

CHAPTER 4 CONTESTED CASES

Chapter rescission date pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.7: 1/1/28

751—4.1(17A) Scope and applicability. This chapter applies to contested case proceedings conducted by the Iowa telecommunications and technology commission. Contested cases generally include, but are not limited to, appeals of administrative orders issued by the executive director and the withdrawal of an authorized user's right to use the service offered by the commission.

751—4.2(17A) Definitions. Except where otherwise specifically defined by law:

"Commission" means the Iowa telecommunications and technology commission, as designated in Iowa Code chapter 8D, as having appellate jurisdiction over a particular matter.

"Contested case" means a proceeding defined by Iowa Code section 17A.2(5) and includes any matter defined as a no factual dispute contested case under Iowa Code section 17A.10A.

"Executive director" means the director or an authorized representative of the commission.

"Issuance" means the date of mailing of a decision or order or date of delivery if service is by other means unless another date is specified in the order.

"Party" means each person or commission named or admitted as a party or properly seeking and entitled as of right to be admitted as a party.

"Presiding officer" means the administrative law judge or, under certain circumstances, members of the commission or the entire commission.

"Proposed decision" means the presiding officer's recommended findings of fact, conclusions of law, decision, and order in a contested case in which the entire commission did not preside.

751—4.3(17A) Time requirements.

4.3(1) Time shall be computed as provided in Iowa Code section 4.1(34).

4.3(2) For good cause, the presiding officer may extend or shorten the time to take any action, except as precluded by statute or by rule. Except for good cause stated in the record, before extending or shortening the time to take any action, the presiding officer shall afford all parties an opportunity to be heard or to file written arguments.

751—4.4(17A) Requests for contested case proceeding. Any person claiming an entitlement to a contested case proceeding shall file a written request for such a proceeding within the time specified by the particular rules or statutes governing the subject matter or, in the absence of such law, the time specified in the commission action in question.

The request for a contested case proceeding should state the name and address of the requester, identify the specific commission action which is disputed, and where the requester is represented by a lawyer identify the provisions of law or precedent requiring or authorizing the holding of a contested case proceeding in the particular circumstances involved, and include a short and plain statement of the issues of material fact in dispute.

751—4.5(17A) Notice of hearing.

4.5(1) *Delivery.* Delivery of the notice of hearing constitutes the commencement of the contested case proceeding. Delivery may be executed by:

- a. Personal service as provided in the Iowa Rules of Civil Procedure; or
- b. Certified mail, return receipt requested; or
- c. First-class mail; or
- d. Publication, as provided in the Iowa Rules of Civil Procedure.

4.5(2) *Contents.* The notice of hearing shall contain the following information:

- 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 commission 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;
- e. Identification of all parties including the name, address and telephone number of the person who will act as advocate for the commission or the state and of parties' counsel where known;
- f. Reference to the procedural rules governing conduct of the contested case proceeding;
- g. Reference to the procedural rules governing informal settlement;
- h. Identification of the presiding officer, if known. If not known, a description of who will serve as presiding officer (e.g., the commission, members of the commission, administrative law judge from the department of inspections and appeals); and
- i. Notification of the time period in which a party may request, pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.11(1) and rule 4.6(17A), that the presiding officer be an administrative law judge.

751—4.6(17A) Presiding officer.

4.6(1) In each contested case in which Iowa Code chapter 17A requires an evidentiary hearing, the chair of the commission will determine whether the hearing shall be held before the commission, one or more members of the commission, or an administrative law judge. Any party who wishes to request that the presiding officer assigned to render a proposed decision be an administrative law judge employed by the department of inspections and appeals must file a written request within 20 days after service of a notice of hearing which identifies or describes the presiding officer as the commission head or members of the commission.

4.6(2) The executive director may deny the request only upon a finding that one or more of the following apply:

- a. Neither the commission nor any officer of the commission under whose authority the contested case is to take place is a named party to the proceeding or a real party in interest to that proceeding.
- b. There is a compelling need to expedite issuance of a final decision in order to protect the public health, safety, or welfare.
- c. The case involves significant policy issues of first impression that are inextricably intertwined with the factual issues presented.
- d. The demeanor of the witnesses is likely to be dispositive in resolving the disputed factual issues.
- e. Funds are unavailable to pay the costs of an administrative law judge and an intercommission appeal.
- f. The request was not timely filed.
- g. The request is not consistent with a specified statute.

4.6(3) The executive director shall issue a written ruling specifying the grounds for its decision within 20 days after a request for an administrative law judge is filed. If the ruling is contingent upon the availability of an administrative law judge with the qualifications identified in subrule 4.6(4), the parties shall be notified at least 10 days prior to the hearing if a qualified administrative law judge will not be available.

4.6(4) An administrative law judge assigned to act as presiding officer in telecommunications matters shall have the following technical expertise: must be familiar with telecommunications transactions.

