

§ 81.20 Interlocutory appeals to the Secretary from rulings of an ALJ.

(a) A ruling by an ALJ may not be appealed to the Secretary until the issuance of an initial decision, except that the Secretary may, at any time prior to the issuance of an initial decision, grant review of a ruling upon either an ALJ's certification of the ruling to the Secretary for review, or the filing of a petition seeking review of an interim ruling by one or both of the parties, if—

(1) That ruling involves a controlling question of substantive or procedural law; and

(2) The immediate resolution of the question will materially advance the final disposition of the proceeding or subsequent review will be an inadequate remedy.

(b)(1) A petition for interlocutory review of an interim ruling must include the following:

(i) A brief statement of the facts necessary to an understanding of the issue on which review is sought.

(ii) A statement of the issue.

(iii) A statement of the reasons showing that the ruling complained of involves a controlling question of substantive or procedural law and why immediate review of the ruling will materially advance the disposition of the case, or why subsequent review will be an inadequate remedy.

(2) A petition may not exceed ten pages, double-spaced, and must be accompanied by a copy of the ruling and any findings and opinions relating to the ruling. The petition must be filed with the Office of Hearings and Appeals, which immediately forwards the petition to the Office of the Secretary.

(c) A copy of the petition must be provided to the ALJ at the time the petition is filed under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, and a copy of a petition or any certification must be served upon the parties by certified mail, return receipt requested. The petition or certification must reflect that service.

(d) If a party files a petition under this section, the ALJ may state to the Secretary a view as to whether review is appropriate or inappropriate by submitting a brief statement addressing the party's petition within 10 days of the ALJ's receipt of the petition for in-

terlocutory review. A copy of the statement must be served on all parties by certified mail, return receipt requested.

(e)(1) A party's response, if any, to a petition or certification for interlocutory review must be filed within seven days after service of the petition or certification, and may not exceed ten pages, double-spaced, in length. A copy of the response must be filed with the ALJ by hand delivery, by regular mail, or by facsimile transmission.

(2) A party shall serve a copy of its response on all parties on the filing date by hand-delivery or regular mail. If agreed upon by the parties, service of a copy of the response may be made upon the other parties by facsimile transmission.

(f) The filing of a request for interlocutory review does not automatically stay the proceedings. Rather, a stay during consideration of a petition for review may be granted by the ALJ if the ALJ has certified or stated to the Secretary that review of the ruling is appropriate. The Secretary may order a stay of proceedings at any time after the filing of a request for interlocutory review.

(g) The Secretary notifies the parties if a petition or certification for interlocutory review is accepted, and may provide the parties a reasonable time within which to submit written argument or other existing material in the administrative record with regard to the merit of the petition or certification.

(h) If the Secretary takes no action on a request for interlocutory review within 15 days of receipt of it, the request is deemed to be denied.

(i) The Secretary may affirm, modify, set aside, or remand the ALJ's ruling.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 557(b); 20 U.S.C. 1234(f)(1))

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