

National Transportation Safety Board

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against which the applicant seeks an award, but need not be served on any other party to the proceeding. If the administrative law judge finds that the information should not be withheld from disclosure, it shall be placed in the public record of the proceeding. Otherwise, any request to inspect or copy the exhibit shall be disposed of in accordance with the Board's established procedures under the Freedom of Information Act as implemented by Part 801 of the Board's rules.

§ 826.23 Documentation of fees and expenses.

The application shall be accompanied by full documentation of the fees and expenses, including the cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, project or similar matter, for which an award is sought. A separate itemized statement shall be submitted for each professional firm or individual whose services are covered by the application, showing the hours spent in connection with the proceeding by each individual, a description of the specific services performed, the rate at which each fee has been computed, any expenses for which reimbursement is sought, the total amount claimed, and the total amount paid or payable by the applicant or by any other person or entity for the services provided. The administrative law judge may require the applicant to provide vouchers, receipts, or other substantiation for any expenses claimed.

§ 826.24 When an application may be filed.

(a) An application may be filed whenever the applicant has prevailed in the proceeding, but in no case no later than the 30 days after the Board's final disposition of the proceeding. This 30-day deadline is statutory and the Board has no authority to extend it.

(b) If review or reconsideration is sought or taken of a decision to which an applicant believes it has prevailed, proceedings for the award of fees shall be stayed pending final disposition of the underlying controversy.

(c) For purposes of this rule, final disposition means the later of (1) the date on which an unappealed initial decision by an administrative law judge

becomes administratively final; (2) issuance of an order disposing of any petitions for reconsideration of the Board's final order in the proceeding; (3) if no petition for reconsideration is filed, the last date on which such a petition could have been filed; or (4) issuance of a final order or any other final resolution of a proceeding, such as a settlement or voluntary dismissal, which is not subject to a petition for reconsideration.

[46 FR 48209, Oct. 1, 1981, as amended at 59 FR 30532, June 14, 1994]

Subpart C—Procedures for Considering Applications

§ 826.31 Filing and service of documents and general procedures.

The rules contained in 49 CFR part 821 apply to proceedings under the Act, unless they are superseded by or are inconsistent with a provision of this part.

[59 FR 30532, June 14, 1994]

§ 826.32 Answer to application.

(a) Within 30 days after service of an application, counsel representing the agency against which an award is sought may file an answer to the application. Unless agency counsel requests an extension of time for filing or files a statement of intent to negotiate under paragraph (b) of this section, failure to file an answer within the 30-day period may be treated as a consent to the award requested.

(b) If agency counsel and the applicant believe that the issues in the fee application can be settled, they may jointly file a statement of their intent to negotiate a settlement. The filing of this statement shall extend the time for filing an answer for an additional 30 days, and further extensions may be granted by the administrative law judge upon request by agency counsel and the applicant.

(c) The answer shall explain in detail any objections to the award requested and identify the facts relied on in support of agency counsel's position. If the answer is based on any alleged facts not already in the record of the proceeding, agency counsel shall include

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with the answer either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under § 826.36.

§ 826.33 Reply.

Within 15 days after service of an answer, the applicant may file a reply. If the reply is based on any alleged facts not already in the record of the proceeding, the applicant shall include with the reply either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under § 826.36.

§ 826.34 Comments by other parties.

Any party to a proceeding other than the applicant and agency counsel may file comments on an application within 30 days after it is served or on an answer within 15 days after it is served. A commenting party may not participate further in proceedings on the application unless the administrative law judge determines that the public interest requires such participation in order to permit full exploration of matters raised in the comments.

§ 826.35 Settlement.

The applicant and agency counsel may agree on a proposed settlement of the award before final action on the application, either in connection with a settlement of the underlying proceeding, or after the underlying proceeding has been concluded. If a prevailing party and agency counsel agree on a proposed settlement of an award before an application has been filed, the application shall be filed with the proposed settlement.

§ 826.36 Further proceedings.

(a) Ordinarily the determination of an award will be made on the basis of the written record; however, on request of either the applicant or agency counsel, or on his or her own initiative, the administrative law judge assigned to the matter may order further proceedings, such as an informal conference, oral argument, additional written submissions, or an evidentiary hearing. Such further proceedings shall be held only when necessary for full and fair resolution of the issues arising from the application and shall be conducted as promptly as possible.

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(b) A request that the administrative law judge order further proceedings under this section shall specifically identify the information sought or the disputed issues and shall explain why the additional proceedings are necessary to resolve the issues.

§ 826.37 Decision.

The administrative law judge shall issue an initial decision on the application within 60 days after completion of proceedings on the application. The decision shall include written findings and conclusions on the applicant's eligibility and status as a prevailing party and an explanation of the reasons for any difference between the amount requested and the amount awarded. The decision shall also include, if at issue, findings on whether the agency's position was substantially justified, whether the applicant unduly protracted the proceedings, or whether special circumstances make an award unjust.

§ 826.38 Board review.

Either the applicant or agency counsel may seek review of the initial decision on the fee application, or the Board may decide to review the decision on its own initiative, in accordance with subpart H of part 821 for FAA safety enforcement matters appealed under section 609 of the Federal Aviation Act. If neither the applicant nor agency counsel seeks review and the Board does not take review on its own initiative, the initial decision on the application shall become a final decision of the Board 30 days after it is issued. Whether to review a decision is a matter within the discretion of the Board. If review is taken, the Board will issue a final decision on the application or remand the application to the administrative law judge who issued the initial fee award determination for further proceedings.

§ 826.39 Judicial review.

Judicial review of final Board decisions on awards may be sought as provided in 5 U.S.C. 504(c)(2).

§ 826.40 Payment of award.

An applicant seeking payment of an award shall submit to the disbursing