

(b) *Contents.* Any agreement containing consent findings and rule or order disposing of a proceeding shall also provide:

(1) That the rule or order shall have the same force and effect as if made after a full hearing;

(2) That the entire record on which any rule or order may be based shall consist solely of the application and the agreement;

(3) A waiver of any further procedural steps before the hearing examiner and the Assistant Secretary; and

(4) A waiver of any right to challenge or contest the validity of the findings and of the rule or order made in accordance with the agreement.

(c) *Submission.* On or before the expiration of the time granted for negotiations, the parties or their counsel may:

(1) Submit the proposed agreement to the presiding hearing examiner for his consideration; or

(2) Inform the presiding hearing examiner that agreement cannot be reached.

(d) *Disposition.* In the event an agreement containing consent findings and rule or order is submitted within the time allowed therefor, the presiding hearing examiner may accept such agreement by issuing his decision based upon the agreed findings.

§ 1905.25 Discovery.

(a) *Depositions.* (1) For reasons of unavailability or for other good cause shown, the testimony of any witness may be taken by deposition. Depositions may be taken orally or upon written interrogatories before any person designated by the presiding hearing examiner and having power to administer oaths.

(2) *Application.* Any party desiring to take the deposition of a witness may make application in writing to the presiding hearing examiner, setting forth:

(i) The reasons why such deposition should be taken;

(ii) The time when, the place where, and the name and post office address of the person before whom the deposition is to be taken;

(iii) The name and address of each witness; and

(iv) The subject matter concerning which each witness is expected to testify.

(3) *Notice.* Such notice as the presiding hearing examiner may order shall be given by the party taking the deposition to every other party.

(4) *Taking and receiving in evidence.* Each witness testifying upon deposition shall be sworn, and the parties not calling him shall have the right to cross-examine him. The questions propounded and the answers thereto, together with all objections made, shall be reduced to writing, read to the witness, subscribed by him, and certified by the officer before whom the deposition is taken. Thereafter, the officer shall seal the deposition, with two copies thereof, in an envelope and mail the same by registered mail to the presiding hearing examiner. Subject to such objections to the questions and answers as were noted at the time of taking the deposition and would be valid were the witness personally present and testifying, such deposition may be read and offered in evidence by the party taking it as against any party who was present, represented at the taking of the deposition, or who had due notice thereof. No part of a deposition shall be admitted in evidence unless there is a showing that the reasons for the taking of the deposition in the first instance exist at the time of hearing.

(b) *Other discovery.* Whenever appropriate to a just disposition of any issue in a hearing, the presiding hearing examiner may allow discovery by any other appropriate procedure, such as by written interrogatories upon a party, production of documents by a party, or by entry for inspection of the employment or place of employment involved.

§ 1905.26 Hearings.

(a) *Order of proceeding.* Except as may be ordered otherwise by the presiding hearing examiner, the party applicant for relief shall proceed first at a hearing.

(b) *Burden of proof.* The party applicant shall have the burden of proof.

(c) *Evidence—(1) Admissibility.* A party shall be entitled to present his case or defense by oral or documentary evidence, to submit rebuttal evidence, and

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to conduct such cross-examination as may be required for a full and true disclosure of the facts. Any oral or documentary evidence may be received, but a presiding hearing examiner shall exclude evidence which is irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious.

(2) *Testimony of witnesses.* The testimony of a witness shall be upon oath or affirmation administered by the presiding hearing examiner.

(3) *Objections.* If a party objects to the admission or rejection of any evidence, or to the limitation of the scope of any examination or cross-examination, or to the failure to limit such scope, he shall state briefly the grounds for such objection. Rulings on all objections shall appear in the record. Only objections made before the presiding hearing examiner may be relied upon subsequently in a proceeding.

(4) *Exceptions.* Formal exception to an adverse ruling is not required.

(d) *Official notice.* Official notice may be taken of any material fact not appearing in evidence in the record, which is among the traditional matters of judicial notice or concerning which the Department of Labor by reason of its functions is presumed to be expert: *Provided,* That the parties shall be given adequate notice, at the hearing or by reference in the presiding hearing examiner's decision, of the matters so noticed, and shall be given adequate opportunity to show the contrary.

(e) *Transcript.* Hearings shall be stenographically reported. Copies of the transcript may be obtained by the parties upon written application filed with the reporter, and upon the payment of fees at the rate provided in the agreement with the reporter.

§ 1905.27 Decisions of hearing examiners.

(a) *Proposed findings of fact, conclusions, and rules or orders.* Within 10 days after receipt of notice that the transcript of the testimony has been filed or such additional time as the presiding hearing examiner may allow, each party may file with the hearing examiner proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, and rule or order, together with a supporting brief expressing the reasons for such proposals.

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Such proposals and brief shall be served on all other parties, and shall refer to all portions of the record and to all authorities relied upon in support of each proposal.

(b) *Decision of the hearing examiner.* Within a reasonable time after the time allowed for the filing of proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, and rule or order, the presiding hearing examiner shall make and serve upon each party his decision, which shall become final upon the 20th day after service thereof, unless exceptions are filed thereto, as provided in § 1905.28. The decision of the hearing examiner shall include (1) a statement of findings and conclusions, with reasons and bases therefor, upon each material issue of fact, law, or discretion presented on the record, and (2) the appropriate rule, order, relief, or denial thereof. The decision of the hearing examiner shall be based upon a consideration of the whole record and shall state all facts officially noticed and relied upon. It shall be made on the basis of a preponderance of reliable and probative evidence.

§ 1905.28 Exceptions.

Within 20 days after service of a decision of a presiding hearing examiner, any party may file with the hearing examiner written exceptions thereto with supporting reasons. Such exceptions shall refer to the specific findings of fact, conclusions of law, or terms of the rule or order excepted to, the specific pages of transcript relevant to the suggestions, and shall suggest corrected findings of fact, conclusions of law, or terms of the rule or order. Upon receipt of any exceptions, the hearing examiner shall fix a time for filing any objections to the exceptions and any supporting reasons.

§ 1905.29 Transmission of record.

If exceptions are filed, the hearing examiner shall transmit the record of the proceeding to the Assistant Secretary for review. The record shall include: The application, any request for hearing thereon, motions and requests filed in written form, rulings thereon, the transcript of the testimony taken