

CHAPTER 17A

IOWA ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT

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17A.1 Citation and statement of purpose.

1. **This chapter** may be cited as the “*Iowa Administrative Procedure Act*”.

2. **This chapter** is intended to provide a minimum procedural code for the operation of all state agencies when they take action affecting the rights and duties of the public. Nothing in **this chapter** is meant to discourage agencies from adopting procedures providing greater protections to the public or conferring additional rights upon the public; and save for express provisions of **this chapter** to the contrary, nothing in **this chapter** is meant to abrogate in whole or in part any statute prescribing procedural duties for an agency which are greater than or in addition to those provided here. **This chapter** is meant to apply to all rulemaking and contested case proceedings and all suits for the judicial review of agency action that are not specifically excluded from **this chapter** or some portion thereof by its express terms or by the express terms of another chapter.

3. The purposes of **this chapter** are: To provide legislative oversight of powers and duties delegated to administrative agencies; to increase public accountability of administrative agencies; to simplify government by assuring a uniform minimum procedure to which all agencies will be held in the conduct of their most important functions; to increase public access to governmental information; to increase public participation in the formulation of administrative rules; to increase the fairness of agencies in their conduct of contested case proceedings; and to simplify the process of judicial review of agency action as well as increase its ease and availability.

4. In accomplishing its objectives, the intention of **this chapter** is to strike a fair balance between these purposes and the need for efficient, economical and effective government administration. The chapter is not meant to alter the substantive rights of any person or agency. Its impact is limited to procedural rights with the expectation that better substantive

results will be achieved in the everyday conduct of state government by improving the process by which those results are attained.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.1]

2005 Acts, ch 3, §15; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §135

17A.2 Definitions.

As used in [this chapter](#):

1. “Agency” means each board, commission, department, officer or other administrative office or unit of the state. “Agency” does not mean the general assembly, the judicial branch or any of its components, the office of consumer advocate, the governor, or a political subdivision of the state or its offices and units. Unless provided otherwise by statute, no less than two-thirds of the members eligible to vote of a multimember agency constitute a quorum authorized to act in the name of the agency.

2. “Agency action” includes the whole or a part of an agency rule or other statement of law or policy, order, decision, license, proceeding, investigation, sanction, relief, or the equivalent or a denial thereof, or a failure to act, or any other exercise of agency discretion or failure to do so, or the performance of any agency duty or the failure to do so.

3. “Agency member” means an individual who is the statutory or constitutional head of an agency, or an individual who is one of several individuals who constitute the statutory or constitutional head of an agency.

4. “ARC number” means the identification number assigned by the governor’s administrative rules coordinator to each rulemaking document.

5. “Contested case” means a proceeding including but not restricted to ratemaking, price fixing, and licensing in which the legal rights, duties or privileges of a party are required by Constitution or statute to be determined by an agency after an opportunity for an evidentiary hearing.

6. “License” includes the whole or a part of any agency permit, certificate, approval, registration, charter, or similar form of permission required by statute.

7. “Licensing” includes the agency process respecting the grant, denial, renewal, revocation, suspension, annulment, withdrawal, or amendment of a license.

8. “Party” means each person or agency named or admitted as a party or properly seeking and entitled as of right to be admitted as a party.

9. “Person” means any individual, partnership, corporation, association, governmental subdivision, or public or private organization of any character other than an agency.

10. “Provision of law” means the whole or part of the Constitution of the United States of America or the Constitution of the State of Iowa, or of any federal or state statute, court rule, executive order of the governor, or agency rule.

11. “Rule” means each agency statement of general applicability that implements, interprets, or prescribes law or policy, or that describes the organization, procedure, or practice requirements of any agency. Notwithstanding any other statute, the term includes an executive order or directive of the governor which creates an agency or establishes a program or which transfers a program between agencies established by statute or rule. The term includes the amendment or repeal of an existing rule, but does not include:

a. A statement concerning only the internal management of an agency and which does not substantially affect the legal rights of, or procedures available to, the public or any segment thereof.

b. A declaratory order issued pursuant to [section 17A.9](#), or an interpretation issued by an agency with respect to a specific set of facts and intended to apply only to that specific set of facts.

c. An intergovernmental, interagency, or intra-agency memorandum, directive, manual, or other communication which does not substantially affect the legal rights of, or procedures available to, the public or any segment thereof.

d. A determination, decision, or order in a contested case.

e. An opinion of the attorney general.

f. Those portions of staff manuals, instructions, or other statements issued by an agency which set forth criteria or guidelines to be used by its staff in auditing, in making inspections,

in settling commercial disputes or negotiating commercial arrangements, or in the selection or handling of cases, such as operational tactics or allowable tolerances or criteria for the defense, prosecution, or settlement of cases, when the disclosure of such statements would:

- (1) enable law violators to avoid detection; or
- (2) facilitate disregard of requirements imposed by law; or
- (3) give a clearly improper advantage to persons who are in an adverse position to the state.

g. A specification of the prices to be charged for goods or services sold by an agency as distinguished from a license fee, application fee, or other fees.

h. A statement concerning only the physical servicing, maintenance, or care of publicly owned or operated facilities or property.

i. A statement relating to the use of a particular publicly owned or operated facility or property, the substance of which is indicated to the public by means of signs or signals.

j. A decision by an agency not to exercise a discretionary power.

k. A statement concerning only inmates of a penal institution, students enrolled in an educational institution, or patients admitted to a hospital, when issued by such an agency.

l. An advisory opinion of the Iowa ethics and campaign disclosure board.

12. "Rulemaking" means the process for adopting, amending, or repealing a rule.

[C54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §17A.1; C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.2]

[83 Acts, ch 127, §2](#); [83 Acts, ch 186, §10005, 10201](#); [86 Acts, ch 1245, §2036](#); [90 Acts, ch 1266, §31](#); [98 Acts, ch 1047, §11](#); [98 Acts, ch 1202, §4 – 6, 46](#); [2010 Acts, ch 1054, §1, 6](#)

17A.3 Public information — adoption of rules — availability of rules and orders.

1. In addition to other requirements imposed by Constitution or statute, each agency shall:

a. Adopt as a rule a description of the organization of the agency which states the general course and method of its operations, the administrative subdivisions of the agency and the programs implemented by each of them, a statement of the mission of the agency, and the methods by which and location where the public may obtain information or make submissions or requests.

b. Adopt rules of practice setting forth the nature and requirements of all formal and informal procedures available to the public, including a description of all forms and instructions that are to be used by the public in dealing with the agency.

c. As soon as feasible and to the extent practicable, adopt rules, in addition to those otherwise required by [this chapter](#), embodying appropriate standards, principles, and procedural safeguards that the agency will apply to the law it administers.

d. Make available for public inspection all rules, and make available for public inspection and index by subject, all other written statements of law or policy, or interpretations formulated, adopted, or used by the agency in the discharge of its functions. Except as otherwise required by Constitution or statute, or in the use of discovery under the Iowa rules of civil procedure or in criminal cases, an agency shall not be required to make available for public inspection those portions of its staff manuals, instructions, or other statements excluded from the definition of "rule" by [section 17A.2, subsection 11](#), paragraph "f".

e. Make available for public inspection and index by name and subject all final orders, decisions, and opinions: Provided that to the extent required to prevent a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy or trade secrets, an agency shall delete identifying details when it makes available for public inspection any final order, decision, or opinion; however, in each case the justification for the deletion shall be explained fully in writing.

2. No agency rule or other written statement of law or policy, or interpretation, order, decision, or opinion is valid or effective against any person or party, nor shall it be invoked by the agency for any purpose, until it has been made available for public inspection and indexed as required by [subsection 1](#), paragraphs "d" and "e". This provision is not applicable in favor of any person or party who has actual timely knowledge thereof and the burden of proving such knowledge shall be on the agency.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.3]

[86 Acts, ch 1245, §2037](#); [98 Acts, ch 1202, §7, 46](#)

17A.4 Procedure for adoption of rules.

