

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.1

reopening the proceeding and modifying the rule or order as requested, issue an order to show cause pursuant to § 3.72, or take such other action as is appropriate: *Provided, however*, That any action under § 3.72 or otherwise shall be concluded within the specified 120-day period.

(Sec. 6(g), 38 Stat. 721 (15 U.S.C. 46(g)); 80 Stat. 383, as amended, 81 Stat. 54 (5 U.S.C. 552))

[45 FR 36344, May 29, 1980, as amended at 46 FR 26291, May 12, 1981; 47 FR 33251, Aug. 2, 1982; 50 FR 53305, Dec. 31, 1985; 53 FR 40868, Oct. 19, 1988; 65 FR 50637, Aug. 21, 2000]

PART 3—RULES OF PRACTICE FOR ADJUDICATIVE PROCEEDINGS

Subpart A—Scope of Rules; Nature of Adjudicative Proceedings

Sec.

- 3.1 Scope of the rules in this part; expedition of proceedings.
- 3.2 Nature of adjudicative proceedings.

Subpart B—Pleadings

- 3.11 Commencement of proceedings.
- 3.12 Answer.
- 3.13 Adjudicative hearing on issues arising in rulemaking proceedings under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act.
- 3.14 Intervention.
- 3.15 Amendments and supplemental pleadings.

Subpart C—Prehearing Procedures; Motions; Interlocutory Appeals; Summary Decisions

- 3.21 Prehearing procedures.
- 3.22 Motions.
- 3.23 Interlocutory appeals.
- 3.24 Summary decisions.
- 3.25 Consent agreement settlements.
- 3.26 Motions following denial of preliminary injunctive relief.

Subpart D—Discovery; Compulsory Process

- 3.31 General discovery provisions.
- 3.31A Expert discovery.
- 3.32 Admissions.
- 3.33 Depositions.
- 3.34 Subpoenas.
- 3.35 Interrogatories to parties.
- 3.36 Applications for subpoenas for records of or appearances by certain officials or employees of the Commission or officials or employees of governmental agencies other than the Commission, and subpoenas to be served in a foreign country.

- 3.37 Production of documents, electronically stored information, and any tangible things; access for inspection and other purposes.
- 3.38 Motion for order compelling disclosure or discovery; sanctions.
- 3.38A Withholding requested material.
- 3.39 Orders requiring witnesses to testify or provide other information and granting immunity.
- 3.40 Admissibility of evidence in advertising substantiation cases.

Subpart E—Hearings

- 3.41 General hearing rules.
- 3.42 Presiding officials.
- 3.43 Evidence.
- 3.44 Record.
- 3.45 *In camera* orders.
- 3.46 Proposed findings, conclusions, and order.

Subpart F—Decision

- 3.51 Recommended decision.
- 3.52 Exceptions to recommended decision.
- 3.53 Review of recommended decision in absence of exceptions.
- 3.54 Commission decision after review of recommended decision.
- 3.55 Reconsideration.
- 3.56 Effective date of orders; application for stay.

Subpart G [Reserved]

Subpart H—Reopening of Proceedings

- 3.71 Authority.
- 3.72 Reopening.

Subpart I—Recovery of Awards Under the Equal Access to Justice Act in Commission Proceedings

- 3.81 General provisions.
- 3.82 Information required from applicants.
- 3.83 Procedures for considering applicants.

AUTHORITY: 15 U.S.C. 46.

SOURCE: 32 FR 8449, June 13, 1967, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—Scope of Rules; Nature of Adjudicative Proceedings

§ 3.1 Scope of the rules in this part; expedition of proceedings.

The rules in this part govern procedure in formal adjudicative proceedings. To the extent practicable and consistent with requirements of law, the Commission's policy is to conduct such proceedings expeditiously. In the

§ 3.2

conduct of such proceedings the Administrative Law Judge and counsel for all parties shall make every effort at each stage of a proceeding to avoid delay. In the event of a scheduling conflict between a proceeding in which the Commission also has sought or is seeking relief under Section 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. 53(b), and another proceeding, the proceeding in which the Commission also has sought or is seeking relief under Section 13(b) shall take precedence. The Commission, at any time, or the Administrative Law Judge at any time prior to the filing of his or her recommended decision, may, with the consent of the parties, shorten any time limit prescribed by these Rules of Practice.

[74 FR 20208, May 1, 2009, as amended at 88 FR 42875, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.2 Nature of adjudicative proceedings.

Adjudicative proceedings are those formal proceedings conducted under one or more of the statutes administered by the Commission which are required by statute to be determined on the record after opportunity for an agency hearing. The term includes hearings upon objections to orders relating to the promulgation, amendment, or repeal of rules under sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, but does not include rulemaking proceedings up to the time when the Commission determines under § 1.26(g) of this chapter that objections sufficient to warrant the holding of a public hearing have been filed. The term also includes proceedings for the assessment of civil penalties pursuant to § 1.94 of this chapter. The term does not include other proceedings such as negotiations for and Commission consideration of the entry of consent orders; investigational hearings as distinguished from proceedings after the issuance of a complaint; requests for extensions of time to comply with final orders or other proceedings involving compliance with final orders; proceedings for the promulgation of industry guides or trade regulation rules; or the promulgation of substantive rules and regulations.

[74 FR 1820, Jan. 13, 2009]

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

Subpart B—Pleadings

§ 3.11 Commencement of proceedings.

(a) *Complaint.* Except as provided in § 3.13, an adjudicative proceeding is commenced when an affirmative vote is taken by the Commission to issue a complaint.

(b) *Form of complaint.* The Commission's complaint shall contain the following:

(1) Recital of the legal authority and jurisdiction for institution of the proceeding, with specific designation of the statutory provisions alleged to have been violated;

(2) A clear and concise factual statement sufficient to inform each respondent with reasonable definiteness of the type of acts or practices alleged to be in violation of the law;

(3) Where practical, a form of order which the Commission has reason to believe should issue if the facts are found to be as alleged in the complaint; and

(4) Notice of the specific date, time and place for the evidentiary hearing. Unless a different date is determined by the Commission, the date of the evidentiary hearing shall be 5 months from the date of the administrative complaint in a proceeding in which the Commission, in an ancillary proceeding, has sought or is seeking relief pursuant to Section 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. 53(b), and 8 months from the date of issuance of the administrative complaint in all other proceedings.

[74 FR 1820, Jan. 13, 2009]

§ 3.12 Answer.

(a) *Time for filing.* A respondent shall file an answer within 14 days after being served with the complaint.

(b) *Content of answer.* An answer shall conform to the following:

(1) *If allegations of complaint are contested.* An answer in which the allegations of a complaint are contested shall contain:

(i) A concise statement of the facts constituting each ground of defense;

(ii) Specific admission, denial, or explanation of each fact alleged in the complaint or, if the respondent is without knowledge thereof, a statement to that effect. Allegations of a complaint

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.14

not thus answered shall be deemed to have been admitted.

(2) *If allegations of complaint are admitted.* If the respondent elects not to contest the allegations of fact set forth in the complaint, the answer shall consist of a statement that the respondent admits all of the material allegations to be true. Such an answer shall constitute a waiver of hearings as to the facts alleged in the complaint, and together with the complaint will provide a record basis on which the Commission shall issue a final decision containing appropriate findings and conclusions and a final order disposing of the proceeding. In such an answer, the respondent may, however, reserve the right to submit proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law under § 3.46.

(c) *Default.* Failure of the respondent to file an answer within the time provided shall be deemed to constitute a waiver of the respondent's right to appear and contest the allegations of the complaint and to authorize the Commission, without further notice to the respondent, to find the facts to be as alleged in the complaint and to enter a final decision containing appropriate findings and conclusions and a final order disposing of the proceeding.

[74 FR 1820, Jan. 13, 2009]

§ 3.13 Adjudicative hearing on issues arising in rulemaking proceedings under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act.

(a) *Notice of hearing.* When the Commission, acting under § 1.26(g) of this chapter, determines that objections which have been filed are sufficient to warrant the holding of an adjudicative hearing in rulemaking proceedings under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, or when the Commission otherwise determines that the holding of such a hearing would be in the public interest, a hearing will be held before an Administrative Law Judge for the purpose of receiving evidence relevant and material to the issues raised by such objections or other issues specified by the Commission. In such case the Commission will publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER containing a statement of:

(1) The provisions of the rule or order to which objections have been filed;

(2) The issues raised by the objections or the issues on which the Commission wishes to receive evidence;

(3) The time and place for hearing, the time to be at least thirty (30) days after publication of the notice; and

(4) The time within which, and the conditions under which, any person who petitioned for issuance, amendment, or repeal of the rule or order, or any person who filed objections sufficient to warrant the holding of the hearing, or any other interested person, may file notice of intention to participate in the proceeding.

(b) *Parties.* Any person who petitions for issuance, amendment, or repeal of a rule or order, and any person who files objections sufficient to warrant the holding of a hearing, and who files timely notice of intention to participate, shall be regarded as a party and shall be individually served with any pleadings filed in the proceeding. Upon written application to the Administrative Law Judge and a showing of good cause, any interested person may be designated by the Administrative Law Judge as a party.

[32 FR 8449, June 13, 1967, as amended at 40 FR 33969, Aug. 13, 1975]

§ 3.14 Intervention.

(a) Any individual, partnership, unincorporated association, or corporation desiring to intervene in an adjudicative proceeding shall make written application in the form of a motion setting forth the basis therefor. Such application shall be served upon each party to the proceeding in accordance with the provisions of § 4.4(b) of this chapter. The answer filed by any party shall be served upon the applicant in accordance with the provisions of § 4.4(b). The Administrative Law Judge or the Commission may by order permit the intervention to such extent and upon such terms as are provided by law or as otherwise may be deemed proper.

(b) In an adjudicative proceeding where the complaint states that divestiture relief is contemplated, the labor organization[s] representing employees of the respondent[s] may intervene as a matter of right. Applications for such intervention are to be made in accordance with the procedures set forth in paragraph (a) of this section and must

§ 3.15

be filed within 60 days of the issuance of the complaint. Intervention as a matter of right shall be limited to the issue of the effect, if any, of proposed remedies on employment, with full rights of participation in the proceeding concerning this issue. This paragraph does not affect a labor organization's ability to petition for leave to intervene pursuant to § 3.14(a).

[32 FR 8449, June 13, 1967, as amended at 46 FR 20979, Apr. 8, 1981; 80 FR 25941, May 12, 2015]

§ 3.15 Amendments and supplemental pleadings.

(a) *Amendments*—(1) *By leave*. If and whenever determination of a controversy on the merits will be facilitated thereby, the Administrative Law Judge may, upon such conditions as are necessary to avoid prejudicing the public interest and the rights of the parties, allow appropriate amendments to pleadings or notice of hearing: *Provided, however*, That a motion for amendment of a complaint or notice may be allowed by the Administrative Law Judge only if the amendment is reasonably within the scope of the original complaint or notice. Motions for other amendments of complaints or notices shall be certified to the Commission.

(2) *Conformance to evidence*. When issues not raised by the pleadings or notice of hearing but reasonably within the scope of the original complaint or notice of hearing are tried by express or implied consent of the parties, they shall be treated in all respects as if they had been raised in the pleadings or notice of hearing; and such amendments of the pleadings or notice as may be necessary to make them conform to the evidence and to raise such issues shall be allowed at any time.

(b) *Supplemental pleadings*. The Administrative Law Judge may, upon reasonable notice and such terms as are just, permit service of a supplemental pleading or notice setting forth transactions, occurrences, or events which have happened since the date of the pleading or notice sought to be supplemented and which are relevant to any of the issues involved.

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

Subpart C—Prehearing Procedures; Motions; Interlocutory Appeals; Summary Decisions

§ 3.21 Prehearing procedures.

(a) *Meeting of the parties before scheduling conference*. As early as practicable before the prehearing scheduling conference described in paragraph (b) of this section, but in any event no later than 5 days after the answer is filed by the last answering respondent, counsel for the parties shall meet to discuss the nature and basis of their claims and defenses and the possibilities for a prompt settlement or resolution of the case. The parties shall also agree, if possible, on—

(1) A proposed discovery plan specifically addressing a schedule for depositions of fact witnesses, the production of documents and electronically stored information, and the timing of expert discovery pursuant to § 3.31A. The parties' agreement regarding electronically stored information should include the scope of and a specified time period for the exchange of such information that is subject to §§ 3.31(b)(2), 3.31(c), and 3.37(a), and the format for the disclosure of such information, consistent with §§ 3.31(c)(3) and 3.37(c);

(2) A preliminary estimate of the time required for the evidentiary hearing; and

(3) Any other matters to be determined at the scheduling conference.

(b) *Scheduling conference*. Not later than 10 days after the answer is filed by the last answering respondent, the Administrative Law Judge shall hold a scheduling conference. At the scheduling conference, counsel for the parties shall be prepared to address:

(1) Their factual and legal theories;

(2) The current status of any pending motions;

(3) A schedule of proceedings that is consistent with the date of the evidentiary hearing set by the Commission;

(4) Steps taken to preserve evidence relevant to the issues raised by the claims and defenses;

(5) The scope of anticipated discovery, any limitations on discovery, and a proposed discovery plan, including the disclosure of electronically stored information;

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.22

(6) Issues that can be narrowed by agreement or by motion, suggestions to expedite the presentation of evidence at trial, and any request to bifurcate issues, claims or defenses; and

(7) Other possible agreements or steps that may aid in the just and expeditious disposition of the proceeding and to avoid unnecessary cost.

(c) *Prehearing scheduling order.* (1) Not later than 2 days after the scheduling conference, the Administrative Law Judge shall enter an order that sets forth the results of the conference and establishes a schedule of proceedings that will permit the evidentiary hearing to commence on the date set by the Commission, including a plan of discovery that addresses the deposition of fact witnesses, timing of expert discovery, and the production of documents and electronically stored information, dates for the submission and hearing of motions, the specific method by which exhibits shall be numbered or otherwise identified and marked for the record, and the time and place of a final prehearing conference. The Commission may, upon a showing of good cause, order a later date for the evidentiary hearing than the one specified in the complaint.

(2) The Administrative Law Judge may, upon a showing of good cause, grant a motion to extend any deadline or time specified in this scheduling order other than the date of the evidentiary hearing. Such motion shall set forth the total period of extensions, if any, previously obtained by the moving party. In determining whether to grant the motion, the Administrative Law Judge shall consider any extensions already granted, the length of the proceedings to date, the complexity of the issues, and the need to conclude the evidentiary hearing and render a recommended decision in a timely manner. The Administrative Law Judge shall not rule on *ex parte* motions to extend the deadlines specified in the scheduling order, or modify such deadlines solely upon stipulation or agreement of counsel.

(d) *Meeting prior to final prehearing conference.* Counsel for the parties shall meet before the final prehearing conference described in paragraph (e) of this section to discuss the matters set

forth therein in preparation for the conference.

(e) *Final prehearing conference.* As close to the commencement of the evidentiary hearing as practicable, the Administrative Law Judge shall hold a final prehearing conference, which counsel shall attend in person, to submit any proposed stipulations as to law, fact, or admissibility of evidence, exchange exhibit and witness lists, and designate testimony to be presented by deposition. At this conference, the Administrative Law Judge shall also resolve any outstanding evidentiary matters or pending motions (except motions for summary decision) and establish a final schedule for the evidentiary hearing.

(f) *Additional prehearing conferences and orders.* The Administrative Law Judge shall hold additional prehearing and status conferences or enter additional orders as may be needed to ensure the just and expeditious disposition of the proceeding and to avoid unnecessary cost. Such conferences shall be held in person to the extent practicable.

(g) *Public access and reporting.* Prehearing conferences shall be public unless the Administrative Law Judge determines in his or her discretion that the conference (or any part thereof) shall be closed to the public. The Administrative Law Judge shall have discretion to determine whether a prehearing conference shall be stenographically reported.

[74 FR 1820, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 88 FR 42875, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.22 Motions.

(a) *Presentation and disposition.* Motions filed under § 4.17 of this chapter shall be directly referred to and ruled on by the Commission. Motions to dismiss filed before the evidentiary hearing (other than motions to dismiss under § 3.26(d)), motions to strike, and motions for summary decision shall be directly referred to the Commission and shall be ruled on by the Commission unless the Commission in its discretion refers the motion to the Administrative Law Judge. Except as otherwise provided by an applicable rule, motions not referred to the Administrative Law Judge shall be ruled on by

the Commission within 45 days of the filing of the last-filed answer or reply to the motion, if any, unless the Commission determines there is good cause to extend the deadline. If the Commission refers the motion to the Administrative Law Judge, it may set a deadline for the ruling by the Administrative Law Judge, and a party may seek review of the ruling of the Administrative Law Judge in accordance with § 3.23. During the time a proceeding is before an Administrative Law Judge, all other motions shall be addressed to and decided by the Administrative Law Judge, if within his or her authority. The Administrative Law Judge shall certify to the Commission a motion to disqualify filed under § 3.42(g) if the Administrative Law Judge does not disqualify himself or herself within 10 days. The Administrative Law Judge shall certify to the Commission forthwith any other motion upon which he or she has no authority to rule. Rulings containing information granted *in camera* status pursuant to § 3.45 shall be filed in accordance with § 3.45(f). When a motion to dismiss is made at the close of the evidence offered in support of the complaint based upon an alleged failure to establish a *prima facie* case, the Administrative Law Judge shall defer ruling thereon until immediately after all evidence has been received and the hearing record is closed. All written motions shall be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, and all motions addressed to the Commission shall be in writing. The moving party shall also provide a copy of its motion to the Administrative Law Judge at the time the motion is filed with the Secretary.

