

(e) *Hearsay evidence.* Hearsay evidence is admissible in proceedings governed by this part. The fact that evidence is hearsay goes to the weight of evidence and does not affect its admissibility.

(f) *Admission of evidence.* The hearing officer admits evidence introduced by a party in support of its case in accordance with this section, but may exclude irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence.

(g) *Expert or opinion witnesses.* An employee of the FAA or DOT may not be called as an expert or opinion witness for any party other than the agency except as provided in Department of Transportation regulations at 49 CFR part 9.

§ 16.225 Public disclosure of evidence.

(a) Except as provided in this section, the hearing shall be open to the public.

(b) The hearing officer may order that any information contained in the record be withheld from public disclosure. Any person may object to disclosure of information in the record by filing a written motion to withhold specific information with the hearing officer. The person shall state specific grounds for nondisclosure in the motion.

(c) The hearing officer shall grant the motion to withhold information from public disclosure if the hearing officer determines that disclosure would be in violation of the Privacy Act, would reveal trade secrets or privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, or is otherwise prohibited by law.

§ 16.227 Standard of proof.

The hearing officer shall issue an initial decision or shall rule in a party's favor only if the decision or ruling is supported by, and in accordance with, reliable, probative, and substantial evidence contained in the record and is in accordance with law.

§ 16.229 Burden of proof.

(a) The burden of proof of noncompliance with an Act or any regulation, order, agreement or document of conveyance issued under the authority of an Act is on the agency.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by statute or rule, the proponent of a motion, request, or order has the burden of proof.

(c) A party who has asserted an affirmative defense has the burden of proving the affirmative defense.

§ 16.231 Offer of proof.

A party whose evidence has been excluded by a ruling of the hearing officer may offer the evidence on the record when filing an appeal.

§ 16.233 Record.

(a) *Exclusive record.* The transcript of all testimony in the hearing, all exhibits received into evidence, all motions, applications requests and rulings, and all documents included in the hearing record shall constitute the exclusive record for decision in the proceedings and the basis for the issuance of any orders.

(b) *Examination and copy of record.* Any interested person may examine the record at the Part 16 Airport Proceedings Docket, AGC-600, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20591. Any person may have a copy of the record after payment of reasonable costs for search and reproduction of the record.

§ 16.235 Argument before the hearing officer.

(a) *Argument during the hearing.* During the hearing, the hearing officer shall give the parties reasonable opportunity to present oral argument on the record supporting or opposing motions, objections, and rulings if the parties request an opportunity for argument. The hearing officer may direct written argument during the hearing if the hearing officer finds that submission of written arguments would not delay the hearing.

(b) *Posthearing briefs.* The hearing officer may request or permit the parties to submit posthearing briefs. The hearing officer may provide for the filing of simultaneous reply briefs as well, if such filing will not unduly delay the issuance of the hearing officer's initial decision. Posthearing briefs shall include proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law; exceptions to rulings of