339; FAX: 202-482-9237.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

In November 2015, Congress passed the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015 (sec. 701 of Pub. L. 114-74) (the 2015 Act), which further amended the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-410). The 2015 Act required Federal agencies to make annual inflationary adjustments to the civil monetary penalties (CMPs) within their jurisdiction, to be effective no later than January 15 of each year.

The Ethics in Government Act as amended, chapter 131, title 5 of the United States Code, provides for five

CMPs.¹ Specifically, the Ethics in Government Act provides for penalties that can be assessed by an appropriate United States district court, based upon a civil action brought by the Department of Justice, for the following five types of violations:

(1) knowing and willful failure to file, report required information on, or falsification of a public financial disclosure report, 5 U.S.C. 13106(a)(1), 5 CFR 2634.701(b);

(2) knowing and willful breach of a qualified trust by trustees and interested parties, 5 U.S.C. 13104(f)(6)(C)(i), 5 CFR 2634.702(a);

(3) negligent breach of a qualified trust by trustees and interested parties, 5 U.S.C. 13104(f)(6)(C)(ii), 5 CFR 2634.702(b);

(4) misuse of a public report, 5 U.S.C. 13107(c)(2), 5 CFR 2634.703; and

(5) violation of outside employment/activities provisions, 5 U.S.C. 13145(a), 5 CFR 2636.104(a).

In compliance with the 2015 Act and guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE) made previous inflationary adjustments to the five Ethics in Government Act CMPs, and is issuing this rulemaking to effectuate the 2025 annual inflationary adjustments to those CMPs. In accordance with the 2015 Act, these adjustments are based on the percent change between the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the month of October preceding the date of the adjustment, and the prior year's October CPI-U. Pursuant to OMB guidance, the cost-of-living adjustment multiplier for 2025, based on the CPI-U for October 2024, not seasonally adjusted, is 1.02598. To calculate the 2025 annual adjustment, agencies must multiply the most recent penalty by the 1.02598 multiplier, and round to the nearest dollar.

Applying the formula established by the 2015 Act and OMB guidance, OGE is amending the Ethics in Government Act CMPs through this rulemaking to:

(1) Increase the three penalties reflected in 5 CFR 2634.702(a), 2634.703, and 2636.104(a)—which were previously adjusted to a maximum of \$24,496—to a maximum of \$25,132;

¹ OGE has previously determined, after consultation with the Department of Justice, that the \$200 late filing fee for public financial disclosure reports that are more than 30 days overdue (see 5 U.S.C. 13106(d) and 5 CFR 2634.704 of OGE's regulations thereunder) is not a CMP as defined under the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act, as amended. Therefore, that fee is not being adjusted in this rulemaking (nor was it adjusted by OGE in previous CMP rulemakings). The late filing fee for public financial disclosure reports that are more than 30 days overdue will remain at its current amount of \$200.

(2) Increase the penalty reflected in 5 CFR 2634.702(b)—which was previously adjusted to a maximum of \$12,249—to a maximum of \$12,567; and

(3) Increase the penalty reflected in 5 CFR 2634.701(b)—which was previously adjusted to a maximum of \$73,627—to a maximum of \$75,540.

These adjusted penalty amounts will apply to penalties for violations that occurred after November 2, 2015 and that are assessed after January 15, 2025 (the effective date of this final rule). OGE will continue to make future annual inflationary adjustments to the Ethics in Government Act CMPs in accordance with the statutory formula set forth in the 2015 Act and OMB guidance.

II. Matters of Regulatory Procedure

Administrative Procedure Act

Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b), as Director of the Office of Government Ethics, I find that good cause exists for waiving the general notice of proposed rulemaking and public comment procedures as to these technical amendments. The notice and comment procedures are being waived because these amendments, which concern matters of agency organization, procedure and practice, are being adopted in accordance with statutorily mandated inflation adjustment procedures of the 2015 Act, which specifies that agencies shall adjust civil monetary penalties notwithstanding Section 553 of the Administrative Procedure Act. It is also in the public interest that the adjusted rates for civil monetary penalties under the Ethics in Government Act become effective as soon as possible in order to maintain their deterrent effect.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

As the Director of the Office of Government Ethics, I certify under the 5 U.S.C. 553(b) that this final rule would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities because it primarily affects current Federal executive branch employees.