1. Prior to the adoption, amendment, or repeal of any rule an agency shall:

a. Give notice of its intended action by submitting the notice to the administrative rules coordinator and the administrative code editor. The administrative rules coordinator shall assign an ARC number to each rulemaking document. The administrative code editor shall publish each notice meeting the requirements of [this chapter](#) in the Iowa administrative bulletin created pursuant to section [2B.5A](#). The agency shall also submit a copy of the notice to the chairpersons and ranking members of the appropriate standing committees of the general assembly for additional study. Any notice of intended action shall be published at least thirty-five days in advance of the action. The notice shall include a statement of either the terms or substance of the intended action or a description of the subjects and issues involved, and the time when, the place where, and the manner in which interested persons may present their views.

b. Afford all interested persons not less than twenty days to submit data, views, or arguments in writing. If timely requested in writing by twenty-five interested persons, by a governmental subdivision, by the administrative rules review committee, by an agency, or by an association having not less than twenty-five members, the agency must give interested persons an opportunity to make oral presentation. The opportunity for oral presentation must be held at least twenty days after publication of the notice of its time and place in the Iowa administrative bulletin. The agency shall consider fully all written and oral submissions respecting the proposed rule. Within one hundred eighty days following either the notice published according to the provisions of paragraph “a” or within one hundred eighty days after the last date of the oral presentations on the proposed rule, whichever is later, the agency shall adopt a rule pursuant to the rulemaking proceeding or shall terminate the proceeding by publishing notice of termination in the Iowa administrative bulletin.

c. Mail the number of copies of the proposed rule as requested to the state office of a trade or occupational association which has registered its name and address with the agency. The trade or occupational association shall reimburse the agency for the actual cost incurred in providing the copies of the proposed rule under this paragraph. Failure to provide copies as provided in this paragraph shall not be grounds for the invalidation of a rule, unless that failure was deliberate on the part of that agency or the result of gross negligence.

2. An agency shall include in a preamble to each rule it adopts a brief explanation of the principal reasons for its action and, if applicable, a brief explanation of the principal reasons for its failure to provide in that rule for the waiver of the rule in specified situations if no such waiver provision is included in the rule. This explanatory requirement does not apply when the agency adopts a rule that only defines the meaning of a provision of law if the agency does not possess delegated authority to bind the courts to any extent with its definition. In addition, if requested to do so by an interested person, either prior to adoption or within thirty days thereafter, the agency shall issue a concise statement of the principal reasons for and against the rule adopted, incorporating therein the reasons for overruling considerations urged against the rule. This concise statement shall be issued either at the time of the adoption of the rule or within thirty-five days after the agency receives the request.

3. a. When the statute so provides, or with the approval of the administrative rules review committee, if the committee finds good cause that notice and public participation would be unnecessary, impracticable, or contrary to the public interest, the provisions of [subsection 1](#) shall be inapplicable.

b. (1) If the administrative rules review committee by a two-thirds vote, the governor, or the attorney general files with the administrative code editor an objection to the adoption of a rule or portion of a rule pursuant to [this subsection](#), the rule or portion of the rule shall cease to be effective one hundred eighty days after the date the objection was filed.

(2) If the administrative rules review committee files with the administrative code editor an objection to the adoption of a rule or portion of a rule pursuant to [this subsection](#), the administrative rules review committee, by a separate two-thirds vote, may suspend the applicability of the rule or portion of the rule until the rule ceases to be effective under this paragraph “b”. The determination to suspend the applicability of the rule or portion of the rule shall be included in the copy of the objection to be forwarded to the agency.

c. If an objection to a rule is filed under [this subsection](#), a copy of the objection, properly dated, shall be forwarded to the agency at the time of filing the objection. In any action contesting a rule or portion of a rule adopted pursuant to [this subsection](#), the burden of proof shall be on the agency to show that the procedures of [subsection 1](#) were impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest .

4. Any notice of intended action or rule filed without notice pursuant to [subsection 3](#), which necessitates additional annual expenditures of at least one hundred thousand dollars or combined expenditures of at least five hundred thousand dollars within five years by all affected persons, including the agency itself, shall be accompanied by a fiscal impact statement outlining the expenditures. The agency shall promptly deliver a copy of the statement to the legislative services agency. To the extent feasible, the legislative services agency shall analyze the statement and provide a summary of that analysis to the administrative rules review committee. If the agency has made a good-faith effort to comply with the requirements of [this subsection](#), the rule shall not be invalidated on the ground that the contents of the statement are insufficient or inaccurate.

5. A rule is not valid unless adopted in substantial compliance with the requirements of [this section](#) that are in effect at the time of adoption of the rule. However, a rule shall be conclusively presumed to have been made in compliance with all of the procedural requirements of [this section](#) if it has not been invalidated on the grounds of noncompliance in a proceeding commenced within two years after its effective date.

6. a. If the administrative rules review committee created by [section 17A.8](#), the governor, or the attorney general finds objection to all or some portion of a proposed or adopted rule because that rule is deemed to be unreasonable, arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise beyond the authority delegated to the agency, the committee, governor, or attorney general may, in writing, notify the agency of the objection. In the case of a rule issued under [subsection 3](#), or a rule made effective under [section 17A.5, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”, the committee, governor, or attorney general may notify the agency of such an objection. The committee, governor, or attorney general shall also file a certified copy of such an objection in the office of the administrative code editor and a notice to the effect that an objection has been filed shall be published in the next issue of the Iowa administrative bulletin and in the Iowa administrative code when that rule is printed in it. The burden of proof shall then be on the agency in any proceeding for judicial review or for enforcement of the rule heard subsequent to the filing to establish that the rule or portion of the rule timely objected to according to the above procedure is not unreasonable, arbitrary, capricious, or otherwise beyond the authority delegated to it.

b. If the agency fails to meet the burden of proof prescribed for a rule objected to according to the provisions of paragraph “a”, the court shall declare the rule or portion of the rule objected to invalid and judgment shall be rendered against the agency for court costs. Such court costs shall include a reasonable attorney fee and shall be payable by the director of the department of administrative services from the support appropriations of the agency which issued the rule in question.

7. a. Upon the vote of two-thirds of its members the administrative rules review committee may delay the effective date of a rule or portion of a rule seventy days beyond that permitted in [section 17A.5](#), unless the rule was promulgated under [section 17A.5, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”. If the rule was promulgated under [section 17A.5, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”, the administrative rules review committee, within thirty-five days of the effective date of the rule and upon the vote of two-thirds of its members, may suspend the applicability of the rule or portion of the rule for seventy days.

b. Notice of an effective date that was delayed under this provision shall be published in the Iowa administrative code and bulletin.

8. The governor may rescind an adopted rule by executive order within seventy days of the rule becoming effective. The governor shall provide a copy of the executive order to the administrative code editor who shall include it in the next publication of the Iowa administrative bulletin.

9. Upon the vote of two-thirds of its members, the administrative rules review committee, following notice of intended action as provided in [subsection 1](#) and prior to adoption of a rule

pursuant to that notice, may suspend further action relating to that notice for seventy days. Notice that a notice of intended action was suspended under this provision shall be published in the Iowa administrative code and bulletin.

[C66, 71, §17A.6, 17A.7; C73, §17A.6, 17A.7, 17A.17; C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.4]

83 Acts, ch 142, §9; 86 Acts, ch 1245, §2038; 90 Acts, ch 1266, §32; 91 Acts, ch 258, §17, 18; 98 Acts, ch 1202, §8, 9, 46; 2003 Acts, ch 35, §27, 49; 2003 Acts, ch 145, §286; 2006 Acts, ch 1011, §2; 2008 Acts, ch 1031, §80; 2010 Acts, ch 1031, §52, 58; 2013 Acts, ch 114, §1 – 3; 2014 Acts, ch 1092, §13 – 15

Rules mandating expenditures by political subdivisions; limitations; fiscal impact statements; §25B.6

Subsection 7, see also §17A.8(9)

Subsection 3, paragraph c amended

Subsections 5 and 9 amended

17A.4A Regulatory analysis.

1. An agency shall issue a regulatory analysis of a proposed rule that complies with [subsection 2](#), paragraph “a”, if, within thirty-two days after the published notice of proposed rule adoption, a written request for the analysis is submitted to the agency by the administrative rules review committee or the administrative rules coordinator. An agency shall issue a regulatory analysis of a proposed rule that complies with [subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”, if the rule would have a substantial impact on small business and if, within thirty-two days after the published notice of proposed rule adoption, a written request for analysis is submitted to the agency by the administrative rules review committee, the administrative rules coordinator, at least twenty-five persons signing that request who each qualify as a small business or by an organization representing at least twenty-five such persons. If a rule has been adopted without prior notice and an opportunity for public participation in reliance upon [section 17A.4, subsection 3](#), the written request for an analysis that complies with [subsection 2](#), paragraph “a” or “b”, may be made within seventy days of publication of the rule.

