

CHAPTER 26
CONTESTED CASE PROCEEDINGS

[Prior to 9/24/86, Employment Security[370] Ch 6]
[Former 345—6.5(96) and 6.8(96) transferred to 345—9.2(17A,96) and 9.1(17A,96) respectively, IAC 6/10/92]
[Prior to 3/12/97, Job Service Division [345] Ch 6]

Chapter rescission date pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.7: 1/29/30

871—26.1(17A,96) Applicability. The rules in this chapter govern the procedures for contested case proceedings brought pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 96.

[ARC 8688C, IAB 12/25/24, effective 1/29/25]

871—26.2(17A,96) Definitions. Terms defined in the Iowa employment security law and the Iowa administrative procedure Act and that are used in these rules shall have the same meaning as provided by such laws. In addition, the following words and terms when used in this chapter shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“*Contested case*” means a proceeding defined in Iowa Code section 17A.2(5) and includes any matter defined as a no factual dispute contested case in Iowa Code section 17A.10A. It specifically includes any appeal from a determination of a representative of the department or any appeal or request for a hearing by an employer or employing unit from an experience rating, charge determination or other decision affecting its liability. Except as provided in subrule 26.16(4), a final decision of the employment appeal board of the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing shall constitute final agency action. A presiding officer’s decision shall be the final decision of the department if there is no appeal therefrom to the employment appeal board of the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing or if the appeal is made directly to the district court in lieu of filing an appeal with the employment appeal board of the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing.

“*Presiding officer*” means an administrative law judge employed by the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing.

[ARC 8688C, IAB 12/25/24, effective 1/29/25]

871—26.3(17A,96) Appeal of unemployment benefits contested case.

26.3(1) An unemployment benefits contested case must be filed by a party within ten calendar days of mailing the initial determination of benefits as determined by the postmark or date stamp to the party’s last-known address. The appeal must be in writing and delivered by mail, facsimile, email, online, or in person to the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing’s unemployment insurance appeals bureau at UIAB Administrative Hearings Division, 502 East 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. An online appeal is filed by completing and submitting an online appeal form available on the workforce development website.

26.3(2) The appeal should state the following:

- a. The name, address and social security number of the claimant;
- b. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken; and
- c. The grounds upon which the appeal is based.

26.3(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of subrule 26.3(1), a contributory employer, which has not previously received a notice of the filing of a valid claim for benefits, may appeal an individual’s eligibility to receive benefits within 30 calendar days from the mailing date of the quarterly statement of benefit charges.

26.3(4) Also notwithstanding the provisions of subrule 26.3(1), a reimbursable employer, which has not previously received a notice of the filing of a valid claim for benefits, may appeal an individual’s eligibility to receive benefits within 15 calendar days from the mailing date of the quarterly billing of benefit charges.

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871—26.4(17A,96) Appeal of employer liability contested case.

26.4(1) An appeal from a decision of the tax bureau of the department concerning employer status and liability, assessments, contribution (tax) rate, successorship, workers’ status, and all questions

regarding coverage of a worker or group of workers, must be filed by a party no later than 30 calendar days of mailing the tax bureau's decision as determined by the postmark or date stamp to the party's last-known address. The appeal must be in writing and delivered by mail, facsimile, email, online, or in person to Tax Bureau, Iowa Workforce Development, 1000 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

26.4(2) The appeal should state the following:

- a. The name, address, and Iowa employer account number of the employer;
- b. The name and title of the person filing the appeal;
- c. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken; and
- d. The grounds upon which the appeal is based.

[ARC 8688C, IAB 12/25/24, effective 1/29/25]

871—26.5(17A,96) Notice of hearing.

26.5(1) Notices of hearing shall be sent to all parties at their last-known address at least ten days in advance of the hearing date by first-class mail, email, or other electronic means. Notices of hearing shall contain the information required by Iowa Code section 17A.12(2) and any additional information required by statute or rule.

26.5(2) Unless otherwise precluded, the parties in a contested case may waive any provision of this chapter pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.10.

26.5(3) A hearing will be promptly scheduled and conducted by telephone unless a party requests that it be held in person. In-person hearings will be located at the Wallace State Office Building or at a site designated by UIAB. The party requesting an in-person hearing will ordinarily be required to travel the greater distance if all parties are not located near the same hearing site. A request for an in-person hearing may be denied if factors such as the distance between the parties, the number of parties or the health of any party make it impractical or impossible to conduct a fair hearing in person. An in-person hearing may be scheduled at the discretion of the presiding officer to whom the contested case is assigned or by the manager or chief administrative law judge of the appeals bureau. At the discretion of the presiding officer, witnesses or representatives may be allowed to participate via telephone in an in-person hearing.

26.5(4) Whenever it appears that other parties should be joined to dispose of all issues in a contested case, the presiding officer may so order and may grant such continuance to hold such additional proceedings upon notice to all parties.