(b) *Proceedings not stayed.* A motion under consideration by the Commission shall not stay proceedings before the Administrative Law Judge unless the Commission so orders or unless otherwise provided by an applicable rule.

(c) *Content.* All written motions shall state the particular order, ruling, or action desired and the grounds therefor. Memoranda in support of, or in opposition to, any dispositive motion shall not exceed 10,000 words. Memoranda in support of, or in opposition to, any other motion shall not exceed 2,500 words. Any reply in support of a dis-

positive motion shall not exceed 5,000 words and any reply in support of any other motion authorized by the Administrative Law Judge or the Commission shall not exceed 1,250 words. These word count limitations include headings, footnotes, and quotations, but do not include the cover, table of contents, table of citations or authorities, glossaries, statements with respect to oral argument, any addendums containing statutes, rules or regulations, any certificates of counsel, proposed form of order, and any attachment required by § 3.45(e). Documents that fail to comply with these provisions shall not be filed with the Secretary. Motions must also include the name, address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address (if any) of counsel and attach a draft order containing the proposed relief. If a party includes in a motion information that has been granted *in camera* status pursuant to § 3.45(b) or is subject to confidentiality protections pursuant to a protective order, the party shall file 2 versions of the motion in accordance with the procedures set forth in § 3.45(e). The party shall mark its confidential filings with brackets or similar conspicuous markings to indicate the material for which it is claiming confidential treatment. The time period specified by § 3.22(d) within which an opposing party may file an answer will begin to run upon service on that opposing party of the confidential version of the motion.

(d) *Responses.* Within 10 days after service of any written motion, or within such longer or shorter time as may be designated by the Administrative Law Judge or the Commission, the opposing party shall answer or shall be deemed to have consented to the granting of the relief asked for in the motion. If an opposing party includes in an answer information that has been granted *in camera* status pursuant to § 3.45(b) or is subject to confidentiality protections pursuant to a protective order, the opposing party shall file 2 versions of the answer in accordance with the procedures set forth in § 3.45(e). The moving party shall have no right to reply, except for dispositive motions or as otherwise permitted by the Administrative Law Judge or the Commission. Reply and surreply briefs

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.23

to motions other than dispositive motions shall be permitted only in circumstances where the parties wish to draw the Administrative Law Judge's or the Commission's attention to recent important developments or controlling authority that could not have been raised earlier in the party's principal brief. The reply may be conditionally filed with the motion seeking leave to reply. Any reply with respect to a dispositive motion, or any permitted reply to any other motion, shall be filed within 5 days after service of the last answer to that motion.

(e) *Rulings on motions.* Unless otherwise provided by a relevant rule, the Administrative Law Judge shall rule on motions within 14 days after the filing of all motion papers authorized by this section. The Commission, for good cause, may extend the time allowed for a ruling.

(f) *Motions for extensions.* The Administrative Law Judge or the Commission may waive the requirements of this section as to motions for extensions of time; however, the Administrative Law Judge shall have no authority to rule on *ex parte* motions for extensions of time.

(g) *Statement.* Each motion to quash filed pursuant to § 3.34(c), each motion to compel or determine sufficiency pursuant to § 3.38(a), each motion for sanctions pursuant to § 3.38(b), and each motion for enforcement pursuant to § 3.38(c) shall be accompanied by a signed statement representing that counsel for the moving party has conferred with opposing counsel in an effort in good faith to resolve by agreement the issues raised by the motion and has been unable to reach such an agreement. If some of the matters in controversy have been resolved by agreement, the statement shall specify the matters so resolved and the matters remaining unresolved. The statement shall recite the date, time, and place of each such conference between counsel, and the names of all parties participating in each such conference. Unless otherwise ordered by the Administrative Law Judge, the statement required by this rule must be filed only with the first motion concerning com-

pliance with the discovery demand at issue.

[74 FR 1821, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 80 FR 15160, Mar. 23, 2015]

§ 3.23 Interlocutory appeals.

(a) *Appeals without a determination by the Administrative Law Judge.* (1) The Commission may, in its discretion, entertain interlocutory appeals where a ruling of the Administrative Law Judge:

(i) Requires the disclosure of records of the Commission or another governmental agency or the appearance of an official or employee of the Commission or another governmental agency pursuant to § 3.36, if such appeal is based solely on a claim of privilege: *Provided*, that the Administrative Law Judge shall stay until further order of the Commission the effectiveness of any ruling, whether or not appeal is sought, that requires the disclosure of non-public Commission minutes, Commissioner circulations, or similar documents prepared by the Commission, an individual Commissioner, or the Office of the General Counsel;

(ii) Suspends an attorney from participation in a particular proceeding pursuant to § 3.42(d); or

(iii) Grants or denies an application for intervention pursuant to the provisions of § 3.14.

(2) Appeal from such rulings may be sought by filing with the Commission an application for review within 3 days after notice of the Administrative Law Judge's ruling. An answer may be filed within 3 days after the application for review is filed. The Commission upon its own motion may enter an order staying compliance with a discovery demand authorized by the Administrative Law Judge pursuant to § 3.36 or placing the matter on the Commission's docket for review. Any order placing the matter on the Commission's docket for review will set forth the scope of the review and the issues which will be considered and will make provision for the filing of memoranda of law if deemed appropriate by the Commission.

(b) *Other interlocutory appeals.* A party may request the Administrative Law Judge to determine that a ruling involves a controlling question of law

or policy as to which there is substantial ground for difference of opinion and that an immediate appeal from the ruling may materially advance the ultimate termination of the litigation or subsequent review will be an inadequate remedy. An answer may be filed within 3 days after the request for determination is filed. The Administrative Law Judge shall issue a ruling on the request for determination within 3 days of the deadline for filing an answer. The party may file an application for review with the Commission within 1 day after notice that the Administrative Law Judge has issued the requested determination or 1 day after the deadline has passed for the Administrative Law Judge to issue a ruling on the request for determination and the Administrative Law Judge has not issued his or her ruling. An answer may be filed within 3 days after the application for review is filed.

(c) The application for review shall attach the ruling from which appeal is being taken and any other portions of the record on which the moving party relies. Neither the application for review nor the answer shall exceed 2,500 words. This word count limitation includes headings, footnotes, and quotations, but does not include the cover, table of contents, table of citations or authorities, glossaries, statements with respect to oral argument, any addendums containing statutes, rules or regulations, any certificates of counsel, proposed form of order, and any attachment required by § 3.45(e). The Commission may order additional briefing on the application.

(d) *Ruling on application for review.* Within 3 days after the deadline for filing an answer, the Commission will determine whether to grant the application for review. The denial of an application shall not constitute a ruling on the merits of the ruling that is the subject of the application.

(e) *Proceedings not stayed.* An application for review and appeal hereunder shall not stay proceedings before the Administrative Law Judge unless the Judge or the Commission shall so order.

[74 FR 1822, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 80 FR 15160, Mar. 23, 2015]

§ 3.24 Summary decisions.

(a) *Procedure.* (1) Any party may move, with or without supporting affidavits, for a summary decision in the party's favor upon all or any part of the issues being adjudicated. The motion shall be accompanied by a separate and concise statement of the material facts as to which the moving party contends there is no genuine issue for trial. Counsel in support of the complaint may so move at any time after 20 days following issuance of the complaint and any respondent may so move at any time after issuance of the complaint. Any such motion by any party, however, shall be filed in accordance with the scheduling order issued pursuant to § 3.21, but in any case at least 30 days before the date fixed for the hearing.

(2) Any other party may, within 14 days after service of the motion, file opposing affidavits. The opposing party shall include a separate and concise statement of those material facts as to which the opposing party contends there exists a genuine issue for trial, as provided in § 3.24(a)(3). The parties may file memoranda of law in support of, or in opposition to, the motion consistent with § 3.22(c). If a party includes in any such brief or memorandum information that has been granted in camera status pursuant to § 3.45(b) or is subject to confidentiality protections pursuant to a protective order, the party shall file 2 versions of the document in accordance with the procedures set forth in § 3.45(e). If the Commission determines that there is no genuine issue as to any material fact regarding liability or relief, it shall issue a final decision and order. A summary decision, interlocutory in character and in compliance with the procedures set forth in § 3.51(c), may be rendered on the issue of liability alone although there is a genuine issue as to relief.

(3) Affidavits shall set forth such facts as would be admissible in evidence and shall show affirmatively that the affiant is competent to testify to the matters stated therein. The Commission may permit affidavits to be supplemented or opposed by depositions, answers to interrogatories, or further affidavits. When a motion for

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.25

summary decision is made and supported as provided in this rule, a party opposing the motion may not rest upon the mere allegations or denials of his or her pleading; the response, by affidavits or as otherwise provided in this rule, must set forth specific facts showing that there is a genuine issue of material fact for trial. If no such response is filed, summary decision, if appropriate, shall be rendered.

(4) Should it appear from the affidavits of a party opposing the motion that it cannot, for reasons stated, present by affidavit facts essential to justify its opposition, the Commission may deny the motion for summary decision or may order a continuance to permit affidavits to be obtained or depositions to be taken or discovery to be had or make such other order as is appropriate and a determination to that effect shall be made a matter of record.

(5) If on motion under this rule a summary decision is not rendered upon the whole case or for all the relief asked and a trial is necessary, the Commission shall issue an order specifying the facts that appear without substantial controversy and directing further proceedings in the action. The facts so specified shall be deemed established.

(b) *Affidavits filed in bad faith.* (1) Should it appear to the satisfaction of the Commission at any time that any of the affidavits presented pursuant to this rule are presented in bad faith, or solely for the purpose of delay, or are patently frivolous, the Commission shall enter a determination to that effect upon the record.

(2) If upon consideration of all relevant facts attending the submission of any affidavit covered by paragraph (b)(1) of this section, the Commission concludes that action to suspend or remove an attorney from the case is warranted, it shall take action as specified in § 3.42(d).

[74 FR 1822, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 88 FR 42875, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.25 Consent agreement settlements.

(a) The Administrative Law Judge may, in his or her discretion and without suspension of prehearing procedures, hold conferences for the purpose

of supervising negotiations for the settlement of the case, in whole or in part, by way of consent agreement.

(b) A proposal to settle a matter in adjudication by consent shall be submitted by way of a motion to withdraw the matter from adjudication for the purpose of considering a proposed settlement. Such motion shall be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, as provided in § 4.2. Any such motion shall be accompanied by a consent proposal; the proposal itself, however, shall not be placed on the public record unless and until it is accepted by the Commission as provided herein. If the consent proposal affects only some of the respondents or resolves only some of the charges in adjudication, the motion required by this paragraph shall so state and shall specify the portions of the matter that the proposal would resolve.

(c) If a consent agreement accompanying the motion has been executed by one or more respondents and by complaint counsel, has been approved by the appropriate Bureau Director, and conforms to § 2.32, and the matter is pending before an Administrative Law Judge, the Secretary shall issue an order withdrawing from adjudication those portions of the matter that the proposal would resolve and all proceedings before the Administrative Law Judge shall be stayed with respect to such portions, pending a determination by the Commission pursuant to paragraph (f) of this section. If a consent proposal is not in the form of a consent agreement executed by a respondent, does not otherwise conform to § 2.32, or has not been executed by complaint counsel, and the matter is pending before the Administrative Law Judge, he or she shall certify the motion and proposal to the Commission upon a written determination that there is a reasonable possibility of settlement. The certification may be accompanied by a recommendation to the Commission as to the disposition of the motion. The Administrative Law Judge shall make a determination as to whether to certify the motion within 5 days after the filing of the motion. The filing of a motion under paragraph (b) of this section and certification thereof

§ 3.26

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

to the Commission shall not stay proceedings before the Administrative Law Judge unless the Commission shall so order. Upon certification of such motion, the Commission in its discretion may issue an order withdrawing from adjudication those portions of the matter that the proposal would resolve for the purpose of considering the consent proposal.

(d) If the matter is no longer pending before the Administrative Law Judge, the Commission in its discretion may, upon motion filed under paragraph (b) of this section, issue an order withdrawing from adjudication those portions of the matter that the proposal would resolve for the purpose of considering the consent proposal. Such order may issue whether or not the consent agreement executed by a respondent, otherwise conforms to § 2.32, or has been executed by complaint counsel.

(e) The Commission will treat those portions of a matter withdrawn from adjudication pursuant to paragraphs (c) or (d) of this section as being in a nonadjudicative status. Portions not so withdrawn shall remain in an adjudicative status.

(f) After some or all of the allegations in a matter have been withdrawn from adjudication, the Commission may accept a proposed consent agreement, reject it and return the matter or affected portions thereof to adjudication for further proceedings, or take such other action as it may deem appropriate. If an agreement is accepted, it will be disposed of as provided in § 2.34 of this chapter, except that if, following the public comment period provided for in § 2.34, the Commission decides, based on comments received or otherwise, to withdraw its acceptance of the agreement, it will so notify the parties and will return to adjudication any portions of the matter previously withdrawn from adjudication for further proceedings or take such other action it considers appropriate.

(g) This rule will not preclude the settlement of the case by regular adjudicatory process through the filing of an admission answer or submission of the case to the Administrative Law

Judge on a stipulation of facts and an agreed order.

[74 FR 20208, May 1, 2009]

§ 3.26 Motions following denial of preliminary injunctive relief.

(a) This section sets forth two procedures by which respondents may obtain consideration of whether continuation of an adjudicative proceeding is in the public interest after a court has denied preliminary injunctive relief in a separate proceeding brought under section 13(b) of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. 53(b), in aid of the adjudicative proceeding.

(b) A motion under this section shall be addressed to the Commission and must be filed within 14 days after, but no earlier than:

(1) A district court has denied the Commission's request for a preliminary injunction, if the Commission has not filed a motion for relief pending appeal with the court of appeals within 7 days following the district court's denial of a preliminary injunction; or

(2) A court of appeals has denied a Commission motion for relief pending appeal.

(c) *Withdrawal from adjudication.* Following denial of court relief as specified in paragraph (b) of this section, respondents may move that the adjudicative proceeding be withdrawn from adjudication in order to consider whether the public interest warrants further litigation. Although all respondents must consent to the filing of such a motion, a motion under this paragraph (c) may be filed jointly or separately by each of the respondents in the adjudicative proceeding. At the time respondents file a motion under this paragraph (c), respondents must also electronically transmit a copy to complaint counsel. The Secretary shall issue an order withdrawing the matter from adjudication 2 days after such a motion is filed, except that, if complaint counsel file an objection asserting that the conditions of paragraph (b) of this section have not been met, the Commission shall decide the motion within 10 days after the objection is filed.

(d) *Consideration on the record of a motion to dismiss.* (1) In lieu of a motion to withdraw the adjudicative proceeding

from adjudication under paragraph (c) of this section, any respondent may file a motion under this paragraph to dismiss the administrative complaint on the basis that the public interest does not warrant further litigation after a court has denied preliminary injunctive relief to the Commission.

(2) *Stay.* The filing of a motion under this paragraph (d) shall stay the proceeding until 7 days following the disposition of the motion by the Commission, and all deadlines established by these rules shall be tolled for the amount of time the proceeding is so stayed.

(3) *Answer.* Complaint counsel may file a response within 7 days after such motion is filed.

(4) *Ruling by Commission.* Within 30 days after the deadline for filing a response, the Commission shall rule on any motion under this paragraph (d).

(e) *Form.* Memoranda in support of or in opposition to motions authorized by this section shall not exceed 10,000 words. This word count limitation includes headings, footnotes, and quotations, but does not include the cover, table of contents, table of citations or authorities, glossaries, statements with respect to oral argument, any addendums containing statutes, rules or regulations, any certificates of counsel, proposed form of order, and any attachment required by § 3.45(e).

(f) *In camera materials.* If any filing includes materials that are subject to confidentiality protections pursuant to an order entered in either the proceeding under section 13(b) or the adjudicative proceeding, such materials shall be treated as *in camera* materials for purposes of this paragraph and the party shall file 2 versions of the document in accordance with the procedures set forth in § 3.45(e). The time within which complaint counsel may file an objection or response under this section will begin to run upon service of the *in camera* version of the motion (including any supporting briefs and memoranda).

[80 FR 15161, Mar. 23, 2015]

Subpart D—Discovery; Compulsory Process

§ 3.31 General discovery provisions.

