

§ 4.222

deponent desires to make must be entered upon the deposition by the officer with a statement of the reasons given by the deponent for making them. The deposition must then be signed by the deponent, unless the parties in interest by stipulation waive the signing, or the witness is ill or cannot be found or refuses to sign. If the deposition is not signed by the deponent, the officer must sign it and state on the record the fact of the waiver, or of the illness or absence of the deponent or the fact of the refusal to sign together with the reason, if any, given therefor; the deposition may then be used as fully as though signed, unless the OHA deciding official holds that the reason given for refusal to sign requires rejection of the deposition in whole or in part.

(g) *Certificates by officer.* The officer must certify on the deposition that the deponent was duly sworn by the officer and that the deposition is a true record of the deponent's testimony. The officer must then securely seal the deposition, together with two copies thereof, in an envelope and must personally deliver or mail the same by certified or registered mail to the OHA deciding official.

(h) *Use of depositions.* A deposition ordered and taken in accord with the provisions of this section may be used in a hearing if the OHA deciding official finds that the witness is absent and that his or her presence cannot be readily obtained, that the evidence is otherwise admissible, and that circumstances exist that make it desirable in the interest of fairness to allow the deposition to be used. If a deposition has been taken, and the party in interest on whose application it was taken refuses to offer the deposition, or any part thereof, in evidence, any other party in interest or the OHA deciding official may introduce the deposition or any portion thereof on which he or she wishes to rely.

§ 4.222 Written interrogatories; admission of facts and documents.

At any time prior to a hearing and in sufficient time to permit answers to be filed before the hearing, a party in interest may serve upon any other party in interest written interrogatories and requests for admission of facts and doc-

43 CFR Subtitle A (10-1-03 Edition)

uments. A copy of such interrogatories and requests must be filed with the OHA deciding official. Such interrogatories and requests for admission must be drawn with the purpose of defining the issues in dispute between the parties and facilitating the presentation of evidence at the hearing. Answers must be served upon the party propounding the written interrogatories or requesting the admission of facts and documents within 30 days from the date of service of such interrogatories or requests, or within such other period of time as may be agreed upon by the parties or prescribed by the OHA deciding official. A copy of the answer must be filed with the OHA deciding official. Within 10 days after written interrogatories are served upon a party, that party may serve cross-interrogatories for answer by the witness to be interrogated.

§ 4.223 Objections to and limitations on production of documents, depositions, and interrogatories.

The OHA deciding official, upon motion timely made by any party in interest, proper notice, and good cause shown, may direct that proceedings under §§ 4.220, 4.221, and 4.222 may be conducted only under, and in accordance with, such limitation as he or she deems necessary and appropriate as to documents, time, place, and scope. The OHA deciding official may act on his or her own motion only if undue delay, dilatory tactics, and unreasonable demands are made so as to delay the orderly progress of the proceeding or cause unacceptable hardship upon a party or witness.

§ 4.224 Failure to comply with orders.

In the event of the failure of a party to comply with a request for the production of a document under § 4.220; or on the failure of a party to appear for examination under § 4.221 or on the failure of a party to respond to interrogatories or requests for admissions under § 4.222; or on the failure of a party to comply with an order of the OHA deciding official issued under § 4.223 without, in any of such events, showing an excuse or explanation satisfactory to the OHA deciding official for

such failure, the OHA deciding official may:

- (a) Decide the fact or issue relating to the material requested to be produced, or the subject matter of the probable testimony, in accordance with the claims of the other party in interest or in accordance with other evidence available to the OHA deciding official; or
- (b) Make such other ruling as the OHA deciding official determines just and proper.

§ 4.225 Prehearing conference.

The OHA deciding official may, upon his or her own motion or upon the request of any party in interest, call upon the parties to appear for a conference to:

- (a) Simplify or clarify the issues;
- (b) Obtain stipulations, admissions, agreements on documents, understandings on matters already of record, or similar agreements which will avoid unnecessary proof;
- (c) Limit the number of expert or other witnesses in avoidance of excessively cumulative evidence;
- (d) Effect possible agreement disposing of all or any of the issues in dispute; and
- (e) Resolve such other matters as may simplify and shorten the hearing.

HEARINGS

SOURCE: 66 FR 67656, Dec. 31, 2001, unless otherwise noted.

§ 4.230 Authority and duties of the OHA deciding official.

The authority of the OHA deciding official in all hearings in estate proceedings includes, but is not limited to authority:

- (a) To administer oaths and affirmations;
- (b) To issue subpoenas under the provisions of 25 U.S.C. 374 upon his or her own initiative or within his or her discretion upon the request of any party in interest, to any person whose testimony he or she believes to be material to a hearing. Upon the failure or refusal of any person upon whom a subpoena has been served to appear at a hearing or to testify, the OHA deciding official may file a petition in the appropriate U.S. District Court for the

issuance of an order requiring the appearance and testimony of the witness:

- (c) To permit any party in interest to cross-examine any witness;
- (d) To appoint a guardian ad litem to represent any minor or incompetent party in interest at hearings;
- (e) To rule upon offers of proof and receive evidence;
- (f) To take and cause depositions to be taken and to determine their scope; and
- (g) To otherwise regulate the course of the hearing and the conduct of witnesses, parties in interest, and attorneys at law appearing therein.

§ 4.231 Hearings.

(a) All testimony in Indian probate hearings must be under oath and must be taken in public except in those circumstances which in the opinion of the OHA deciding official justify all but parties in interest to be excluded from the hearing.

(b) The proceedings of hearings must be recorded verbatim.

(c) The record must include a showing of the names of all parties in interest and of attorneys who attended such hearing.

§ 4.232 Evidence; form and admissibility.

(a) Parties in interest may offer at a hearing such relevant evidence as they deem appropriate under the generally accepted rules of evidence of the State in which the evidence is taken, subject to the OHA deciding official's supervision as to the extent and manner of presentation of such evidence.

(b) The OHA deciding official may admit letters or copies thereof, affidavits, or other evidence not ordinarily admissible under the generally accepted rules of evidence, the weight to be attached to evidence presented in any particular form being within the discretion of the OHA deciding official, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the particular case.

(c) Stipulations of fact and stipulations of testimony that would be given by witnesses were such witnesses present, agreed upon by the parties in interest, may be used as evidence at the hearing.