4.6(5) Except as provided otherwise by another provision of law, all rulings by an administrative law judge acting as presiding officer are subject to appeal to the commission. A party must seek any available intracommission appeal in order to exhaust adequate administrative remedies.

4.6(6) Unless otherwise provided by law, commission heads and members of multimembered commission heads, when reviewing a proposed decision upon intracommission appeal, shall have the powers of and shall comply with the provisions of this chapter which apply to presiding officers.

751—4.7(17A) Waiver of procedures. Unless otherwise precluded by law, the parties in a contested case proceeding may waive any provision of this chapter. However, the commission in its discretion may refuse to give effect to such a waiver when it deems the waiver to be inconsistent with the public interest.

751—4.8(17A) Telephone or network proceedings. The presiding officer may resolve preliminary procedural motions by telephone conference or on the Iowa Communications Network in which all parties have an opportunity to participate. Other telephone or network proceedings, including the hearing for the contested case proceeding, may be held with the consent of all parties. The presiding officer will determine the location of the parties and witnesses for telephone or network hearings. The convenience of the witnesses or parties, as well as the nature of the case, will be considered when location is chosen. The cost of the telephone hearing or network hearing may be assessed equally to each party.

751—4.9(17A) Disqualification.

4.9(1) A presiding officer or other person shall withdraw from participation in the making of any proposed or final decision in a contested case if that person:

- a. Has a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party or a representative of a party;
- b. Has personally investigated, prosecuted or advocated in connection with that case, the specific controversy underlying that case, another pending factually related contested case, or a pending factually related controversy that may culminate in a contested case involving the same parties;
- c. Is 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;
- d. Has acted as counsel to any person who is a private party to that proceeding within the past two years;
- e. Has a personal financial interest in the outcome of the case or any other significant personal interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the case;
- f. Has a spouse or relative within the third degree of relationship that (1) is a party to the case, or an officer, director or trustee of a party; (2) is a lawyer in the case; (3) is known to have an interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the case; or (4) is likely to be a material witness in the case; or
- g. Has any other legally sufficient cause to withdraw from participation in the decision making in that case.

4.9(2) The term “personally investigated” means taking affirmative steps to interview witnesses directly or to obtain documents or other information directly. The term “personally investigated” does not include general direction and supervision of assigned investigators, unsolicited receipt of information which is relayed to assigned investigators, review of another person’s investigative work product in the course of determining whether there is probable cause to initiate a proceeding, or exposure to factual information while performing other commission functions, including fact gathering for purposes other than investigation of the matter which culminates in a contested case. Factual information relevant to the merits of a contested case received by a person who later serves as presiding officer in that case shall be disclosed if required by Iowa Code section 17A.17 and subrules 4.9(3) and 4.23(9).

4.9(3) In a situation where a presiding officer or other person knows of information which might reasonably be deemed to be a basis for disqualification and decides voluntary withdrawal is unnecessary, that person shall submit the relevant information for the record by affidavit and shall provide for the record a statement of the reasons for the determination that withdrawal is unnecessary.

4.9(4) If a party asserts disqualification on any appropriate ground, including those listed in subrule 4.9(1), the party shall file a motion supported by an affidavit pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.17(7). The motion must be filed as soon as practicable after the reason alleged in the motion becomes known to the party. If, during the course of the hearing, a party first becomes aware of evidence of bias or other grounds for disqualification, the party may move for disqualification but must establish the grounds by the introduction of evidence into the record.

If the presiding officer determines that disqualification is appropriate, the presiding officer or other person shall withdraw. If the presiding officer determines that withdrawal is not required, the presiding officer shall enter an order to that effect. A party asserting disqualification may seek an interlocutory appeal under rule 4.25(17A) and seek a stay under rule 4.29(17A).

751—4.10(17A) Consolidation—severance.

4.10(1) Consolidation. The presiding officer may consolidate any or all matters at issue in two or more contested case proceedings where (a) the matters at issue involve common parties or common questions of fact or law; (b) consolidation would expedite and simplify consideration of the issues involved; and (c) consolidation would not adversely affect the rights of any of the parties to those proceedings.

4.10(2) Severance. The presiding officer may, for good cause shown, order any contested case proceedings or portions thereof severed.

751—4.11(17A) Pleadings.

4.11(1) Pleadings may be required by rule, by the notice of hearing, or by order of the presiding officer.

4.11(2) Petition.

a. Any petition required in a contested case proceeding shall be filed within 20 days of delivery of the notice of hearing or subsequent order of the presiding officer, unless otherwise ordered.

b. A petition shall state in separately numbered paragraphs the following:

- (1) The persons or entities on whose behalf the petition is filed;
- (2) The particular provisions of statutes and rules involved;
- (3) The relief demanded and the facts and law relied upon for such relief; and
- (4) The name, address and telephone number of the petitioner and the petitioner's attorney, if any.

4.11(3) Answer. An answer shall be filed within 20 days of service of the petition unless otherwise ordered. A party may move to dismiss or apply for a more definite and detailed statement when appropriate.

