

own counsel shall sign his or her individual name and state his or her address and telephone number on every filing or submission of record.

(b) *Effect of signature.* (1) The signature of counsel or a party shall constitute a certification that: the counsel or party has read the filing or submission of record; to the best of his or her knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, the filing or submission of record is well-grounded in fact and is warranted by existing law or a good faith argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law; and the filing or submission of record is not made for any improper purpose, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of litigation.

(2) If a filing or submission of record is not signed, the administrative law judge shall strike the filing or submission of record, unless it is signed promptly after the omission is called to the attention of the pleader or movant.

(c) *Effect of making oral motion or argument.* The act of making any oral motion or oral argument by any counsel or party constitutes a certification that to the best of his or her knowledge, information, and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, his or her statements are well-grounded in fact and are warranted by existing law or a good faith argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law, and are not made for any improper purpose, such as to harass or to cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of litigation.

§ 509.8 Conflicts of interest.

(a) *Conflict of interest in representation.* No person shall appear as counsel for another person in an adjudicatory proceeding if it reasonably appears that such representation may be materially limited by that counsel's responsibilities to a third person or by the counsel's own interests. The administrative law judge may take corrective measures at any stage of a proceeding to cure a conflict of interest in representation, including the issuance of an order limiting the scope of representation or disqualifying an individual

from appearing in a representative capacity for the duration of the proceeding.

(b) *Certification and waiver.* If any person appearing as counsel represents two or more parties to an adjudicatory proceeding or also represents a non-party on a matter relevant to an issue in the proceeding, counsel must certify in writing at the time of filing the notice of appearance required by § 509.6(a):

(1) That the counsel has personally and fully discussed the possibility of conflicts of interest with each such party and non-party; and

(2) That each such party and non-party waives any right it might otherwise have had to assert any known conflicts of interest or to assert any non-material conflicts of interest during the course of the proceeding.

[56 FR 38306, Aug. 12, 1991, as amended at 61 FR 20354, May 6, 1996]

§ 509.9 Ex parte communications.

(a) *Definition*—(1) *Ex parte communication* means any material oral or written communication relevant to the merits of an adjudicatory proceeding that was neither on the record nor on reasonable prior notice to all parties that takes place between:

(i) An interested person outside the Office (including such person's counsel); and

(ii) The administrative law judge handling that proceeding, the Director, or a decisional employee.

(2) *Exception.* A request for status of the proceeding does not constitute an *ex parte* communication.

(b) *Prohibition of ex parte communications.* From the time the notice is issued by the Director until the date that the Director issues the final decision pursuant to § 509.40(c) of this subpart:

(1) No interested person outside the Office shall make or knowingly cause to be made an *ex parte* communication to the Director, the administrative law judge, or a decisional employee; and

(2) The Director, administrative law judge, or decisional employee shall not make or knowingly cause to be made to any interested person outside the Office any *ex parte* communication.

(c) *Procedure upon occurrence of ex parte communication.* If an *ex parte*