

561—7.13(17A,455A) Defaults.

7.13(1) *Defaults defined.* A party shall be in default when the party:

- a. Fails to file a pleading within the time prescribed for filing of the pleading;
- b. Withdraws a pleading without permission to replead;
- c. Fails to comply with any order of the presiding officer; or
- d. Fails to appear for a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice. If a party fails to

appear and participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, then the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and render a decision on the merits in the absence of the party. If a decision on the merits is rendered, the sole remedy to set aside the judgment is a motion to vacate made consistent with the provisions of subrule 7.17(7).

7.13(2) *How entered.* If a party is in default, the presiding officer on motion of the adverse party shall enter the default against the party.

7.13(3) *Contents of decision.* A default decision shall contain the presiding officer's reasons for the decision. A default decision may award any relief consistent with the request for relief made in the petition and embraced in its issues. Unless the defaulting party has appeared before the presiding officer, the relief shall not exceed the demand for relief. A default decision may provide either that the default decision is to be stayed pending a timely motion to set aside or that the default decision is to take effect immediately.

7.13(4) *Setting aside default.*

a. For good cause shown, the presiding officer may set aside a default or order thereon due to mistake, inadvertence, surprise, excusable neglect or unavoidable casualty. The exclusive remedy for an order based on default shall be a timely motion to set aside the default.

b. A motion to set aside a default must be filed promptly after the discovery of the grounds, but in no case shall the motion be filed more than ten days after receipt of the order. Default decisions shall become final agency action unless a motion to set aside the default is timely filed.

(1) Contents of motion. A motion to set aside a default shall state all facts relied upon by the moving party and shall establish that good cause existed for that party's default status. If the party is in default due to failure to appear for a contested case proceeding, then 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.

(2) Further appeal stayed. The time for further appeal of a decision for which a motion to set aside the default has been filed is stayed pending a decision on the motion to set aside the default.

(3) When granted. The burden of proof to show good cause to set aside the default due to mistake, inadvertence, surprise, excusable neglect or unavoidable casualty is on the moving party. 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 timely filed response to the motion.

7.13(5) *Appeal of denial of motion to set aside default.*

a. If a timely motion to set aside a default is denied, it may be followed by an appeal to the agency having jurisdiction of the matter. The issues on appeal are limited to the grounds for denial of the motion to set aside default. Review is limited to whether the denial of the motion was arbitrary or capricious and whether there is a showing of good cause to set aside default due to mistake, inadvertence, surprise, excusable neglect or unavoidable casualty.

b. Upon a finding by the agency of good cause, the default shall be set aside. The hearing shall be completed, with proper notice, before appeal on the subject matter of the case shall be permitted.