(a) *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 things for inspection and other purposes; and requests for admission. Except as provided in the rules, or unless the Administrative Law Judge orders otherwise, the frequency or sequence of these methods is not limited. The parties shall, to the greatest extent practicable, conduct discovery simultaneously; the fact that a party is conducting discovery shall not operate to delay any other party's discovery. Unless all parties expressly agree otherwise, no discovery shall take place before the issuance of a prehearing scheduling order under § 3.21(c), except for the mandatory initial disclosures required by paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) *Mandatory initial disclosures.* Complaint counsel and respondent's counsel shall, within 5 days of receipt of a respondent's answer to the complaint and without awaiting a discovery request, provide to each other:

(1) The name, and, if known, the address and telephone number of each individual likely to have discoverable information relevant to the allegations of the Commission's complaint, to the proposed relief, or to the defenses of the respondent, as set forth in § 3.31(c)(1); and

(2) A copy of, or a description by category and location of, all documents and electronically stored information including declarations, transcripts of investigational hearings and depositions, and tangible things in the possession, custody, or control of the Commission or respondent(s) that are relevant to the allegations of the Commission's complaint, to the proposed relief, or to the defenses of the respondent, as set forth in § 3.31(c)(1); unless such information or materials are subject to the limitations in § 3.31(c)(2), privileged as defined in § 3.31(c)(4), pertain to hearing preparation as defined in § 3.31(c)(5), pertain to experts as defined in § 3.31A, or are obtainable from

§ 3.31

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

some other source that is more convenient, less burdensome, or less expensive. A party shall make its disclosures based on the information then reasonably available to it and is not excused from making its disclosures because it has not fully completed its investigation.

(c) *Scope of discovery.* Unless otherwise limited by order of the Administrative Law Judge or the Commission in accordance with these rules, the scope of discovery under all the rules in this part is as follows:

(1) *In general.* Parties may obtain discovery to the extent that it may be reasonably expected to yield information relevant to the allegations of the complaint, to the proposed relief, or to the defenses of any respondent. Such information may include the existence, description, nature, custody, condition, and location of any books, documents, other tangible things, electronically stored information, and the identity and location of persons having any knowledge of any discoverable matter. Information may not be withheld from discovery on grounds that the information will be inadmissible at the hearing if the information sought appears reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence.

(2) *Limitations.* Complaint counsel need only search for materials that were collected or reviewed in the course of the investigation of the matter or prosecution of the case and that are in the possession, custody or control of the Bureaus or Offices of the Commission that investigated the matter, including the Bureau of Economics. The Administrative Law Judge may authorize for good cause additional discovery of materials in the possession, custody, or control of those Bureaus or Offices, or authorize other discovery pursuant to § 3.36. Neither complaint counsel, respondent, nor a third party receiving a discovery request under these rules is required to search for materials generated and transmitted between an entity's counsel (including counsel's legal staff or in-house counsel) and not shared with anyone else, or between complaint counsel and non-testifying Commission employees, unless the Administrative Law Judge determines there is good

cause to provide such materials. The frequency or extent of use of the discovery methods otherwise permitted under these rules shall be limited by the Administrative Law Judge if he or she determines that:

(i) The discovery sought from a party or third party is unreasonably cumulative or duplicative, or is obtainable from some other source that is more convenient, less burdensome, or less expensive;

(ii) The party seeking discovery has had ample opportunity by discovery in the action to obtain the information sought; or

(iii) The burden and expense of the proposed discovery on a party or third party outweigh its likely benefit.

(3) *Electronically stored information.* A party or third party need not provide discovery of electronically stored information from sources that the party or third party identifies as not reasonably accessible because of undue burden or cost. On a motion to compel discovery, the party or third party from whom discovery is sought must show that the information is not reasonably accessible because of undue burden or cost. If that showing is made, the Administrative Law Judge may nonetheless order discovery if the requesting party shows good cause, considering the limitations of paragraph (c)(2). The Administrative Law Judge may specify conditions for the discovery.

(4) *Privilege.* Discovery shall be denied or limited in order to preserve the privilege of a witness, person, or governmental agency as governed by the Constitution, any applicable act of Congress, or the principles of the common law as they may be interpreted by the Commission in the light of reason and experience.

(5) *Hearing preparations: Materials.* Subject to the provisions of § 3.31A, a party may obtain discovery of documents and tangible things otherwise discoverable under paragraph (c)(1) of this section and prepared in anticipation of litigation or for hearing by or for another party or by or for that other party's representative (including the party's attorney, consultant, or agent) only upon a showing that the

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.31

party seeking discovery has substantial need of the materials in the preparation of its case and that the party 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.

(d) *Protective orders; orders to preserve evidence.* In order to protect the parties and third parties against improper use and disclosure of confidential information, the Administrative Law Judge shall issue a protective order as set forth in the appendix to this section. The Administrative Law Judge may also deny discovery or make any other order which justice requires to protect a party or other person from annoyance, embarrassment, oppression, or undue burden or expense, or to prevent undue delay in the proceeding. Such an order may also be issued to preserve evidence upon a showing that there is substantial reason to believe that such evidence would not otherwise be available for presentation at the hearing.

(e) *Supplementation of disclosures and responses.* A party who has made a mandatory initial disclosure under § 3.31(b) or responded to a request for discovery with a disclosure or response is under a duty to supplement or correct the disclosure or response to include information thereafter acquired if ordered by the Administrative Law Judge or in the following circumstances:

(1) A party is under a duty to supplement at appropriate intervals its mandatory initial disclosures under § 3.31(b) if the party learns that in some material respect the information disclosed is incomplete or incorrect and if the additional or corrective information has not otherwise been made known to the other parties during the discovery process or in writing.

(2) A party is under a duty to amend in a timely manner a prior response to an interrogatory, request for production, or request for admission if the party learns that the response is in

some material respect incomplete or incorrect.

(f) *Stipulations.* When approved by the Administrative Law Judge, the parties may by written stipulation (1) provide that depositions may be taken before any person, at any time or place, upon any notice, and in any manner and when so taken may be used like other depositions, and (2) modify the procedures provided by these rules for other methods of discovery.

(g) *Disclosure of privileged or protected information or communications; scope of waiver; obligations of receiving party.*

(1)(i) The disclosure of privileged or protected information or communications during a part 3 proceeding or during a Commission precomplaint investigation shall not operate as a waiver if:

(A) The disclosure is inadvertent;

(B) The holder of the privilege or protection took reasonable steps to prevent disclosure; and

(C) The holder promptly took reasonable steps to rectify the error, including notifying any party that received the information or communication of the claim and the basis for it.

(ii) After being notified, the receiving party must promptly return, sequester, or destroy the specified information and any copies it has; must not use or disclose the information until the claim is resolved; must take reasonable steps to retrieve the information if the party disclosed it before being notified; and may promptly present the information to the Administrative Law Judge under seal for a determination of the claim. The producing party must preserve the information until the claim is resolved.

(2) The disclosure of privileged or protected information or communications during a part 3 proceeding or during a Commission precomplaint investigation shall waive the privilege or protection as to undisclosed information or communications only if:

(i) The waiver is intentional;

(ii) The disclosed and undisclosed information or communications concern the same subject matter; and

(iii) They ought in fairness to be considered together.

(h) *Restriction on filings.* Unless otherwise ordered by the Administrative

§ 3.31

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

Law Judge in his or her discretion, mandatory initial and supplemental disclosures, interrogatories, depositions, requests for documents, requests for admissions, and answers and responses thereto shall be served upon other parties but shall not be filed with the Office of the Secretary, the Administrative Law Judge, or otherwise provided to the Commission, except to support or oppose a motion or to offer as evidence.

APPENDIX A TO § 3.31: STANDARD PROTECTIVE ORDER.

For the purpose of protecting the interests of the parties and third parties in the above-captioned matter against improper use and disclosure of confidential information submitted or produced in connection with this matter:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT this Protective Order Governing Confidential Material (“Protective Order”) shall govern the handling of all Discovery Material, as hereafter defined.

1. As used in this Order, “confidential material” shall refer to any document or portion thereof that contains privileged information, competitively sensitive information, or sensitive personal information. “Sensitive personal information” shall refer to, but shall not be limited to, an individual’s Social Security number, taxpayer identification number, financial account number, credit card or debit card number, driver’s license number, state-issued identification number, passport number, date of birth (other than year), and any sensitive health information identifiable by individual, such as an individual’s medical records. “Document” shall refer to any discoverable writing, recording, transcript of oral testimony, or electronically stored information in the possession of a party or a third party. “Commission” shall refer to the Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”), or any of its employees, agents, attorneys, and all other persons acting on its behalf, excluding persons retained as consultants or experts for purposes of this proceeding.

2. Any document or portion thereof submitted by a respondent or a third party during a Federal Trade Commission investigation or during the course of this proceeding that is entitled to confidentiality under the Federal Trade Commission Act, or any other federal statute or regulation, or under any federal court or Commission precedent interpreting such statute or regulation, as well as any information that discloses the substance of the contents of any confidential materials derived from a document subject to this Order, shall be treated as confidential material for purposes of this Order. The identity

of a third party submitting such confidential material shall also be treated as confidential material for the purposes of this Order where the submitter has requested such confidential treatment.

3. The parties and any third parties, in complying with informal discovery requests, disclosure requirements, or discovery demands in this proceeding may designate any responsive document or portion thereof as confidential material, including documents obtained by them from third parties pursuant to discovery or as otherwise obtained.

4. The parties, in conducting discovery from third parties, shall provide to each third party a copy of this Order so as to inform each such third party of his, her, or its rights herein.

5. A designation of confidentiality shall constitute a representation in good faith and after careful determination that the material is not reasonably believed to be already in the public domain and that counsel believes the material so designated constitutes confidential material as defined in Paragraph 1 of this Order.

6. Material may be designated as confidential by placing on or affixing to the document containing such material (in such manner as will not interfere with the legibility thereof), or if an entire folder or box of documents is confidential by placing or affixing to that folder or box, the designation “CONFIDENTIAL—FTC Docket No. XXXX” or any other appropriate notice that identifies this proceeding, together with an indication of the portion or portions of the document considered to be confidential material. Confidential information contained in electronic documents may also be designated as confidential by placing the designation “CONFIDENTIAL—FTC Docket No. XXXX” or any other appropriate notice that identifies this proceeding, on the face of the CD or DVD or other medium on which the document is produced. Masked or otherwise redacted copies of documents may be produced where the portions masked or redacted contain privileged matter, provided that the copy produced shall indicate at the appropriate point that portions have been masked or redacted and the reasons therefor.

7. Confidential material shall be disclosed only to: (a) the Administrative Law Judge presiding over this proceeding, personnel assisting the Administrative Law Judge, the Commission and its employees, and personnel retained by the Commission as experts or consultants for this proceeding; (b) judges and other court personnel of any court having jurisdiction over any appellate proceedings involving this matter; (c) outside counsel of record for any respondent, their associated attorneys and other employees of their law firm(s), provided they are

Federal Trade Commission

§3.31A

not employees of a respondent; (d) anyone retained to assist outside counsel in the preparation or hearing of this proceeding including consultants, provided they are not affiliated in any way with a respondent and have signed an agreement to abide by the terms of the protective order; and (e) any witness or deponent who may have authored or received the information in question.

8. Disclosure of confidential material to any person described in Paragraph 7 of this Order shall be only for the purposes of the preparation and hearing of this proceeding, or any appeal therefrom, and for no other purpose whatsoever, provided, however, that the Commission may, subject to taking appropriate steps to preserve the confidentiality of such material, use or disclose confidential material as provided by its Rules of Practice; sections 6(f) and 21 of the Federal Trade Commission Act; or any other legal obligation imposed upon the Commission.

9. In the event that any confidential material is contained in any pleading, motion, exhibit or other paper filed or to be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, the Secretary shall be so informed by the Party filing such papers, and such papers shall be filed *in camera*. To the extent that such material was originally submitted by a third party, the party including the materials in its papers shall immediately notify the submitter of such inclusion. Confidential material contained in the papers shall continue to have *in camera* treatment until further order of the Administrative Law Judge, provided, however, that such papers may be furnished to persons or entities who may receive confidential material pursuant to Paragraphs 7 or 8. Upon or after filing any paper containing confidential material, the filing party shall file on the public record a duplicate copy of the paper that does not reveal confidential material. Further, if the protection for any such material expires, a party may file on the public record a duplicate copy which also contains the formerly protected material.

10. If counsel plans to introduce into evidence at the hearing any document or transcript containing confidential material produced by another party or by a third party, they shall provide advance notice to the other party or third party for purposes of allowing that party to seek an order that the document or transcript be granted *in camera* treatment. If that party wishes *in camera* treatment for the document or transcript, the party shall file an appropriate motion with the Administrative Law Judge within 5 days after it receives such notice. Except where such an order is granted, all documents and transcripts shall be part of the public record. Where *in camera* treatment is granted, a duplicate copy of such document or transcript with the confidential material

deleted therefrom may be placed on the public record.

11. If any party receives a discovery request in any investigation or in any other proceeding or matter that may require the disclosure of confidential material submitted by another party or third party, the recipient of the discovery request shall promptly notify the submitter of receipt of such request. Unless a shorter time is mandated by an order of a court, such notification shall be in writing and be received by the submitter at least 10 business days before production, and shall include a copy of this Protective Order and a cover letter that will apprise the submitter of its rights hereunder. Nothing herein shall be construed as requiring the recipient of the discovery request or anyone else covered by this Order to challenge or appeal any order requiring production of confidential material, to subject itself to any penalties for non-compliance with any such order, or to seek any relief from the Administrative Law Judge or the Commission. The recipient shall not oppose the submitter's efforts to challenge the disclosure of confidential material. In addition, nothing herein shall limit the applicability of Rule 4.11(e) of the Commission's Rules of Practice, 16 CFR 4.11(e), to discovery requests in another proceeding that are directed to the Commission.

12. At the time that any consultant or other person retained to assist counsel in the preparation of this action concludes participation in the action, such person shall return to counsel all copies of documents or portions thereof designated confidential that are in the possession of such person, together with all notes, memoranda or other papers containing confidential information. At the conclusion of this proceeding, including the exhaustion of judicial review, the parties shall return documents obtained in this action to their submitters, provided, however, that the Commission's obligation to return documents shall be governed by the provisions of Rule 4.12 of the Rules of Practice, 16 CFR 4.12.

13. The provisions of this Protective Order, insofar as they restrict the communication and use of confidential discovery material, shall, without written permission of the submitter or further order of the Commission, continue to be binding after the conclusion of this proceeding.

[74 FR 1824, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 74 FR 20309, May 1, 2009; 76 FR 52251, 52252, Aug. 22, 2011]

§3.31A Expert discovery.

(a) The parties shall serve each other with a list of experts they intend to call as witnesses at the hearing not later than 1 day after the close of fact

§3.31A

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

discovery, meaning the close of discovery except for depositions and other discovery permitted under §3.24(a)(4), and discovery for purposes of authenticity and admissibility of exhibits. Complaint counsel shall serve the other parties with a report prepared by each of its expert witnesses not later than 14 days after the close of fact discovery. Each respondent shall serve each other party with a report prepared by each of its expert witnesses not later than 14 days after the deadline for service of complaint counsel's expert reports. Complaint counsel shall serve respondents with a list of any rebuttal expert witnesses and a rebuttal report prepared by each such witness not later than 10 days after the deadline for service of respondent's expert reports. Aside from any information required by paragraph (c), a rebuttal report shall be limited to rebuttal of matters set forth in a respondent's expert reports. If material outside the scope of fair rebuttal is presented, a respondent may file a motion not later than 5 days after the deadline for service of complaint counsel's rebuttal reports, seeking appropriate relief with the Administrative Law Judge, including striking all or part of the report, leave to submit a surrebuttal report by respondent's experts, or leave to call a surrebuttal witness and to submit a surrebuttal report by that witness.

(b) No party may call an expert witness at the hearing unless he or she has been listed and has provided reports as required by this section. Each side will be limited to calling at the evidentiary hearing 5 expert witnesses, including any rebuttal or surrebuttal expert witnesses. A party may file a motion seeking leave to call additional expert witnesses due to extraordinary circumstances.

(c) Each report shall be signed by the expert and contain a complete statement of all opinions to be expressed and the basis and reasons therefor; the data, materials, or other information considered by the witness in forming the opinions; any exhibits to be used as a summary of or support for the opinions; the qualifications of the witness, including a list of all publications authored by the witness within the preceding 10 years; the compensation to be

paid for the study and testimony; and a listing of any other cases in which the witness has testified as an expert at trial or by deposition within the preceding 4 years. A rebuttal or surrebuttal report need not include any information already included in the initial report of the witness.

(d) A party may depose any person who has been identified as an expert whose opinions may be presented at trial. Unless otherwise ordered by the Administrative Law Judge, a deposition of any expert witness shall be conducted after the disclosure of a report prepared by the witness in accordance with paragraph (a) of this section. Depositions of expert witnesses shall be completed not later than 65 days after the close of fact discovery. Upon motion, the Administrative Law Judge may order further discovery by other means, subject to such restrictions as to scope as the Administrative Law Judge may deem appropriate.

