

§ 16.42 Presiding officer.

(a) An FDA employee to whom the Commissioner delegates such authority, or any other agency employee designated by an employee to whom such authority is delegated, or, consistent with 5 CFR 930.209(b) or (c), an administrative law judge to whom such authority is delegated, may serve as the presiding officer and conduct a regulatory hearing under this part.

(b) In a regulatory hearing required by the act or a regulation, the presiding officer is to be free from bias or prejudice and may not have participated in the investigation or action that is the subject of the hearing or be subordinate to a person, other than the Commissioner, who has participated in such investigation or action.

(c)(1) The Commissioner or the delegate under § 16.40 is not precluded by this section from prior participation in the investigation or action that is the subject of the hearing. If there has been prior participation, the Commissioner or the delegate should, if feasible, designate a presiding officer for the hearing who is not a subordinate. Thus, if the Commissioner's authority to make a final decision has been delegated to a center director, the presiding officer may be an official in another center or the office of the Commissioner. The exercise of general supervisory responsibility, or the designation of the presiding officer, does not constitute prior participation in the investigation or action that is the subject of the hearing so as to preclude the Commissioner or delegate from designating a subordinate as the presiding officer.

(2) The party requesting a hearing may make a written request to have the Commissioner or the delegate under § 16.40 be the presiding officer, notwithstanding paragraph (c)(1) of this section. If accepted, as a matter of discretion, by the Commissioner or the delegate, the request is binding upon the party making the request.

(3) A different presiding officer may be substituted for the one originally designated under § 16.22 without notice to the parties.

[44 FR 22367, Apr. 13, 1979, as amended at 54 FR 9037, Mar. 3, 1989; 67 FR 53306, Aug. 15, 2002]

§ 16.44 Communication to presiding officer and Commissioner.

(a) Regulatory hearings are not subject to the separation of functions rules in § 10.55.

(b) Those persons who are directly involved in the investigation or presentation of the position of FDA or any party at a regulatory hearing that is required by the act or a regulation should avoid any off-the-record communication on the matter to the presiding officer or the Commissioner or their advisors if the communication is inconsistent with the requirement of § 16.95(b)(1) that the administrative record be the exclusive record for decision. If any communication of this type occurs, it is to be reduced to writing and made part of the record, and the other party provided an opportunity to respond.

(c) A copy of any letter or memorandum of meeting between a participant in the hearing and the presiding officer or the Commissioner, e.g., a response by the presiding officer to a request for a change in the time of the hearing, is to be sent to all participants by the person writing the letter or the memorandum.

Subpart D—Procedures for Regulatory Hearing**§ 16.60 Hearing procedure.**

(a) A regulatory hearing is public, except when the Commissioner determines that all or part of a hearing should be closed to prevent a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy; to prevent the disclosure of a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information that is not available for public disclosure under § 20.61; or to protect investigatory records compiled for law enforcement purposes that are not available for public disclosure under § 20.64.

(1) The Commissioner may determine that a regulatory hearing is closed either on the Commissioner's initiative or on a request by the party asking for a regulatory hearing, in the request for the hearing.