2. a. Except to the extent that a written request for a regulatory analysis expressly waives one or more of the following, the regulatory analysis must contain all of the following:

(1) A description of the classes of persons who probably will be affected by the proposed rule, including classes that will bear the costs of the proposed rule and classes that will benefit from the proposed rule.

(2) A description of the probable quantitative and qualitative impact of the proposed rule, economic or otherwise, upon affected classes of persons, including a description of the nature and amount of all of the different kinds of costs that would be incurred in complying with the proposed rule.

(3) The probable costs to the agency and to any other agency of the implementation and enforcement of the proposed rule and any anticipated effect on state revenues.

(4) A comparison of the probable costs and benefits of the proposed rule to the probable costs and benefits of inaction.

(5) A determination of whether less costly methods or less intrusive methods exist for achieving the purpose of the proposed rule.

(6) A description of any alternative methods for achieving the purpose of the proposed rule that were seriously considered by the agency and the reasons why they were rejected in favor of the proposed rule.

b. In the case of a rule that would have a substantial impact on small business, the regulatory analysis must contain a discussion of whether it would be feasible and practicable to do any of the following to reduce the impact of the rule on small business:

(1) Establish less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rule for small business.

(2) Establish less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rule for compliance or reporting requirements for small business.

(3) Consolidate or simplify the rule’s compliance or reporting requirements for small business.

(4) Establish performance standards to replace design or operational standards in the rule for small business.

(5) Exempt small business from any or all requirements of the rule.

c. The agency shall reduce the impact of a proposed rule that would have a substantial impact on small business by using a method discussed in paragraph “b” if the agency finds that the method is legal and feasible in meeting the statutory objectives which are the basis of the proposed rule.

3. Each regulatory analysis must include quantifications of the data to the extent practicable and must take account of both short-term and long-term consequences.

4. Upon receipt by an agency of a timely request for a regulatory analysis, the agency shall extend the period specified in [this chapter](#) for each of the following until at least twenty days after publication in the administrative bulletin of a concise summary of the regulatory analysis:

a. The end of the period during which persons may make written submissions on the proposed rule.

b. The end of the period during which an oral proceeding may be requested.

c. The date of any required oral proceeding on the proposed rule.

5. In the case of a rule adopted without prior notice and an opportunity for public participation in reliance upon [section 17A.4, subsection 3](#), the summary must be published within seventy days of the request.

6. The published summary of the regulatory analysis must also indicate where persons may obtain copies of the full text of the regulatory analysis and where, when, and how persons may present their views on the proposed rule and demand an oral proceeding thereon if one is not already provided. Agencies shall make available to the public, to the maximum extent feasible, the published summary and the full text of the regulatory analysis described in [this subsection](#) in an electronic format, including, but not limited to, access to the documents through the internet.

7. If the agency has made a good-faith effort to comply with the requirements of [subsections 1 through 3](#), the rule may not be invalidated on the ground that the contents of the regulatory analysis are insufficient or inaccurate.

8. a. For the purpose of [this section](#), “*small business*” means any entity including but not limited to an individual, partnership, corporation, joint venture, association, or cooperative, to which all of the following apply:

(1) It is not an affiliate or subsidiary of an entity dominant in its field of operation.

(2) It has either twenty or fewer full-time equivalent positions or less than one million dollars in annual gross revenues in the preceding fiscal year.

b. For purposes of this definition, “*dominant in its field of operation*” means having more than twenty full-time equivalent positions and more than one million dollars in annual gross revenues, and “*affiliate or subsidiary of an entity dominant in its field of operation*” means an entity which is at least twenty percent owned by an entity dominant in its field of operation, or by partners, officers, directors, majority stockholders, or their equivalent, of an entity dominant in that field of operation.

[98 Acts, ch 1202, §10, 46; 2008 Acts, ch 1031, §81](#)

17A.5 Filing and taking effect of rules.

1. Each agency shall file each rule adopted by the agency with the office of the administrative rules coordinator and provide an exact copy to the administrative code editor. The administrative rules coordinator shall assign an ARC number to each rulemaking document. The administrative rules coordinator shall keep a permanent register of the rules open to public inspection. The administrative code editor shall publish each rule adopted in accordance with [this chapter](#) in the Iowa administrative code.

2. A rule adopted after July 1, 1975, is effective thirty-five days after filing, as required in [this section](#), and indexing and publication in the Iowa administrative bulletin except that:

a. If a later date is required by statute or specified in the rule, the later date is the effective date.

b. Subject to applicable constitutional or statutory provisions, a rule becomes effective immediately upon filing with the administrative rules coordinator, or at a subsequent stated

date prior to indexing and publication, or at a stated date less than thirty-five days after filing, indexing and publication, if the agency finds:

- (1) That a statute so provides;
- (2) That the rule confers a benefit or removes a restriction on the public or some segment thereof; or
- (3) That this effective date is necessary because of imminent peril to the public health, safety or welfare. In any subsequent action contesting the effective date of a rule promulgated under this paragraph, the burden of proof shall be on the agency to justify its finding. The agency's finding and a brief statement of the reasons therefor shall be filed with and made a part of the rule. Prior to indexing and publication, the agency shall make reasonable efforts to make known to the persons who may be affected by it a rule made effective under the terms of this paragraph.

[C54, 58, 62, §17A.3, 17A.4; C66, 71, 73, §17A.8; C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.5]

89 Acts, ch 83, §10; 90 Acts, ch 1266, §33; 91 Acts, ch 258, §19; 2006 Acts, ch 1011, §3

17A.6 Publications — copy of standards adopted by reference.

1. The administrative code editor shall publish the Iowa administrative bulletin and the Iowa administrative code as provided in [section 2B.5A](#).

2. An agency which adopts standards by reference to another publication shall deliver an electronic copy of the publication, or the relevant part of the publication, containing the standards to the administrative code editor who shall publish it on the general assembly's internet site. If an electronic copy of the publication is not available, the agency shall deliver a printed copy of the publication to the administrative code editor who shall deposit the copy in the state law library where it shall be made available for inspection and reference.

[C54, 58, 62, 66, §14.3, 17A.9; C71, 73, §14.6(5); C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.6]

88 Acts, ch 1158, §2; 89 Acts, ch 296, §4; 90 Acts, ch 1266, §34; 91 Acts, ch 42, §2, 3; 91 Acts, ch 258, §20; 95 Acts, ch 14, §1; 96 Acts, ch 1099, §9, 10; 2003 Acts, ch 35, §28, 29, 49; 2003 Acts, ch 145, §141; 2006 Acts, ch 1011, §4; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §201; 2010 Acts, ch 1031, §53

See §256.53

17A.6A Rulemaking internet site.

1. Subject to the direction of the administrative rules coordinator, each agency shall make available to the public a uniform, searchable, and user-friendly rules database, published on an internet site.

2. An agency's rulemaking internet site shall also make available to the public all of the following:

- a. A brief summary of the rulemaking process, including a description of any opportunity for public participation in the process.
- b. Process forms for filing comments or complaints concerning proposed or adopted rules.
- c. Process forms and instructions for filing a petition for rulemaking, a petition for a declaratory order, or a request for a waiver of an administrative rule.
- d. Any other material prescribed by the administrative rules coordinator.

3. To the extent practicable, the administrative rules coordinator shall create a uniform format for rulemaking internet sites.

2012 Acts, ch 1138, §18

17A.6B Agency fees internet site — notice.

1. The office of the chief information officer shall establish and maintain a user-friendly state services fee database and internet site for use by the public. Each agency shall make available through the internet site the current fees, rates, and charges imposed by the agency on the public.

2. The state services fee internet site shall provide timely notice of any modifications in fees, rates, and charges imposed by an agency by providing for an electronic mail notification system for interested parties.

2014 Acts, ch 1088, §1

NEW section

17A.7 Petition for adoption, amendment, or repeal of rules — periodic comprehensive reviews.

