

**17A.11 Presiding officer, disqualification, substitution.**

1. *a.* If the agency or an officer of the agency under whose authority the contested case is to take place is a named party to that proceeding or a real party in interest to that proceeding the presiding officer may be, in the discretion of the agency, either the agency, one or more members of a multimember agency, or one or more administrative law judges assigned by the division of administrative hearings in accordance with the provisions of [section 10A.801](#). However, a party may, within a time period specified by rule, request that the presiding officer be an administrative law judge assigned by the division of administrative hearings. Except as otherwise provided by statute, the agency shall grant a request by a party for an administrative law judge unless the agency finds, and states reasons for the finding, that any of the following conditions exist:

(1) There is a compelling need to expedite issuance of a final decision in order to protect the public health, safety, or welfare.

(2) A qualified administrative law judge is unavailable to hear the case within a reasonable time.

(3) The case involves significant policy issues of first impression that are inextricably intertwined with the factual issues presented.

(4) The demeanor of the witnesses is likely to be dispositive in resolving the disputed factual issues.

(5) Funds are unavailable to pay the costs of an administrative law judge and an intra-agency appeal.

(6) The request was not timely filed.

(7) There is other identified good cause, as specified by rule, for denying the request.

*b.* If the agency or an officer of the agency under whose authority the contested case is to take place is not a named party to that proceeding or a real party in interest to that proceeding the presiding officer may be, in the discretion of the agency, either the agency, one or more members of a multimember agency, an administrative law judge assigned by the division of administrative hearings in accordance with the provisions of [section 10A.801](#), or any other qualified person designated as a presiding officer by the agency. Any other person designated as a presiding officer by the agency may be employed by and officed in the agency for which that person acts as a presiding officer, but such a person shall not perform duties inconsistent with that person's duties and responsibilities as a presiding officer.

*c.* For purposes of paragraph "a", the division of administrative hearings established in [section 10A.801](#) shall be treated as a wholly separate agency from the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing.

2. Any person serving or designated to serve alone or with others as a presiding officer is subject to disqualification for bias, prejudice, interest, or any other cause provided in [this chapter](#) or for which a judge is or may be disqualified.

3. Any party may timely request the disqualification of a person as a presiding officer by filing a motion supported by an affidavit asserting an appropriate ground for disqualification, after receipt of notice indicating that the person will preside or upon discovering facts establishing grounds for disqualification, whichever is later.

4. A person whose disqualification is requested shall determine whether to grant the request, stating facts and reasons for the determination.

5. If a substitute is required for a person who is disqualified or becomes unavailable for any other reason, the substitute shall be appointed by either of the following:

*a.* The governor, if the disqualified or unavailable person is an elected official.

*b.* The appointing authority, if the disqualified or unavailable person is an appointed official.

6. Any action taken by a duly-appointed substitute for a disqualified or unavailable person is as effective as if taken by the latter.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.11]

[88 Acts, ch 1109, §4](#); [98 Acts, ch 1202, §15, 46](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §1730](#)

Referred to in [§8A.413](#), [10A.318](#), [10A.801](#), [17A.9](#), [148.2A](#), [148.7](#), [155A.2A](#), [169.5](#), [169.14](#), [256B.6](#), [421.17](#), [455B.174](#), [476.2](#), [505.29](#), [524.228](#), [533.501](#), [903A.1](#)

Board of medicine alternate members for contested case hearings, see [§148.2A](#)

Board of pharmacy alternate members for contested case hearings, see [§155A.2A](#)  
Subsection 1, paragraph c amended