(e) A party may not discover facts known or opinions held by an expert who has been retained or specifically employed by another party in anticipation of litigation or preparation for hearing and who is not listed as a witness for the evidentiary hearing. A party may not discover drafts of any report required by this section, regardless of the form in which the draft is recorded, or any communications between another party's attorney and any of that other party's testifying experts, regardless of the form of the communications, except to the extent that the communications:

(1) Relate to compensation for the expert's study or testimony;

(2) Identify facts or data that the other party's attorney provided and that the expert considered in forming the opinions to be expressed; or

(3) Identify assumptions that the other party's attorney provided and that the expert relied on in forming the opinions to be expressed.

(f) The Administrative Law Judge may, upon a finding of good cause, alter the pre-hearing schedule set forth in this section; provided, however, that no such alteration shall affect the date

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.33

of the evidentiary hearing noticed in the complaint.

[74 FR 1826, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 52252, Aug. 22, 2011]

§ 3.32 Admissions.

(a) At any time after 30 days after issuance of a complaint, or after publication of notice of an adjudicative hearing in a rulemaking proceeding under § 3.13, any party may serve on any other party a written request for admission of the truth of any matters relevant to the pending proceeding set forth in the request that relate to statements or opinions of fact or of the application of law to fact, including the genuineness of any documents described in the request. Copies of documents shall be served with the request unless they have been or are otherwise furnished or are known to be, and in the request are stated as being, in the possession of the other party. Each matter of which an admission is requested shall be separately set forth.

(b) The matter is admitted unless, within 10 days after service of the request, or within such shorter or longer time as the Administrative Law Judge may allow, the party to whom the request is directed serves upon the party requesting the admission a sworn written answer or objection addressed to the matter. If objection is made, the reasons therefor shall be stated. The answer shall specifically deny the matter or set forth in detail the reasons why the answering party cannot truthfully admit or deny the matter. A denial shall fairly meet the substance of the requested admission, and when good faith requires that a party qualify its answer or deny only a part of the matter of which an admission is requested, the party shall specify so much of it as is true and qualify or deny the remainder. An answering party may not give lack of information or knowledge as a reason for failure to admit or deny unless the party states that it has made reasonable inquiry and that the information known to or readily obtainable by the party is insufficient to enable it to admit or deny. A party who considers that a matter of which an admission has been requested presents a genuine issue for trial may not, on that ground alone, object to the

request; the party may deny the matter or set forth reasons why the party cannot admit or deny it.

(c) Any matter admitted under this rule is conclusively established unless the Administrative Law Judge on motion permits withdrawal or amendment of the admission. The Administrative Law Judge may permit withdrawal or amendment when the presentation of the merits of the proceeding will be subverted thereby and the party who obtained the admission fails to satisfy the Administrative Law Judge that withdrawal or amendment will prejudice him in maintaining his action or defense on the merits. Any admission made by a party under this rule is for the purpose of the pending proceeding only and is not an admission by him for any other purpose nor may it be used against him in any other proceeding.

[43 FR 56865, Dec. 4, 1978, as amended at 50 FR 53305, Dec. 31, 1985; 80 FR 15161, Mar. 23, 2015]

§ 3.33 Depositions.

(a) *In general.* Any party may take a deposition of any named person or of a person or persons described with reasonable particularity, provided that such deposition is reasonably expected to yield information within the scope of discovery under § 3.31(c)(1) and subject to the requirements in § 3.36. Such party may, by motion, obtain from the Administrative Law Judge an order to preserve relevant evidence upon a showing that there is substantial reason to believe that such evidence would not otherwise be available for presentation at the hearing. Depositions may be taken before any person having power to administer oaths, either under the law of the United States or of the state or other place in which the deposition is taken, who may be designated by the party seeking the deposition, provided that such person shall have no interest in the outcome of the proceeding. The party seeking the deposition shall serve upon each person whose deposition is sought and upon each party to the proceeding reasonable notice in writing of the time and place at which it will be taken, and the name and address of each person or persons to be examined, if known, and

§ 3.33

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

if the name is not known, a description sufficient to identify them. The parties may stipulate in writing or the Administrative Law Judge may upon motion order that a deposition be taken by telephone or other remote electronic means. A deposition taken by such means is deemed taken at the place where the deponent is to answer questions.

(b) The Administrative Law Judge may rule on motion by a party that a deposition shall not be taken upon a determination that such deposition would not be reasonably expected to meet the scope of discovery set forth under § 3.31(c), or that the value of the deposition would be outweighed by the considerations set forth under § 3.43(b). The fact that a witness testifies at an investigative hearing does not preclude the deposition of that witness.

(c)(1) *Notice to corporation or other organization.* A party may name as the deponent a public or private corporation, partnership, association, governmental agency other than the Federal Trade Commission, or any bureau or regional office of the Federal Trade Commission, and describe with reasonable particularity the matters on which examination is requested. The organization so named shall designate one or more officers, directors, or managing agents, or other persons who consent to testify on its behalf, and may set forth, for each person designated, the matters on which he or she will testify. A subpoena shall advise a non-party organization of its duty to make such a designation. The persons so designated shall testify as to matters known or reasonably available to the organization. This subsection does not preclude taking a deposition by any other procedure authorized in these rules.

(2) *Restriction on filings.* Except as provided in § 3.31(h), notices of depositions shall not be filed with the Office of the Secretary or with the Administrative Law Judge, or otherwise provided to the Commission.

(d) *Taking of deposition.* Each deponent shall be duly sworn, and any party shall have the right to question him or her. Objections to questions or to evidence presented shall be in short form, stating the grounds of objections relied

upon. The questions propounded and the answers thereto, together with all objections made, shall be recorded and certified by the officer. Thereafter, upon payment of the charges therefor, the officer shall furnish a copy of the deposition to the deponent and to any party.

(e) *Depositions upon written questions.* A party desiring to take a deposition upon written questions shall serve them upon every other party with a notice stating:

(1) The name and address of the person who is to answer them, and

(2) The name or descriptive title and address of the officer before whom the deposition is to be taken.

A deposition upon written questions may be taken of a public or private corporation, partnership, association, governmental agency other than the Federal Trade Commission, or any bureau or regional office of the Federal Trade Commission in accordance with the provisions of § 3.33(c). Within 30 days after the notice and written questions are served, any other party may serve cross questions upon all other parties. Within 10 days after being served with cross questions, the party taking the deposition may serve redirect questions upon all other parties. Within 10 days after being served with redirect questions, any other party may serve recross questions upon all other parties. The content of any question shall not be disclosed to the deponent prior to the taking of the deposition. A copy of the notice and copies of all questions served shall be delivered by the party taking the deposition to the officer designated in the notice, who shall proceed promptly to take the testimony of the deponent in response to the questions and to prepare, certify, and file or mail the deposition, attaching thereto the copy of the notice and the questions received by him or her. When the deposition is filed the party taking it shall promptly give notice thereof to all other parties.

(f) *Correction of deposition.* A deposition may be corrected, as to form or substance, in the manner provided by § 3.44(b). Any such deposition shall, in addition to the other required procedures, be read to or by the deponent and signed by him or her, unless the

parties by stipulation waive the signing or the deponent is unavailable or cannot be found or refuses to sign. If the deposition is not signed by the deponent within 30 days of its submission or attempted submission, the officer shall sign it and certify that the signing has been waived or that the deponent is unavailable or that the deponent has refused to sign, as the case may be, together with the reason for the refusal to sign, if any has been given. The deposition may then be used as though signed unless, on a motion to suppress under § 3.33(g)(2)(iv), the Administrative Law Judge determines that the reasons given for the refusal to sign require rejection of the deposition in whole or in part. In addition to and not in lieu of the procedure for formal correction of the deposition, the deponent may enter in the record at the time of signing a list of objections to the transcription of his or her remarks, stating with specificity the alleged errors in the transcript.

(g) *Objections; errors and irregularities*—(1) *Objections to admissibility*. Subject to the provisions of paragraph (g)(2) of this section, objection may be made at the hearing to receiving in evidence any deposition or part thereof for any reason which would require the exclusion of the evidence if the witness were then present and testifying.

(2) *Effect of errors and irregularities in depositions*—(i) *As to notice*. All errors and irregularities in the notice for taking a deposition are waived unless written objection is promptly served upon the party giving the notice.

(ii) *As to disqualification of officer*. Objection to taking a deposition because of disqualification of the officer before whom it is to be taken is waived unless made before the taking of the deposition begins or as soon thereafter as the disqualification becomes known or could be discovered with reasonable diligence.

(iii) *As to taking of deposition*. (A) Objections to the competency of a witness or to the competency, relevancy, or materiality of testimony are not waived by failure to make them before or during the taking of the deposition, unless the ground of the objection is one which might have been obviated or removed if presented at that time.

(B) Errors and irregularities occurring at the oral examination in the manner of taking the deposition, in the form of the questions or answers, in the oath or affirmation, or in the conduct of parties, and errors of any kind which might be obviated, removed, or cured if promptly presented, are waived unless seasonable objection thereto is made at the taking of the deposition.

(C) Objections to the form of written questions are waived unless served in writing upon all parties within the time allowed for serving the succeeding cross or other questions and within 5 days after service of the last questions authorized.

(iv) *As to completion and return of deposition*. Errors and irregularities in the manner in which the testimony is transcribed or the deposition is prepared, signed, certified, endorsed, or otherwise dealt with by the officer are waived unless a motion to suppress the deposition or some part thereof is made with reasonable promptness after such defect is or with due diligence might have been ascertained.

[74 FR 1827, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 80 FR 15162, Mar. 23, 2015]

§ 3.34 Subpoenas.

(a) *Subpoenas ad testificandum*. Counsel for a party may sign and issue a subpoena, on a form provided by the Secretary, requiring a person to appear and give testimony at the taking of a deposition to a party requesting such subpoena or to attend and give testimony at an adjudicative hearing.

(b) *Subpoenas duces tecum; subpoenas to permit inspection of premises*. Counsel for a party may sign and issue a subpoena, on a form provided by the Secretary, commanding a person to produce and permit inspection and copying of designated books, documents, or tangible things, or commanding a person to permit inspection of premises, at a time and place therein specified. The subpoena shall specify with reasonable particularity the material to be produced. The person commanded by the subpoena need not appear in person at the place of production or inspection unless commanded to appear for a deposition or hearing

§ 3.35

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section. As used herein, the term “documents” includes written materials, electronically stored information, and tangible things. A subpoena *duces tecum* may be used by any party for purposes of discovery, for obtaining documents for use in evidence, or for both purposes, and shall specify with reasonable particularity the materials to be produced.

(c) *Motions to quash; limitation on subpoenas.* Any motion by the subject of a subpoena to limit or quash the subpoena shall be filed within the earlier of 10 days after service thereof or the time for compliance therewith. Such motions shall set forth all assertions of privilege or other factual and legal objections to the subpoena, including all appropriate arguments, affidavits and other supporting documentation, and shall include the statement required by § 3.22(g). Nothing in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section authorizes the issuance of subpoenas except in accordance with §§ 3.31(c)(2) and 3.36.

[74 FR 1828, Jan. 13, 2009]

§ 3.35 Interrogatories to parties.

(a) *Availability; procedures for use.* (1) Any party may serve upon any other party written interrogatories, not exceeding 25 in number, including all discrete subparts, to be answered by the party served or, if the party served is a public or private corporation, partnership, association or governmental agency, by any officer or agent, who shall furnish such information as is available to the party. For this purpose, information shall not be deemed to be available insofar as it is in the possession of the Commissioners, the General Counsel, the office of Administrative Law Judges, or the Secretary in his or her capacity as custodian or recorder of any such information, or their respective staffs.

(2) Each interrogatory shall be answered separately and fully in writing under oath, unless it is objected to on grounds not raised and ruled on in connection with the authorization, in which event the reasons for objection shall be stated in lieu of an answer. The answers are to be signed by the person making them, and the objec-

tions signed by the attorney making them. The party upon whom the interrogatories have been served shall serve a copy of the answers, and objections, if any, within 30 days after the service of the interrogatories. The Administrative Law Judge may allow a shorter or longer time.

(3) Except as provided in § 3.31(h), interrogatories shall not be filed with the Office of the Secretary, the Administrative Law Judge, or otherwise provided to the Commission.

(b) *Scope; use at hearing.* (1) Interrogatories may relate to any matters that can be inquired into under § 3.31(c)(1), and the answers may be used to the extent permitted by the rules of evidence.

(2) An interrogatory otherwise proper is not necessarily objectionable merely because an answer to the interrogatory involves an opinion or contention that relates to fact or the application of law to fact, but such an interrogatory need not be answered until after designated discovery has been completed, but in no case later than 3 days before the final prehearing conference.

(c) *Option to produce records.* Where the answer to an interrogatory may be derived or ascertained from the records of the party upon whom the interrogatory has been served or from an examination, audit, or inspection of such records, or from a compilation, abstract, or summary based thereon, and the burden of deriving or ascertaining the answer is substantially the same for the party serving the interrogatory as for the party served, it is a sufficient answer to such interrogatory to specify the records from which the answer may be derived or ascertained and to afford to the party serving the interrogatory reasonable opportunity to examine, audit or inspect such records and to make copies, compilations, abstracts or summaries. The specification shall include sufficient detail to permit the interrogating party to identify readily the individual documents from which the answer may be ascertained.

[74 FR 1828, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 80 FR 15162, Mar. 23, 2015]

§ 3.36 Applications for subpoenas for records of or appearances by certain officials or employees of the Commission or officials or employees of governmental agencies other than the Commission, and subpoenas to be served in a foreign country.

(a) *Form.* An application for issuance of a subpoena for the production of documents, as defined in § 3.34(b), or for the issuance of a request requiring the production of or access to documents, other tangible things, or electronically stored information for the purposes described in § 3.37(a), in the possession, custody, or control of the Commissioners, the General Counsel, any Bureau or Office not involved in the matter, the office of Administrative Law Judges, or the Secretary in his or her capacity as custodian or recorder of any such information, or their respective staffs, or of a governmental agency other than the Commission or the officials or employees of such other agency, or for the issuance of a subpoena requiring the appearance of a Commissioner, the General Counsel, an official of any Bureau or Office not involved in the matter, an Administrative Law Judge, or the Secretary in his or her capacity as custodian or recorder of any such information, or their respective staffs, or of an official or employee of another governmental agency, or for the issuance of a subpoena to be served in a foreign country, shall be made in the form of a written motion filed in accordance with the provisions of § 3.22(a). No application for records pursuant to § 4.11 of this chapter or the Freedom of Information Act may be filed with the Administrative Law Judge.

(b) *Content.* The motion shall make a showing that:

(1) The material sought is reasonable in scope;

(2) If for purposes of discovery, the material falls within the limits of discovery under § 3.31(c)(1), or, if for an adjudicative hearing, the material is reasonably relevant;

(3) If for purposes of discovery, the information or material sought cannot reasonably be obtained by other means or, if for purposes of compelling a witness to appear at the evidentiary hear-

ing, the movant has a compelling need for the testimony;

(4) With respect to subpoenas to be served in a foreign country, that the party seeking discovery or testimony has a good faith belief that the discovery requested would be permitted by treaty, law, custom, or practice in the country from which the discovery or testimony is sought and that any additional procedural requirements have been or will be met before the subpoena is served; and

(5) If the subpoena requires access to documents or other tangible things, it meets the requirements of § 3.37.

(c) *Execution.* If an Administrative Law Judge issues an order authorizing a subpoena pursuant to this section, the moving party may forward to the Secretary a request for the authorized subpoena, with a copy of the authorizing order attached. Each such subpoena shall be signed by the Secretary; shall have attached to it a copy of the authorizing order; and shall be served by the moving party only in conjunction with a copy of the authorizing order.

[74 FR 1828, Jan. 13, 2009]

§ 3.37 Production of documents, electronically stored information, and any tangible things; access for inspection and other purposes.

(a) *Availability; procedures for use.* Any party may serve on another party a request: to produce and permit the party making the request, or someone acting on the party's behalf, to inspect and copy any designated documents or electronically stored information, as defined in § 3.34(b), or to inspect and copy, test, or sample any tangible things which are within the scope of § 3.31(c)(1) and in the possession, custody, or control of the party upon whom the request is served; or to permit entry upon designated land or other property in the possession or control of the party upon whom the order would be served for the purpose of inspection and measuring, surveying, photographing, testing, or sampling the property or any designated object or operation thereon, within the scope of § 3.31(c)(1). Each such request shall specify with reasonable particularity the documents or things to be

§ 3.38

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

produced or inspected, or the property to be entered. Each such request shall also specify a reasonable time, place, and manner of making the production or inspection and performing the related acts. Each request may specify the form in which electronically stored information is to be produced, but the requested form of electronically stored information must not be overly burdensome or unnecessarily costly to the producing party. A party shall make documents available as they are kept in the usual course of business or shall organize and label them to correspond with the categories in the request. A person not a party to the action may be compelled to produce documents and things or to submit to an inspection as provided in § 3.34. Except as provided in § 3.31(h), requests under this section shall not be filed with the Office of the Secretary, the Administrative Law Judge, or otherwise provided to the Commission.

