

561—7.15(17A,455A) Hearing procedures.

7.15(1) Conduct of proceedings. A hearing shall be conducted by a presiding officer who shall:

- a. Open the record and receive appearances;
- b. Administer oaths;
- c. Enter the notice of hearing into the record;
- d. Receive testimony and exhibits presented by the parties;
- e. In the presiding officer's discretion, interrogate witnesses;
- f. Rule on objections and motions;
- g. Close the hearing;
- h. Issue an order containing findings of fact and conclusions of law.

Additionally, the presiding officer 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.

7.15(2) Order of proceedings. 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.

7.15(3) Failure to appear. If a party fails to appear after proper service of notice of hearing, the presiding officer may adjourn, may enter a default against the absent party, or may proceed with the hearing and make a proposed decision in the absence of the party. Adjournment may be granted by the presiding officer on the presiding officer's own motion in the interest of justice.

7.15(4) Representation at hearings. Parties have the right to participate 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, at its own expense, be represented by an attorney.

7.15(5) Appearance pro se. If a party other than the department appears on the party's own behalf without counsel, the presiding officer shall explain to the party the rules of practice and procedure and generally conduct the hearing in a less formal manner than that used when a party is represented by counsel.

7.15(6) Attendance and participation of the public. Every hearing before an agency of the department or an administrative law judge shall be open to the public.

7.15(7) Introduction of evidence. 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.

7.15(8) Fees. Each party bears all costs and expenses, including fees, for its own witnesses.

7.15(9) Objections. All objections shall be timely made and stated on the record.

7.15(10) Decorum. The presiding officer shall maintain the decorum of the hearing and may refuse to admit or may expel anyone whose conduct is disorderly. Contemptuous conduct is grounds for removal from the hearing.

7.15(11) Recording of hearing.

- a. **Method of recording.** Oral proceedings in connection with a hearing in a case shall be recorded either by mechanized means or by certified shorthand reporters. Parties requesting that the hearing be recorded by certified shorthand reporters shall bear the costs thereof.

b. Transcription. Oral proceedings in connection with a hearing in a case or any portion of the oral proceedings shall be transcribed at the request of any party with the expense of the transcription charged to the requesting party.

c. Tapes. Copies of mechanized records of oral proceedings may be obtained from the presiding officer at the requester's expense.

7.15(12) Telephone hearings. Hearings may be conducted via telephone upon order of the presiding officer and with the consent of all parties.