Paperwork Reduction Act

The Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35) does not apply because this regulation does not contain information collection requirements that require approval of the Office of Management and Budget.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

For purposes of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. chapter 25, subchapter II), this rule would not significantly or uniquely affect small governments and will not

result in increased expenditures by State, local, and tribal governments, in the aggregate, or by the private sector, of \$100 million or more (as adjusted for inflation) in any one year.

Executive Order 13563 and Executive Order 12866

Executive Orders 13563 and 12866 direct agencies to assess all costs and benefits of available regulatory alternatives and, if regulation is necessary, to select the regulatory approaches that maximize net benefits (including economic, environmental, public health and safety effects, distributive impacts, and equity). Executive Order 13563 emphasizes the importance of quantifying both costs and benefits, of reducing costs, of harmonizing rules, and of promoting flexibility. The Office of Management and Budget has determined that rulemakings such as this implementing annual inflationary adjustments under the 2015 Act are not significant regulatory actions under Executive Order 12866.

Executive Order 12988

As Director of the Office of Government Ethics, I have reviewed this rule in light of section 3 of Executive Order 12988, Civil Justice Reform, and certify that it meets the applicable standards provided therein.

List of Subjects

5 CFR Part 2634

Certificates of divestiture, Conflict of interests, Financial disclosure, Government employees, Penalties, Privacy, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Trusts and trustees.

5 CFR Part 2636

Conflict of interests, Government employees, Penalties.

Dated: January 8, 2025.

David Huitema,

Director, U.S. Office of Government Ethics.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, the U.S. Office of Government Ethics is amending 5 CFR parts 2634 and 2636 as follows:

PART 2634—EXECUTIVE BRANCH FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE, QUALIFIED TRUSTS, AND CERTIFICATES OF DIVESTITURE

■ 1. The authority citation for part 2634 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. ch. 131; 26 U.S.C. 1043; Pub. L. 101–410, 104 Stat. 890, 28 U.S.C. 2461 note, as amended by sec. 31001, Pub. L. 104–134, 110 Stat. 1321 and sec. 701, Pub. L. 114–74; Pub. L. 112–105, 126 Stat.

291; E.O. 12674, 54 FR 15159, 3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 215, as modified by E.O. 12731, 55 FR 42547, 3 CFR, 1990 Comp., p. 306.

■ 2. Section 2634.701 is amended by revising paragraph (b) to read as follows:

§ 2634.701 Failure to file or falsifying reports.

* * * * *

(b) *Civil action.* The Attorney General may bring a civil action in any appropriate United States district court against any individual who knowingly and willfully falsifies or who knowingly and willfully fails to file or report any information required by filers of public reports under subpart B of this part. The court in which the action is brought may assess against the individual a civil monetary penalty in any amount, not to exceed the amounts set forth in table 1 to this paragraph (b), as provided by 5 U.S.C. 13106(a)(1), and as adjusted in accordance with the inflation adjustment procedures prescribed in the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, as amended.

TABLE 1 TO § 2634.701(b)

Date of violation	Penalty
Violation occurring between Sept. 14, 2007 and Nov. 2, 2015	\$50,000
Violation occurring after Nov. 2, 2015	75,540

* * * * *

■ 3. Section 2634.702 is revised to read as follows:

§ 2634.702 Breaches by trust fiduciaries and interested parties.

(a) The Attorney General may bring a civil action in any appropriate United States district court against any individual who knowingly and willfully violates the provisions of § 2634.408(d)(1) or (e)(1). The court in which the action is brought may assess against the individual a civil monetary penalty in any amount, not to exceed the amounts set forth in table 1 to this paragraph (a), as provided by section 5 U.S.C. 13104(f)(6)(C)(i) and as adjusted in accordance with the inflation adjustment procedures prescribed in the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, as amended.

TABLE 1 TO § 2634.702(a)

Date of violation	Penalty
Violation occurring between Sept. 29, 1999 and Nov. 2, 2015	\$11,000
Violation occurring after Nov. 2, 2015	25,132

(b) The Attorney General may bring a civil action in any appropriate United States district court against any individual who negligently violates the provisions of § 2634.408(d)(1) or (e)(1).

The court in which the action is brought may assess against the individual a civil monetary penalty in any amount, not to exceed the amounts set forth in table 2 to this paragraph (b), as provided by 5 U.S.C. 13104(f)(6)(C)(ii) and as adjusted in accordance with the inflation adjustment procedures of the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, as amended.

TABLE 2 TO § 2634.702(b)

Date of violation	Penalty
Violation occurring between Sept. 29, 1999 and Nov. 2, 2015	\$5,500
Violation occurring after Nov. 2, 2015	12,567

■ 4. Section 2634.703 is revised to read as follows:

§ 2634.703 Misuse of public reports.