(b) *Response; objections.* No more than 30 days after receiving the request, the response of the party upon whom the request is served shall state, with respect to each item or category, that inspection and related activities will be permitted as requested, unless the request is objected to, in which event the reasons for the objection shall be stated. If objection is made to part of an item or category, the part shall be specified and inspection permitted of the remaining parts. The response may state an objection to a requested form for producing electronically stored information. If the responding party objects to a requested form - or if no form was specified in the request - the party must state the form it intends to use. The party submitting the request may move for an order under § 3.38(a) with respect to any objection to or other failure to respond to the request or any part thereof, or any failure to permit inspection as requested.

(c) *Production of documents or electronically stored information.* Unless otherwise stipulated or ordered by the Administrative Law Judge, these procedures apply to producing documents or electronically stored information:

(i) A party must produce documents as they are kept in the usual course of business or must organize and label

them to correspond to the categories in the request;

(ii) If a request does not specify a form for producing electronically stored information, a party must produce it in a form in which it is ordinarily maintained or in a reasonably usable form; and

(iii) A party need not produce the same electronically stored information in more than one form.

[74 FR 1829, Jan. 13, 2009]

§ 3.38 Motion for order compelling disclosure or discovery; sanctions.

(a) *Motion for order to compel.* A party may apply by motion to the Administrative Law Judge for an order compelling disclosure or discovery, including a determination of the sufficiency of the answers or objections with respect to the mandatory initial disclosures required by § 3.31(b), a request for admission under § 3.32, a deposition under § 3.33, an interrogatory under § 3.35, or a production of documents or things or access for inspection or other purposes under § 3.37. Any memorandum in support of such motion shall be no longer than 2,500 words. Any response to the motion by the opposing party must be filed within 5 days of receipt of service of the motion and shall be no longer than 2,500 words. These word count limitations include headings, footnotes, and quotations, but do not include the cover, table of contents, table of citations or authorities, glossaries, statements with respect to oral argument, any addendums containing statutes, rules or regulations, any certificates of counsel, proposed form of order, and any attachment required by § 3.45(e). The Administrative Law Judge shall rule on a motion to compel within 3 business days of the date in which the response is due. Unless the Administrative Law Judge determines that the objection is justified, the Administrative Law Judge shall order that an initial disclosure or an answer to any requests for admissions, documents, depositions, or interrogatories be served or disclosure otherwise be made.

(b) If a party or an officer or agent of a party fails to comply with any discovery obligation imposed by these rules, upon motion by the aggrieved party, the Administrative Law Judge

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.39

or the Commission, or both, may take such action in regard thereto as is just, including but not limited to the following:

(1) Order that any answer be amended to comply with the request, subpoena, or order;

(2) Order that the matter be admitted or that the admission, testimony, documents, or other evidence would have been adverse to the party;

(3) Rule that for the purposes of the proceeding the matter or matters concerning which the order or subpoena was issued be taken as established adversely to the party;

(4) Rule that the party may not introduce into evidence or otherwise rely, in support of any claim or defense, upon testimony by such party, officer, agent, expert, or fact witness, or the documents or other evidence, or upon any other improperly withheld or undisclosed materials, information, witnesses, or other discovery;

(5) Rule that the party may not be heard to object to introduction and use of secondary evidence to show what the withheld admission, testimony, documents, or other evidence would have shown;

(6) Rule that a pleading, or part of a pleading, or a motion or other submission by the party, concerning which the order or subpoena was issued, be stricken, or that a decision of the proceeding be rendered against the party, or both.

(c) Any such action may be taken by written or oral order issued in the course of the proceeding or by inclusion in a recommended decision of the Administrative Law Judge or an order or opinion of the Commission. It shall be the duty of parties to seek and Administrative Law Judges to grant such of the foregoing means of relief or other appropriate relief as may be sufficient to compensate for withheld testimony, documents, or other evidence. If in the Administrative Law Judge's opinion such relief would not be sufficient, or in instances where a nonparty fails to comply with a subpoena or order, he or she shall certify to the Commission a request that court en-

forcement of the subpoena or order be sought.

[74 FR 1829, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 88 FR 42876, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.38A Withholding requested material.

(a) Any person withholding material responsive to a subpoena issued pursuant to § 3.34 or § 3.36, written interrogatories requested pursuant to § 3.35, a request for production or access pursuant to § 3.37, or any other request for the production of materials under this part, shall assert a claim of privilege or any similar claim not later than the date set for production of the material. Such person shall, if so directed in the subpoena or other request for production, submit, together with such claim, a schedule which describes the nature of the documents, communications, or tangible things not produced or disclosed - and does so in a manner that, without revealing information itself privileged or protected, will enable other parties to assess the claim. The schedule need not describe any material outside the scope of the duty to search set forth in § 3.31(c)(2) except to the extent that the Administrative Law Judge has authorized additional discovery as provided in that paragraph.

(b) A person withholding material for reasons described in § 3.38A(a) shall comply with the requirements of that subsection in lieu of filing a motion to limit or quash compulsory process.

(Sec. 5 of the FTC Act (15 U.S.C. 45))

[74 FR 1830, Jan. 13, 2009]

§ 3.39 Orders requiring witnesses to testify or provide other information and granting immunity.

(a) Where Commission complaint counsel desire the issuance of an order requiring a witness or deponent to testify or provide other information and granting immunity under 18 U.S.C. 6002, Directors and Assistant Directors of Bureaus and Regional Directors and Assistant Regional Directors of Commission Regional Offices who supervise complaint counsel responsible for presenting evidence in support of the complaint are authorized to determine:

§ 3.40

(1) That the testimony or other information sought from a witness or deponent, or prospective witness or deponent, may be necessary to the public interest, and

(2) That such individual has refused or is likely to refuse to testify or provide such information on the basis of his or her privilege against self-incrimination; and to request, through the Commission's liaison officer, approval by the Attorney General for the issuance of such order. Upon receipt of approval by the Attorney General (or his or her designee), the Administrative Law Judge is authorized to issue an order requiring the witness or deponent to testify or provide other information and granting immunity when the witness or deponent has invoked his or her privilege against self-incrimination and it cannot be determined that such privilege was improperly invoked.

(b) Requests by counsel other than Commission complaint counsel for an order requiring a witness to testify or provide other information and granting immunity under 18 U.S.C. 6002 may be made to the Administrative Law Judge and may be made *ex parte*. When such requests are made, the Administrative Law Judge is authorized to determine:

(1) That the testimony or other information sought from a witness or deponent, or prospective witness or deponent, may be necessary to the public interest, and

(2) That such individual has refused or is likely to refuse to testify or provide such information on the basis of his or her privilege against self-incrimination; and, upon making such determinations, to request, through the Commission's liaison officer, approval by the Attorney General for the issuance of an order requiring a witness to testify or provide other information and granting immunity; and, after the Attorney General (or his or her designee) has granted such approval, to issue such order when the witness or deponent has invoked his or her privilege against self-incrimination and it cannot be determined that such privilege was improperly invoked.

(18 U.S.C. 6002, 6004)

[74 FR 1830, Jan. 13, 2009]

16 CFR Ch. I (1-1-25 Edition)

§ 3.40 Admissibility of evidence in advertising substantiation cases.

(a) If a person, partnership, or corporation is required through compulsory process under section 6, 9 or 20 of the Act issued after October 26, 1977 to submit to the Commission substantiation in support of an express or an implied representation contained in an advertisement, such person, partnership or corporation shall not thereafter be allowed, in any adjudicative proceeding in which it is alleged that the person, partnership, or corporation lacked a reasonable basis for the representation, and for any purpose relating to the defense of such allegation, to introduce into the record, whether directly or indirectly through references contained in documents or oral testimony, any material of any type whatsoever that was required to be but was not timely submitted in response to said compulsory process. *Provided, however*, that a person, partnership, or corporation is not, within the meaning of this section, required through compulsory process to submit substantiation with respect to those portions of said compulsory process to which such person, partnership, or corporation has raised good faith legal objections in a timely motion pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, until the Commission denies such motion; or if the person, partnership, or corporation thereafter continues to refuse to comply, until such process has been judicially enforced.

(b) The Administrative Law Judge shall, upon motion, at any stage exclude all material that was required to be but was not timely submitted in response to compulsory process described in paragraph (a) of this section, or any reference to such material, unless the person, partnership, or corporation demonstrates in a hearing, and the Administrative Law Judge finds, that by the exercise of due diligence the material could not have been timely submitted in response to the compulsory process, and that the Commission was notified of the existence of the material immediately upon its discovery. Said findings of the Administrative Law Judge shall be in writing and shall specify with particularity the evidence

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.42

relied upon. The rules normally governing the admissibility of evidence in Commission proceedings shall in any event apply to any material coming within the above exception.

[42 FR 56500, Oct. 10, 1977; 42 FR 61450, Dec. 5, 1977, as amended at 45 FR 45578, July 7, 1980]

Subpart E—Hearings

§ 3.41 General hearing rules.

(a) *Public hearings.* All hearings in adjudicative proceedings shall be public unless an *in camera* order is entered by the Administrative Law Judge pursuant to § 3.45(b) of this chapter or unless otherwise ordered by the Commission.

(b) *Expedition.* Hearings shall proceed with all reasonable expedition, and, insofar as practicable, shall be held at one place and shall continue, except for brief intervals of the sort normally involved in judicial proceedings, without suspension until concluded. The hearing will take place on the date specified in the notice accompanying the complaint, pursuant to § 3.11(b)(4), and should be limited to no more than 210 hours. The Commission, upon a showing of good cause, may order a later date for the evidentiary hearing to commence or extend the number of hours for the hearing. Consistent with the requirements of expedition:

(1) The Administrative Law Judge may order hearings at more than one place and may grant a reasonable recess at the end of a case-in-chief for the purpose of discovery deferred during the prehearing procedure if the Administrative Law Judge determines that such recess will materially expedite the ultimate disposition of the proceeding.

(2) When actions involving a common question of law or fact are pending before the Administrative Law Judge, the Commission or the Administrative Law Judge may order a joint hearing of any or all the matters in issue in the actions; the Commission or the Administrative Law Judge may order all the actions consolidated; and the Commission or the Administrative Law Judge may make such orders concerning proceedings therein as may tend to avoid unnecessary costs or delay.

(3) When separate hearings will be conducive to expedition and economy,

the Commission or the Administrative Law Judge may order a separate hearing of any claim, or of any separate issue, or of any number of claims or issues.

(4) Each side shall be allotted no more than half of the trial time within which to present its opening statements, *in limine* motions, all arguments excluding the closing argument, direct or cross examinations, or other evidence.

(5) Each side shall be permitted to make an opening statement that is no more than 2 hours in duration.

(6) Each side shall be permitted to make a closing argument no later than 5 days after the last filed proposed findings. The closing argument shall last no longer than 2 hours.

(c) *Rights of parties.* Every party, except intervenors, whose rights are determined under § 3.14, shall have the right of due notice, cross-examination, presentation of evidence, objection, motion, argument, and all other rights essential to a fair hearing.

(d) *Adverse witnesses.* An adverse party, or an officer, agent, or employee thereof, and any witness who appears to be hostile, unwilling, or evasive, may be interrogated by leading questions and may also be contradicted and impeached by the party calling him or her.

(e) Requests for an order requiring a witness to testify or provide other information and granting immunity under 18 U.S.C. 6002 shall be disposed of in accordance with § 3.39.

(f) *Collateral federal court actions.* (1) The pendency of a collateral federal court action that relates to the administrative adjudication shall not stay the proceeding:

(i) Unless a court of competent jurisdiction, or the Commission for good cause, so directs; or

(ii) Except as provided in § 3.26.

(2) A stay shall toll any deadlines set by the rules.

[74 FR 1830, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 80 FR 15162, Mar. 23, 2015]

§ 3.42 Presiding officials.

(a) *Who presides.* Hearings in adjudicative proceedings shall be presided over by a duly qualified Administrative Law Judge or by the Commission or

§ 3.42

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

one or more members of the Commission sitting as Administrative Law Judges; and the term *Administrative Law Judge* as used in this part means and applies to the Commission or any of its members when so sitting.

(b) *How assigned.* The presiding Administrative Law Judge shall be designated by the Chief Administrative Law Judge or, when the Commission or one or more of its members preside, by the Commission, who shall notify the parties of the Administrative Law Judge designated.

(c) *Powers and duties.* Administrative Law Judges shall have the duty to conduct fair and impartial hearings, to take all necessary action to avoid delay in the disposition of proceedings, and to maintain order. They shall have all powers necessary to that end, including the following:

- (1) To administer oaths and affirmations;
- (2) To issue subpoenas and orders requiring answers to questions;
- (3) To take depositions or to cause depositions to be taken;
- (4) To compel admissions, upon request of a party or on their own initiative;
- (5) To rule upon offers of proof and receive evidence;
- (6) To regulate the course of the hearings and the conduct of the parties and their counsel therein;
- (7) To hold conferences for settlement, simplification of the issues, or any other proper purpose;
- (8) To consider and rule upon, as justice may require, all procedural and other motions appropriate in an adjudicative proceeding, including motions to open defaults;
- (9) To make and file recommended decisions;
- (10) To certify questions to the Commission for its determination;
- (11) To reject written submissions that fail to comply with rule requirements, or deny *in camera* status without prejudice until a party complies with all relevant rules; and
- (12) To take any action authorized by the rules in this part or in conformance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act as restated and incorporated in title 5, U.S.C.

(d) *Suspension of attorneys by Administrative Law Judge.* The Administrative Law Judge shall have the authority, for good cause stated on the record, to suspend or bar from participation in a particular proceeding any attorney who shall refuse to comply with his directions, or who shall be guilty of disorderly, dilatory, obstructionist, or contumacious conduct, or contemptuous language in the course of such proceeding. Any attorney so suspended or barred may appeal to the Commission in accordance with the provisions of § 3.23(a). The appeal shall not operate to suspend the hearing unless otherwise ordered by the Administrative Law Judge or the Commission; in the event the hearing is not suspended, the attorney may continue to participate therein pending disposition of the appeal.

(e) *Substitution of Administrative Law Judge.* In the event of the substitution of a new Administrative Law Judge for the one originally designated, any motion predicated upon such substitution shall be made within 5 days thereafter.

(f) *Interference.* In the performance of their adjudicative functions, Administrative Law Judges shall not be responsible to or subject to the supervision or direction of any officer, employee, or agent engaged in the performance of investigative or prosecuting functions for the Commission, and all direction by the Commission to Administrative Law Judges concerning any adjudicative proceedings shall appear in and be made a part of the record.

(g) *Disqualification of Administrative Law Judges.* (1) When an Administrative Law Judge deems himself disqualified to preside in a particular proceeding, he shall withdraw therefrom by notice on the record and shall notify the Director of Administrative Law Judges of such withdrawal.

(2) Whenever any party shall deem the Administrative Law Judge for any reason to be disqualified to preside, or to continue to preside, in a particular proceeding, such party may file with the Secretary a motion addressed to the Administrative Law Judge to disqualify and remove him, such motion to be supported by affidavits setting forth the alleged grounds for disqualification. If the Administrative Law

Judge does not disqualify himself within 10 days, he shall certify the motion to the Commission, together with any statement he may wish to have considered by the Commission. The Commission shall promptly determine the validity of the grounds alleged, either directly or on the report of another Administrative Law Judge appointed to conduct a hearing for that purpose.

(3) Such motion shall be filed at the earliest practicable time after the participant learns, or could reasonably have learned, of the alleged grounds for disqualification.

(h) *Failure to comply with Administrative Law Judge's directions.* Any party who refuses or fails to comply with a lawfully issued order or direction of an Administrative Law Judge may be considered to be in contempt of the Commission. The circumstances of any such neglect, refusal, or failure, together with a recommendation for appropriate action, shall be promptly certified by the Administrative Law Judge to the Commission. The Commission may make such orders in regard thereto as the circumstances may warrant.

[32 FR 8449, June 13, 1967, as amended at 37 FR 5609, Mar. 17, 1972; 41 FR 8340, Feb. 26, 1976; 43 FR 56868, Dec. 4, 1978; 46 FR 45750, Sept. 15, 1981; 50 FR 53306, Dec. 31, 1985; 66 FR 17629, Apr. 3, 2001; 80 FR 15162, Mar. 23, 2015; 88 FR 42876, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.43 Evidence.

(a) *Burden of proof.* Counsel representing the Commission, or any person who has filed objections sufficient to warrant the holding of an adjudicative hearing pursuant to § 3.13, shall have the burden of proof, but the proponent of any factual proposition shall be required to sustain the burden of proof with respect thereto.

(b) *Admissibility.* Relevant, material, and reliable evidence shall be admitted. Irrelevant, immaterial, and unreliable evidence shall be excluded. Evidence, even if relevant, may be excluded if its probative value is substantially outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice, confusion of the issues, or if the evidence would be misleading, or based on considerations of undue delay, waste of time, or needless presentation of cumulative evidence. Evidence that constitutes hearsay may be

admitted if it is relevant, material, and bears satisfactory indicia of reliability so that its use is fair. Hearsay is a statement, other than one made by the declarant while testifying at the hearing, offered in evidence to prove the truth of the matter asserted. If otherwise meeting the standards for admissibility described in this paragraph, depositions, investigational hearings, prior testimony in Commission or other proceedings, expert reports, and any other form of hearsay, shall be admissible and shall not be excluded solely on the ground that they are or contain hearsay. However, absent the consent of the parties, before admitting prior testimony (including expert reports) from other proceedings where either the Commission or respondent did not participate, except for other proceedings where the Commission and at least one respondent did participate, the Administrative Law Judge must make a finding upon the motion of a party seeking the admission of such evidence that the prior testimony would not be duplicative, would not present unnecessary hardship to a party or delay to the proceedings, and would aid in the determination of the matter. Statements or testimony by a party-opponent, if relevant, shall be admitted.

