

701—7.10(17A) Informal stage of the tax appeals process. When an appeal is filed, the parties are encouraged to utilize the informal procedures described in this rule to reach a resolution between the parties without the necessity of initiating contested case proceedings. That resolution may be the granting of the appeal in full or in part, the denial of the appeal in full or in part, or an agreement to settle the matter. Unless, in accordance with rule 701—7.12(17A,421), the taxpayer demands a contested case proceeding or an expedited hearing is agreed to or the department waives informal procedures upon notification to the taxpayer, such informal procedures will be initiated as herein provided upon the filing of a proper appeal.

7.10(1) Appeals section review. After an appeal is filed, the review unit, subject to the control of the director or the division administrator of the legal services and appeals division, will:

- a. Review and evaluate the validity of the appeal.
- b. Determine the correct amount of tax owing or refund due.
- c. Determine the best method of resolving the dispute between the taxpayer and the department.
- d. Take further action regarding the appeal, including any additions to and deletions from the audit, as may be warranted by the circumstances to resolve the appeal, including a request for an informal conference.
- e. Determine whether the appeal complies with rule 701—7.8(17A) and request any amendments to the appeal or additional information.

7.10(2) Determinations, conferences. The review unit may concede any items contained in the appeal that it determines should not be controverted by the department. If the taxpayer has not waived informal procedures, the review unit may request that the taxpayer and the taxpayer's representative, if any, attend an informal conference with the review unit to explore the possibility of reaching a settlement without the necessity of initiating contested case proceedings or the possibility of narrowing the issues presented in the appeal if no settlement can be made. The review unit may request clarification of the issues from the taxpayer or further information from the taxpayer or third persons.

7.10(3) Findings. A position letter addressing the issues raised in the appeal may be issued to the taxpayer or taxpayer's representative unless the issues may be more expeditiously determined in another manner or it is determined that such a letter is unnecessary.

7.10(4) Format of review. Nothing herein will prevent the review unit and the taxpayer from mutually agreeing on the manner in which the appeal will be informally reviewed.

7.10(5) Settlements. Only the director, a deputy director, the division administrator of the legal services and appeals division, or another person designated in writing by the director may approve and sign settlements of appeals. If a settlement is reached during informal procedures, a closing order stating that a settlement was reached by the parties and that the case is terminated shall be issued by the director and provided to all parties.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 17A.10.

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