An answer shall show on whose behalf it is filed and specifically admit, deny, or otherwise answer all material allegations of the pleading to which it responds. It shall state any facts deemed to show an affirmative defense and contain as many additional defenses as the pleader may claim.

An answer shall state the name, address and telephone number of the person filing the answer, the person or entity on whose behalf it is filed, and the attorney representing that person, if any.

Any allegation in the petition not denied in the answer is considered admitted. The presiding officer may refuse to consider any defense not raised in the answer which could have been raised on the basis of facts known when the answer was filed if any party would be prejudiced.

4.11(4) Amendment. Any notice of hearing, petition, or other charging document may be amended before a responsive pleading has been filed. Amendments to pleadings after a responsive pleading has been filed and to an answer may be allowed with the consent of the other parties or in the discretion of the presiding officer who may impose terms or grant a continuance.

751—4.12(17A) Service and filing of pleadings and other papers.

4.12(1) When service required. Except where otherwise provided by law, every pleading, motion, document, or other paper filed in a contested case proceeding and every paper relating to discovery in such a proceeding shall be served upon each of the parties of record to the proceeding, including the person designated as advocate or prosecutor for the state or the commission, simultaneously with their filing. Except for the original notice of hearing and an application for rehearing as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.16(2), the party filing a document is responsible for service on all parties.

4.12(2) Service—how made. Service upon a party represented by an attorney shall be made upon the attorney unless otherwise ordered. Service is made by delivery or by mailing a copy to the person's last-known address. Service by mail is complete upon mailing, except where otherwise specifically provided by statute, rule, or order.

4.12(3) Filing—when required. After the notice of hearing, all pleadings, motions, documents or other papers in a contested case proceeding shall be filed with the executive director of the commission at the ICN main office location as listed in 751—subrule 1.6(1). All pleadings, motions, documents or other papers that are required to be served upon a party shall be filed simultaneously with the commission.

4.12(4) Filing—when made. Except where otherwise provided by law, a document is deemed filed at the time it is delivered to the ICN main office location as listed in 751—subrule 1.6(1), delivered to an

established courier service for immediate delivery to that office, or mailed by first-class mail or state interoffice mail to that office, so long as there is proof of mailing.

4.12(5) *Proof of mailing.* Proof of mailing includes either: a legible United States Postal Service postmark on the envelope, a certificate of service, a notarized affidavit, or a certification in substantially the following form:

I certify under penalty of perjury and pursuant to the laws of Iowa that, on (date of mailing), I mailed copies of (describe document) addressed to the Iowa Telecommunications and Technology Commission at the ICN main office location as listed in 751—subrule 1.6(1) and to the names and addresses of the parties listed below by depositing the same in (a United States post office mailbox with correct postage properly affixed or state interoffice mail).

(Date)

(Signature)

751—4.13(17A) Discovery.

4.13(1) Discovery procedures applicable in civil actions are applicable in contested cases. Unless lengthened or shortened by these rules or by order of the presiding officer, time periods for compliance with discovery shall be as provided in the Iowa Rules of Civil Procedure.

4.13(2) Any motion relating to discovery shall allege that the moving party has previously made a good-faith attempt to resolve the discovery issues involved with the opposing party. Motions in regard to discovery shall be ruled upon by the presiding officer. Opposing parties shall be afforded the opportunity to respond within ten days of the filing of the motion unless the time is shortened as provided in subrule 4.13(1). The presiding officer may rule on the basis of the written motion and any response, or may order argument on the motion.

4.13(3) Evidence obtained in discovery may be used in the contested case proceeding if that evidence would otherwise be admissible in that proceeding.

751—4.14(17A) Subpoenas.

4.14(1) *Issuance.*

a. A commission subpoena shall be issued to a party on request. Such a request must be in writing. In the absence of good cause for permitting later action, a request for a subpoena must be received at least three days before the scheduled hearing. The request shall include the name, address, and telephone number of the requesting party.

b. Except to the extent otherwise provided by law, parties are responsible for service of their own subpoenas and payment of witness fees and mileage expenses.

4.14(2) *Motion to quash or modify.* The presiding officer may quash or modify a subpoena for any lawful reason upon motion in accordance with the Iowa Rules of Civil Procedure. A motion to quash or modify a subpoena shall be set for argument promptly.

751—4.15(17A) Motions.

4.15(1) No technical form for motions is required. However, prehearing motions must be in writing, state the grounds for relief, and state the relief sought.

4.15(2) Any party may file a written response to a motion within ten days after the motion is served, unless the time period is extended or shortened by rules of the commission or the presiding officer. The presiding officer may consider a failure to respond within the required time period in ruling on a motion.

4.15(3) The presiding officer may schedule oral argument on any motion.

4.15(4) Motions pertaining to the hearing, except motions for summary judgment, must be filed and served at least ten days prior to the date of hearing unless there is good cause for permitting later action or the time for such action is lengthened or shortened by rule of the commission or an order of the presiding officer.