(c) *Admissibility of third party documents.* Extrinsic evidence of authenticity as a condition precedent to admissibility of documents received from third parties is not required with respect to the original or a duplicate of a domestic record of regularly conducted activity by that third party that otherwise meets the standards of admissibility described in paragraph (b) if accompanied by a written declaration of its custodian or other qualified person, in a manner complying with any Act of Congress or rule prescribed by the Supreme Court pursuant to statutory authority, certifying that the record:

(1) Was made at or near the time of the occurrence of the matters set forth by, or from information transmitted by, a person with knowledge of those matters;

(2) Was kept in the course of the regularly conducted activity; and

(3) Was made by the regularly conducted activity as a regular practice.

§ 3.44

(d) *Presentation of evidence.* (1) A party is entitled to present its case or defense by sworn oral testimony and documentary evidence, to submit rebuttal evidence, and to conduct such cross-examination as, in the discretion of the Commission or the Administrative Law Judge, may be required for a full and true disclosure of the facts.

(2) The Administrative Law Judge shall exercise reasonable control over the mode and order of interrogating witnesses and presenting evidence so as to—

(i) Make the interrogation and presentation effective for the ascertainment of the truth;

(ii) Avoid needless consumption of time; and

(iii) Protect witnesses from harassment or undue embarrassment.

(3) As respondents are in the best position to determine the nature of documents generated by such respondents and which come from their own files, the burden of proof is on the respondent to introduce evidence to rebut a presumption that such documents are authentic and kept in the regular course of business.

(e) *Information obtained in investigations.* Any documents, papers, books, physical exhibits, or other materials or information obtained by the Commission under any of its powers may be disclosed by counsel representing the Commission when necessary in connection with adjudicative proceedings and may be offered in evidence by counsel representing the Commission in any such proceeding

(f) *Official notice.* “Official notice” may be taken of any material fact that is not subject to reasonable dispute in that it is either generally known within the Commission’s expertise or capable of accurate and ready determination by resort to sources whose accuracy cannot reasonably be questioned. If official notice is requested or is taken of a material fact not appearing in the evidence in the record, the parties, upon timely request, shall be afforded an opportunity to disprove such noticed fact.

(g) *Objections.* Objections to evidence shall timely and briefly state the grounds relied upon, but the transcript shall not include argument or debate

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

thereon except as ordered by the Administrative Law Judge. Rulings on all objections shall appear in the record.

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

(i) *Excluded evidence.* When an objection to a question propounded to a witness is sustained, the questioner may make a specific offer of what he or she expects to prove by the answer of the witness, or the Administrative Law Judge may, in his or her discretion, receive and report the evidence in full. Rejected exhibits, adequately marked for identification, shall be retained in the record so as to be available for consideration by any reviewing authority.

[74 FR 1831, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 52252, Aug. 22, 2011]

§ 3.44 Record.

(a) *Reporting and transcription.* Hearings shall be stenographically reported and transcribed by the official reporter of the Commission under the supervision of the Administrative Law Judge, and the original transcript shall be a part of the record and the sole official transcript. Upon a motion by any party, for good cause shown the Administrative Law Judge may order that the live oral testimony of all witnesses be video recorded digitally, at the expense of the moving party, and in such cases the video recording and the written transcript of the testimony shall be made part of the record. If a video recording is so ordered, the moving party shall not pay or retain any person or entity to perform such recording other than the reporter designated by the Commission to transcribe the proceeding, except by order of the Administrative Law Judge upon a finding of good cause. In any order allowing for video recording by a person or entity other than the Commission’s designated reporter, the Administrative Law Judge shall prescribe standards and procedures for the video recording to ensure that it is a complete and accurate record of the witnesses’ testimony. Copies of the written transcript and video recording are available from the reporter at rates not to exceed the maximum rates fixed by contract between the Commission and the reporter. Copies of a video recording made by a person or entity other than

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.45

the reporter shall be available at the same rates, or no more than the actual cost of duplication, whichever is higher.

(b) *Corrections.* Corrections of the official transcript may be made only when they involve errors affecting substance and then only in the manner herein provided. Corrections ordered by the Administrative Law Judge or agreed to in a written stipulation signed by all counsel and parties not represented by counsel, and approved by the Administrative Law Judge, shall be included in the record, and such stipulations, except to the extent they are capricious or without substance, shall be approved by the Administrative Law Judge. Corrections shall not be ordered by the Administrative Law Judge except upon notice and opportunity for the hearing of objections. Such corrections shall be made by the official reporter by furnishing substitute type pages, under the usual certificate of the reporter, for insertion in the official record. The original uncorrected pages shall be retained in the files of the Commission.

(c) *Closing of the hearing record.* Upon completion of the evidentiary hearing, the Administrative Law Judge shall issue an order closing the hearing record after giving the parties 3 business days to determine if the record is complete or needs to be supplemented. The Administrative Law Judge shall retain the discretion to permit or order correction of the record as provided in § 3.44(b).

[74 FR 1832, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 52252, Aug. 22, 2011]

§ 3.45 *In camera* orders.

(a) *Definition.* Except as hereinafter provided, material made subject to an *in camera* order will be kept confidential and not placed on the public record of the proceeding in which it was submitted. Only respondents, their counsel, authorized Commission personnel, and court personnel concerned with judicial review may have access thereto, provided that the Administrative Law Judge, the Commission and reviewing courts may disclose such *in camera* material to the extent necessary for the proper disposition of the proceeding.

(b) *In camera treatment of material.* A party or third party may obtain *in camera* treatment for material, or portions thereof, offered into evidence only by motion to the Administrative Law Judge. Parties who seek to use material obtained from a third party subject to confidentiality restrictions must demonstrate that the third party has been given at least 10 days notice of the proposed use of such material. Each such motion must include an attachment containing a copy of each page of the document in question on which *in camera* or otherwise confidential excerpts appear. The Administrative Law Judge shall order that such material, whether admitted or rejected, be placed *in camera* only after finding that its public disclosure will likely result in a clearly defined, serious injury to the person, partnership, or corporation requesting *in camera* treatment or after finding that the material constitutes sensitive personal information. "Sensitive personal information" shall include, but shall not be limited to, an individual's Social Security number, taxpayer identification number, financial account number, credit card or debit card number, driver's license number, state-issued identification number, passport number, date of birth (other than year), and any sensitive health information identifiable by individual, such as an individual's medical records. For material other than sensitive personal information, a finding that public disclosure will likely result in a clearly defined, serious injury shall be based on the standard articulated in *H.P. Hood & Sons, Inc.*, 58 F.T.C. 1184, 1188 (1961); see also *Bristol-Myers Co.*, 90 F.T.C. 455, 456 (1977), which established a three-part test that was modified by *General Foods Corp.*, 95 F.T.C. 352, 355 (1980). The party submitting material for which *in camera* treatment is sought must provide, for each piece of such evidence and affixed to such evidence, the name and address of any person who should be notified in the event that the Commission intends to disclose *in camera* information in a final decision. No material, or portion thereof, offered into evidence, whether admitted or rejected, may be withheld from the public record unless it falls within the scope of an

§ 3.45

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

order issued in accordance with this section, stating the date on which *in camera* treatment will expire, and including:

(1) A description of the material;

(2) A statement of the reasons for granting *in camera* treatment; and

(3) A statement of the reasons for the date on which *in camera* treatment will expire, except in the case of sensitive personal information, which shall be accorded permanent *in camera* treatment unless disclosure or an expiration date is required or provided by law. For *in camera* material other than sensitive personal information, an expiration date may not be omitted except in unusual circumstances, in which event the order shall state with specificity the reasons why the need for confidentiality of the material, or portion thereof at issue is not likely to decrease over time, and any other reasons why such material is entitled to *in camera* treatment for an indeterminate period. If an *in camera* order is silent as to duration, without explanation, then it will expire 3 years after its date of issuance. Material subject to an *in camera* order shall be segregated from the public record and filed in a sealed envelope, or other appropriate container, bearing the title, the docket number of the proceeding, the notation “*In Camera* Record under §3.45,” and the date on which *in camera* treatment expires. If the Administrative Law Judge has determined that *in camera* treatment should be granted for an indeterminate period, the notation should state that fact. Parties are not required to provide documents subject to *in camera* treatment, including documents obtained from third parties, to any individual or entity other than the Administrative Law Judge, counsel for other parties, and, during an appeal, the Commission or a federal court.

(c) *Release of in camera material.* *In camera* material constitutes part of the confidential records of the Commission and is subject to the provisions of §4.11 of this chapter.

(d) *Briefs and other submissions referring to in camera or confidential information.* Parties shall not disclose information that has been granted *in camera* status pursuant to §3.45(b) or is subject to confidentiality protections pursuant

to a protective order in the public version of proposed findings, briefs, or other documents. This provision does not preclude references in such proposed findings, briefs, or other documents to *in camera* or other confidential information or general statements based on the content of such information.

(e) *When in camera or confidential information is included in briefs and other submissions.* If a party includes specific information that has been granted *in camera* status pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section or is subject to confidentiality protections pursuant to a protective order in any document filed in a proceeding under this part, the party shall file 2 versions of the document. A complete version shall be marked “*In Camera*” or “Subject to Protective Order,” as appropriate, on every page and shall be filed with the Secretary and served by the party on the other parties in accordance with the Commission’s rules. Submitters of *in camera* or other confidential material should mark any such material in the complete versions of their submissions in a conspicuous matter, such as with highlighting or bracketing. References to *in camera* or confidential material must be supported by record citations to relevant evidentiary materials and associated Administrative Law Judge *in camera* or other confidentiality rulings to confirm that *in camera* or other confidential treatment is warranted for such material. In addition, the document must include an attachment containing a copy of each page of the document in question on which *in camera* or otherwise confidential excerpts appear, and providing the name and address of any person who should be notified of the Commission’s intent to disclose in a final decision any of the *in camera* or otherwise confidential information in the document. Any time period within which these rules allow a party to respond to a document shall run from the date the party is served with the complete version of the document. An expurgated version of the document, marked “Public Record” on every page and omitting the *in camera* and confidential information and attachment that appear in the complete version, shall be

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.46

filed with the Secretary within 5 days after the filing of the complete version, unless the Administrative Law Judge or the Commission directs otherwise, and shall be served by the party on the other parties in accordance with the rules in this part. The expurgated version shall indicate any omissions with brackets or ellipses, and its pagination and depiction of text on each page shall be identical to that of the *in camera* version.

(f) *When in camera or confidential information is included in rulings or recommendations of the Administrative Law Judge.* If the Administrative Law Judge includes in any ruling or recommendation information that has been granted *in camera* status pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section or is subject to confidentiality protections pursuant to a protective order, the Administrative Law Judge shall file 2 versions of the ruling or recommendation. A complete version shall be marked “*In Camera*” or “Subject to Protective Order,” as appropriate, on every page and shall be served upon the parties. The complete version will be placed in the *in camera* record of the proceeding. An expurgated version, to be filed within 5 days after the filing of the complete version, shall omit the *in camera* and confidential information that appears in the complete version, shall be marked “Public Record” on every page, shall be served upon the parties, and shall be included in the public record of the proceeding.

(g) *Provisional in camera rulings.* The Administrative Law Judge may make a provisional grant of *in camera* status to materials if the showing required in § 3.45(b) cannot be made at the time the material is offered into evidence but the Administrative Law Judge determines that the interests of justice would be served by such a ruling. Within 20 days of such a provisional grant of *in camera* status, the party offering the evidence or an interested third party must present a motion to the Administrative Law Judge for a final ruling on whether *in camera* treatment of the material is appropriate pursuant to § 3.45(b). If no such motion is filed, the Administrative Law Judge may either exclude the evidence, deny *in camera*

status, or take such other action as is appropriate.

[74 FR 1832, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 52253, Aug. 22, 2011; 80 FR 15162, Mar. 3, 2015]

§ 3.46 Proposed findings, conclusions, and order.

(a) *General.* Within 21 days of the closing of the hearing record, each party may file with the Secretary for consideration of the Administrative Law Judge proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law, and rule or order, together with reasons therefor and briefs in support thereof. Such proposals shall be in writing, shall be served upon all parties, and shall contain adequate references to the record and authorities relied on. If a party includes in the proposals information that has been granted *in camera* status pursuant to § 3.45(b), the party shall file 2 versions of the proposals in accordance with the procedures set forth in § 3.45(e). Reply findings of fact, conclusions of law, and briefs may be filed by each party within 10 days of service of the initial proposed findings.

(b) *Exhibit index.* The first statement of proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law filed by a party shall include an index listing for each exhibit offered by the party and received in evidence:

- (1) The exhibit number, followed by
- (2) The exhibit’s title or a brief description if the exhibit is untitled;
- (3) The transcript page at which the Administrative Law Judge ruled on the exhibit’s admissibility or a citation to any written order in which such ruling was made;
- (4) The transcript pages at which the exhibit is discussed;
- (5) An identification of any other exhibit which summarizes the contents of the listed exhibit, or of any other exhibit of which the listed exhibit is a summary;
- (6) A cross-reference, by exhibit number, to any other portions of that document admitted as a separate exhibit on motion by any other party; and
- (7) A statement whether the exhibit has been accorded *in camera* treatment, and a citation to the *in camera* ruling.

§ 3.51

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

(c) *Witness index.* The first statement of proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law filed by a party shall also include an index to the witnesses called by that party, to include for each witness:

(1) The name of the witness;

(2) A brief identification of the witness;

(3) The transcript pages at which any testimony of the witness appears; and

(4) A statement whether the witness testimony has been accorded *in camera* treatment, and a citation to the *in camera* ruling.

(d) *Stipulated indices.* As an alternative to the filing of separate indices, the parties are encouraged to stipulate to joint exhibit and witness indices at the time the first statement of proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law is due to be filed.

(e) *Rulings.* The record shall show the Administrative Law Judge's recommended ruling on each proposed finding and conclusion, except when the proposed order disposing of the proceeding otherwise informs the parties of the action taken.

[74 FR 1833, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 80 FR 15162, Mar. 23, 2015; 88 FR 42876, July 5, 2023]

Subpart F—Decision

§ 3.51 Recommended decision.

(a) *When filed, content*—(1) *Filing of recommended decision.* The Administrative Law Judge shall file a recommended decision within 70 days after the filing of the last filed initial or reply proposed findings of fact, conclusions of law and order pursuant to § 3.46, or within 85 days of the closing the hearing record pursuant to § 3.44(c) where the parties have waived the filing of proposed findings. The Administrative Law Judge may extend any of these time periods by up to 30 days for good cause. The Commission may further extend any of these time periods for good cause.

(2) *Certification of the record.* At the same time the Administrative Law Judge files the recommended decision, the Administrative Law Judge will also certify to the Commission the record of the proceeding. The record must include the Administrative Law Judge's

recommended decision; any transcripts from prehearing conferences; all hearing transcripts; all rulings; all exhibits; and the pleadings, motions, briefs, memoranda, and other supporting papers filed in connection with the proceeding. The Administrative Law Judge must also furnish to the Commission an index of each exhibit identified but not received in evidence.

(b) *Exhaustion of administrative remedies.* A recommended decision shall not be considered final agency action subject to judicial review under 5 U.S.C. 704. Any objection to a ruling by the Administrative Law Judge, or to a finding, conclusion or a provision of the order in the recommended decision, which is not made a part of any exceptions filed with the Commission shall be deemed to have been waived.

(c) *Content, format for filing.* (1) A recommended decision shall be based on a consideration of the whole record relevant to the issues decided, and shall be supported by reliable and probative evidence. The recommended decision shall include a statement of recommended findings of fact (with specific page references to principal supporting items of evidence in the record) and recommended conclusions of law, as well as the reasons or basis therefor, upon all the material issues of fact, law, or discretion presented on the record (or those designated under paragraph (c)(2) of this section) and an appropriate proposed rule or order. Rulings containing information granted in camera status pursuant to § 3.45 shall be filed in accordance with § 3.45(f).

(2) The recommended decision shall be prepared in a common word processing format, such as WordPerfect or Microsoft Word, and shall be filed by the Administrative Law Judge with the Office of the Secretary in both electronic and paper versions.

(3) When more than one claim for relief is presented in an action, or when multiple parties are involved, the Administrative Law Judge may direct the entry of a recommended decision as to one or more but fewer than all of the claims or parties only upon an express determination that there is no just reason for delay and upon an express direction for the entry of recommended decision.

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.52

(d) *By whom made.* The recommended decision shall be made and filed by the Administrative Law Judge who presided over the hearings, except when he or she shall have become unavailable to the Commission.

