

decision. Posthearing briefs shall include proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law; exceptions to rulings of the hearing officer; references to the record in support of the findings of fact; and supporting arguments for the proposed findings, proposed conclusions, and exceptions.

**§ 16.237 Waiver of procedures.**

(a) The hearing officer shall waive such procedural steps as all parties to the hearing agree to waive before issuance of an initial decision.

(b) Consent to a waiver of any procedural step bars the raising of this issue on appeal.

(c) The parties may not by consent waive the obligation of the hearing officer to enter an initial decision on the record.

**Subpart G—Initial Decisions, Orders and Appeals**

**§ 16.241 Initial decisions, order, and appeals.**

(a) The hearing officer shall issue an initial decision based on the record developed during the proceeding and shall send the initial decision to the parties not later than 110 days after the Director's determination unless otherwise provided in the hearing order.

(b) Each party adversely affected by the hearing officer's initial decision may file an appeal with the Associate Administrator within 15 days of the date the initial decision is issued. Each party may file a reply to an appeal within 10 days after it is served on the party. Filing and service of appeals and replies shall be by personal delivery.

(c) If an appeal is filed, the Associate Administrator reviews the entire record and issues a final agency decision and order within 30 days of the due date of the reply. If no appeal is filed, the Associate Administrator may take review of the case on his or her own motion. If the Associate Administrator finds that the respondent is not in compliance with any Act or any regulation, agreement, or document of conveyance issued or made under such Act, the final agency order includes a statement of corrective action, if appropriate, and identifies sanctions for continued noncompliance.

(d) If no appeal is filed, and the Associate Administrator does not take review of the initial decision on the Associate Administrator's own motion, the initial decision shall take effect as the final agency decision and order on the sixteenth day after the actual date the initial decision is issued.

(e) The failure to file an appeal is deemed a waiver of any rights to seek judicial review of an initial decision that becomes a final agency decision by operation of paragraph (d) of this section.

(f) If the Associate Administrator takes review on the Associate Administrator's own motion, the Associate Administrator issues a notice of review by the sixteenth day after the actual date the initial decision is issued.

(1) The notice sets forth the specific findings of fact and conclusions of law in the initial decision that are subject to review by the Associate Administrator.

(2) Parties may file one brief on review to the Associate Administrator or rely on their posthearing briefs to the hearing officer. Briefs on review shall be filed not later than 10 days after service of the notice of review. Filing and service of briefs on review shall be by personal delivery.

(3) The Associate Administrator issues a final agency decision and order within 30 days of the due date of the briefs on review. If the Associate Administrator finds that the respondent is not in compliance with any Act or any regulation, agreement or document of conveyance issued under such Act, the final agency order includes a statement of corrective action, if appropriate, and identifies sanctions for continued noncompliance.

**§ 16.243 Consent orders.**

(a) The agency attorney and the respondents may agree at any time before the issuance of a final decision and order to dispose of the case by issuance of a consent order. Good faith efforts to resolve a complaint through issuance of a consent order may continue throughout the administrative process. Except as provided in § 16.209, such efforts may not serve as the basis for extensions of the times set forth in this part.

## § 16.247

(b) A proposal for a consent order, specified in paragraph (a) of this section, shall include:

- (1) A proposed consent order;
- (2) An admission of all jurisdictional facts;
- (3) An express waiver of the right to further procedural steps and of all rights of judicial review; and
- (4) The hearing order, if issued, and an acknowledgment that the hearing order may be used to construe the terms of the consent order.

(c) If the issuance of a consent order has been agreed upon by all parties to the hearing, the proposed consent order shall be filed with the hearing officer, along with a draft order adopting the consent decree and dismissing the case, for the hearing officer's adoption.

(d) The deadline for the hearing officer's initial decision and the final agency decision is extended by the amount of days elapsed between the filing of the proposed consent order with the hearing officer and the issuance of the hearing officer's order continuing the hearing.

(e) If the agency attorney and sponsor agree to dispose of a case by issuance of a consent order before the FAA issues a hearing order, the proposal for a consent order is submitted jointly to the official authorized to issue a hearing order, together with a request to adopt the consent order and dismiss the case. The official authorized to issue the hearing order issues the consent order as an order of the FAA and terminates the proceeding.

### Subpart H—Judicial Review

#### § 16.247 Judicial review of a final decision and order.

(a) A person may seek judicial review, in a United States Court of Appeals, of a final decision and order of the Associate Administrator as provided in 49 U.S.C. 46110 or section 519(b)(4) of the Airport and Airway Improvement Act of 1982, as amended, (AAIA), 49 U.S.C. 47106(d) and 47111(d). A party seeking judicial review of a final decision and order shall file a petition for review with the Court not later than 60 days after a final decision and order under the AAIA has been served on the party or within 60 days

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after the entry of an order under 49 U.S.C. 40101 *et seq.*

(b) The following do not constitute final decisions and orders subject to judicial review:

- (1) An FAA decision to dismiss a complaint without prejudice, as set forth in §16.27;
- (2) A Director's determination;
- (3) An initial decision issued by a hearing officer at the conclusion of a hearing;
- (4) A Director's determination or an initial decision of a hearing officer that becomes the final decision of the Associate Administrator because it was not appealed within the applicable time periods provided under §§16.33(b) and 16.241(b).

### Subpart I—Ex Parte Communications

#### § 16.301 Definitions.

As used in this subpart:

*Decisional employee* means the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Associate Administrator, Director, hearing officer, or other FAA employee who is or who may reasonably be expected to be involved in the decisional process of the proceeding.

*Ex parte communication* means an oral or written communication not on the public record with respect to which reasonable prior notice to all parties is not given, but it shall not include requests for status reports on any matter or proceeding covered by this part, or communications between FAA employees who participate as parties to a hearing pursuant to 16.203(b) of this part and other parties to a hearing.

#### § 16.303 Prohibited ex parte communications.

(a) The prohibitions of this section shall apply from the time a proceeding is noticed for hearing unless the person responsible for the communication has knowledge that it will be noticed, in which case the prohibitions shall apply at the time of the acquisition of such knowledge.

(b) Except to the extent required for the disposition of ex parte matters as authorized by law: