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without requiring the representative to take a position with respect to the issue, file proposed findings in those proceedings where findings are permitted, and petition for review by the Commission under §2.341 with respect to the admitted contentions. The representative shall identify those contentions on which it will participate in advance of any hearing held.

(d) If a matter is taken up by the Commission under §2.341 or *sua sponte*, a person who is not a party may, in the discretion of the Commission, be permitted to file a brief "*amicus curiae*." Such a person shall submit the amicus brief together with a motion for leave to do so which identifies the interest of the person and states the reasons why a brief is desirable. Unless the Commission provides otherwise, the brief must be filed within the time allowed to the party whose position the brief will support. A motion of a person who is not a party to participate in oral argument before the Commission will be granted at the discretion of the Commission.

§2.316 Consolidation of parties.

On motion or on its or his own initiative, the Commission or the presiding officer may order any parties in a proceeding who have substantially the same interest that may be affected by the proceeding and who raise substantially the same questions, to consolidate their presentation of evidence, cross-examination, briefs, proposed findings of fact, and conclusions of law and argument. However, it may not order any consolidation that would prejudice the rights of any party. A consolidation under this section may be for all purposes of the proceeding, all of the issues of the proceeding, or with respect to any one or more issues thereof.

§2.317 Separate hearings; consolidation of proceedings.

(a) Separate hearings. On motion by the parties or upon request of the presiding officer for good cause shown, or on its own initiative, the Commission may establish separate hearings in a proceeding if it is found that the action will be conducive to the proper dispatch of its business and to the ends of justice and will be conducted in accord-

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ance with the other provisions of this subpart.

(b) Consolidation of proceedings. On motion and for good cause shown or on its own initiative, the Commission or the presiding officers of each affected proceeding may consolidate for hearing or for other purposes two or more proceedings, or may hold joint hearings with interested States and/or other Federal agencies on matters of concurrent jurisdiction, if it is found that the action will be conducive to the proper dispatch of its business and to the ends of justice and will be conducted in accordance with the other provisions of this subpart.

§2.318 Commencement and termination of jurisdiction of presiding officer.

(a) Unless the Commission orders otherwise, the jurisdiction of the presiding officer designated to conduct a hearing over the proceeding, including motions and procedural matters, commences when the proceeding commences. If a presiding officer has not been designated, the Chief Administrative Judge has jurisdiction or, if he or she is unavailable, another administrative judge or administrative law judge has jurisdiction. A proceeding commences when a notice of hearing or a notice of proposed action under §2.105 is issued. When a notice of hearing provides that the presiding officer is to be an administrative judge or an administrative law judge, the Chief Administrative Judge will designate by order the administrative judge or administrative law judge, as appropriate, who is to preside. The presiding officer's jurisdiction in each proceeding terminates when the period within which the Commission may direct that the record be certified to it for final decision expires, when the Commission renders a final decision, or when the presiding officer withdraws from the case upon considering himself or herself disqualified, whichever is earliest.

(b) The Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation or the Director of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, as appropriate, may issue an order and take any otherwise proper administrative action with respect to a licensee who is a party to a pending proceeding. Any

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order related to the subject matter of the pending proceeding may be modified by the presiding officer as appropriate for the purpose of the proceeding.

§ 2.319 Power of the presiding officer.

A presiding officer has the duty to conduct a fair and impartial hearing according to law, to take appropriate action to control the prehearing and hearing process, to avoid delay and to maintain order. The presiding officer has all the powers necessary to those ends, including the powers to:

- (a) Administer oaths and affirmations;
- (b) Issue subpoenas authorized by law, including subpoenas requested by a participant for the attendance and testimony of witnesses or the production of evidence upon the requestor's showing of general relevance and reasonable scope of the evidence sought;
- (c) Consolidate parties and proceedings in accordance with §§ 2.316 and 2.317 and/or direct that common interests be represented by a single spokesperson;
- (d) Rule on offers of proof and receive evidence. In proceedings under this part, strict rules of evidence do not apply to written submissions. However, the presiding officer may, on motion or on the presiding officer's own initiative, strike any portion of a written presentation or a response to a written question that is irrelevant, immaterial, unreliable, duplicative or cumulative.
- (e) Restrict irrelevant, immaterial, unreliable, duplicative or cumulative evidence and/or arguments;
- (f) Order depositions to be taken as appropriate;
- (g) Regulate the course of the hearing and the conduct of participants;
- (h) Dispose of procedural requests or similar matters;
- (i) Examine witnesses;
- (j) Hold conferences before or during the hearing for settlement, simplification of contentions, or any other proper purpose;
- (k) Set reasonable schedules for the conduct of the proceeding and take actions reasonably calculated to maintain overall schedules;
- (l) Certify questions to the Commission for its determination, either in the

presiding officer's discretion, or on motion of a party or on direction of the Commission;

- (m) Reopen a proceeding for the receipt of further evidence at any time before the initial decision;
- (n) Appoint special assistants from the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel under § 2.322;
- (o) Issue initial decisions as provided in this part;
- (p) Dispose of motions by written order or by oral ruling during the course of a hearing or prehearing conference. The presiding officer should ensure that parties not present for the oral ruling are notified promptly of the ruling;
- (q) Issue orders necessary to carry out the presiding officer's duties and responsibilities under this part; and
- (r) Take any other action consistent with the Act, this chapter, and 5 U.S.C. 551-558.

§ 2.320 Default.

If a party fails to file an answer or pleading within the time prescribed in this part or as specified in the notice of hearing or pleading, to appear at a hearing or prehearing conference, to comply with any prehearing order entered by the presiding officer, or to comply with any discovery order entered by the presiding officer, the Commission or the presiding officer may make any orders in regard to the failure that are just, including, among others, the following:

- (a) Without further notice, find the facts as to the matters regarding which the order was made in accordance with the claim of the party obtaining the order, and enter the order as appropriate; or
- (b) Proceed without further notice to take proof on the issues specified.

§ 2.321 Atomic Safety and Licensing Boards.

(a) The Commission or the Chief Administrative Judge may establish one or more Atomic Safety and Licensing Boards, each comprised of three members, one of whom will be qualified in the conduct of administrative proceedings and two of whom have such technical or other qualifications as the