4.15(5) Motions for summary judgment. Motions for summary judgment shall comply with the requirements of Iowa Rule of Civil Procedure 237 and shall be subject to disposition according to the requirements of that rule to the extent such requirements are not inconsistent with the provisions of this rule or any other provision of law governing the procedure in contested cases.

Motions for summary judgment must be filed and served at least 45 days prior to the scheduled hearing date, or other time period determined by the presiding officer. Any party resisting the motion shall file and serve a resistance within 15 days, unless otherwise ordered by the presiding officer, from the date a copy of the motion was served. The time fixed for hearing or nonoral submission shall be not less than 20 days after the filing of the motion, unless a shorter time is ordered by the presiding officer. A summary judgment order rendered on all issues in a contested case is subject to rehearing pursuant to rule 4.28(17A) and appeal pursuant to rule 4.27(17A).

751—4.16(17A) Prehearing conference.

4.16(1) Any party may request a prehearing conference. A written request for prehearing conference or an order for prehearing conference on the presiding officer's own motion shall be filed not less than seven days prior to the hearing date. A prehearing conference shall be scheduled not less than three business days prior to the hearing date.

Written notice of the prehearing conference shall be given by the executive director to all parties. For good cause the presiding officer may permit variances from this rule.

4.16(2) Each party shall bring to the prehearing conference:

a. A final list of the witnesses who the party anticipates will testify at hearing. Witnesses not listed may be excluded from testifying unless there was good cause for the failure to include their names; and

b. A final list of exhibits which the party anticipates will be introduced at hearing. Exhibits other than rebuttal exhibits that are not listed may be excluded from admission into evidence unless there was good cause for the failure to include them.

c. Witness or exhibit lists may be amended subsequent to the prehearing conference within the time limits established by the presiding officer at the prehearing conference. Any such amendments must be served on all parties.

4.16(3) In addition to the requirements of subrule 4.16(2), the parties at a prehearing conference may:

a. Enter into stipulations of law or fact;

b. Enter into stipulations on the admissibility of exhibits;

c. Identify matters which the parties intend to request be officially noticed;

d. Enter into stipulations for waiver of any provision of law; and

e. Consider any additional matters which will expedite the hearing.

4.16(4) Prehearing conferences shall be conducted by telephone unless otherwise ordered. Parties shall exchange and receive witness and exhibit lists in advance of a telephone prehearing conference.

751—4.17(17A) Continuances. Unless otherwise provided, applications for continuances shall be made to the presiding officer.

4.17(1) A written application for a continuance shall:

a. Be made at the earliest possible time and no less than seven days before the hearing except in case of unanticipated emergencies;

b. State the specific reasons for the request; and

c. Be signed by the requesting party or the party's representative.

An oral application for a continuance may be made if the presiding officer waives the requirement for a written motion. However, a party making such an oral application for a continuance must confirm that request by written application within five days after the oral request unless that requirement is waived by the presiding officer. No application for continuance shall be made or granted without notice to all parties except in an emergency where notice is not feasible. The commission may waive notice of such requests for a particular case or an entire class of cases.

4.17(2) In determining whether to grant a continuance, the presiding officer may consider:

a. Prior continuances;

b. The interests of all parties;

c. The likelihood of informal settlement;

d. The existence of an emergency;

e. Any objection;

f. Any applicable time requirements;

- g. The existence of a conflict in the schedules of counsel, parties, or witnesses;
- h. The timeliness of the request; and
- i. Other relevant factors.

The presiding officer may require documentation of any grounds for continuance.

751—4.18(17A) Withdrawals. A party requesting a contested case proceeding may withdraw that request prior to the hearing only in accordance with commission rules. Unless otherwise provided, a withdrawal shall be with prejudice.

751—4.19(17A) Intervention.

4.19(1) Motion. A motion for leave to intervene in a contested case proceeding shall state the grounds for the proposed intervention, the position and interest of the proposed intervenor, and the possible impact of intervention on the proceeding. A proposed answer or petition in intervention shall be attached to the motion. Any party may file a response within 14 days of service of the motion to intervene unless the time period is extended or shortened by the presiding officer.

4.19(2) When filed. Motion for leave to intervene shall be filed as early in the proceeding as possible to avoid adverse impact on existing parties or the conduct of the proceeding. Unless otherwise ordered, a motion for leave to intervene shall be filed before the prehearing conference, if any, or at least 20 days before the date scheduled for hearing. Any later motion must contain a statement of good cause for the failure to file in a timely manner. Unless inequitable or unjust, an intervenor shall be bound by any agreement, arrangement, or other matter previously raised in the case. Requests by untimely intervenors for continuances which would delay the proceeding will ordinarily be denied.

4.19(3) Grounds for intervention. The movant shall demonstrate that (a) intervention would not unduly prolong the proceedings or otherwise prejudice the rights of existing parties; (b) the movant is likely to be aggrieved or adversely affected by a final order in the proceeding; and (c) the interests of the movant are not adequately represented by existing parties.

