Media Contact: Bureau of Indian Affairs
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Adoption of new Federal regulations to govern the -handling of public appeals from administrative decisions made by officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs was announced today by Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton.

The procedure being established, decisions or actions by Indian Bureau person's legal rights or privileges. Which are merely directed against the decisions or actions.

Secretary Seaton explained, applies only to officers which are claimed to violate a It does not cover the handling of complaints legal or administrative correctness of such Under the new rules an appeal may be filed by or on behalf of any person who believes that his legal rights or privileges have been violated. No degree of formality is required, a simple letter will suffice, and the appellant need not be represented by counsel.

Three levels of appeal are provided. Appeals may be made to area directors of the Bureau of Indian Affairs from decisions made by officials under their supervision. Decisions of area directors may be appealed to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. And decisions of the Commissioner may be appealed to the Secretary of the Interior.

The regulations provide generally that appeals shall be filed with the official making the decision and that they must be received within 20 days after the mailing of the notice of decision. Additional briefs or arguments may also be submitted by the appellant within 10 days after the original appeal is filed.

Provision is also made in the regulations for serving notice of appeals on interested parties who may be adversely affected. Such parties are given 20 days in which to file a written answer and 10 additional days for the submission of further briefs or arguments.

The regulations explicitly provide that no appeal shall be dismissed because of a procedural error or informality which is satisfactorily explained as the result of ignorance, mistake or circumstances beyond the control of the appellant.

A notice of intention to adopt the appeals regulations was published in the Federal Register on November 28, 1959. Several suggestions and comments were received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and were considered in the drafting of the final regulations.

The regulations, as now approved, will be published in the Federal Register shortly and will go into effect on the 30th day after publication.