

§ 3800.40

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carries on investigations of its consumer regulatory programs.

§ 3800.40 Investigational proceedings.

(a) For the purpose of hearing the testimony of witnesses and receiving documents and other data relating to any subject under investigation, the Secretary, or the Secretary's designee, may conduct an investigational proceeding.

(b) The Secretary, or the Secretary's designee, ("presiding official") shall preside over the investigational proceeding. The proceeding shall be stenographically or mechanically reported. A transcript shall be a part of the record of the investigation.

(c) Unless the presiding official determines otherwise, investigational proceedings shall be public.

(d) The presiding official shall take all necessary action to regulate the course of the proceeding to avoid delay and to maintain order. If necessary to maintain order, the presiding official may exclude a witness or counsel from a proceeding. The Department may also take further action as permitted by statute.

§ 3800.50 Rights of witnesses in investigational proceedings.

(a) Any person who testifies at a public investigational proceeding shall be entitled, on payment of costs, to purchase a copy of a transcript of the testimony the person provided.

(b) In a nonpublic investigational proceeding, the presiding official may for good cause limit a witness to an inspection of the official transcript of that witness's testimony.

(c) Any person subpoenaed to appear at an investigational proceeding may be represented by counsel as follows:

(1) With respect to any question asked of a witness, a witness may obtain confidential advice from counsel;

(2) If a witness refuses to answer a question, counsel for the witness may briefly state the legal grounds for the refusal;

(3) Counsel for the witness may object to a question or a request for production of documents that is beyond the scope of the investigation or for which a privilege of the witness to refuse to answer may be invoked. In so doing, counsel for the witness may state briefly the grounds for the objection. Objections will be deemed continuing throughout the course of the proceeding. Repetitious or cumulative statements of an objection or the grounds for an objection are unnecessary and impermissible; and

(4) After the Department's examination of a witness, counsel for the witness may request that the witness be permitted to clarify any answers to correct any ambiguity, equivocation, or incompleteness in the witness's testimony. The decision to grant or deny this request is within the sole discretion of the presiding official.

§ 3800.60 Settlements.

(a) At any time during an investigation, the Department and the parties subject to an investigation may conduct settlement negotiations.

(b) When the Secretary or Secretary's designee deems it appropriate, the Department may enter into a settlement agreement.