4.19(4) Effect of intervention. If appropriate, the presiding officer may order consolidation of the petitions and briefs of different parties whose interests are aligned with each other and limit the number of representatives allowed to participate actively in the proceedings. A person granted leave to intervene is a party to the proceeding. The order granting intervention may restrict the issues that may be raised by the intervenor or otherwise condition the intervenor's participation in the proceeding.

751—4.20(17A) Hearing procedures.

4.20(1) The presiding officer presides at the hearing, and may rule on motions, require briefs, issue a proposed decision, and issue such orders and rulings as will ensure the orderly conduct of the proceedings.

4.20(2) All objections shall be timely made and stated on the record.

4.20(3) Parties have the right to participate or to be represented in all hearings or prehearing conferences related to their case. Partnerships, corporations, or associations may be represented by any member, officer, director, or duly authorized agent. Any party may be represented by an attorney or another person authorized by law.

4.20(4) Subject to terms and conditions prescribed by the presiding officer, parties have the right to introduce evidence on issues of material fact, cross-examine witnesses present at the hearing as necessary for a full and true disclosure of the facts, present evidence in rebuttal, and submit briefs and engage in oral argument.

4.20(5) The presiding officer shall maintain the decorum of the hearing and may refuse to admit or may expel anyone whose conduct is disorderly.

4.20(6) Witnesses may be sequestered during the hearing.

4.20(7) The presiding officer shall conduct the hearing in the following manner:

a. The presiding officer shall give an opening statement briefly describing the nature of the proceedings;

b. The parties shall be given an opportunity to present opening statements;

c. Parties shall present their cases in the sequence determined by the presiding officer;

d. Each witness shall be sworn or affirmed by the presiding officer or the court reporter, and be subject to examination and cross-examination. The presiding officer may limit questioning in a manner consistent with law;

e. When all parties and witnesses have been heard, parties may be given the opportunity to present final arguments.

751—4.21(17A) Evidence.

4.21(1) The presiding officer shall rule on admissibility of evidence and may, where appropriate, take official notice of facts in accordance with all applicable requirements of law.

4.21(2) Stipulation of facts is encouraged. The presiding officer may make a decision based on stipulated facts.

4.21(3) Evidence in the proceeding shall be confined to the issues as to which the parties received notice prior to the hearing unless the parties waive their right to such notice or the presiding officer determines that good cause justifies expansion of the issues. If the presiding officer decides to admit evidence on issues outside the scope of the notice over the objection of a party who did not have actual notice of those issues, that party, upon timely request, shall receive a continuance sufficient to amend pleadings and to prepare on the additional issue.

4.21(4) The party seeking admission of an exhibit must provide opposing parties with an opportunity to examine the exhibit prior to the ruling on its admissibility. Copies of documents should normally be provided to opposing parties.

All exhibits admitted into evidence shall be appropriately marked and be made part of the record.

4.21(5) Any party may object to specific evidence or may request limits on the scope of any examination or cross-examination. Such an objection shall be accompanied by a brief statement of the grounds upon which it is based. The objection, the ruling on the objection, and the reasons for the ruling shall be noted in the record. The presiding officer may rule on the objection at the time it is made or may reserve a ruling until the written decision.

4.21(6) Whenever evidence is ruled inadmissible, the party offering that evidence may submit an offer of proof on the record. The party making the offer of proof for excluded oral testimony shall briefly summarize the testimony or, with permission of the presiding officer, present the testimony. If the excluded evidence consists of a document or exhibit, it shall be marked as part of an offer of proof and inserted in the record.

751—4.22(17A) Default.

4.22(1) 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 render a decision in the absence of the party.

4.22(2) Where appropriate and not contrary to law, any party may move for default against a party who has requested the contested case proceeding and has failed to file a required pleading or has failed to appear after proper service.

4.22(3) Default decisions or decisions rendered on the merits after a party has failed to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding become final commission action unless, within 15 days after the date of notification or mailing of the decision, a motion to vacate is filed and served on all parties or an appeal of a decision on the merits is timely initiated within the time provided by rule 4.27(17A). A motion to vacate must state all facts relied upon by the moving party which establish that good cause existed for that party's failure to appear or participate at the contested case proceeding. Each fact so stated must be substantiated by at least one sworn affidavit of a person with personal knowledge of each such fact, which affidavit(s) must be attached to the motion.

4.22(4) The time for further appeal of a decision for which a timely motion to vacate has been filed is stayed pending a decision on the motion to vacate.

4.22(5) Properly substantiated and timely filed motions to vacate shall be granted only for good cause shown. The burden of proof as to good cause is on the moving party. Adverse parties shall have ten days to respond to a motion to vacate. Adverse parties shall be allowed to conduct discovery as to the issue of good

cause and to present evidence on the issue prior to a decision on the motion, if a request to do so is included in that party's response.

4.22(6) "Good cause" for purposes of this rule shall have the same meaning as "good cause" for setting aside a default judgment under Iowa Rule of Civil Procedure 236.

