

## § 952.16

The presiding officer shall give consideration to the convenience and necessity of the parties and the relevancy of the evidence to be offered.

[36 FR 11563, June 16, 1971, as amended at 63 FR 66050, Dec. 1, 1998]

## § 952.16 Appearances.

(a) A respondent may appear and be heard in person or by attorney.

(b) An attorney may practice before the Postal Service in accordance with applicable rules issued by the Judicial Officer. See part 951 of this chapter.

(c) When a respondent is represented by an attorney, all pleadings and other papers subsequent to the complaint shall be mailed to the attorney.

(d) A respondent must promptly file a notice of change of attorney.

## § 952.17 Presiding officers.

(a) The presiding officer at any hearing shall be an Administrative Law Judge qualified in accordance with law or the Judicial Officer (39 U.S.C. 204). The Chief Administrative Law Judge shall assign cases to Administrative Law Judges upon rotation so far as practicable. The Judicial Officer may, for good cause shown, preside at the reception of evidence in proceedings where expedited hearings are requested by either party.

(b) The presiding officer shall have authority to:

(1) Administer oaths and affirmations;

(2) Examine witnesses;

(3) Rule upon offers of proof, admissibility of evidence and matters of procedure;

(4) Order any pleading amended upon motion of a party at any time prior to the close of the hearing;

(5) Maintain discipline and decorum and exclude from the hearing any person acting in an indecorous manner;

(6) Require the filing of briefs or memoranda of law on any matter upon which he is required to rule;

(7) Order prehearing conferences for the purpose of the settlement or simplification of issues by the parties;

(8) Order the proceeding reopened at any time prior to his decision for the receipt of additional evidence;

(9) Render an initial decision, which becomes the final Agency decision un-

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less a timely appeal is taken: The Judicial Officer may issue a tentative or a final decision;

(10) Rule upon applications and requests filed under § 952.19 and § 952.21.

[36 FR 11563, June 16, 1971, as amended at 38 FR 17216, June 29, 1973; 38 FR 20263, July 30, 1973; 44 FR 61960, Oct. 29, 1979; 65 FR 32027, May 22, 2000]

## § 952.18 Evidence.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in these rules, the Federal Rules of Evidence shall govern. However, such rules may be relaxed to the extent that the presiding officer deems proper to insure a fair hearing. The presiding officer shall exclude irrelevant, immaterial or repetitious evidence.

(b) Testimony shall be under oath or affirmation and witnesses shall be subject to cross-examination.

(c) Agreed statements of fact may be received in evidence.

(d) Official notice or knowledge may be taken of the types of matters of which judicial notice or knowledge may be taken.

(e) Authoritative writings of the medical or other sciences, may be admitted in evidence but only through the testimony of expert witnesses or by stipulation.

(f) Lay testimonials will not be received in evidence as proof of the efficacy or quality of any product or thing sold through the mails.

(g) The written statement of a competent witness may be received in evidence provided that such statement is relevant to the issues, that the witness shall testify under oath at the hearing that the statement is in all respects true, and, in the case of expert witnesses, that the statement correctly states his opinion or knowledge concerning the matters in question.

(h) A party who objects to the admission of evidence shall make a brief statement of the grounds for the objection. Formal exceptions to the rulings of the presiding officer are unnecessary.

[36 FR 11563, June 16, 1971, as amended at 44 FR 61960, Oct. 29, 1979]

## § 952.19 Subpoenas.

(a) *General.* Upon written request of either party filed with the Recorder or