

§ 356.22

issuance of subpoenas pursuant to this section may be made *ex parte*, and, if so made, such applications and rulings thereon shall remain *ex parte* unless otherwise ordered by the administrative law judge.

(f) *Role of the Under Secretary.* If a hearing has not been requested, the party seeking enforcement will ask the Under Secretary to appoint an administrative law judge to rule on applications for issuance of a subpoena under this section.

§ 356.22 Prehearing conference.

(a)(1) If an administrative hearing has been requested, the administrative law judge will direct the parties to attend a prehearing conference to consider:

- (i) Simplification of issues;
- (ii) Obtaining stipulations of fact and of documents to avoid unnecessary proof;
- (iii) Settlement of the matter;
- (iv) Discovery; and
- (v) Such other matters as may expedite the disposition of the proceedings.

(2) Any relevant and significant stipulations or admissions will be incorporated into the initial decision.

(b) If a prehearing conference is impractical, the administrative law judge will direct the parties to correspond with each other or to confer by telephone or otherwise to achieve the purposes of such a conference.

§ 356.23 Hearing.

(a) *Scheduling of hearing.* The administrative law judge will schedule the hearing at a reasonable time, date, and place, which will be in Washington, DC, unless the administrative law judge determines otherwise based upon good cause shown, that another location would better serve the interests of justice. In setting the date, the administrative law judge will give due regard to the need for the parties adequately to prepare for the hearing and the importance of expeditiously resolving the matter.

(b) *Joinder or consolidation.* The administrative law judge may order joinder or consolidation if sanctions are proposed against more than one party or if violations of more than one protective order or disclosure undertaking

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are alleged if to do so would expedite processing of the cases and not adversely affect the interests of the parties.

(c) *Hearing procedures.* Hearings will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner by the administrative law judge, who may limit attendance at any hearing or portion thereof if necessary or advisable in order to protect proprietary information from improper disclosure. The rules of evidence prevailing in courts of law shall not apply, and all evidentiary material the administrative law judge determines to be relevant and material to the proceeding and not unduly repetitious may be received into evidence and given appropriate weight. The administrative law judge may make such orders and determinations regarding the admissibility of evidence, conduct of examination and cross-examination, and similar matters as are necessary or appropriate to ensure orderliness in the proceedings. The administrative law judge will ensure that a record of the hearing will be taken by reporter or by electronic recording, and will order such part of the record to be sealed as is necessary to protect proprietary information.

(d) *Rights of parties.* At a hearing each party shall have the right to:

- (1) Introduce and examine witnesses and submit physical evidence;
- (2) Confront and cross-examine adverse witnesses;
- (3) Present oral argument; and
- (4) Receive a transcript or recording of the proceedings, upon request, subject to the administrative law judge's orders regarding sealing the record.

(e) *Representation.* Each charged or affected party has a right to represent himself or herself or to retain private counsel for that purpose. The Chief Counsel will represent the Department, unless the General Counsel of the Department determines otherwise. The administrative law judge may disallow a representative if such representation constitutes a conflict of interest or is otherwise not in the interests of justice and may debar a representative for contumacious conduct relating to the proceedings.

(f) *Ex parte communications.* The parties and their representatives may not

make any *ex parte* communications to the administrative law judge concerning the merits of the allegations or any matters at issue, except as provided in § 356.18(j) regarding emergency interim sanctions.

§ 356.24 Proceeding without a hearing.

If no party has requested a hearing, the Deputy Under Secretary, within 40 days after the date of service of a charging letter, will submit for inclusion into the record and provide each charged or affected party information supporting the allegations in the charging letter. Each charged or affected party has the right to file a written response to the information and supporting documentation within 30 days after the date of service of the information provided by the Deputy Under Secretary unless the Deputy Under Secretary alters the time period for good cause. The Deputy Under Secretary may allow the parties to submit further information and argument.

§ 356.25 Witnesses.

Witnesses summoned before the Department shall be paid the same fees and mileage that are paid witnesses in the courts of the United States.

§ 356.26 Initial decision.

(a) *Initial decision.* The administrative law judge, if a hearing was requested, or the Deputy Under Secretary will submit an initial decision to the APO Sanctions Board, providing copies to the parties. The administrative law judge or the Deputy Under Secretary will ordinarily issue the decision within 20 days of the conclusion of the hearing, if one was held, or within 15 days of the date of service of final written submissions. The initial decision will be based solely on evidence received into the record and the pleadings of the parties.

(b) *Findings and conclusions.* The initial decision will state findings and conclusions as to whether a person has violated a protective order or a disclosure undertaking; the basis for those findings and conclusions; and whether the sanctions proposed in the charging letter, or lesser included sanctions, should be imposed against the charged or affected party. The administrative

law judge or the Deputy Under Secretary may impose sanctions only upon determining that the preponderance of the evidence supports a finding of violation of a protective order or a disclosure undertaking and that the sanctions are warranted against the charged or affected party.

(c) *Finality of decision.* If the APO Sanctions Board has not issued a decision on the matter within 60 days after issuance of the initial decision, the initial decision becomes the final decision of the Department.

§ 356.27 Final decision.

(a) *APO Sanctions Board.* Upon request of a party, the initial decision will be reviewed by the members of the APO Sanctions Board. The Board consists of the Under Secretary for International Trade, who shall serve as Chairperson, the Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, and the General Counsel.

(b) *Comments on initial decision.* Within 30 days after issuance of the initial decision, a party may submit written comments to the APO Sanctions Board on the initial decision, which the Board will consider when reviewing the initial decision. The parties have no right to an oral presentation, although the Board may allow oral argument in its discretion.

(c) *Final decision by the APO Sanctions Board.* Within 60 days but not sooner than 30 days after issuance of an initial decision, the APO Sanctions Board may issue a final decision which adopts the initial decision in its entirety; differs in whole or in part from the initial decision, including the imposition of lesser included sanctions; or remands the matter to the administrative law judge or the Deputy Under Secretary for further consideration. The only sanctions that the Board can impose are those sanctions proposed in the charging letter or lesser included sanctions.

(d) *Content's of final decision.* If the final decision of the APO Sanctions Board does not remand the matter and differs from the initial decision, it will state findings and conclusions which differ from the initial decision, if any, the basis for those findings and conclusions, and the sanctions which are to