4.22(7) A decision denying a motion to vacate is subject to further appeal within the time limit allowed for further appeal of a decision on the merits in the contested case proceeding. A decision granting a motion to vacate is subject to interlocutory appeal by the adverse party pursuant to rule 4.25(17A).

4.22(8) If a motion to vacate is granted and no timely interlocutory appeal has been taken, the presiding officer shall issue another notice of hearing and the contested case shall proceed accordingly.

4.22(9) A default decision may award any relief consistent with the request for relief made in the petition and embraced in its issues but, unless the defaulting party has appeared, it cannot exceed the relief demanded.

4.22(10) A default decision may provide either that the default decision is to be stayed pending a timely motion to vacate or that the default decision is to take effect immediately, subject to a request for stay under rule 4.29(17A).

751—4.23(17A) Ex parte communication.

4.23(1) Prohibited communications. Unless required for the disposition of ex parte matters specifically authorized by statute, following issuance of the notice of hearing, there shall be no communication, directly or indirectly, between the presiding officer and any party or representative of any party or any other person with a direct or indirect interest in such case in connection with any issue of fact or law in the case except upon notice and opportunity for all parties to participate. This does not prohibit persons jointly assigned such tasks from communicating with each other. Nothing in this provision is intended to preclude the presiding officer from communicating with members of the commission or seeking the advice or help of persons other than those with a personal interest in, or those engaged in personally investigating as defined in subrule 4.9(2), prosecuting, or advocating in, either the case under consideration or a pending factually related case involving the same parties as 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.

4.23(2) Prohibitions on ex parte communications commence with the issuance of the notice of hearing in a contested case and continue for as long as the case is pending.

4.23(3) Written, oral or other forms of communication are "ex parte" if made without notice and opportunity for all parties to participate.

4.23(4) To avoid prohibited ex parte communications, notice must be given in a manner reasonably calculated to give all parties a fair opportunity to participate. Notice of written communications shall be provided in compliance with rule 4.12(17A) and may be supplemented by telephone, facsimile, electronic mail or other means of notification. Where permitted, oral communications may be initiated through conference telephone call including all parties or their representatives.

4.23(5) Persons who jointly act as presiding officer in a pending contested case may communicate with each other without notice or opportunity for parties to participate.

4.23(6) The executive director or other persons may be present in deliberations or otherwise advise the presiding officer without notice or opportunity for parties to participate as long as they are not disqualified from participating in the making of a proposed or final decision under any provision of law and they comply with subrule 4.23(1).

4.23(7) Communications with the presiding officer involving uncontested scheduling or procedural matters do not require notice or opportunity for parties to participate. Parties should notify other parties prior to initiating such contact with the presiding officer when feasible, and shall notify other parties when seeking to continue hearings or other deadlines pursuant to rule 4.17(17A).

4.23(8) Disclosure of prohibited communications. A presiding officer who receives a prohibited ex parte communication during the pendency of a contested case must initially determine if the effect of the communication is so prejudicial that the presiding officer should be disqualified. If the presiding officer determines that disqualification is warranted, a copy of any prohibited written communication, all written

responses to the communication, a written summary stating the substance of any prohibited oral or other communication not available in written form for disclosure, all responses made, and the identity of each person from whom the presiding officer received a prohibited ex parte communication shall be submitted for inclusion in the record under seal by protective order. If the presiding officer determines that disqualification is not warranted, such documents shall be submitted for inclusion in the record and served on all parties. Any party desiring to rebut the prohibited communication must be allowed the opportunity to do so upon written request filed within ten days after notice of the communication.

4.23(9) Promptly after being assigned to serve as presiding officer at any stage in a contested case proceeding, a presiding officer shall disclose to all parties material factual information received through ex parte communication prior to such assignment unless the factual information has already been or shortly will be disclosed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.13(2) or through discovery. Factual information contained in an investigative report or similar document need not be separately disclosed by the presiding officer as long as such documents have been or will shortly be provided to the parties.

4.23(10) The presiding officer may render a proposed or final decision imposing appropriate sanctions for violations of this rule including default, a decision against the offending party, censure, or suspension, or revocation of the privilege to practice before the commission. Violation of ex parte communication prohibitions by commission personnel shall be reported to the executive director for possible sanctions including censure, suspension, dismissal, or other disciplinary action.

751—4.24(17A) Recording costs. Upon request, the commission shall provide a copy of the whole or any portion of the record at cost. The cost of preparing a copy of the record or of transcribing the hearing record shall be paid by the requesting party.

Parties who request that a hearing be recorded by certified shorthand reporters rather than by electronic means shall bear the cost of that recordation, unless otherwise provided by law.