(e) *Reopening of proceeding by Administrative Law Judge; termination of jurisdiction.* (1) At any time from the close of the hearing record pursuant to § 3.44(c) until the filing of his or her recommended decision, an Administrative Law Judge may reopen the proceeding for the reception of further evidence for good cause shown.

(2) Except for the correction of clerical errors or pursuant to an order of remand from the Commission, the jurisdiction of the Administrative Law Judge is terminated upon the filing of his or her recommended decision with respect to those issues decided pursuant to paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

[88 FR 42876, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.52 Exceptions to recommended decision.

(a) *Timing of Commission review for cases in which the Commission sought preliminary relief in federal court.* (1) For proceedings with respect to which the Commission has sought preliminary relief in federal court under 15 U.S.C. 53(b), any party may file exceptions to the recommended decision or order of the Administrative Law Judge by filing its opening brief, subject to the requirements in paragraph (c) of this section, within 20 days of the issuance of the recommended decision. Any party may respond to any exceptions filed by another party by filing an answering brief, subject to the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section, within 20 days of service of the opening brief. Any party may file a reply to an answering brief, subject to the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section, within 5 days of service of the answering brief. Unless the Commission orders that there shall be no oral argument, it will hold oral argument within 10 days after the deadline for the filing of any reply briefs. The Commission will issue its final decision pursuant to § 3.54 within 45 days after oral argument. If no oral argument is scheduled, the Commission will issue its final decision pursuant to § 3.54 within 45 days

after the deadline for the filing of any reply briefs.

(2) If no exceptions to the recommended decision are filed, the Commission may in its discretion hold oral argument within 10 days after the deadline for the filing of exceptions, and will issue its final decision pursuant to § 3.54 within 45 days after oral argument. If no oral argument is scheduled, the Commission will issue its final decision pursuant to § 3.54 within 45 days after the deadline for the filing of exceptions.

(b) *Timing of Commission review in all other cases.* (1) In all cases other than those subject to paragraph (a) of this section, any party may file exceptions to the recommended decision of the Administrative Law Judge by filing its opening brief, subject to the requirements in paragraph (c) of this section, within 30 days of the issuance of the recommended decision. Any party may respond to the opening brief by filing an answering brief, subject to the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section, within 30 days of service of the opening brief. Any party may file a reply to an answering brief, subject to the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section, within 7 days of service of the answering brief. Unless the Commission orders that there shall be no oral argument, it will hold oral argument within 15 days after the deadline for the filing of any reply briefs. The Commission will issue its final decision pursuant to § 3.54 within 100 days after oral argument. If no oral argument is scheduled, the Commission will issue its final decision pursuant to § 3.54 within 100 days after the deadline for the filing of any reply briefs.

(2) If no exceptions to the recommended decision are filed, the Commission may in its discretion hold oral argument within 30 days after the deadline for the filing of exceptions, and will issue its final decision pursuant to § 3.54 within 100 days after oral argument. If no oral argument is scheduled, the Commission will issue its final decision pursuant to § 3.54 within 100 days after the deadline for the filing of exceptions.

(c) *Opening brief.* (1) The opening brief shall contain, in the order indicated, the following:

(i) A subject index of the matter in the brief, with page references, and a table of cases (alphabetically arranged), textbooks, statutes, and other material cited, with page references thereto;

(ii) A concise statement of the case, which includes a statement of facts relevant to the issues submitted for review, and a summary of the argument, which must contain a succinct, clear, and accurate statement of the arguments made in the body of the brief, and which must not merely repeat the argument headings;

(iii) A specification of the questions intended to be urged;

(iv) The argument presenting clearly the points of fact and law relied upon in support of the position taken on each question, with specific page references to the record and the legal or other material relied upon; and

(v) A proposed form of order for the Commission's consideration instead of the order contained in the recommended decision.

(2) [Reserved]

(d) *Answering brief.* The answering brief shall contain a subject index, with page references, and a table of cases (alphabetically arranged), textbooks, statutes, and other material cited, with page references thereto, as well as arguments in response to the appellant's appeal brief. The answering brief shall not, without leave of the Commission, exceed 14,000 words.

(e) *Reply brief.* The reply brief shall be limited to rebuttal of matters in the answering brief and shall not, without leave of the Commission, exceed 7,000 words. The Commission will not consider new arguments or matters raised in reply briefs that could have been raised earlier in the principal briefs. No further briefs may be filed except by leave of the Commission.

(f) *In camera information.* If a party includes in any brief to be filed under this section information that has been granted *in camera* status pursuant to § 3.45(b) or is subject to confidentiality provisions pursuant to a protective order, the party shall file 2 versions of the brief in accordance with the procedures set forth in § 3.45(e). The time period specified by this section within which a party may file an answering or

reply brief will begin to run upon service on the party of the *in camera* or confidential version of a brief.

(g) *Signature.* (1) The original of each brief filed shall have a hand-signed signature by an attorney of record for the party, or in the case of parties not represented by counsel, by the party itself, or by a partner if a partnership, or by an officer of the party if it is a corporation or an unincorporated association.

(2) Signing a brief constitutes a representation by the signer that he or she has read it; that to the best of his or her knowledge, information, and belief, the statements made in it are true; that it is not interposed for delay; that it complies with the applicable word count limitation; and that to the best of his or her knowledge, information, and belief, it complies with all the other rules in this part. If a brief is not signed or is signed with intent to defeat the purpose of this section, it may be stricken as sham and false and the proceeding may go forward as though the brief has not been filed.

(h) *Oral argument.* All oral arguments shall be public unless otherwise ordered by the Commission. Oral arguments will be held in all cases on appeal or review to the Commission, unless the Commission otherwise orders upon its own initiative or upon request of any party made at the time of filing his or her brief. Oral arguments before the Commission shall be reported stenographically, unless otherwise ordered, and a member of the Commission absent from an oral argument may participate in the consideration and decision of the appeal in any case in which the oral argument is stenographically reported.

(i) *Corrections in transcript of oral argument.* The Commission will entertain only joint motions of the parties requesting corrections in the transcript of oral argument, except that the Commission will receive a unilateral motion which recites that the parties have made a good faith effort to stipulate to the desired corrections but have been unable to do so. If the parties agree in part and disagree in part, they should file a joint motion incorporating the extent of their agreement,

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.54

and, if desired, separate motions requesting those corrections to which they have been unable to agree. The Secretary, pursuant to delegation of authority by the Commission, is authorized to prepare and issue in the name of the Commission a brief “Order Correcting Transcript” whenever a joint motion to correct transcript is received.

(j) *Briefs of amicus curiae.* A brief of an amicus curiae may be filed by leave of the Commission granted on motion with notice to the parties or at the request of the Commission, except that such leave shall not be required when the brief is presented by an agency or officer of the United States; or by a State, territory, commonwealth, or the District of Columbia, or by an agency or officer of any of them. The brief may be conditionally filed with the motion for leave. A motion for leave shall identify the interest of the applicant and state how a Commission decision in the matter would affect the applicant or persons it represents. The motion shall also state the reasons why a brief of an amicus curiae is desirable. Except as otherwise permitted by the Commission, an amicus curiae shall file its brief within the time allowed the parties whose position as to affirmance or reversal the amicus brief will support. The Commission shall grant leave for a later filing only for cause shown, in which event it shall specify within what period such brief must be filed. A motion for an amicus curiae to participate in oral argument will be granted only for extraordinary reasons. An amicus brief may be no more than one-half the maximum length authorized by these rules for a party’s principal brief.

(k) *Word count limitation.* The word count limitations in this section include headings, footnotes and quotations, but do not include the cover, table of contents, table of citations or authorities, glossaries, statements with respect to oral argument, any addendums containing statutes, rules or regulations, any certificates of counsel, proposed form of order, and any attachment required by § 3.45(e). Extensions of word count limitations are disfavored, and will only be granted where a party can make a strong show-

ing that undue prejudice would result from complying with the existing limit.

[74 FR 1834, Jan. 13, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 52253, Aug. 22, 2011; 80 FR 15162, Mar. 23, 2015; 88 FR 42876, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.53 Review of recommended decision in absence of exceptions.

If no party files exceptions to the recommended decision of the Administrative Law Judge under § 3.52(a)(1) or § 3.52(b)(1), the Commission will enter an order placing the case on its own docket for review. The Commission’s order will set forth the scope of such review and the issues which will be considered and will make provision for the filing of briefs if deemed appropriate by the Commission.

[88 FR 42877, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.54 Commission decision after review of recommended decision.

(a) In rendering its decision, the Commission will adopt, modify, or set aside the recommended findings, recommended conclusions, and proposed rule or order contained in the recommended decision, and will include in the decision a statement of the reasons or basis for its action and any concurring and dissenting opinions.

(b) In those cases where the Commission believes that it should have further information or additional views of the parties as to the form and content of the rule or order to be issued, the Commission, in its discretion, may withhold final action pending the receipt of such additional information or views.

(c) The order of the Commission disposing of adjudicative hearings under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER and, if it contains a rule or regulation, will specify the effective date thereof, which will not be prior to the ninetieth (90th) day after its publication unless the Commission finds that emergency conditions exist necessitating an earlier effective date, in which event the Commission will specify in the order its findings as to such conditions.

[32 FR 8449, June 13, 1967, as amended at 88 FR 42877, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.55

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

§ 3.55 Reconsideration.

Within fourteen (14) days after completion of service of a Commission decision, any party may file with the Commission a petition for reconsideration of such decision, setting forth the relief desired and the grounds in support thereof. Any petition filed under this subsection must be confined to new questions raised by the decision or final order and upon which the petitioner had no opportunity to argue before the Commission. Any party desiring to oppose such a petition shall file an answer thereto within ten (10) days after service upon him of the petition. The filing of a petition for reconsideration shall not operate to stay the effective date of the decision or order or to toll the running of any statutory time period affecting such decision or order unless specifically so ordered by the Commission.

[32 FR 8449, June 13, 1967, as amended at 61 FR 50650, Sept. 26, 1996]

§ 3.56 Effective date of orders; application for stay.

(a) Other than consent orders, an order to cease and desist under section 5 of the FTC Act becomes effective upon the sixtieth day after service, except as provided in section 5(g)(3) of the FTC Act, and except for divestiture provisions, as provided in section 5(g)(4) of the FTC Act.

(b) Any party subject to a cease and desist order under section 5 of the FTC Act, other than a consent order, may apply to the Commission for a stay of all or part of that order pending judicial review. If, within 30 days after the application was received by the Commission, the Commission either has denied or has not acted on the application, a stay may be sought in a court of appeals where a petition for review of the order is pending.

(c) An application for stay shall state the reasons a stay is warranted and the facts relied upon, and shall include supporting affidavits or other sworn statements, and a copy of the relevant portions of the record. The application shall address the likelihood of the applicant's success on appeal, whether the applicant will suffer irreparable harm if a stay is not granted, the de-

gree of injury to other parties if a stay is granted, and why the stay is in the public interest.

(d) An application for stay shall be filed within 30 days of service of the order on the party. Such application shall be served in accordance with the provisions of §4.4(b) of this part that are applicable to service in adjudicative proceedings. Any party opposing the application may file an answer within 5 business days after receipt of the application. The applicant may file a reply brief, limited to new matters raised by the answer, within 3 business days after receipt of the answer.

[60 FR 37748, July 21, 1995]

Subpart G [Reserved]

Subpart H—Reopening of Proceedings

§ 3.71 Authority.

Except while pending in a U.S. court of appeals on a petition for review (after the transcript of the record has been filed) or in the U.S. Supreme Court, a proceeding may be reopened by the Commission at any time in accordance with §3.72. Any person subject to a Commission decision containing a rule or order which has become effective, or an order to cease and desist which has become final may file a request to reopen the proceeding in accordance with §2.51.

[44 FR 40637, July 12, 1979]

§ 3.72 Reopening.

(a) *Before statutory review.* At any time prior to the expiration of the time allowed for filing a petition for review or prior to the filing of the transcript of the record of a proceeding in a U.S. court of appeals pursuant to a petition for review, the Commission may upon its own initiative and without prior notice to the parties reopen the proceeding and enter a new decision modifying or setting aside the whole or any part of the findings as to the facts, conclusions, rule, order, or opinion issued by the Commission in such proceeding.

(b) *After decision has become final.* (1) Whenever the Commission is of the opinion that changed conditions of fact

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.72

or law or the public interest may require that a Commission decision containing a rule or order which has become effective, or an order to cease and desist which has become final by reason of court affirmance or expiration of the statutory period for court review without a petition for review having been filed, or a Commission decision containing an order dismissing a proceeding, should be altered, modified, or set aside in whole or in part, the Commission will, except as provided in § 2.51, serve upon each person subject to such decision (in the case of proceedings instituted under § 3.13, such service may be by publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER) an order to show cause, stating the changes it proposes to make in the decision and the reasons they are deemed necessary. Within thirty (30) days after service of such order to show cause, any person served may file an answer thereto. Any person not responding to the order within the time allowed may be deemed to have consented to the proposed changes.

(2) Whenever an order to show cause is not opposed, or if opposed but the pleadings do not raise issues of fact to be resolved, the Commission, in its discretion, may decide the matter on the order to show cause and answer thereto, if any, or it may serve upon the parties (in the case of proceedings instituted under § 3.13, such service may be by publication in FEDERAL REGISTER) a notice of hearing, setting forth the date when the cause will be heard. In such a case, the hearing will be limited to the filing of briefs and may include oral argument when deemed necessary by the Commission. When the pleadings raise substantial factual issues, the Commission will direct such hearings as it deems appropriate, including hearings for the receipt of evidence by it or by an Administrative Law Judge. Unless otherwise ordered and insofar as practicable, hearings before an Administrative Law Judge to receive evidence shall be conducted in accordance with subparts B, C, D, and E of part 3 of this chapter. Upon conclusion of hearings before an Administrative Law Judge, the record and the Administrative Law Judge's recommendations shall be certified to the Commission for final disposition of the matter.

(3) *Termination of existing orders*—(i) *Generally.* Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this rule, and except as provided in paragraphs (b)(3)(ii) and (iii) of this section, an order issued by the Commission before August 16, 1995, will be deemed, without further notice or proceedings, to terminate 20 years from the date on which the order was first issued, or on January 2, 1996, whichever is later.

(ii) *Exception.* This paragraph applies to the termination of an order issued before August 16, 1995, where a complaint alleging a violation of the order was or is filed (with or without an accompanying consent decree) in federal court by the United States or the Federal Trade Commission while the order remains in force, either on or after August 16, 1995, or within the 20 years preceding that date. If more than one complaint was or is filed while the order remains in force, the relevant complaint for purposes of this paragraph will be the latest filed complaint. An order subject to this paragraph will terminate 20 years from the date on which a court complaint described in this paragraph was or is filed, except as provided in the following sentence. If the complaint was or is dismissed, or a federal court rules or has ruled that the respondent did not violate any provision of the order, and the dismissal or ruling was or is not appealed, or was or is upheld on appeal, the order will terminate according to paragraph (b)(3)(i) of this section as though the complaint was never filed; provided, however, that the order will not terminate between the date that such complaint is filed and the later of the deadline for appealing such dismissal or ruling and the date such dismissal or ruling is upheld on appeal. The filing of a complaint described in this paragraph will not affect the duration of any order provision that has expired, or will expire, by its own terms. The filing of a complaint described in this paragraph also will not affect the duration of an order's application to any respondent that is not named in the complaint.

(iii) *Stay of Termination.* Any party to an order may seek to stay, in whole or part, the termination of the order as to that party pursuant to paragraph (b)(3)

§ 3.81

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

(i) or (ii) of this section. Petitions for such stays shall be filed in accordance with the procedures set forth in § 2.51 of these rules. Such petitions shall be filed on or before the date on which the order would be terminated pursuant to paragraph (b)(3) (i) or (ii) of this section. Pending the disposition of such a petition, the order will be deemed to remain in effect without interruption.

(iv) *Orders not terminated.* Nothing in § 3.72(b)(3) is intended to apply to *in camera* orders or other procedural or interlocutory rulings by an Administrative Law Judge or the Commission.

[32 FR 8449, June 13, 1967, as amended at 44 FR 40637, July 12, 1979; 45 FR 21623, Apr. 2, 1980; 60 FR 58515, Nov. 28, 1995]

Subpart I—Recovery of Awards Under the Equal Access to Justice Act in Commission Proceedings

AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 504 and 5 U.S.C. 553(b).

SOURCE: 63 FR 36341, July 6, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3.81 General provisions.

(a) *Purpose of these rules.* The Equal Access to Justice Act, 5 U.S.C. 504 (called “the Act” in this subpart), provides for the award of attorney fees and other expenses to eligible individuals and entities who are parties to adversary adjudicative proceedings under part 3 of this title. The rules in this subpart describe the parties eligible for awards, how to apply for awards, and the procedures and standards that the Commission will use to make them.