1. An interested person may petition an agency requesting the adoption, amendment, or repeal of a rule. Each agency shall prescribe by rule the form for petitions and the procedure for their submission, consideration, and disposition. Within sixty days after submission of a petition, the agency either shall deny the petition in writing on the merits, stating its reasons for the denial, or initiate rulemaking proceedings in accordance with [section 17A.4](#), or issue a rule if it is not required to be issued according to the procedures of [section 17A.4, subsection 1](#).

2. Beginning July 1, 2012, over each five-year period of time, an agency shall conduct an ongoing and comprehensive review of all of the agency's rules. The goal of the review is the identification and elimination of all rules of the agency that are outdated, redundant, or inconsistent or incompatible with statute or its own rules or those of other agencies. An agency shall commence its review by developing a plan of review in consultation with major stakeholders and constituent groups. When the agency completes the five-year review of the agency's own rules, the agency shall provide a summary of the results to the administrative rules coordinator and the administrative rules review committee.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.7]

[98 Acts, ch 1202, §11, 46; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §136; 2012 Acts, ch 1138, §19; 2013 Acts, ch 90, §15](#)

17A.8 Administrative rules review committee.

1. There is created the "Administrative Rules Review Committee." The committee shall be bipartisan and shall be composed of the following members:

a. Three senators appointed by the majority leader of the senate and two senators appointed by the minority leader of the senate.

b. Three representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives and two representatives appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives.

2. A committee member shall be appointed prior to the adjournment of a regular session convened in an odd-numbered year. The term of office shall be for four years beginning May 1 of the year of appointment. However, a member shall serve until a successor is appointed. A vacancy on the committee shall be filled by the original appointing authority for the remainder of the term. A vacancy shall exist whenever a committee member ceases to be a member of the house from which the member was appointed.

3. A committee member shall be paid the per diem specified in [section 2.10, subsection 5](#), for each day in attendance and shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses. There is appropriated from money in the general fund not otherwise appropriated an amount sufficient to pay costs incurred under [this section](#).

4. a. The committee shall prescribe its rules of procedure. The committee may employ a secretary or may appoint the administrative code editor or a designee to act as secretary.

b. The chairperson of the committee shall be chosen as provided in this paragraph. For the term commencing with the convening of the first regular session of each general assembly and ending upon the convening of the second regular session of that general assembly, the chairperson shall be chosen by the committee from its members who are members of the house of representatives. For the term commencing with the convening of the second regular session of each general assembly and ending upon the convening of the first regular session of the next general assembly, the chairperson shall be chosen by the committee from its members who are members of the senate. A vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment and shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term of the vacancy.

5. A regular committee meeting shall be held at the seat of government on the second Tuesday of each month. Unless impracticable, in advance of each such meeting the subject matter to be considered shall be published in the Iowa administrative bulletin. A special committee meeting may be called by the chairperson at any place in the state and at any time. Unless impracticable, in advance of each special meeting notice of the time and place of such meeting and the subject matter to be considered shall be published in the Iowa administrative bulletin.

6. The committee shall meet for the purpose of selectively reviewing rules, whether proposed or in effect. A regular or special committee meeting shall be open to the public and an interested person may be heard and present evidence. The committee may require a representative of an agency whose rule or proposed rule is under consideration to attend a committee meeting.

7. The committee may refer a rule to the speaker of the house and the president of the senate at the next regular session of the general assembly. The speaker and the president shall refer such a rule to the appropriate standing committee of the general assembly.

8. If the committee finds objection to a rule, it may utilize the procedure provided in [section 17A.4, subsection 6](#). In addition or in the alternative, the committee may include in the referral, under [subsection 7](#), a recommendation that this rule be overcome by statute. If the committee of the general assembly to which a rule is referred finds objection to the referred rule, it may recommend to the general assembly that this rule be overcome by statute. [This section](#) shall not be construed to prevent a committee of the general assembly from reviewing a rule on its own motion.

9. *a.* Upon a vote of two-thirds of its members, the administrative rules review committee may delay the effective date of a rule or portion of a rule until the adjournment of the next regular session of the general assembly, unless the rule was promulgated under [section 17A.5, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”. If the rule was promulgated under [section 17A.5, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”, the administrative rules review committee, within thirty-five days of the effective date of the rule and upon the vote of two-thirds of its members, may suspend the applicability of the rule or portion of the rule until the adjournment of the next regular session of the general assembly.

b. The committee shall refer a rule or portion of a rule whose effective date has been delayed or applicability has been suspended to the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate who shall refer the delayed or suspended rule or portion of the rule to the appropriate standing committees of the general assembly. A standing committee shall review the rule within twenty-one days after the rule is referred to the committee by the speaker of the house of representatives or the president of the senate and shall take formal committee action by sponsoring a joint resolution to disapprove the rule, by proposing legislation relating to the rule, or by refusing to propose a joint resolution or legislation concerning the rule. The standing committee shall inform the administrative rules review committee of the committee action taken concerning the rule. If the general assembly has not disapproved of the rule by a joint resolution, the rule shall become effective. The speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate shall notify the administrative code editor of the final disposition of each rule or portion of a rule whose effective date has been delayed or whose applicability has been suspended pursuant to [this subsection](#). If the rule is disapproved, the rule shall not be effective and the agency shall rescind the rule.

[C54, 58, 62, §17A.2; C66, 71, 73, §17A.2 – 17A.4, 17A.10; C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.8]

[86 Acts, ch 1245, §2024, 2039; 91 Acts, ch 258, §21 – 23; 95 Acts, ch 49, §1; 98 Acts, ch 1202, §12, 46; 2003 Acts, ch 35, §30, 49; 2008 Acts, ch 1031, §97; 2008 Acts, ch 1156, §19, 58; 2012 Acts, ch 1138, §20; 2013 Acts, ch 114, §4](#)

Delay of effective date of rules, see also §17A.4(7)

17A.9 Declaratory orders.

1. *a.* Any person may petition an agency for a declaratory order as to the applicability to specified circumstances of a statute, rule, or order within the primary jurisdiction of the agency.

b. (1) An agency shall issue a declaratory order in response to a petition for that order unless the agency determines that issuance of the order under the circumstances would be contrary to a rule adopted in accordance with [subsection 2](#).

(2) However, an agency shall not issue a declaratory order that would substantially prejudice the rights of a person who would be a necessary party and who does not consent in writing to the determination of the matter by a declaratory order proceeding.

2. Each agency shall adopt rules that provide for the form, contents, and filing of petitions for declaratory orders, the procedural rights of persons in relation to the petitions, and the

disposition of the petitions. The rules must describe the classes of circumstances in which the agency will not issue a declaratory order and must be consistent with the public interest and with the general policy of [this chapter](#) to facilitate and encourage agency issuance of reliable advice.

3. Within fifteen days after receipt of a petition for a declaratory order, an agency shall give notice of the petition to all persons to whom notice is required by any provision of law and may give notice to any other persons.

4. Persons who qualify under any applicable provision of law as an intervenor and who file timely petitions for intervention according to agency rules may intervene in proceedings for declaratory orders. The provisions of [sections 17A.10 through 17A.18](#) apply to agency proceedings for declaratory orders only to the extent an agency so provides by rule or order.

5. Within thirty days after receipt of a petition for a declaratory order, an agency, in writing, shall do one of the following:

a. Issue an order declaring the applicability of the statute, rule, or order in question to the specified circumstances.

b. Set the matter for specified proceedings.

c. Agree to issue a declaratory order by a specified time.

d. Decline to issue a declaratory order, stating the reasons for its action.

6. A copy of all orders issued in response to a petition for a declaratory order must be mailed promptly to the petitioner and any other parties.

7. A declaratory order has the same status and binding effect as any final order issued in a contested case proceeding. A declaratory order must contain the names of all parties to the proceeding on which it is based, the particular facts on which it is based, and the reasons for its conclusion.

8. If an agency has not issued a declaratory order within sixty days after receipt of a petition therefor, or such later time as agreed by the parties, the petition is deemed to have been denied. Once a petition for a declaratory order is deemed denied or if the agency declines to issue a declaratory order pursuant to [subsection 5](#), paragraph “d”, a party to that proceeding may either seek judicial review or await further agency action with respect to its petition for a declaratory order.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.9]

[98 Acts, ch 1202, §13, 46; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §201](#)

17A.9A Waivers and variances.