751—4.25(17A) Interlocutory appeals. Upon written request of a party or on its own motion, the commission may review an interlocutory order of the presiding officer. In determining whether to do so, the commission shall weigh the extent to which its granting the interlocutory appeal would expedite final resolution of the case and the extent to which review of that interlocutory order by the commission at the time it reviews the proposed decision of the presiding officer would provide an adequate remedy. Any request for interlocutory review must be filed within 14 days of issuance of the challenged order, but no later than the time for compliance with the order or the date of hearing, whichever is first.

751—4.26(17A) Posthearing procedures and orders.

4.26(1) *Filing by parties of briefs and proposed findings.* The presiding officer may ask the parties to submit proposed findings and conclusions of law and a proposed order or briefs. Copies of the submission shall be served on all parties. The submission schedule, including waiver or briefs, shall be determined at the close of the hearing.

4.26(2) *Final decision or order.*

a. When a quorum of the entire commission presides over the reception of evidence at the hearing, its decision is a final decision. The decision shall be in writing and shall include findings of fact and conclusions of law in conformance with Iowa Code chapter 17A.

b. In a contested case in which the hearing is held before an administrative law judge or a panel of commission members constituting less than a quorum of the board, the presiding officer or panel shall render a proposed decision. The proposed decision shall be in writing and shall include findings of fact and conclusions of law in conformance with Iowa Code chapter 17A. The proposed decision becomes the final decision of the commission without further proceedings unless there is an appeal to, or review on motion of, the commission within 30 days.

4.26(3) *Decisions and orders.*

a. *By whom prepared.* The presiding officer who presided at the reception of evidence shall prepare a proposed or final decision or order in each case. Findings of fact shall be prepared by the presiding officer at the reception of the evidence in a case unless the officer becomes unavailable. 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.

b. Content of decision or order. The proposed or final decision or order shall:

(1) Be in writing or stated in the record.

(2) Include findings of fact. Findings of fact, if set forth in statutory language, shall be accompanied by a concise and explicit statement of underlying facts supporting the findings. If a party submitted proposed finding of fact in accordance with subrule 4.26(1), the decision or order shall include a ruling upon each proposed finding.

(3) Include conclusions of law, supported by cited authority or reasoned opinion.

c. Delivery. A copy of the proposed decision or order shall be delivered to the parties either by personal service or by certified mail, return receipt requested.

751—4.27(17A) Appeals and review.

4.27(1) *Appeal by party.* Any adversely affected party may appeal a proposed decision to the commission within 30 days after issuance of the proposed decision.

4.27(2) *Review.* The commission member of the commission may initiate review of a proposed decision on its own motion at any time within 30 days following the issuance of such a decision.

4.27(3) *Notice of appeal.* An appeal of a proposed decision is initiated by filing a timely notice of appeal with the commission. The notice of appeal must be signed by the appealing party or a representative of that party and contain a certificate of service. If a commission member or the commission initiates review of a proposed decision, the executive director shall mail a notice of review to all parties. The notice of appeal or the notice of review shall specify:

a. The parties initiating the appeal;

b. The proposed decision or order appealed from;

c. The specific findings or conclusions to which exception is taken and any other exceptions to the decision or order;

d. The relief sought;

e. The grounds for relief.

4.27(4) *Requests to present additional evidence.* A party may request the taking of additional evidence only by establishing that the evidence is material, that good cause existed for the failure to present the evidence at the hearing, and that the party has not waived the right to present the evidence. A written request to present additional evidence must be filed with the notice of appeal or, by a nonappealing party, within 14 days of service of the notice of appeal. The commission may remand a case to the presiding officer for further hearing or may itself preside at the taking of additional evidence.

4.27(5) *Scheduling.* The commission shall issue a schedule for consideration of the appeal.

4.27(6) *Briefs and arguments.* Unless otherwise ordered, within 20 days of the notice of appeal or order for review, each appealing party may file exceptions and briefs. Within 20 days thereafter, any party may file a responsive brief. Briefs shall cite any applicable legal authority and specify relevant portions of the record in that proceeding. Written requests to present oral argument shall be filed with the briefs.

The commission may resolve the appeal on the briefs or provide an opportunity for oral argument. The commission may shorten or extend the briefing period as appropriate.

751—4.28(17A) Applications for rehearing.

4.28(1) *By whom filed.* Any party to a contested case proceeding may file an application for rehearing from a final order.

4.28(2) *Content of application.* The application for rehearing shall state on whose behalf it is filed, the specific grounds for rehearing, and the relief sought. In addition, the application shall state whether the applicant desires reconsideration of all or part of the commission decision on the existing record and whether, on the basis of the grounds enumerated in subrule 4.27(4), the applicant requests an opportunity to submit additional evidence.

4.28(3) *Time of filing.* The application shall be filed with the commission within 20 days after issuance of the final decision.

4.28(4) *Notice to other parties.* A copy of the application shall be timely mailed by the applicant to all parties of record not joining therein. If the application does not contain a certificate of service, the commission shall serve copies on all parties.

4.28(5) *Disposition.* Any application for a rehearing shall be deemed denied unless the commission grants the application within 20 days after its filing.

751—4.29(17A) Stays of commission actions.

