

National Science Foundation

§ 672.17

Presiding Officer, who will notify the parties of his assignment.

(b) *Notice of hearing.* If the respondent requests a hearing in his answer, or one is ordered by the Presiding Officer, the Presiding Officer shall serve upon the parties a notice setting forth a time and place for the hearing. The Presiding Officer may issue the notice of hearing at any appropriate time, but not later than twenty (20) days prior to the date set for the hearing.

(c) *Postponement of hearing.* The Presiding Officer will not grant a request for postponement of a hearing except upon motion and for good cause shown.

§ 672.15 Evidence.

(a) *General.* The Presiding Officer shall admit all evidence which is not irrelevant, immaterial, unduly repetitious, or otherwise unreliable or of little probative value. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, evidence relating to settlement which would be excluded in the federal courts under Rule 408 of the Federal Rules of Evidence is inadmissible. In the presentation, admission, disposition, and use of evidence, the Presiding Officer shall preserve the confidentiality of trade secrets and other commercial and financial information. The confidential or trade secret status of any information shall not, however, preclude its introduction into evidence. The Presiding Officer may review such evidence in camera, and issue appropriate protective orders.

(b) *Examination of witnesses.* Parties shall examine witnesses orally, under oath or affirmation, except as otherwise provided in these rules or by the Presiding Officer. Parties shall have the right to cross-examine a witness who appears at the hearing.

(c) *Verified statements.* The Presiding Officer may admit into the record as evidence, in lieu of oral testimony, statements of fact or opinion prepared by a witness. The admissibility of the evidence contained in the statement shall be subject to the same rules as if the testimony were produced under oral examination. Before any such statement is read or admitted into evidence, the witness shall deliver a copy of the statement to the Presiding Officer, the reporter, and opposing counsel.

The witness presenting the statement shall swear to or affirm the statement and shall be subject to appropriate oral cross-examination.

(d) *Admission of affidavits where the witness is unavailable.* The Presiding Officer may admit into evidence affidavits of witnesses who are "unavailable," within the meaning of that term under Rule 804(a) of the Federal Rules of Evidence.

(e) *Exhibits.* Where practicable, an original and one copy of each exhibit shall be filed with the Presiding Officer for the record and a copy shall be furnished to each party. A true copy of any exhibit may be substituted for the original.

(f) *Official notice.* Official notice may be taken of any matter judicially noticeable in the Federal courts and of other facts within the specialized knowledge and experience of the Agency. Opposing parties shall be given adequate opportunity to show that such facts are erroneously noticed.

§ 672.16 Objections and offers of proof.

(a) *Objection.* Any objection concerning the conduct of the hearing may be made orally or in writing during the hearing. The party raising the objection must supply a short statement of its grounds. The ruling by the Presiding Officer on any objection and the reasons given for it shall be part of the record. An exception to each objection overruled shall be automatic and is not waived by further participation in the hearing.

(b) *Offer of proof.* Whenever evidence is excluded from the record, the party offering the evidence may make an offer of proof, which shall be included in the record. The offer of proof for excluded oral testimony shall consist of a brief statement describing the nature of the evidence excluded. The offer of proof for excluded documents or exhibits shall consist of the insertion in the record of the documents or exhibits excluded.

§ 672.17 Burden of presentation; burden of persuasion.

The complainant has the burden of going forward with and of proving that the violation occurred as set forth in the complaint and that the proposed