1. Any person may petition an agency for a waiver or variance from the requirements of a rule, pursuant to the requirements of [this section](#), if the agency has established by rule an application, evaluation, and issuance procedure permitting waivers and variances. An agency shall not grant a petition for waiver or a variance of a rule unless the agency has jurisdiction over the rule and the waiver or variance is consistent with any applicable statute, constitutional provision, or other provision of law. In addition, [this section](#) does not authorize an agency to waive or vary any requirement created or duty imposed by statute.

2. Upon petition of a person, an agency may in its sole discretion issue a waiver or variance from the requirements of a rule if the agency finds, based on clear and convincing evidence, all of the following:

a. The application of the rule would pose an undue hardship on the person for whom the waiver or variance is requested.

b. The waiver or variance from the requirements of a rule in the specific case would not prejudice the substantial legal rights of any person.

c. The provisions of a rule subject to a petition for a waiver or variance are not specifically mandated by statute or another provision of law.

d. Substantially equal protection of public health, safety, and welfare will be afforded by a means other than that prescribed in the particular rule for which the waiver or variance is requested.

3. The burden of persuasion rests with the person who petitions an agency for the waiver or variance of a rule. Each petition for a waiver or variance shall be evaluated by the agency based on the unique, individual circumstances set out in the petition. A waiver or variance,

if granted, shall be drafted by the agency so as to provide the narrowest exception possible to the provisions of the rule. The agency may place any condition on a waiver or a variance that the agency finds desirable to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. A waiver or variance shall not be permanent, unless the petitioner can show that a temporary waiver or variance would be impracticable. If a temporary waiver or variance is granted, there is no automatic right to renewal. At the sole discretion of the agency, a waiver or variance may be renewed if the agency finds all of the factors set out in [subsection 2](#) remain valid.

4. A grant or denial of a waiver or variance petition shall be indexed, filed, and available for public inspection as provided in [section 17A.3](#). The administrative code editor and the administrative rules coordinator shall devise a mechanism to identify rules for which a petition for a waiver or variance has been granted or denied and make this information available to the public.

5. Semiannually, each agency which permits the granting of petitions for waivers or variances shall prepare a report of these actions identifying the rules for which a waiver or variance has been granted or denied, the number of times a waiver or variance was granted or denied for each rule, a citation to the statutory provisions implemented by these rules, and a general summary of the reasons justifying the agencies' actions on the waiver or variance request. To the extent practicable, this report shall detail the extent to which the granting of a waiver or variance has established a precedent for additional waivers or variances and the extent to which the granting of a waiver or variance has affected the general applicability of the rule itself. Copies of this report shall be provided semiannually to the administrative rules coordinator and the administrative rules review committee.

6. For purposes of [this section](#), “a waiver or variance” means an agency action which suspends in whole or in part the requirements or provisions of a rule as applied to an identified person on the basis of the particular circumstances of that person.

[2000 Acts, ch 1176, §1](#)

17A.10 Informal settlements — waiver.

1. Unless precluded by statute, informal settlements of controversies that may culminate in contested case proceedings according to the provisions of [this chapter](#) are encouraged. Agencies shall prescribe by rule specific procedures for attempting such informal settlements prior to the commencement of contested case proceedings. [This subsection](#) shall not be construed to require either party to such a controversy to utilize the informal procedures or to settle the controversy pursuant to those informal procedures.

2. The parties to a contested case proceeding may, by written stipulation representing an informed mutual consent, waive any provision of [this chapter](#) relating to such proceedings. In addition to consenting to such a waiver in individual cases, an agency may, by rule, express its consent to such a waiver as to an entire class of cases.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.10]

17A.10A Contested cases — no factual dispute.

Upon petition by a party in a matter that would be a contested case if there was a dispute over the existence of material facts, all of the provisions of [this chapter](#) applicable to contested cases, except those relating to presentation of evidence, shall be applicable even though there is no factual dispute in the particular case.

[98 Acts, ch 1202, §14, 46](#)

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 and appeals.

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](#)

Board of medicine alternate members for contested case hearings, see §148.2A

17A.12 Contested cases — notice — hearing — records.

1. In a contested case, all parties shall be afforded an opportunity for hearing after reasonable notice in writing delivered either by personal service as in civil actions or by certified mail return receipt requested. However, an agency may provide by rule for the delivery of such notice by other means. Delivery of the notice referred to in [this subsection](#) shall constitute commencement of the contested case proceeding.

2. The notice shall include:

a. A statement of the time, place and nature of the hearing.

b. A statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction under which the hearing is to be held.

c. A reference to the particular sections of the statutes and rules involved.

d. A short and plain statement of the matters asserted. If the agency or other party is unable to state the matters in detail at the time the notice is served, the initial notice may be limited to a statement of the issues involved. Thereafter upon application a more definite and detailed statement shall be furnished.

3. If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. The parties shall be duly notified of the decision, together with the presiding officer's reasons for the decision, which is the final decision of the agency, unless within fifteen days, or such period of time as otherwise specified by statute or rule, after the date of notification or mailing of the decision, further appeal is initiated. If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

4. Opportunity shall be afforded all parties to respond and present evidence and argument on all issues involved and to be represented by counsel at their own expense.

5. Unless precluded by statute, informal disposition may be made of any contested case by stipulation, agreed settlement, consent order or default or by another method agreed upon by the parties in writing.

6. The record in a contested case shall include:

- a. All pleadings, motions and intermediate rulings.
- b. All evidence received or considered and all other submissions.
- c. A statement of all matters officially noticed.
- d. All questions and offers of proof, objections and rulings thereon.
- e. All proposed findings and exceptions.
- f. Any decision, opinion or report by the officer presiding at the hearing.

7. Oral proceedings shall be open to the public and shall be recorded either by mechanized means or by certified shorthand reporters. Oral proceedings or any part thereof shall be transcribed at the request of any party with the expense of the transcription charged to the requesting party. The recording or stenographic notes of oral proceedings or the transcription thereof shall be filed with and maintained by the agency for at least five years from the date of decision.

8. Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence in the record and on matters officially noticed in the record.

9. Unless otherwise provided by statute, a person's request or demand for a contested case proceeding shall be in writing, delivered to the agency by United States postal service or personal service and shall be considered as filed with the agency on the date of the United States postal service postmark or the date personal service is made.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.12]

[87 Acts, ch 71, §1](#); [98 Acts, ch 1202, §16, 46](#)

Interpreters in legal proceedings, chapters 622A, 622B

17A.13 Subpoenas — discovery.

1. Agencies have all subpoena powers conferred upon them by their enabling acts or other statutes. In addition, prior to the commencement of a contested case by the notice referred to in [section 17A.12, subsection 1](#), an agency having power to decide contested cases may subpoena books, papers, records and any other real evidence necessary for the agency to determine whether it should institute a contested case proceeding. After the commencement of a contested case, each agency having power to decide contested cases may administer oaths and issue subpoenas in those cases. Discovery procedures applicable to civil actions are available to all parties in contested cases before an agency. Evidence obtained in discovery may be used in the hearing before the agency if that evidence would otherwise be admissible

in the agency hearing. Agency subpoenas shall be issued to a party on request. On contest, the court shall sustain the subpoena or similar process or demand to the extent that it is found to be in accordance with the law applicable to the issuance of subpoenas or discovery in civil actions. In proceedings for enforcement, the court shall issue an order requiring the appearance of the witness or the production of the evidence or data within a reasonable time under penalty of punishment for contempt in cases of willful failure to comply.

2. An agency that relies on a witness in a contested case, whether or not an agency employee, who has made prior statements or reports with respect to the subject matter of the witness' testimony, shall, on request, make such statements or reports available to parties for use on cross-examination, unless those statements or reports are otherwise expressly exempt from disclosure by Constitution or statute. Identifiable agency records that are relevant to disputed material facts involved in a contested case, shall, upon request, promptly be made available to a party unless the requested records are expressly exempt from disclosure by Constitution or statute.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.13]

[83 Acts, ch 186, §10006, 10201](#)

17A.14 Rules of evidence — official notice.