4.29(1) *When available.*

a. Any party to a contested case proceeding may petition the commission for a stay of an order issued in that proceeding or for other temporary remedies, pending review by the commission. The petition shall be filed with the notice of appeal and shall state the reasons justifying a stay or other temporary remedy. The commission may rule on the stay or authorize the presiding officer to do so.

b. Any party to a contested case proceeding may petition the commission for a stay or other temporary remedies pending judicial review of all or part of that proceeding. The petition shall state the reasons justifying a stay or other temporary remedy.

4.29(2) *When granted.* In determining whether to grant a stay, the presiding officer or commission shall consider the factors listed in Iowa Code section 17A.19(5) "c."

4.29(3) *Vacation.* A stay may be vacated by the issuing authority upon application of the commission or any other party.

751—4.30(17A) No factual dispute contested cases. If the parties agree that no dispute of material fact exists as to a matter that would be a contested case if such a dispute of fact existed, the parties may present all relevant admissible evidence either by stipulation or otherwise as agreed by the parties, without necessity for the production of evidence at an evidentiary hearing. If such agreement is reached, a jointly submitted schedule detailing the method and timetable for submission of the record, briefs and oral argument should be submitted to the presiding officer for approval as soon as practicable. If the parties cannot agree, any party may file and serve a motion for summary judgment pursuant to the rules governing such motions.

751—4.31(17A) Emergency adjudicative proceedings.

4.31(1) *Necessary emergency action.* To the extent necessary to prevent or avoid immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare, and consistent with the Constitution and other provisions of law, the commission may issue a written order in compliance with Iowa Code section 17A.18A to suspend a license in whole or in part, order the cessation of any continuing activity, order affirmative action, or take other action within the jurisdiction of the commission by emergency adjudicative order. Before issuing an emergency adjudicative order the commission shall consider factors including, but not limited to, the following:

a. Whether there has been a sufficient factual investigation to ensure that the commission is proceeding on the basis of reliable information;

b. Whether the specific circumstances which pose immediate danger to the public health, safety or welfare have been identified and determined to be continuing;

c. Whether the person required to comply with the emergency adjudicative order may continue to engage in other activities without posing immediate danger to the public health, safety or welfare;

d. Whether imposition of monitoring requirements or other interim safeguards would be sufficient to protect the public health, safety or welfare; and

e. Whether the specific action contemplated by the commission is necessary to avoid the immediate danger.

4.31(2) *Issuance of order.*

a. An emergency adjudicative order shall contain findings of fact, conclusions of law, and policy reasons to justify the determination of an immediate danger in the commission's decision to take immediate action.

b. The written emergency adjudicative order shall be immediately delivered to persons who are required to comply with the order by utilizing one or more of the following procedures:

- (1) Personal delivery;
- (2) Certified mail, return receipt requested, to the last address on file with the commission;
- (3) Certified mail to the last address on file with the commission;
- (4) First-class mail to the last address on file with the commission; or
- (5) Fax. Fax may be used as the sole method of delivery if the person required to comply with the order has filed a written request that commission orders be sent by fax and has provided a fax number for that purpose.

c. To the degree practicable, the commission shall select the procedure for providing written notice that best ensures prompt, reliable delivery.

4.31(3) *Oral notice.* Unless the written emergency adjudicative order is provided by personal delivery on the same day that the order issues, the commission shall make reasonable immediate efforts to contact by telephone the persons who are required to comply with the order.

4.31(4) *Completion of proceedings.* After the issuance of an emergency adjudicative order, the commission shall proceed as quickly as feasible to complete any proceedings that would be required if the matter did not involve an immediate danger.

Issuance of a written emergency adjudicative order shall include notification of the date on which commission proceedings are scheduled for completion. After issuance of an emergency adjudicative order, continuance of further commission proceedings to a later date will be granted only in compelling circumstances upon application in writing.

751—4.32(17A,8D) Informal procedure prior to hearing. Any person who desires to pursue informal settlement of any contested case may request a meeting with appropriate staff. The request should be made in writing to the executive director, setting forth a concise statement of the circumstances giving rise to the controversy, the text or citation to any applicable law, commission rule, or decision, and a statement of the settlement proposed. A request for informal settlement should be received by the executive director not less than 15 days before the board meeting at which it is to be considered. The executive director shall schedule consideration of the request at the next regular board meeting occurring more than 15 days after the request for an informal settlement is made. Not more than 10 days after the commission meeting at which the request is scheduled for consideration, the executive director will notify the petitioner in writing of the commission's disposition of the request. If the commission determines that a conference is appropriate, the party will be notified when, where, and with whom such a conference is to be held. The terms of any settlement agreed to by the parties shall be embodied in a written stipulation. Upon receipt of the request, all formal contested case procedures are stayed, except in the case of emergency orders as provided in rule 4.31(17A). If informal settlement is unsuccessful, formal contested case proceedings may be instituted in accordance with rule 4.5(17A).

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapters 8D and 17A.

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