(a) The Attorney General may bring a civil action against any person who obtains or uses a report filed under this part for any purpose prohibited by 5 U.S.C. 13107(c)(1), as incorporated in § 2634.603(f). The court in which the action is brought may assess against the person a civil monetary penalty in any amount, not to exceed the amounts set forth in table 1 to this paragraph (a), as provided by 5 U.S.C. 13107(c)(2) and as adjusted in accordance with the inflation adjustment procedures prescribed in the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, as amended.

TABLE 1 TO § 2634.703(a)

Date of violation	Penalty
Violation occurring between Sept. 29, 1999 and Nov. 2, 2015	\$11,000
Violation occurring after Nov. 2, 2015	25,132

(b) This remedy shall be in addition to any other remedy available under statutory or common law.

PART 2636—LIMITATIONS ON OUTSIDE EARNED INCOME, EMPLOYMENT AND AFFILIATIONS FOR CERTAIN NONCAREER EMPLOYEES

■ 5. The authority citation for part 2636 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 5 U.S.C. ch. 131; Pub. L. 101–410, 104 Stat. 890, 28 U.S.C. 2461 note, as amended by sec. 31001, Pub. L. 104–134, 110 Stat. 1321 and sec. 701, Pub. L. 114–74; E.O. 12674, 54 FR 15159, 3 CFR, 1989 Comp., p. 215, as modified by E.O. 12731, 55 FR 42547, 3 CFR, 1990 Comp., p. 306.

■ 6. Section 2636.104 is amended by revising paragraph (a) to read as follows:

§ 2636.104 Civil, disciplinary and other action.

(a) *Civil action.* Except when the employee engages in conduct in good faith reliance upon an advisory opinion issued under § 2636.103, an employee who engages in any conduct in violation of the prohibitions, limitations, and restrictions contained in this part may be subject to civil action under 5 U.S.C. 13145(a), and a civil monetary penalty of not more than the amounts set in table 1 to this paragraph (a), as adjusted in accordance with the inflation adjustment procedures prescribed in the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, as amended, or the amount of the compensation the individual received for the prohibited conduct, whichever is greater.

TABLE 1 TO § 2636.104(a)

Date of violation	Penalty
Violation occurring between Sept. 29, 1999 and Nov. 2, 2015	\$11,000
Violation occurring after Nov. 2, 2015	25,132

* * * * *
[FR Doc. 2025–00671 Filed 1–14–25; 8:45 am]
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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

10 CFR Parts 2 and 13

[NRC–2023–0070]

RIN 3150–AK96

Adjustment of Civil Penalties for Inflation for Fiscal Year 2025

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is amending its regulations to adjust the maximum civil monetary penalties it can assess under statutes enforced by the agency. These changes are mandated by the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, as amended by the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015. The NRC is amending its regulations to adjust the maximum civil monetary penalty for a violation of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, or any regulation or order issued under the Atomic Energy Act from \$362,814 to \$372,240 per violation, per day. Additionally, the NRC is amending provisions concerning program fraud civil penalties by adjusting the maximum civil monetary penalty under the Program Fraud Civil

Remedies Act from \$13,946 to \$14,308 for each false claim or statement.

DATES: This final rule is effective on January 15, 2025.

ADDRESSES: Please refer to Docket ID NRC–2023–0070 when contacting the NRC about the availability of information for this action. You may obtain publicly available information related to this action by any of the following methods:

- *Federal Rulemaking Website:* Go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC–2023–0070. Address questions about NRC dockets to Helen Chang; telephone: 301–415–3228; email: Helen.Chang@nrc.gov. For technical questions, contact the individual listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document.

- *NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):* You may obtain publicly available documents online in the ADAMS Public Documents collection at <https://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select “Begin Web-based ADAMS Search.” For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC’s Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1–800–397–4209, 301–415–4737, or by email to PDR.Resource@nrc.gov. The ADAMS accession number for each document referenced (if it is available in ADAMS) is provided the first time that it is mentioned in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

- *NRC’s PDR:* The PDR, where you may examine and order copies of publicly available documents, is open by appointment. To make an appointment to visit the PDR, please send an email to PDR.Resource@nrc.gov or call 1–800–397–4209 or 301–415–4737, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Krupskaya Castellon, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001; telephone: 301–287–9221, email: Krupskaya.Castellon@nrc.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

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