**Section 1120.5550 Protests**

a) Protest Resolution by the CPO

An actual or prospective bidder, offeror or contractor that may be aggrieved in connection with a procurement may file a protest on any phase of solicitation or award, including but not limited to specifications preparation, bid solicitation or award.

b) Complaint

Complainants should seek resolution of their complaints initially with IOC. Complaints may be made verbally or in writing.

c) Filing of Protest

1) Protests shall be made in writing to the CPO and shall be filed within 14 calendar days after the protester knows or should have known of the facts giving rise to the protest. A protest is considered filed when physically received by the Procurement Officer. Protests filed after the 14 calendar day period shall not be considered. With respect to a protest regarding specifications, the protest must be received within 14 calendar days after the date the solicitation was issued, and in any event must be received by IOC at the designated address before the date for opening of bids or proposals.

2) To expedite handling of protests, the envelope should be labeled "Protest". The written protest shall include as a minimum the following:

A) the name and address of the protester;

B) appropriate identification of the procurement and, if a contract has been awarded, its number;

C) a statement of reasons for the protest; and

D) supporting exhibits, evidence or documents to substantiate any claims unless not available within the filing time, in which case the expected availability date shall be indicated.

d) Requested Information; Time for Filing

Any additional information requested by IOC shall be submitted within the time periods established by the requesting source in order to expedite consideration of the protest. Failure of the protesting party to comply expeditiously with a request for information by the Procurement Officer may result in resolution of the protest without consideration of that information.

e) Stay of Procurements During Protest

When a protest has been timely filed and before an award has been made, the CPO shall make no award of the contract and any award made shall be stayed until the protest has been resolved. The Comptroller may authorize award or reinstate the contract if necessary to protect the interests of the State.

f) Decision by the CPO

Time for Decisions. A decision on a protest shall be made by the CPO as expeditiously as possible after receiving all relevant requested information. If a protest is sustained, the available remedies include, but are not limited to, reversal of award and cancellation or revision of the solicitation.

g) Effect of Judicial or Administrative Proceedings

If an action concerning the protest has commenced in court, the CPO shall not act on the protest but shall refer the protest to IOC's Chief Legal Counsel.

(Source: Amended at 42 Ill. Reg. 6682, effective March 30, 2018)