

Office of the Secretary, Education

§ 33.18

(3) Make the collection of penalties and assessments under 31 U.S.C. 3806.

(b) The ALJ may not be responsible to, or subject to the supervision or direction of, the investigating official or the reviewing official.

(c) Except as provided in paragraph (a) of this section, the representative for the Government may be employed anywhere in the Department, including in the offices of either the investigating official or the reviewing official.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3809(1)(2))

§ 33.15 Ex parte contacts.

No party or person (except employees of the ALJ's office) may communicate in any way with the ALJ 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 questions concerning administrative functions or procedures.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803(g)(1)(A))

§ 33.16 Disqualification of reviewing official or ALJ.

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

(b) A party may file with the ALJ a motion for disqualification of a reviewing official or an ALJ. That motion must be accompanied by an affidavit alleging personal bias or other reason for disqualification.

(c) The motion and affidavit must be filed promptly upon the party's discovery of reasons requiring disqualification, or the objections are deemed waived.

(d) The affidavit must 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 those facts. It must be accompanied by a certificate of the representative of record that it is made in good faith.

(e) Upon the filing of the motion and affidavit, the ALJ shall not proceed 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 ALJ determines that a reviewing official is disqualified, the ALJ shall dismiss the complaint without prejudice.

(2) If the ALJ disqualifies himself or herself, the case must be reassigned promptly to another ALJ.

(3) If the ALJ denies a motion to disqualify, the Department head may determine the matter only as part of his or her review of the initial decision upon appeal, if any.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803(g)(2)(G))

§ 33.17 Rights of parties.

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

(a) Be accompanied, represented, and advised by a representative (as defined in § 33.2);

(b) Participate in any conference held by the ALJ;

(c) Conduct discovery under § 33.21;

(d) Agree to stipulations of fact or law, which must 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 ALJ; and

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

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803(g) (2) (E), (F), (3)(B)(ii))

§ 33.18 Authority of the ALJ.

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

(b) The ALJ has the authority to:

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

(2) Disqualify a non-attorney representative (designated as described in the § 33.2 definitions of "representative") if the ALJ determines that the representative is incapable of rendering reasonably effective assistance;

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

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

(5) Administer oaths and affirmations;

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

(7) Rule on motions and other procedural matters;

(8) Regulate the scope and timing of discovery;

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

(10) Examine witnesses;

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

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

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

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

(15) Exercise such other authority as is necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the ALJ under this part.

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

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803(g))

§ 33.19 Prehearing conferences.

(a) The ALJ may schedule prehearing conferences as appropriate.

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

(c) The ALJ 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, admissions of fact or 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

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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.

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

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

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803(g))

§ 33.20 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 § 33.4(b) are based, unless those documents are subject to a privilege under Federal law. Upon payment of fees for duplication, the defendant may obtain copies of the 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 § 33.5 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 with the ALJ following the filing of an answer pursuant to § 33.9.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803(g)(3)(B)(ii), 3803(e))