26.5(5) Any number of appeals involving similar issues of law or fact may be consolidated for hearing so long as no substantial rights of any party would be prejudiced by so doing.

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871—26.6(17A,96) Recusal. A presiding officer shall withdraw from participation in the hearing or the making of any decision in a contested case in accordance with provisions outlined in chapter 481—10.9(17A).

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871—26.7(17A,96) Withdrawals, dismissals, and continuance.

26.7(1) An appeal may be withdrawn at any time prior to the issuance of a decision upon the request of the appellant and with the approval of a presiding officer. Requests for withdrawal may be made in writing or orally, provided the oral request is recorded by a presiding officer.

An appeal may be dismissed upon the request of a party or in the agency's discretion when the issue or issues on appeal have been resolved in the appellant's favor.

26.7(2) A hearing may be postponed by the presiding officer for reasons stated in 481—subrule 10.17(3), either upon the presiding officer's own motion or upon the request of any party in interest. A party's request for postponement should be made not less than three days prior to the scheduled hearing and may be in writing or oral, provided the oral request is recorded by the presiding officer. A party shall not be granted more than one postponement except in the case of extreme emergency.

26.7(3) For good cause shown, the presiding officer may reopen the record, and with notice to all parties, schedule another hearing.

“*Good cause*,” for purposes of this rule, is defined as an emergency circumstance that is beyond the control of the party and that prevents the party from being able to participate in the hearing. Examples of good cause include but are not limited to death, sudden illness, or accident involving the party or the party’s immediate family (spouse, partner, children, parents, siblings) or other circumstances evidencing an emergency situation that was beyond the party’s control and was not reasonably foreseeable.

Examples of circumstances that do not constitute good cause include but are not limited to a lost or misplaced notice of hearing, confusion as to the date and time for the hearing, failure to follow the directions on the notice of hearing, oversleeping, or other acts demonstrating a lack of due care by the party.

26.7(4) If necessary, the presiding officer may hear, *ex parte*, additional information regarding the request for reopening. The granting or denial of such a request may be used as grounds for appeal to the employment appeal board of the department of inspections, appeals, and licensing upon the issuance of the presiding officer’s final decision in the case.

26.7(5) If good cause for reopening has not been shown, the presiding officer may make a decision based upon whatever evidence is properly in the record or, in appropriate cases, may enter default as set forth in rule 871—26.13(17A,96).

[ARC 8688C, IAB 12/25/24, effective 1/29/25]

871—26.8(17A,96) Discovery. Discovery procedures are subject to rule 481—10.13(17A).

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871—26.9(17A,96) Ex parte communications. *Ex parte* communication is subject to rule 481—10.23(17A).

[ARC 8688C, IAB 12/25/24, effective 1/29/25]

871—26.10(17A,96) Motions. Motion practice is subject to rule 481—10.15(10A,17A) with the following exceptions:

1. Written responses to motions may be filed within five days after the motion is served.
2. Motions pertaining to the hearing must be filed and served at least five days prior to the hearing date.

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871—26.11(17A,96) Prehearing conference. Prehearing conferences are subject to rule 481—10.16(10A,17A), with the exception that requests for a prehearing conference must be filed within three days prior to hearing.

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871—26.12(17A,96) Subpoenas for witnesses and documents. Subpoenas are subject to rule 481—10.14(10A,17A) and Iowa Code section 17A.13, with the exception that subpoena requests must be filed within three days prior to hearing.

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871—26.13(17A,96) Conduct of hearings. The conduct of hearings is governed by rule 481—10.20(17A), with the exception of the additional following subrules:

26.13(1) The presiding officer shall begin each hearing with a brief statement identifying the parties and issues, outlining the history of the case, advising the parties of their appeal rights and announcing what matters, if any, will be officially noticed. Any party may inspect and use any portion of the administrative file necessary for the presentation of its case. The administrative file may include information from the claimant’s files maintained in the agency’s computer system.

26.13(2) Each party shall be afforded an opportunity for an opening statement and final arguments.

26.13(3) The hearing shall be confined to evidence relevant to the issue or issues stated on the notice of hearing.

26.13(4) If, during the course of a hearing, it appears to the presiding officer that an issue not set forth in the notice of hearing may affect the presiding officer’s decision, the presiding officer shall so notify the

parties and announce willingness to continue taking testimony on the underlying factual matters if the parties agree to waive on record further notice and make no objection to continuing. If any party objects, the presiding officer shall postpone or continue the hearing and cause new notices of hearing, containing all relevant issues, to be sent to the parties. Notwithstanding, voluntary quits and discharges generally shall be construed to constitute the single issue of separation from employment so that evidence of either or both types of separation may be received in a single hearing.

26.13(5) If factual issues generally relevant to a party's eligibility or liability for benefits but unrelated to the underlying facts in controversy in the present contested case are exposed, the presiding officer may remand the issue to the appropriate section of the department for investigation and preliminary determination.

