

§ 904.260

of the record to the extent that they do not include information classified under an Executive order. Classified information will be included in a classified portion of the record that will be available for review only in accordance with applicable law.

(e) Upon receipt of a communication made, or knowingly caused to be made, by a party in violation of this section the Judge may, to the extent consistent with the interests of justice, national security, the policy of underlying statutes, require the party to show cause why its claim or interest in the adjudication should not be dismissed, denied, disregarded, or otherwise adversely affected by reason of such violation.

(f) The prohibitions of this rule shall apply beginning after issuance of a NOVA, NOPS, NIDP or any other notice and until a final administrative decision is rendered, but in no event shall they begin to apply later than the time at which an administrative proceeding is noticed for hearing unless the person responsible for the communication has knowledge that it will be noticed, in which case the prohibitions shall apply beginning at the time of her/his acquisition of such knowledge.

POST-HEARING

§ 904.260 Recordation of hearing.

(a) All hearings shall be recorded.

(b) The official transcript of testimony taken, together with any exhibits, briefs, or memoranda of law filed therewith, will be filed with the ALJ Docketing Center. Transcripts of testimony will be available in any hearing and will be supplied to the parties at the cost of the Agency.

(c) The Judge may determine whether "ordinary copy", "daily copy", or other copy (as those terms are defined by contract) will be necessary and required for the proper conduct of the administrative proceeding.

§ 904.261 Post-hearing briefs.

(a) The parties may file post-hearing briefs that include proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law within 30 days from service of the hearing transcript. Reply briefs may be submitted within 15 days after service of the pro-

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posed findings and conclusions to which they respond.

(b) The Judge, in his or her discretion, may establish a different date for filing either initial briefs or reply briefs with the court.

(c) In cases involving few parties, limited issues, and short hearings, the Judge may require or a party may request that any proposed findings and conclusions and reasons in support be presented orally at the close of a hearing. In granting such cases, the Judge will advise the parties in advance of hearing.

DECISION

§ 904.270 Record of decision.

(a) The exclusive record of decision consists of the official transcript of testimony and administrative proceedings; exhibits admitted into evidence; briefs, pleadings, and other documents filed in the administrative proceeding; and descriptions or copies of matters, facts, or documents officially noticed in the administrative proceeding. Any other exhibits and records of any *ex parte* communications will accompany the record of decision.

(b) The Judge will arrange for appropriate storage of the records of any administrative proceeding, which place of storage need not necessarily be located physically within the ALJ Docketing Center.

§ 904.271 Initial decision.

(a) After expiration of the period provided in §904.261 for the filing of reply briefs (unless the parties have waived briefs or presented proposed findings orally at the hearing), the Judge will render a written decision upon the record in the case, setting forth:

(1) Findings and conclusions, and the reasons or bases therefor, on all material issues of fact, law, or discretion presented on the record;

(2) An order as to the final disposition of the case, including any appropriate ruling, order, sanction, relief, or denial thereof;

(3) The date upon which the decision will become effective; and

(4) A statement of further right to appeal.

(b) If the parties have presented oral proposed findings at the hearing or have waived presentation of proposed findings, the Judge may at the termination of the hearing announce the decision, subject to later issuance of a written decision under paragraph (a) of this section. In such cases, the Judge may direct the prevailing party to prepare proposed findings, conclusions, and an order.

(c) The Judge will serve the written decision on each of the parties, the Assistant General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation, and the Administrator by certified mail (return receipt requested), facsimile, electronic transmission or third party commercial carrier to an addressee's last known address or by personal delivery and upon request will promptly certify to the Administrator the record, including the original copy of the decision, as complete and accurate.

(d) An initial decision becomes effective as the final administrative decision of NOAA 60 days after service, unless:

(1) Otherwise provided by statute or regulations;

(2) The Judge grants a petition for reconsideration under § 904.272; or

(3) A petition for discretionary review is filed or the Administrator issues an order to review upon his/her own initiative under § 904.273.

§ 904.272 Petition for reconsideration.

Unless an order or initial decision of the Judge specifically provides otherwise, any party may file a petition for reconsideration of an order or initial decision issued by the Judge. Such petitions must state the matter claimed to have been erroneously decided, and the alleged errors and relief sought must be specified with particularity. Petitions must be filed within 20 days after the service of such order or initial decision. The filing of a petition for reconsideration shall operate as a stay of an order or initial decision or its effectiveness date unless specifically so ordered by the Judge. Within 15 days after the petition is filed, any party to the administrative proceeding may file an answer in support or in opposition.

§ 904.273 Administrative review of decision.

(a) Subject to the requirements of this section, any party who wishes to seek review of an initial decision of a Judge must petition for review of the initial decision within 30 days after the date the decision is served. The petition must be served on the Administrator by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested at the following address: Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Commerce, Room 5128, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230. Copies of the petition for review, and all other documents and materials required in paragraph (d) of this section, must be served on all parties and the Assistant General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation at the following address: Assistant General Counsel for Enforcement and Litigation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 8484 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

(b) The Administrator may elect to issue an order to review the initial decision without petition and may affirm, reverse, modify or remand the Judge's initial decision. Any such order must be issued within 60 days after the date the initial decision is served.

(c) Review by the Administrator of an initial decision is discretionary and is not a matter of right. If a party files a timely petition for discretionary review, or review is timely undertaken on the Administrator's own initiative, the effectiveness of the initial decision is stayed until further order of the Administrator or until the initial decision becomes final pursuant to paragraph (h) of this section.

(d) A petition for review must comply with the following requirements regarding format and content:

(1) The petition must include a concise statement of the case, which must contain 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 petition;

(2) The petition must set forth, in detail, specific objections to the initial