(1) *When an eligible party will receive an award.* An eligible party will receive an award when:

(i) It prevails in the adjudicative proceeding, unless the Commission’s position in the proceeding was substantially justified or special circumstances make an award unjust. Whether or not the position of the agency was substantially justified will be determined on the basis of the administrative record as a whole that is made in the adversary proceeding for which fees and other expenses are sought; or

(ii) The agency’s demand is substantially in excess of the decision of the

adjudicative officer, and is unreasonable when compared with that decision, under all the facts and circumstances of the case. *Demand* means the express final demand made by the agency prior to initiation of the adversary adjudication, but does not include a recitation by the agency of the statutory penalty in the administrative complaint or elsewhere when accompanied by an express demand for a lesser amount.

(b) *When the Act applies.* (1) Section 504(a)(1) of the Act applies to any adversarial adjudicative proceeding pending before the Commission at any time after October 1, 1981. This includes proceedings begun before October 1, 1981, if final Commission action has not been taken before that date.

(2) Section 504(a)(4) applies to any adversarial adjudicative proceeding pending before the Commission at any time on or after March 29, 1996.

(c) *Proceedings covered.* (1) The Act applies to all adjudicative proceedings under part 3 of the rules of practice as defined in § 3.2, except hearings relating to the promulgation, amendment, or repeal of rules under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act.

(2) [Reserved]

(d) *Eligibility of applicants.* (1) To be eligible for an award of attorney fees and other expenses under the Act, the applicant must be a party to the adjudicative proceeding in which it seeks an award. The term *party* is defined in 5 U.S.C. 551(3). The applicant must show that it meets all conditions of eligibility set out in this subpart.

(2) The types of eligible applicants are as follows:

(i) An individual with a net worth of not more than \$2 million;

(ii) The sole owner of an unincorporated business who has a net worth of not more than \$7 million, including both personal and business interests, and not more than 500 employees;

(iii) A charitable or other tax-exempt organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) with not more than 500 employees;

(iv) A cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)) with not more than 500 employees;

Federal Trade Commission

§ 3.81

(v) Any other partnership, corporation, association, unit of local government, or organization with a net worth of not more than \$7 million and not more than 500 employees; and

(vi) For purposes of receiving an award for fees and expenses for defending against an excessive Commission demand, any small entity, as that term is defined under 5 U.S.C. 601.

(3) Eligibility of a party shall be determined as of the date the proceeding was initiated.

(4) An applicant who owns an unincorporated business will be considered as an "individual" rather than a "sole owner of an unincorporated business" if the issues on which the applicant prevails are related primarily to personal interests rather than to business interests.

(5) The employees of an applicant include all persons who regularly perform services for remuneration for the applicant, under the applicant's direction and control. Part-time employees shall be included on a proportional basis.

(6) The net worth and number of employees of the applicant and all of its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility. Any individual, corporation or other entity that directly or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares or other interest of the applicant, or any corporation or other entity of which the applicant directly or indirectly owns or controls a majority of the voting shares or other interest, will be considered an affiliate for purposes of this part, unless the Administrative Law Judge determines that such treatment would be unjust and contrary to the purposes of the Act in light of the actual relationship between the affiliated entities. In addition, the Administrative Law Judge may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(7) An applicant that participates in a proceeding primarily on behalf of one or more other persons or entities that would be ineligible is not itself eligible for an award.

(e) *Standards for awards.* (1) For a prevailing party:

(i) A prevailing applicant will receive an award for fees and expenses incurred after initiation of the adversary adjudication in connection with the entire adversary adjudication, or on a substantive portion of the adversary adjudication that is sufficiently significant and discrete to merit treatment as a separate unit unless the position of the agency was substantially justified. The burden of proof that an award should not be made to an eligible prevailing applicant is on complaint counsel, which may avoid an award by showing that its position had a reasonable basis in law and fact.

(ii) An award to prevailing party will be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the proceeding or if special circumstances make an award unjust.

(2) For a party defending against an excessive demand:

(i) An eligible applicant will receive an award for fees and expenses incurred after initiation of the adversary adjudication related to defending against the excessive portion of a Commission demand that is substantially in excess of the decision of the adjudicative officer and is unreasonable when compared with that decision under all the facts and circumstances of the case.

(ii) An award will be denied if the applicant has committed a willful violation of law or otherwise acted in bad faith or if special circumstances make an award unjust.

(f) *Allowable fees and expenses.* (1) Awards will be based on rates customarily charged by persons engaged in the business of acting as attorneys, agents and expert witnesses, even if the services were made available without charge or at a reduced rate to the applicant.

(2) No award for the fee of an attorney or agent under these rules may exceed the hourly rate specified in 5 U.S.C. 504(b)(1)(A). No award to compensate an expert witness may exceed the highest rate at which the Commission paid expert witnesses for similar services at the time the fees were incurred. The appropriate rate may be obtained from the Office of the Executive Director. However, an award may also include the reasonable expenses of the attorney, agent, or witness as a

§ 3.82

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

separate item, if the attorney, agent or witness ordinarily charges clients separately for such expenses.

(3) In determining the reasonableness of the fee sought for an attorney, agent or expert witness, the Administrative Law Judge shall consider the following:

(i) If the attorney, agent or witness is in private practice, his or her customary fee for similar services, or, if an employee of the applicant, the fully allocated cost of the services;

(ii) The prevailing rate for similar services in the community in which the attorney, agent or witness ordinarily performs services;

(iii) The time actually spent in the representation of the applicant;

(iv) The time reasonably spent in light of the difficulty or complexity of the issues in the proceeding; and

(v) Such other factors as may bear on the value of the services provided.

(4) The reasonable cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, project or similar matter prepared on behalf of a party may be awarded, to the extent that the charge for the service does not exceed the prevailing rate for similar services, and the study or other matter was necessary for preparation of the applicant's case.

(5) Any award of fees or expenses under the Act is limited to fees and expenses incurred after initiation of the adversary adjudication and, with respect to excessive demands, the fees and expenses incurred in defending against the excessive portion of the demand.

(g) *Rulemaking on maximum rates for attorney fees.* If warranted by an increase in the cost of living or by special circumstances (such as limited availability of attorneys qualified to handle certain types of proceedings), the Commission may, upon its own initiative or on petition of any interested person or group, adopt regulations providing that attorney fees may be awarded at a rate higher than the rate specified in 5 U.S.C. 504(b)(1)(A) per hour in some or all the types of proceedings covered by this part. Rulemaking under this provision will be in accordance with Rules of Practice part 1, subpart C of this chapter.

§ 3.82 Information required from applicants.

(a) *Contents of application.* An application for an award of fees and expenses under the Act shall contain the following:

(1) Identity of the applicant and the proceeding for which the award is sought;

(2) A showing that the applicant has prevailed; or, if the applicant has not prevailed, a showing that the Commission's demand was the final demand before initiation of the adversary adjudication and that it was substantially in excess of the decision of the adjudicative officer and was unreasonable when compared with that decision;

(3) Identification of the Commission position(s) that applicant alleges was (were) not substantially justified; or, identification of the Commission's demand that is alleged to be excessive and unreasonable and an explanation as to why the demand was excessive and unreasonable;

(4) A brief description of the type and purpose of the organization or business (unless the applicant is an individual);

(5) A statement of how the applicant meets the criteria of § 3.81(d);

(6) The amount of fees and expenses incurred after the initiation of the adjudicative proceeding or, in the case of a claim for defending against an excessive demand, the amount of fees and expenses incurred after the initiation of the adjudicative proceeding attributable to the excessive portion of the demand;

(7) Any other matters the applicant wishes the Commission to consider in determining whether and in what amount an award should be made; and

(8) A written verification under oath or under penalty or perjury that the information provided is true and correct accompanied by the signature of the applicant or an authorized officer or attorney.

(b) *Net worth exhibit.* (1) Each applicant except a qualified tax-exempt organization or cooperative association must provide with its application a detailed exhibit showing the net worth of the application and any affiliates (as defined in § 3.81(d)(6)) when the proceeding was initiated. The exhibit may

be in any form convenient to the applicant that provides full disclosure of the applicant's and its affiliates' assets and liabilities and is sufficient to determine whether the applicant qualifies under the standards in this part. The Administrative Law Judge may require an applicant to file additional information to determine its eligibility for an award.

(2) Ordinarily, the net worth exhibit will be included in the public record of the proceeding. However, if an applicant objects to public disclosure of information in any portion of the exhibit and believes there are legal grounds for withholding it from disclosure, the applicant may submit that portion of the exhibit directly to the Administrative Law Judge in a sealed envelope labeled "Confidential Financial Information," accompanied by a motion to withhold the information from public disclosure. The motion shall describe the information sought to be withheld and explain, in detail, why it falls within one or more of the specific exemptions from mandatory disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552(b) (1) through (9), why public disclosure of the information would adversely affect the applicant, and why disclosure is not required in the public interest. The material in question shall be served on complaint counsel but need not be served on any other party to the proceeding. If the Administrative Law Judge finds that the information should not be withheld from disclosure, it shall be placed in the public record of the proceeding. Otherwise, any request to inspect or copy the exhibit shall be disposed of in accordance with § 4.11.

(c) *Documentation of fees and expenses.* The application shall be accompanied by full documentation of the fees and expenses incurred after initiation of the adversary adjudication, including the cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, project or similar matter, for which an award is sought. With respect to a claim for fees and expenses involving an excessive demand, the application shall be accompanied by full documentation of the fees and expenses incurred after initiation of the adversary adjudication, including the cost of any study, analysis, engi-

neering report, test, project or similar matter, for which an award is sought attributable to the portion of the demand alleged to be excessive and unreasonable. A separate itemized statement shall be submitted for each professional firm or individual whose services are covered by the application, showing the hours spent in connection with the proceeding by each individual, a description of the specific services performed, the rate at which each fee has been computed, any expenses for which reimbursement is sought, the total amount claimed, and the total amount paid or payable by the applicant or by any other person or entity for the services provided. The Administrative Law Judge may require the applicant to provide vouchers, receipts, or other substantiation for any expenses claimed.

(d) *When an application may be filed.*

(1) For a prevailing party:

(i) An application may be filed not later than 30 days after the Commission has issued an order or otherwise taken action that results in final disposition of the proceeding.

(ii) If review or reconsideration is sought or taken of a decision as to which an applicant believes it has prevailed, proceedings for the award of fees shall be stayed pending final disposition of the underlying controversy.

(2) For a party defending against an excessive demand:

(i) An application may be filed not later than 30 days after the Commission has issued an order or otherwise taken action that results in final disposition of the proceeding.

(ii) If review or reconsideration is sought or taken of a decision as to which an applicant believes the agency's demand was excessive and unreasonable, proceedings for the award of fees and expenses shall be stayed pending final disposition of the underlying controversy.

(3) For purposes of this subpart, *final disposition* means the later of—

(i) The date that the Commission issues an order disposing of any petitions for reconsideration of the Commission's final order in the proceeding; or

(ii) The date that the Commission issues a final order or any other final

§ 3.83

16 CFR Ch. I (1–1–25 Edition)

resolution of a proceeding, such as a consent agreement, settlement or voluntary dismissal, which is not subject to a petition for reconsideration.

[63 FR 36341, July 6, 1998, as amended at 88 FR 42877, July 5, 2023]

§ 3.83 Procedures for considering applicants.

(a) *Filing and service of documents.* Any application for an award or other pleading or document related to an application shall be filed and served on all parties as specified in §§ 4.2 and 4.4(b) of this chapter, except as provided in § 3.82(b)(2) for confidential financial information.

(b) *Answer to application.* (1) Within 30 days after service of an application, complaint counsel may file an answer to the application. Unless complaint counsel requests an extension of time for filing or files a statement of intent to negotiate under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, failure to file an answer within the 30-day period may be treated as a consent to the award requested.

(2) If complaint counsel and the applicant believe that the issues in the fee application can be settled, they may jointly file a statement of their intent to negotiate a settlement. The filing of this statement shall extend the time for filing an answer for an additional 30 days, and further extensions may be granted by the Administrative Law Judge upon request by complaint counsel and the applicant.

(3) The answer shall explain in detail any objections to the award requested and identify the facts relied on in support of complaint counsel's position. If the answer is based on any alleged facts not already in the record of the proceeding, complaint counsel shall include with the answer either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under paragraph (f) of this section.

(c) *Reply.* Within 15 days after service of an answer, the applicant may file a reply. If the reply is based on any alleged facts not already in the record of the proceeding, the applicant shall include with the reply either supporting affidavits or a request for further proceedings under paragraph (f) of this section.

(d) *Comments by other parties.* Any party to a proceeding other than the applicant and complaint counsel may file comments on an application within 30 days after it is served or on an answer within 15 days after it is served. A commenting party may not participate further in proceedings on the application unless the Administrative Law Judge determines that the public interest requires such participation in order to permit full exploration of matters in the comments.

(e) *Settlement.* The applicant and complaint counsel may agree on a proposed settlement of the award before final action on the application. A proposed award settlement entered into in connection with a consent agreement covering the underlying proceeding will be considered in accordance with § 3.25. The Commission may request findings of fact or recommendations on the award settlement from the Administrative Law Judge. A proposed award settlement entered into after the underlying proceeding has been concluded will be considered and may be approved or disapproved by the Administrative Law Judge subject to Commission review under paragraph (h) of this section. If an applicant and complaint counsel agree on a proposed settlement of an award before an application has been filed, the application shall be filed with the proposed settlement.

(f) *Further proceedings.* (1) Ordinarily, the determination of an award will be made on the basis of the written record. However, on request of either the applicant or complaint counsel, or on his or her own initiative, the Administrative Law Judge may order further proceedings, such as an informal conference, oral argument, additional written submissions or an evidentiary hearing. Such further proceedings shall be held only when necessary for full and fair resolution of the issues arising from the application, and shall be conducted as promptly as possible.

(2) A request that the Administrative Law Judge order further proceedings under this section shall specifically identify the information sought or the disputed issues and shall explain why the additional proceedings are necessary to resolve the issues.

Federal Trade Commission

§ 4.1

(g) *Decision.* The Administrative Law Judge shall issue a recommended decision on the application within 30 days after closing proceedings on the application.

(1) *For a decision involving a prevailing party:* The decision shall include written recommended findings and conclusions on the applicant's eligibility and status as a prevailing party, and an explanation of the reasons for any difference between the amount requested and the amount awarded. The decision shall also include, if at issue, recommended findings on whether the agency's position was substantially justified, whether the applicant unduly protracted the proceedings, or whether special circumstances make an award unjust.

(2) *For a decision involving an excessive agency demand:* The decision shall include written recommended findings and conclusions on the applicant's eligibility and an explanation of the reasons why the agency's demand was or was not determined to be substantially in excess of the decision of the adjudicative officer and was or was not unreasonable when compared with that decision. That decision shall be based upon all the facts and circumstances of the case. The decision shall also include, if at issue, recommended findings on whether the applicant has committed a willful violation of law or otherwise acted in bad faith, or whether special circumstances make an award unjust.

(h) *Agency review.* Either the applicant or complaint counsel may seek review of the recommended decision on the fee application by filing exceptions under § 3.52(a)(1), or the Commission may decide to review the decision on its own initiative, in accordance with § 3.53. The Commission will issue a final decision on the application or remand the application to the Administrative Law Judge for further proceedings.

(i) *Judicial review.* Judicial review of final Commission decisions on awards may be sought as provided in 5 U.S.C. 504(c)(2).

(j) *Payment of award.* An applicant seeking payment of an award shall submit to the Secretary of the Commission a copy of the Commission's final decision granting the award, accom-

panied by a statement that the applicant will not seek review of the decision in the United States courts. The agency will pay the amount awarded to the applicant within 60 days, unless judicial review of the award or of the underlying decision of the adjudicative proceeding has been sought by the applicant or any party to the proceeding.

[63 FR 36341, July 6, 1998, as amended at 76 FR 52253, Aug. 22, 2011; 80 FR 25941, May 6, 2015; 88 FR 42877, July 5, 2023]

PART 4—MISCELLANEOUS RULES

Sec.

- 4.1 Appearances.
- 4.2 Requirements as to form, and filing of documents other than correspondence.
- 4.3 Time.
- 4.4 Service.
- 4.5 Fees.
- 4.6 Cooperation with other agencies.
- 4.7 Ex parte communications.
- 4.8 Costs for obtaining Commission records.
- 4.9 The public record.
- 4.10 Nonpublic material.
- 4.11 Disclosure requests.
- 4.12 Disposition of documents submitted to the Commission.
- 4.13 Privacy Act rules.
- 4.14 Conduct of business.
- 4.15 Commission meetings.
- 4.16 Privilege against self-incrimination.
- 4.17 Disqualification of Commissioners.

AUTHORITY: 15 U.S.C. 46.

§ 4.1 Appearances.

(a) *Qualifications—(1) Attorneys—(i) U.S.-admitted.* Members of the bar of a Federal court or of the highest court of any State or Territory of the United States are eligible to practice before the Commission.

(ii) *European Community (EC)-qualified.* Persons who are qualified to practice law in a Member State of the European Community and authorized to practice before The Commission of the European Communities in accordance with Regulation No. 99/63/EEC are eligible to practice before the Commission.

(iii) Any attorney desiring to appear before the Commission or an Administrative Law Judge may be required to show to the satisfaction of the Commission or the Administrative Law Judge his or her acceptability to act in that capacity.

(2) *Others.* (i) Any individual or member of a partnership involved in any