In contested cases:

1. Irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence should be excluded. A finding shall be based upon the kind of evidence on which reasonably prudent persons are accustomed to rely for the conduct of their serious affairs, and may be based upon such evidence even if it would be inadmissible in a jury trial. Agencies shall give effect to the rules of privilege recognized by law. Objections to evidentiary offers may be made and shall be noted in the record. Subject to these requirements, when a hearing will be expedited and the interests of the parties will not be prejudiced substantially, any part of the evidence may be required to be submitted in verified written form.

2. Documentary evidence may be received in the form of copies or excerpts, if the original is not readily available. Upon request, parties shall be given an opportunity to compare the copy with the original, if available.

3. Witnesses at the hearing, or persons whose testimony has been submitted in written form if available, shall be subject to cross-examination by any party as necessary for a full and true disclosure of the facts.

4. Official notice may be taken of all facts of which judicial notice may be taken and of other facts within the specialized knowledge of the agency. Parties shall be notified at the earliest practicable time, either before or during the hearing, or by reference in preliminary reports, preliminary decisions or otherwise, of the facts proposed to be noticed and their source, including any staff memoranda or data, and the parties shall be afforded an opportunity to contest such facts before the decision is announced unless the agency determines as part of the record or decision that fairness to the parties does not require an opportunity to contest such facts.

5. The agency's experience, technical competence, and specialized knowledge may be utilized in the evaluation of the evidence.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.14]

17A.15 Final decisions — proposed decisions — conclusiveness — review by the agency.

1. When the agency presides at the reception of the evidence in a contested case, the decision of the agency is a final decision.

2. When the agency did not preside at the reception of the evidence in a contested case, the presiding officer shall make a proposed decision. Findings of fact shall be prepared by the officer presiding at the reception of the evidence in a contested case unless the officer becomes unavailable to the agency. If the officer is unavailable, the findings of fact may be prepared by another person qualified to be a presiding officer who has read the record, unless demeanor of witnesses is a substantial factor. If demeanor is a substantial factor and the presiding officer is unavailable, the portions of the hearing involving demeanor shall be heard again or the case shall be dismissed.

3. When the presiding officer makes a proposed decision, that decision then becomes the final decision of the agency without further proceedings unless there is an appeal to, or review on motion of, the agency within the time provided by rule. On appeal from or review of the proposed decision, the agency has all the power which it would have in initially making the final decision except as it may limit the issues on notice to the parties or by rule. The agency may reverse or modify any finding of fact if a preponderance of the evidence will support a determination to reverse or modify such a finding, or may reverse or modify any conclusion of law that the agency finds to be in error. In cases where there is an appeal from a proposed decision or where a proposed decision is reviewed on motion of the agency, an opportunity shall be afforded to each party to file exceptions, present briefs and, with the consent of the agency, present oral arguments to the agency members who are to render the final decision.

4. [This section](#) shall not preclude an agency from instituting a system whereby the proposed decision of a presiding officer in a contested case may be appealed to, or reviewed on motion of, a body consisting of one or more persons that is between the presiding officer and the agency. If an agency institutes such a system of intermediate review, the proposed decision of the presiding officer becomes the final decision of the agency without further proceedings unless there is an appeal to, or review on motion of, the intermediate reviewing body within the time provided by rule. An intermediate reviewing body may be vested with all or a part of the power which it would have in initially making the decision. A decision of such an intermediate reviewing body is also a proposed decision and shall become the final decision of the agency without further proceedings unless there is an appeal to, or review on motion of, the agency within the time provided by rule. In cases where there is an appeal from a proposed decision rendered by a presiding officer to an intermediate reviewing body, or where such a proposed decision is reviewed on motion of an intermediate reviewing body, an opportunity shall be afforded to each party to file exceptions, present briefs and, with the consent of the intermediate reviewing body, present oral arguments to those who are to render the decision.

5. When an appeal from an agency decision in a contested case may be taken to another agency pursuant to statute, or a second agency may according to statute review on its own motion the decision in a contested case by the first agency, the appeal or review shall be deemed a continuous proceeding as though before one agency. A decision of the first agency in such a case is a proposed decision and shall become the final decision without further proceedings unless there is an appeal to, or review on motion of, the second agency within the time provided by statute or rule. In deciding an appeal from or review of a proposed decision of the first agency, the second agency shall have all those powers conferred upon it by statute and shall afford each party an opportunity to file exceptions, present briefs and, with its consent, present oral arguments to agency members who are to render the final decision.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.15]

[98 Acts, ch 1202, §17, 46](#)

17A.16 Decisions and orders — rehearing.

1. A proposed or final decision or order in a contested case shall be in writing or stated in the record. A proposed or final decision shall include findings of fact and conclusions of law, separately stated. Findings of fact, if set forth in statutory language, shall be accompanied by a concise and explicit statement of underlying facts supporting the findings. The decision shall include an explanation of why the relevant evidence in the record supports each material finding of fact. If, in accordance with agency rules, a party submitted proposed findings of fact, the decision shall include a ruling upon each proposed finding. Each conclusion of law shall be supported by cited authority or by a reasoned opinion. Parties shall be promptly notified of each proposed or final decision or order by the delivery to them of a copy of such decision or order in the manner provided by [section 17A.12, subsection 1](#).

2. Except as expressly provided otherwise by another statute referring to [this chapter](#) by name, any party may file an application for rehearing, stating the specific grounds for the rehearing and the relief sought, within twenty days after the date of the issuance of any final decision by the agency in a contested case. A copy of the application for rehearing shall be timely mailed by the presiding agency to all parties of record not joining in the application.

An application for rehearing shall be deemed to have been denied unless the agency grants the application within twenty days after its filing.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.16]

86 Acts, ch 1245, §518; 88 Acts, ch 1100, §1; 98 Acts, ch 1202, §18, 46

17A.17 Ex parte communications and separation of functions.

1. *a.* Unless required for the disposition of ex parte matters specifically authorized by statute, a presiding officer in a contested case, shall not communicate, directly or indirectly, in connection with any issue of fact or law in that contested case, with any person or party, except upon notice and opportunity for all parties to participate as shall be provided for by agency rules.

b. However, without such notice and opportunity for all parties to participate, a presiding officer in a contested case may communicate with members of the agency, and may have the aid and advice of persons other than those with a personal interest in, or those engaged in personally investigating, prosecuting or advocating in, either the case under consideration or a pending factually related case involving the same parties so long as those persons do not directly or indirectly communicate to the presiding officer any ex parte communications they have received of a type that the presiding officer would be prohibited from receiving or that furnish, augment, diminish, or modify the evidence in the record.

2. Unless required for the disposition of ex parte matters specifically authorized by statute, parties or their representatives in a contested case and persons with a direct or indirect interest in such a case shall not communicate, directly or indirectly, in connection with any issue of fact or law in that contested case, with a presiding officer in that contested case, except upon notice and opportunity for all parties to participate as shall be provided for by agency rules.

3. If, before serving as the presiding officer in a contested case, a person receives an ex parte communication relating directly to the merits of the proceeding over which that person subsequently presides, the person, promptly after starting to serve, shall disclose to all parties any material factual information so received and not otherwise disclosed to those parties pursuant to [section 17A.13, subsection 2](#), or through discovery.

4. A presiding officer who receives an ex parte communication in violation of [this section](#) shall place on the record of the pending matter all such written communications received, all written responses to the communications, and a memorandum stating the substance of all such oral and other communications received, all responses made, and the identity of each person from whom the presiding officer received a prohibited ex parte communication, and shall advise all parties that these matters have been placed on the record. Any party desiring to rebut the prohibited ex parte communication must be allowed to do so, upon requesting the opportunity for rebuttal within ten days after notice of the communication.

5. If the effect of an ex parte communication received in violation of [this section](#) is so prejudicial that it cannot be cured by the procedure in [subsection 4](#), a presiding officer who receives the communication shall be disqualified and the portions of the record pertaining to the communication shall be sealed by protective order.

6. The agency and any party may report any violation of [this section](#) to appropriate authorities for any disciplinary proceedings provided by law. In addition, each agency by rule shall provide for appropriate sanctions, including default, suspending or revoking a privilege to practice before the agency, and censuring, suspending, or dismissing agency personnel, for any violations of [this section](#).

