

which petitioner wishes to participate, and (5) whether petitioner intends to present witnesses.

(d) If objections to the petition are filed, the administrative law judge shall then determine whether petitioners have the requisite interest to be a party in the proceedings, as defined in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section, and shall permit or deny participation accordingly. Where petitions to participate as parties are made by individuals or groups with common interests, the administrative law judge may request all such petitioners to designate a single representative, or he or she may recognize one or more of such petitioners. The administrative law judge shall give each such petitioner written notice of the decision on his or her petition. If the petition is denied, he or she shall briefly state the grounds for denial and shall then treat the petition as a request for participation as *amicus curiae*. The administrative law judge shall give written notice to each party of each petition granted.

§ 18.11 Consolidation of hearings.

When two or more hearings are to be held, and the same or substantially similar evidence is relevant and material to the matters at issue at each such hearing, the Chief Administrative Law Judge or the administrative law judge assigned may, upon motion by any party or on his or her own motion, order that a consolidated hearing be conducted. Where consolidated hearings are held, a single record of the proceedings may be made and the evidence introduced in one matter may be considered as introduced in the others, and a separate or joint decision shall be made, at the discretion of the administrative law judge as appropriate.

§ 18.12 *Amicus curiae*.

A brief of an *amicus curiae* may be filed only with the written consent of all parties, or by leave of the administrative law judge granted upon motion, or on the request of the administrative law judge, except that consent or leave shall not be required when the brief is presented by an officer of an agency of the United States, or by a state, territory or commonwealth. The *amicus curiae* shall not participate in any way in

the conduct of the hearing, including the presentation of evidence and the examination of witnesses.

§ 18.13 Discovery methods.

Parties may obtain discovery by one or more of the following methods: Depositions upon oral examination or written questions; written interrogatories; production of documents or other evidence for inspection and other purposes; and requests for admission. Unless the administrative law judge orders otherwise, the frequency or sequence of these methods is not limited.

§ 18.14 Scope of discovery.

(a) Unless otherwise limited by order of the administrative law judge in accordance with these rules, the parties may obtain discovery regarding any matter, not privileged, which is relevant to the subject matter involved in the proceeding, including the existence, description, nature, custody, condition, and location of any books, documents, or other tangible things and the identity and location of persons having knowledge of any discoverable matter.

(b) It is not ground for objection that information sought will not be admissible at the hearing if the information sought appears reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence.

(c) A party may obtain discovery of documents and tangible things otherwise discoverable under paragraph (a) of this section and prepared in anticipation of or for the hearing by or for another party's representative (including his or her attorney, consultant, surety, indemnitor, insurer, or agent) only upon a showing that the party seeking discovery has substantial need of the materials in the preparation of his or her case and that he or she is unable without undue hardship to obtain the substantial equivalent of the materials by other means. In ordering discovery of such materials when the required showing has been made, the administrative law judge shall protect against disclosure of the mental impressions, conclusions, opinions, or legal theories of an attorney or other representative of a party concerning the proceeding.