

§ 201.12

§ 201.12 Ex parte communications.

(a) After notice of a hearing is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, all communications, whether oral or written, involving any substantive or procedural issue and directed either to the presiding officer or to the Administrator, without reference to these rules of procedure, shall be deemed ex parte communications and shall not be considered part of the record for decision. A record of oral ex parte communications shall be made by the persons contacted. All written ex parte communications shall be available for public viewing at the places(s) specified in the notice of hearing.

(b) The presiding officer shall not consult any person or party on any fact in issue or on the merits of the matter unless notice and opportunity is given for all parties to participate.

§ 201.13 Prehearing conference.

(a) After an examination of all the direct testimony submitted, the presiding officer shall make a preliminary determination of issues of fact to be addressed at the hearing.

(b) The presiding officer's preliminary determination shall be made available at the place or places provided in the notice of the hearing at least five days before the prehearing conference is held.

(c) The purpose of the prehearing conference shall be to enable the presiding officer to determine, on the basis of the direct testimony submitted and prehearing discussions:

(1) Whether the presiding officer's preliminary determination of issues of fact for the hearing has omitted or misconstrued any significant issues, and

(2) The nature of the interest of each party and which parties' interests are adverse.

(d) Only parties may participate in the prehearing conference. A party may appear in person or be represented by counsel.

(e) Parties who do not appear at the prehearing conference shall be bound by the conference's determinations.

§ 201.14 Final agenda of the hearing.

(a) After the prehearing conference, the presiding officer shall prepare a

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final agenda which shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER within ten days after the conclusion of the conference. A copy of the final agenda shall be mailed to all parties.

(b) The final agenda shall list:

(1) All the issues the hearing shall address, the order in which those issues shall be presented, and the direct testimony submitted on those issues; and

(2) A final date for submission of direct testimony on issues of fact not included in the notice of hearing if such issues are presented.

The final agenda may also specify a final date for submission of direct testimony to rebut testimony previously submitted during the time specified in the notice of the hearing.

(c) The presiding officer shall publish with the final agenda a list of witnesses who may appear at the hearing, a list of parties, the nature of the interest of each party, and which parties' interests are adverse on the issues presented.

§ 201.15 Determination to cancel the hearing.

(a) If the presiding officer concludes that no issues of fact are presented by the direct testimony submitted, he shall publish such conclusion in the FEDERAL REGISTER with a notice that a hearing shall not be held. The notice shall set forth a date for filing written comments on the proposed recommended decision. Written comments may include proposed findings and conclusions, arguments, or briefs.

(b) A person need not be a party to submit written comments.

(c) Promptly after expiration of the period for receiving written comments, the presiding officer shall make a recommended decision based on the record, which in this case shall consist of the testimony, exhibits, and written comments submitted. He shall transfer to the Administrator his recommended decision, the record, and a certificate stating that the record contains all the written direct testimony and comments submitted. The Administrator shall then make a final decision in accordance with these regulations.