7. A party to a contested case proceeding may file a timely and sufficient affidavit alleging a violation of any provision of [this section](#). The agency shall determine the matter as part of the record in the case. When an agency in these circumstances makes such a determination with respect to an agency member, that determination shall be subject to de novo judicial review in any subsequent review proceeding of the case.

8. An individual who participates in the making of any proposed or final decision in a contested case shall not have personally investigated, prosecuted, or advocated in connection with that case, the specific controversy underlying that case, or another pending factually related contested case, or pending factually related controversy that may culminate

in a contested case, involving the same parties. In addition, such an individual shall not be subject to the authority, direction, or discretion of any person who has personally investigated, prosecuted, or advocated in connection with that contested case, the specific controversy underlying that contested case, or a pending factually related contested case or controversy, involving the same parties. However, [this section](#) shall not be construed to preclude a person from serving as a presiding officer solely because that person determined there was probable cause to initiate the proceeding.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.17]

[98 Acts, ch 1202, §19, 46; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §201](#)

17A.18 Licenses.

1. When the grant, denial, or renewal of a license is required by Constitution or statute to be preceded by notice and opportunity for an evidentiary hearing, the provisions of [this chapter](#) concerning contested cases apply.

2. When a licensee has made timely and sufficient application for the renewal of a license or a new license with reference to any activity of a continuing nature, the existing license does not expire until the application has been finally determined by the agency, and, in case the application is denied or the terms of the new license limited, until the last day for seeking judicial review of the agency order or a later date fixed by order of the agency or the reviewing court.

3. No revocation, suspension, annulment or withdrawal, in whole or in part, of any license is lawful unless, prior to the institution of agency proceedings, the agency gave written, timely notice by personal service as in civil actions or by restricted certified mail to the licensee of facts or conduct and the provision of law which warrants the intended action, and the licensee was given an opportunity to show, in an evidentiary hearing conducted according to the provisions of [this chapter](#) for contested cases, compliance with all lawful requirements for the retention of the license.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.18]

[98 Acts, ch 1202, §20, 46](#)

17A.18A Emergency adjudicative proceedings.

1. Notwithstanding any other provision of [this chapter](#) and to the extent consistent with the Constitution of the State of Iowa and of the United States, an agency may use emergency adjudicative proceedings in a situation involving an immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare requiring immediate agency action.

2. The agency may take only such action as is necessary to prevent or avoid the immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare that justifies use of emergency adjudication.

3. The agency shall issue an order, including a brief statement of findings of fact, conclusions of law, and policy reasons for the decision if it is an exercise of the agency's discretion, to justify the determination of an immediate danger and the agency's decision to take the specific action.

4. The agency shall give such notice as is practicable to persons who are required to comply with the order. The order is effective when issued.

5. After issuing an order pursuant to [this section](#), the agency shall proceed as quickly as feasible to complete any proceedings that would be required if the matter did not involve an immediate danger.

6. The agency record consists of any documents regarding the matter that were considered or prepared by the agency. The agency shall maintain these documents as its official record.

7. Unless otherwise required by a provision of law, the agency record need not constitute the exclusive basis for agency action in emergency adjudicative proceedings or for judicial review thereof.

[98 Acts, ch 1202, §21, 46; 2006 Acts, ch 1030, §5](#)

17A.19 Judicial review.

Except as expressly provided otherwise by another statute referring to [this chapter](#) by name, the judicial review provisions of [this chapter](#) shall be the exclusive means by which a person or party who is aggrieved or adversely affected by agency action may seek judicial review of such agency action. However, nothing in [this chapter](#) shall abridge or deny to any person or party who is aggrieved or adversely affected by any agency action the right to seek relief from such action in the courts.

1. A person or party who has exhausted all adequate administrative remedies and who is aggrieved or adversely affected by any final agency action is entitled to judicial review thereof under [this chapter](#). When agency action is pursuant to rate regulatory powers over public utilities or common carriers and the aggrievement or adverse effect is to the rates or charges of a public utility or common carrier, the agency action shall not be final until all agency remedies have been exhausted and a decision prescribing rates which satisfy the requirements of those provisions of the Code has been rendered. A preliminary, procedural or intermediate agency action is immediately reviewable if all adequate administrative remedies have been exhausted and review of the final agency action would not provide an adequate remedy. If a declaratory order has not been rendered within sixty days after the filing of a petition therefor under [section 17A.9](#), or by such later time as agreed by the parties, or if the agency declines to issue such a declaratory order after receipt of a petition therefor, any administrative remedy available under [section 17A.9](#) shall be deemed inadequate or exhausted.

2. Proceedings for judicial review shall be instituted by filing a petition either in Polk county district court or in the district court for the county in which the petitioner resides or has its principal place of business. When a proceeding for judicial review has been commenced, a court may, in the interest of justice, transfer the proceeding to another county where the venue is proper. Within ten days after the filing of a petition for judicial review the petitioner shall serve by the means provided in the Iowa rules of civil procedure for the personal service of an original notice, or shall mail copies of the petition to all parties named in the petition and, if the petition involves review of agency action in a contested case, all parties of record in that case before the agency. Such personal service or mailing shall be jurisdictional. The delivery by personal service or mailing referred to in [this subsection](#) may be made upon the party's attorney of record in the proceeding before the agency. A mailing shall be addressed to the parties or their attorney of record at their last known mailing address. Proof of mailing shall be by affidavit. Any party of record in a contested case before an agency wishing to intervene and participate in the review proceeding must file an appearance within forty-five days from the time the petition is filed.

3. If a party files an application under [section 17A.16, subsection 2](#), for rehearing with the agency, the petition for judicial review must be filed within thirty days after that application has been denied or deemed denied. If a party does not file an application under [section 17A.16, subsection 2](#), for rehearing, the petition must be filed within thirty days after the issuance of the agency's final decision in that contested case. If an application for rehearing is granted, the petition for review must be filed within thirty days after the issuance of the agency's final decision on rehearing. In cases involving a petition for judicial review of agency action other than the decision in a contested case, the petition may be filed at any time petitioner is aggrieved or adversely affected by that action.

4. The petition for review shall name the agency as respondent and shall contain a concise statement of:

- a. The nature of the agency action which is the subject of the petition.
- b. The particular agency action appealed from.
- c. The facts on which venue is based.
- d. The grounds on which relief is sought.
- e. The relief sought.

5. a. The filing of the petition for review does not itself stay execution or enforcement of any agency action. Unless precluded by law, the agency may grant a stay on appropriate terms or other temporary remedies during the pendency of judicial review.

- b. A party may file an interlocutory motion in the reviewing court, during the pendency

of judicial review, seeking review of the agency's action on an application for stay or other temporary remedies.

c. If the agency refuses to grant an application for stay or other temporary remedies, or application to the agency for a stay or other temporary remedies is an inadequate remedy, the court may grant relief but only after a consideration and balancing of all of the following factors:

(1) The extent to which the applicant is likely to prevail when the court finally disposes of the matter.

(2) The extent to which the applicant will suffer irreparable injury if relief is not granted.

(3) The extent to which the grant of relief to the applicant will substantially harm other parties to the proceedings.

(4) The extent to which the public interest relied on by the agency is sufficient to justify the agency's action in the circumstances.

d. If the court determines that relief should be granted from the agency's action on an application for stay or other temporary remedies, the court may remand the matter to the agency with directions to deny a stay, to grant a stay on appropriate terms, or to grant other temporary remedies, or the court may issue an order denying a stay, granting a stay on appropriate terms, or granting other temporary remedies.

6. Within thirty days after filing of the petition, or within further time allowed by the court, the agency shall transmit to the reviewing court the original or a certified copy of the entire record of any contested case which may be the subject of the petition. By stipulation of all parties to the review proceedings, the record of such a case may be shortened. A party unreasonably refusing to stipulate to limit the record may be taxed by the court for the additional costs. The court may require or permit subsequent corrections or additions to the record.

7. In proceedings for judicial review of agency action a court may hear and consider such evidence as it deems appropriate. In proceedings for judicial review of agency action in a contested case, however, a court shall not itself hear any further evidence with respect to those issues of fact whose determination was entrusted by Constitution or statute to the agency in that contested case proceeding. Before the date set for hearing a petition for judicial review of agency action in a contested case, application may be made to the court for leave to present evidence in addition to that found in the record of the case. If it is shown to the satisfaction of the court that the additional evidence is material and that there were good reasons for failure to present it in the contested case proceeding before the agency, the court may order that the additional evidence be taken before the agency upon conditions determined by the court. The agency may modify its findings and decision in the case by reason of the additional evidence and shall file that evidence and any modifications, new findings, or decisions with the reviewing court and mail copies of the new findings or decisions to all parties.

