

602.2104 Procedure before commission.

1. Charges before the commission shall be in writing but may be simple and informal. The commission shall investigate each charge as indicated by its gravity. If the charge is groundless, it shall be dismissed by the commission. If the charge appears to be substantiated but does not warrant application to the supreme court, the commission may dispose of it informally by conference with or communication to the judicial officer or employee of the judicial branch involved. If the charge appears to be substantiated and if proved would warrant application to the supreme court, notice shall be given to the judicial officer and a hearing shall be held before the commission. The commission may employ investigative personnel, in addition to the executive secretary, as it deems necessary. The commission may also employ or contract for the employment of legal counsel.

2. In case of a hearing before the commission, written notice of the charge and of the time and place of hearing shall be mailed to a judicial officer or an employee of the judicial branch at the person's residence at least twenty days prior to the time set for hearing. Hearing shall be held in the county where the judicial officer or employee of the judicial branch resides unless the commission and the judicial officer or employee of the judicial branch agree to a different location. The judicial officer shall continue to perform judicial duties during the pendency of the charge and the employee shall continue to perform the employee's assigned duties, unless otherwise ordered by the commission. The attorney general shall prosecute the charge before the commission on behalf of the state. A judicial officer or employee of the judicial branch may defend and has the right to participate in person and by counsel, to cross-examine, to be confronted by the witnesses, and to present evidence in accordance with the rules of civil procedure. A complete record shall be made of the evidence by a court reporter. In accordance with its findings on the evidence, the commission shall dismiss the charge or make application to the supreme court to retire, discipline, or remove the judicial officer or to discipline or remove an employee of the judicial branch.

3. The commission has subpoena power, which may be used in conducting investigations and during the hearing process. A person who disobeys the commission's subpoena or who refuses to testify or produce documents as required by a commission subpoena may be punished for contempt in the district court for the county in which the hearing is being held or the investigation is being conducted. Costs related to investigations and to the appearance of witnesses subpoenaed by the designated prosecutor shall be paid by the commission. Commission subpoenas may be issued as follows:

a. During an investigation, subpoenas shall be issued by the commission, at the request of the person designated to conduct the investigation, to compel the appearance of persons or the production of documents before the person who is designated to conduct the investigation. The person designated to conduct the investigation shall administer the required oath.

b. During the hearing process, subpoenas shall be issued by the commission at the request of the designated prosecutor or the judicial officer or employee of the judicial branch.

83 Acts, ch 186, §3104, 10201; 92 Acts, ch 1228, §33; 93 Acts, ch 85, §1, 2; 98 Acts, ch 1047, §55