26.13(6) If a party fails to appear for the hearing, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing or decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3). If no decision has been issued, the absent party may make a written request to reopen the record for good cause as defined in subrule 26.7(3). The presiding officer may reopen the record for additional material, relevant and nonrepetitious evidence not submitted at the case hearing.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If an absent party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party that has participated is no longer on the telephone line or present, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party and the party may file a written request to reopen the record.

c. Once a decision has been entered, the absent party may file an appeal to the employment appeal board to request a new hearing.

26.13(7) Whenever necessary, the presiding officer may require the attendance at a hearing of department employees having knowledge of the facts in controversy or having technical knowledge concerning the issues raised in appeal.

a. If the primary issue is the claimant's ability to work, availability for work or work search, the department may be named as respondent. The presiding officer may call department personnel having knowledge of the facts in controversy as witnesses.

b. If the issue on appeal is an offer of or recall to work or a job referral by a local workforce development center, both the employer making the offer or recall and the workforce development center representative making the referral may be witnesses at the hearing.

c. If the issue on appeal is the claimant's refusal of employment because of wages, the presiding officer may take the testimony of the workforce development representative having knowledge of prevailing wages in the vicinity. The presiding officer may also obtain testimony and evidence of the hours and other conditions of work for similar jobs in the area.

26.13(8) At the discretion of the presiding officer, witnesses may be excluded from the hearing room or telephone hearing until called to testify. The presiding officer shall admonish such witnesses not to discuss the case amongst themselves until after the record has been closed. All witnesses shall be subject to examination by the presiding officer and by all parties.

26.13(9) The presiding officer may expel or refuse admittance to any party, witness or other person whose conduct at the hearing is disorderly.

26.13(10) If the parties agree that no dispute of material facts exists as to a matter that would be a contested case if such a dispute of fact existed, the parties may present all relevant material evidence either by stipulation or otherwise as agreed by the parties, without the necessity of a formal evidentiary hearing.

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871—26.14(17A,96) Evidence. Rules of evidence are followed in accordance with Iowa Code section 17A.14.

[ARC 8688C, IAB 12/25/24, effective 1/29/25]

871—26.15(17A,96) Recording costs.

26.15(1) The presiding officer shall electronically record all evidentiary hearings, prehearing conferences and hearings on motions, all of which constitute a part of the record of the contested case. A party may, at its own expense, also record any hearing electronically or by certified shorthand reporter.

26.15(2) Upon request of a party, the department shall provide a copy of the whole or a part of the record at a cost, unless there is further appeal, in which event the record shall be provided to all parties at no cost.

[ARC 8688C, IAB 12/25/24, effective 1/29/25]

871—26.16(17A,96) Decisions.

26.16(1) The presiding officer shall issue a written, signed decision as soon as practicable after the closing of the record in a contested case. Each decision shall:

a. Set forth the issues, the appeal rights, a concise history of the case, the findings of essential facts, the reasons for the decision and the actual disposition of the case;

b. Be based on the kind and quality of evidence upon which reasonably prudent persons customarily rely for the conduct of their serious affairs, even if none of such evidence would be admissible in a jury trial in the Iowa district court; and

c. Be sent by first-class mail, email, or other electronic transmission to each of the parties in interest and their representatives.

26.16(2) Copies of all presiding officer decisions shall be kept on file for public inspection at the administrative office of the department of workforce development, filed according to hearing (appeal) number and indexed by the social security number of the claimant.

26.16(3) A presiding officer's decision allowing benefits shall result in the prompt payment of all benefits due. An appeal shall not stay the payment of benefits. A presiding officer's decision reversing an allowance of benefits shall include a statement of overpayment of benefits erroneously paid.

26.16(4) A presiding officer's decision constitutes final agency action in an employer liability contested case.

a. Any party in interest may file with the presiding officer a written application for rehearing within 20 days after the issuance of the decision. A request for rehearing is deemed denied unless the presiding officer grants the rehearing request within 20 days after its filing.

b. Any party in interest may file a petition for judicial review in the Iowa district court within 30 days after the issuance of the decision or within 30 days after the denial of the request for rehearing.

26.16(5) In a claimant benefit contested case, final agency action shall be a presiding officer's decision, if no aggrieved party appealed the decision to the employment appeal board within 15 days, or the decision of the employment appeal board, if the aggrieved party appealed the decision to that tribunal.

a. Once final agency action has been established, any party who is aggrieved or adversely affected by the agency action has 30 days to file a petition for judicial review with the district court.

b. Any party in interest may file with the presiding officer a written application for rehearing within 20 days after the date that the decision becomes final as a result of the failure to appeal the decision to the employment board. Applications for rehearing filed before this date will be forwarded to the employment appeal board as appeals to that tribunal. A request for rehearing is deemed denied unless the presiding officer grants the rehearing request within 20 days after its filing.

c. Any party in interest may file a petition for judicial review within 30 days after the denial of the request for rehearing.

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