8. Except to the extent that [this chapter](#) provides otherwise, in suits for judicial review of agency action all of the following apply:

a. The burden of demonstrating the required prejudice and the invalidity of agency action is on the party asserting invalidity.

b. The validity of agency action must be determined in accordance with the standards of review provided in [this section](#), as applied to the agency action at the time that action was taken.

9. The court shall make a separate and distinct ruling on each material issue on which the court's decision is based.

10. The court may affirm the agency action or remand to the agency for further proceedings. The court shall reverse, modify, or grant other appropriate relief from agency action, equitable or legal and including declaratory relief, if it determines that substantial rights of the person seeking judicial relief have been prejudiced because the agency action is any of the following:

a. Unconstitutional on its face or as applied or is based upon a provision of law that is unconstitutional on its face or as applied.

b. Beyond the authority delegated to the agency by any provision of law or in violation of any provision of law.

c. Based upon an erroneous interpretation of a provision of law whose interpretation has not clearly been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

d. Based upon a procedure or decision-making process prohibited by law or was taken without following the prescribed procedure or decision-making process.

e. The product of decision making undertaken by persons who were improperly constituted as a decision-making body, were motivated by an improper purpose, or were subject to disqualification.

f. Based upon a determination of fact clearly vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency that is not supported by substantial evidence in the record before the court when that record is viewed as a whole. For purposes of this paragraph, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) “*Substantial evidence*” means the quantity and quality of evidence that would be deemed sufficient by a neutral, detached, and reasonable person, to establish the fact at issue when the consequences resulting from the establishment of that fact are understood to be serious and of great importance.

(2) “*Record before the court*” means the agency record for judicial review, as defined by [this chapter](#), supplemented by any additional evidence received by the court under the provisions of [this chapter](#).

(3) “*When that record is viewed as a whole*” means that the adequacy of the evidence in the record before the court to support a particular finding of fact must be judged in light of all the relevant evidence in the record cited by any party that detracts from that finding as well as all of the relevant evidence in the record cited by any party that supports it, including any determinations of veracity by the presiding officer who personally observed the demeanor of the witnesses and the agency’s explanation of why the relevant evidence in the record supports its material findings of fact.

g. Action other than a rule that is inconsistent with a rule of the agency.

h. Action other than a rule that is inconsistent with the agency’s prior practice or precedents, unless the agency has justified that inconsistency by stating credible reasons sufficient to indicate a fair and rational basis for the inconsistency.

i. The product of reasoning that is so illogical as to render it wholly irrational.

j. The product of a decision-making process in which the agency did not consider a relevant and important matter relating to the propriety or desirability of the action in question that a rational decision maker in similar circumstances would have considered prior to taking that action.

k. Not required by law and its negative impact on the private rights affected is so grossly disproportionate to the benefits accruing to the public interest from that action that it must necessarily be deemed to lack any foundation in rational agency policy.

l. Based upon an irrational, illogical, or wholly unjustifiable interpretation of a provision of law whose interpretation has clearly been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

m. Based upon an irrational, illogical, or wholly unjustifiable application of law to fact that has clearly been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

n. Otherwise unreasonable, arbitrary, capricious, or an abuse of discretion.

11. In making the determinations required by [subsection 10](#), paragraphs “a” through “n”, the court shall do all of the following:

a. Shall not give any deference to the view of the agency with respect to whether particular matters have been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

b. Should not give any deference to the view of the agency with respect to particular matters that have not been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

c. Shall give appropriate deference to the view of the agency with respect to particular matters that have been vested by a provision of law in the discretion of the agency.

12. A defendant in a suit for civil enforcement of agency action may defend on any of the grounds specified in [subsection 10](#), paragraphs “a” through “n”, if that defendant, at the time the enforcement suit was filed, would have been entitled to rely upon any of those grounds as a basis for invalidating the agency action in a suit for judicial review of that action brought at the time the enforcement suit was filed. If a suit for civil enforcement of agency action

in a contested case is filed within the time period in which the defendant could have filed a petition for judicial review of that agency action, and the agency subsequently dismisses its suit for civil enforcement of that agency action against the defendant, the defendant may, within thirty days of that dismissal, file a petition for judicial review of the original agency action at issue if the defendant relied upon any of the grounds for judicial review in [subsection 10](#), paragraphs “a” through “n”, in a responsive pleading to the enforcement action, or if the time to file a responsive pleading had not yet expired at the time the enforcement action was dismissed.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.19; 81 Acts, ch 24, §1, 2]
98 Acts, ch 1202, §22 – 24, 46

17A.20 Appeals.

An aggrieved or adversely affected party to the judicial review proceeding may obtain a review of any final judgment of the district court under [this chapter](#) by appeal. The appeal shall be taken as in other civil cases, although the appeal may be taken regardless of the amount involved.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.20]
83 Acts, ch 186, §10007, 10201

17A.21 Inconsistency with federal law.

If it is determined by the attorney general that any provision of [this chapter](#) would cause denial of funds or services from the United States government which would otherwise be available to an agency of this state, or would otherwise be inconsistent with requirements of federal law, such provision shall be suspended as to such agency, but only to the extent necessary to prevent denial of such funds or services or to eliminate the inconsistency with federal requirements. If the attorney general makes such a suspension determination, the attorney general shall report it to the general assembly at its next session. This report shall include any recommendations in regard to corrective legislation needed to conform [this chapter](#) with the federal law.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.21]

17A.22 Agency authority to implement chapter.

Agencies shall have all the authority necessary to comply with the requirements of [this chapter](#) through the issuance of rules or otherwise.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.22]

17A.23 Construction — delegation of authority.

1. Except as expressly provided otherwise by [this chapter](#) or by another statute referring to [this chapter](#) by name, the rights created and the requirements imposed by [this chapter](#) shall be in addition to those created or imposed by every other statute in existence on July 1, 1975, or enacted after that date. If any other statute in existence on July 1, 1975, or enacted after that date diminishes a right conferred upon a person by [this chapter](#) or diminishes a requirement imposed upon an agency by [this chapter](#), [this chapter](#) shall take precedence unless the other statute expressly provides that it shall take precedence over all or some specified portion of this cited chapter.

2. [This chapter](#) shall be construed broadly to effectuate its purposes. [This chapter](#) shall also be construed to apply to all agencies not expressly exempted by [this chapter](#) or by another statute specifically referring to [this chapter](#) by citation; and except as to proceedings in process on July 1, 1975, [this chapter](#) shall be construed to apply to all covered agency proceedings and all agency action not expressly exempted by [this chapter](#) or by another statute specifically referring to [this chapter](#) by citation.

3. An agency shall have only that authority or discretion delegated to or conferred upon the agency by law and shall not expand or enlarge its authority or discretion beyond the

powers delegated to or conferred upon the agency. Unless otherwise specifically provided in statute, a grant of rulemaking authority shall be construed narrowly.

[C75, 77, 79, 81, §17A.23]

89 Acts, ch 83, §11; 98 Acts, ch 1202, §25, 46; 2005 Acts, ch 3, §16; 2013 Acts, ch 114, §5

17A.24 to 17A.30 Reserved.

17A.31 and 17A.32 Repealed by 98 Acts, ch 1202, §45, 46.

17A.33 Review by administrative rules review committee.

The administrative rules review committee shall review existing rules, as time permits, to determine if there are adverse or beneficial effects from these rules. The committee shall give a high priority to rules that are referred to it by small business as defined in [section 17A.4A](#). The review of these rules shall be forwarded to the appropriate standing committees of the house and senate.

84 Acts, ch 1007, §3; 98 Acts, ch 1202, §26, 46

17A.34 Competition with private enterprise — notice for proposed rules.

When a rule is proposed, the administrative rules coordinator shall make an initial determination of whether the rule may cause a service or product to be offered for sale to the public by a state agency that competes with private enterprise. If such a service or product may be offered as a result of the proposed rule, that fact shall be included in the notice of intended action of the rule.

2001 Acts, ch 66, §1