

CHAPTER 474

UTILITIES COMMISSION

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474.1 Creation of commission — organization.

1. A utilities commission is created. The commission shall consist of three members appointed by the governor and subject to confirmation by the senate, not more than two of whom shall be from the same political party. Each member appointed shall serve for six-year staggered terms beginning and ending as provided by [section 69.19](#). Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term in the same manner as full-term appointments are made.

2. *a.* Subject to confirmation by the senate, the governor shall appoint a member as the chairperson of the commission. The chairperson shall be the administrator of the utilities commission. The appointment as chairperson shall be for a two-year term which begins and ends as provided in [section 69.19](#).

b. The commission shall appoint a chief operating officer to manage the operations of the utilities commission. The commission shall set the salary of the chief operating officer within the limits of the pay plan for exempt positions provided for in [section 8A.413, subsection 3](#), unless otherwise provided by the general assembly. The commission may employ additional personnel as it finds necessary.

3. The utilities commission shall regulate and supervise public utilities operating in the state. The commission shall enforce and implement [chapters 476, 476A, 477C, 478, 479, 479A, and 479B](#) and shall perform other duties assigned to it by law.

4. As used in [this chapter](#) and [chapters 475A, 476, 476A, 477A, 477C, 478, 479, 479A, and 479B](#), “*commission*” and “*utilities commission*” mean the Iowa utilities commission.

[C97, §2111; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §7866; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §474.2; C75, 77, 79, 81, §474.1]

[83 Acts, ch 127, §6](#); [86 Acts, ch 1245, §740](#); [89 Acts, ch 296, §70](#); [95 Acts, ch 192, §3](#); [2003 Acts, ch 145, §265](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1031, §115](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1160, §1](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §2668](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1108, §6](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)

Referred to in [§34A.15, 437A.3, 437B.2, 477C.2](#)
Confirmation, see [§2.32](#)

474.2 Certain persons barred from office.

A person who is employed by any common carrier or other public utility or who owns any bonds, stock, or property in any public utility shall not be eligible to hold the office of utilities commission member or chief operating officer of the utilities commission. A member or chief operating officer who enters into employment with any common carrier or other public utility or who acquires any stock or other interest in any common carrier or other public utility after appointment as a member or chief operating officer shall be disqualified from holding or performing the duties of the office.

[C97, §2111; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §7865; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §474.1; C75, 77, 79, 81, §474.2]

[2018 Acts, ch 1160, §2](#); [2019 Acts, ch 24, §65](#); [2020 Acts, ch 1063, §261](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)

Referred to in [§475A.1](#)

474.3 Proceedings.

The utilities commission may in all cases conduct its proceedings, when not otherwise prescribed by law, in such manner as will best conduce to the proper dispatch of business and the attainment of justice.

[C97, §2142; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §7867; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §474.3] [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)

474.4 Quorum — personal interest.

A majority of the utilities commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but no member shall participate in any hearing or proceeding in which the member has any pecuniary interest.

[C97, §2142; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §7868; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §474.4] [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)

474.5 Rules, forms, and service.

1. The utilities commission may from time to time make or amend its rules or orders as necessary for the preservation of order and the regulation of proceedings before it, including forms of notice and the service thereof, which shall conform as nearly as may be to those in use in the courts of the state.

2. The utilities commission shall adopt rules approving the types of city-owned or utility-owned lighting which shall be used in providing energy-efficient exterior lighting under [sections 364.23](#) and [476.62](#).

[C97, §2142; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §7869; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §474.5] [89 Acts, ch 297, §8](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)
Manner of commencing actions, [chapter 617](#)

474.6 Appearances — record of votes — public hearings.

Any party may appear before the utilities commission and be heard in person or by attorney. Every vote and official action thereof shall be entered of record, and, upon the request of either party or person interested, its proceedings shall be public.

[C97, §2142; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §7870; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §474.6] [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)

474.7 Seal.

The utilities commission shall have a seal, of which courts shall take judicial notice.

[C97, §2142; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §7871; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §474.7] [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)

474.8 Office — time employed — expenses.

The utilities commission shall have an office at the seat of government. Each member shall devote the member's whole time to the duties of the office, and the members, chief operating officer, and other employees shall receive their actual necessary traveling expenses while in the discharge of their official duties away from the general offices.

[C97, §2121; SS15, §2121; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §7872; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §474.8] [2018 Acts, ch 1160, §3](#); [2019 Acts, ch 24, §66](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)

474.9 General jurisdiction of utilities commission.

The utilities commission has general supervision of all pipelines and all lines for the transmission, sale, and distribution of electrical current for light, heat, and power pursuant to [chapters 476, 476A, 478, 479, 479A, and 479B](#) and has other duties as provided by law.

[S13, §2120-n; C24, 27, 31, 35, 39, §7874; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, §474.10; C75, 77, 79, 81, §474.9] [88 Acts, ch 1134, §90](#); [89 Acts, ch 296, §71](#); [95 Acts, ch 192, §4](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)

474.10 General counsel.

The commission shall employ a competent attorney to serve as its general counsel, and assistants to the general counsel as it finds necessary for the full and efficient discharge of its duties. The general counsel is the attorney for, and legal advisor of, the commission and is exempt from the merit system provisions of [chapter 8A, subchapter IV](#). Assistants to the general counsel are subject to the merit system provisions of [chapter 8A, subchapter IV](#). The general counsel or an assistant to the general counsel shall provide the necessary legal advice to the commission in all matters and represent the commission in all actions instituted in a state or federal court challenging the validity of a rule or order of the commission. The existence of a fact which disqualifies a person from election or from acting as a utilities commission member disqualifies the person from employment as general counsel or assistant general counsel. The general counsel shall devote full time to the duties of the office. During employment the counsel shall not be a member of a political committee, contribute to a political campaign fund other than through the income tax checkoff for contributions to the presidential election campaign fund, participate in a political campaign, or be a candidate for a political office.

[83 Acts, ch 127, §7](#); [86 Acts, ch 1245, §741](#); [88 Acts, ch 1158, §77](#); [2003 Acts, ch 145, §266](#); [2017 Acts, ch 144, §10, 14](#); [2024 Acts, ch 1170, §369](#)