

Environmental Protection Agency

§ 27.18

in the offices of either the investigating official or the reviewing official.

[45 FR 24363, Apr. 9, 1980, as amended at 57 FR 5326, Feb. 13, 1992]

§ 27.15 Ex parte contacts.

No party or person (except employees of the presiding officer's office) shall communicate in any way with the presiding officer on any matter at issue in a case, unless on notice and opportunity for all parties to participate. This provision does not prohibit a person or party from inquiring about the status of a case or asking routine question concerning administrative functions or procedures.

§ 27.16 Disqualification of the reviewing official or presiding officer.

(a) A reviewing official or presiding officer in a particular case may disqualify himself or herself at any time.

(b) A party may file a motion for disqualification of a reviewing official or presiding officer with the hearing clerk. Such motion shall be accompanied by an affidavit alleging personal bias or other reason for disqualification.

(c) Such motion and affidavit shall be filed within 15 days of the party's discovery of reasons requiring disqualification, or such objections shall be deemed waived.

(d) Such affidavit shall state specific facts that support the party's belief that personal bias or other reason for disqualification exists and the time and circumstances of the party's discovery of such facts. It shall be accompanied by a certificate of the representative of record that it is made in good faith.

(e) Upon the filing of such a motion and affidavit, the presiding officer shall proceed no further in the case until he or she resolves the matter of disqualification in accordance with paragraph (f) of this section.

(f)(1) If the presiding officer determines that the reviewing official is disqualified because the reviewing official could not have made an impartial determination pursuant to § 27.5(a), the presiding officer shall dismiss the complaint without prejudice.

(2) If the presiding officer disqualifies himself or herself, the case shall be reassigned promptly to another presiding officer.

(3) If the presiding officer denies a motion to disqualify, the Environmental Appeals Board may determine the matter only as part of its review of the initial decision upon appeal, if any.

[45 FR 24363, Apr. 9, 1980, as amended at 57 FR 5326, Feb. 13, 1992]

§ 27.17 Rights of parties.

Except as otherwise limited by this part, all parties may—

(a) Be accompanied, represented, and advised by a representative;

(b) Participate in any conference held by the presiding officer;

(c) Conduct discovery;

(d) Agree to stipulations of fact or law, which shall be made part of the record;

(e) Present evidence relevant to the issues at the hearing;

(f) Present and cross-examine witnesses;

(g) Present oral arguments at the hearing as permitted by the presiding officer; and

(h) Submit written briefs and proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law after the hearing.

§ 27.18 Authority of the presiding officer.

(a) The presiding officer shall conduct a fair and impartial hearing, avoid delay, maintain order, and assure that a record of the proceeding is made.

(b) The presiding officer has the authority to—

(1) Set and change the date, time, and place of the hearing upon reasonable notice to the parties;

(2) Continue or recess the hearing in whole or in part for a reasonable period of time;

(3) Hold conferences to identify or simplify the issues, or to consider other matters that may aid in the expeditious disposition of the proceeding;

(4) Administer oaths and affirmations;

(5) Issue subpoenas requiring the attendance of witnesses and the production of documents at depositions or at hearings;

§ 27.19

(6) Rule on motions and other procedural matters;

(7) Regulate the scope and timing of discovery;

(8) Regulate the course of the hearing and the conduct of representatives and parties;

(9) Examine witnesses;

(10) Receive, rule on, exclude, or limit evidence;

(11) Upon motion of a party, take official notice of facts;

(12) Upon motion of a party, decide cases, in whole or in part, by summary judgment where there is no disputed issue of material fact;

(13) Conduct any conference, argument, or hearing on motions in person or by telephone; and

(14) Exercise such other authority as is necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the presiding officer under this part.

(c) The presiding officer does not have the authority to find Federal statutes or regulations invalid.

§ 27.19 Prehearing conferences.

(a) The presiding officer may schedule prehearing conferences as appropriate.

(b) Upon the motion of any party, the presiding officer shall schedule at least one prehearing conference at a reasonable time in advance of the hearing.

(c) The presiding officer may use prehearing conferences to discuss the following:

(1) Simplification of the issues;

(2) The necessity or desirability of amendments to the pleadings, including the need for a more definite statement;

(3) Stipulations and admissions of fact as to the contents and authenticity of documents;

(4) Whether the parties can agree to submission of the case on a stipulated record;

(5) Whether a party chooses to waive appearance at an oral hearing and to submit only documentary evidence (subject to the objection of other parties) and written argument;

(6) Limitation of the number of witnesses;

(7) Scheduling dates for the exchange of witness lists and of proposed exhibits;

(8) Discovery;

(9) The time and place for the hearing; and

(10) Such other matters as may tend to expedite the fair and just disposition of the proceedings.

(d) The presiding officer may issue an order containing all matters agreed upon by the parties or ordered by the presiding officer at a prehearing conference.

§ 27.20 Disclosure of documents.

(a) Upon written request to the reviewing official, the defendant may review any relevant and material documents, transcripts, records, and other materials that relate to the allegations set out in the complaint and upon which the findings and conclusions of the investigating official under § 27.4(b) are based, unless such documents are subject to a privilege under Federal law. Upon payment of fees for duplication, the defendant may obtain copies of such documents.

(b) Upon written request to the reviewing official, the defendant also may obtain a copy of all exculpatory information in the possession of the reviewing official or investigating official relating to the allegations in the complaint, even if it is contained in a document that would otherwise be privileged. If the document would otherwise be privileged, only that portion containing exculpatory information must be disclosed.

(c) The notice sent to the Attorney General from the reviewing official as described in § 27.5 is not discoverable under any circumstances.

(d) The defendant may file a motion to compel disclosure of the documents subject to the provisions of this section. Such a motion may only be filed following the filing of an answer pursuant to § 27.9.

§ 27.21 Discovery.

(a) The following types of discovery are authorized:

(1) Requests for production of documents for inspection and copying;

(2) Requests for admissions of the authenticity of any relevant document or of the truth of any relevant fact;

(3) Written interrogatories; and

(4) Depositions.

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