

Environmental Protection Agency

§ 304.31

section if any issue concerning the allocation of responsibility for payment of EPA's award has been submitted for resolution:

(1) Any objections to the statement of facts in EPA's written statement, and, if so, a counterstatement of facts;

(2) Any objections to EPA's position on the liability of the answering participating PRP pursuant to section 107(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. 9607(a), a description of the evidence in support of the defenses to liability of the answering participating PRP which are specifically enumerated in section 107(b) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. 9607(b) (*i.e.*, that the release or threat of release of a hazardous substance at the facility was caused solely by an act of God, an act of war, an act or omission of an unrelated third party, or any combination thereof), and any supporting documentation thereof;

(3) Any objections to the response action taken by EPA at the facility based upon any documents which formed the basis for the selection of the response action;

(4) Any objections to EPA's summary and supporting documentation for all response costs incurred and to be incurred by the United States in connection with the response action taken by EPA at the facility;

(5) Any documentation which the participating PRP deems relevant to the allocation of responsibility for payment of EPA's award.

(6) A recommended location for the pre-hearing conference and the arbitral hearing; and

(7) Any other statement or documentation that the participating PRP deems necessary to support its claim.

(d) EPA may file a response to any participating PRP's answer within twenty days of receipt of such answer. Two copies of any such response shall be served upon the Arbitrator, and a copy of any such response shall be served upon all parties.

(e) If EPA files a response, any participating PRP may file a reply thereto within ten days after receipt of such response. Two copies of any such reply shall be served upon the Arbitrator, and a copy of any such reply shall be served upon all parties.

§ 304.31 Pre-hearing conference.

(a) The Arbitrator and the parties shall exchange witness lists (with a brief summary of the testimony of each witness) and any exhibits or documents that the parties have not submitted in their pleadings pursuant to §304.30 of this part, within 110 days after the appointment of the Arbitrator (*see* §304.22 of this part) or within 10 days prior to the pre-hearing conference, whichever is earlier.

(b) The Arbitrator shall select the location, date, and time for the pre-hearing conference, giving due consideration to any recommendations by the parties.

(c) The pre-hearing conference shall be held within one hundred twenty days after the appointment of the Arbitrator (*see* §304.22 of this part).

(d) The Arbitrator shall mail to each party notice of the pre-hearing conference not later than twenty days in advance of such conference, unless the parties by mutual agreement waive such notice.

(e) Any party may be represented by counsel at the pre-hearing conference. A party who intends to be so represented shall notify the other parties and the Arbitrator of the name, address and telephone number of counsel at least three days prior to the date set for the pre-hearing conference. When an attorney has initiated the arbitration by signing the joint request for arbitration on behalf of a party, or when an attorney has filed a pleading on behalf of a party, such notice is deemed to have been given.

(f) The pre-hearing conference may proceed in the absence of any party who, after due notice, fails to appear.

(g)(1) At the pre-hearing conference, the Arbitrator and the parties shall exchange witness statements, a stipulation of uncontested facts, a statement of disputed issues, and any other documents, including written direct testimony, that will assist in prompt resolution of the dispute and avoid unnecessary proof.

(2) The Arbitrator and the parties shall consider the settlement of all or part of the claim. The Arbitrator may

encourage further settlement discussions among the parties. Any settlement reached may be set forth in a proposed decision in accordance with § 304.33 of this part. If such a settlement is not set forth in a proposed decision, the settlement shall be treated as an administrative settlement pursuant to section 122(h)(1) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. 9622(h)(1), and shall be subject to public comment pursuant to section 122(i) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. 9622(i).

§ 304.32 Arbitral hearing.

(a) The Arbitrator may, in his sole discretion, schedule a hearing with the parties on one or more of the disputed issues identified in the statement of disputed issues pursuant to § 304.31(g)(1) of this part.

(b) The Arbitrator shall select the location, date, and time for the arbitral hearing, giving due consideration to any recommendations by the parties.

(c) The hearing shall commence within forty-five days after the pre-hearing conference (*see* § 304.31 of this part). The Arbitrator may, upon a showing by the parties that settlement is likely, extend the date for the hearing for up to thirty additional days, if further settlement discussions have been held pursuant to § 304.31(g)(2) of this part.

(d) The Arbitrator shall mail to each party notice of the hearing not later than twenty days in advance of the hearing, unless the parties by mutual agreement waive such notice. Such notice shall include a statement of the disputed issues to be addressed at the hearing. The Arbitrator need not mail a second notice to the parties if the date for the hearing is extended pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section.

(e) Any party may be represented by counsel at the hearing. A party who intends to be so represented shall notify the other parties and the Arbitrator of the name, address and telephone number of counsel at least three days prior to the date set for the hearing. When an attorney has initiated the arbitration by signing the joint request on behalf of a party, or when an attorney has filed a pleading on behalf of a party, or when notice has been given pursuant to § 304.31(e) of this part, such notice is deemed to have been given.

(f) The Arbitrator shall make the necessary arrangements for the making of a true and accurate record of the arbitral hearing.

(g) The Arbitrator shall make the necessary arrangements for the services of an interpreter upon the request of one or more of the parties.

(h) The Arbitrator may take adjournments upon the request of any party or upon the Arbitrator's own initiative and shall take such adjournment when all of the parties agree thereto.

(i) The Arbitrator shall administer oaths to all witnesses before they testify at the arbitral hearing.

(j)(1) A hearing shall be opened by the recording of the location, date, and time of the hearing, the presence of the Arbitrator and the parties, and counsel if any, and by the Arbitrator's acknowledgment for the record of all pleadings and all other documents that have been filed by the parties.

(2) The hearing shall be conducted in accordance with the Arbitrator's jurisdiction as defined by § 304.20 of this part.

(3) The Arbitrator may, at any time, require oral statements clarifying the issues to be addressed at the hearing.

(4) The Arbitrator may require the parties to present witnesses for questioning by the Arbitrator and for direct and cross-examination by the parties on any of the disputed issues, except for any disputed issues concerning the selection or adequacy of the response action, which shall be governed by paragraph (j)(6) of this section.

(5) The Arbitrator shall define the scope of oral testimony. A party may present oral direct testimony only upon a showing of good cause why such testimony could not have been submitted in written form, or upon consent of all of the parties.

(6) Notwithstanding §§ 304.20(e)(1) and 304.20(e)(4) of this part, the Arbitrator may permit any party to supplement the documents which formed the basis for the selection of the response action (with additional documents, affidavits, or oral testimony), if any party demonstrates that supplementation is appropriate based upon applicable principles of administrative law.

(k)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (j)(6) of this section, exhibits