

Environmental Protection Agency

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§ 17.3 Proceedings covered.

(a) These rules apply to adversary adjudications required by statute to be conducted by EPA under 5 U.S.C. 554. To the extent that they are adversary adjudications, the proceedings conducted by EPA to which these rules apply include:

(1) A hearing to consider the assessment of a noncompliance penalty under section 120 of the Clean Air Act as amended (42 U.S.C. 7420);

(2) A hearing to consider the termination of an individual National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit under section 402 of the Clean Water Act as amended (33 U.S.C. 1342);

(3) A hearing to consider the assessment of any civil penalty under section 16(a) of the Toxic Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2615(a));

(4) A hearing to consider ordering a manufacturer of hazardous chemical substances or mixtures to take actions under section 6(b) of the Toxic Substances Control Act (15 U.S.C. 2605(b)), to decrease the unreasonable risk posed by a chemical substance or mixture;

(5) A hearing to consider the assessment of any civil penalty under section 14(a) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act as amended (7 U.S.C. 1361);

(6) A hearing to consider suspension of a registrant for failure to take appropriate steps in the development of registration data under section 3(c)(2)(B) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act as amended (7 U.S.C. 136a);

(7) A hearing to consider the suspension or cancellation of a registration under section 6 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act as amended (7 U.S.C. 136d);

(8) A hearing to consider the assessment of any civil penalty or the revocation or suspension of any permit under section 105(a) or 105(f) of the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act as amended (33 U.S.C. 1415(a), 33 U.S.C. 1415(f));

(9) A hearing to consider the issuance of a compliance order or the assessment of any civil penalty conducted under section 3008 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act as amended (42 U.S.C. 6928);

(10) A hearing to consider the issuance of a compliance order under section 11(d) of the Noise Control Act as amended (42 U.S.C. 4910(d)).

(b) If a proceeding includes both matters covered by the Act and matters specifically excluded from coverage, any award made will include only fees and expenses related to covered issues.

§ 17.4 Applicability to EPA proceedings.

The Act applies to an adversary adjudication pending before EPA at any time between October 1, 1981 and September 30, 1984. This includes proceedings begun before October 1, 1981 if final EPA action has not been taken before that date, and proceedings pending on September 30, 1984.

§ 17.5 Eligibility of applicants.

(a) To be eligible for an award of attorney's fees and other expenses under the Act, the applicant must be a prevailing party in the adversary adjudication for 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 and in subpart B.

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

(1) An individual with a net worth of not more than \$1 million;

(2) The sole owner of an unincorporated business which has a net worth of not more than \$5 million and not more than 500 employees;

(3) 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;

(4) A cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 114j(a)) with not more than 500 employees; and

(5) Any other partnership, corporation, association, or public or private organization with a net worth of not more than \$5 million and not more than 500 employees.

(c) For the purpose of eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant shall be determined as of the date of adversary adjudication was initiated.

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(d) 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 interest.

(e) 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.

(f) The net worth and number of employees of the applicant and all of its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility. An individual or group of individuals, corporation, or other entity that directly or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares of another business' board of directors, trustees, or other persons exercising similar functions, shall be considered an affiliate of that business for purposes of this part. In addition, the Presiding Officer may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(g) An applicant is not eligible if it has participated in the proceeding on behalf of other persons or entities that are ineligible.

§ 17.6 Standards for awards.

(a) A prevailing applicant may receive an award for fees and expenses incurred in connection with a proceeding unless the position of the EPA as a party to the proceeding was substantially justified or unless special circumstances make the award sought unjust. No presumption arises that the agency's position was not substantially justified simply because the agency did not prevail.

(b) An award shall be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the proceeding.

§ 17.7 Allowable fees and other expenses.

(a) The following fees and other expenses are allowable under the Act:

(1) Reasonable expenses of expert witnesses;

(2) The reasonable cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, or project which EPA finds necessary for the preparation of the party's case;

(3) Reasonable attorney or agent fees;

(b) The amount of fees awarded will be based upon the prevailing market rates for the kind and quality of services furnished, except that:

(1) Compensation for an expert witness will not exceed \$24.09 per hour; and

(2) Attorney or agent fees will not be in excess of \$75 per hour.

(c) In determining the reasonableness of the fee sought, the Presiding Officer shall consider the following:

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

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

(3) The difficulty or complexity of the issues raised by the application;

(4) Any necessary and reasonable expenses incurred;

(5) Such other factors as may bear on the value of the services performed.

§ 17.8 Delegation of authority.

The Administrator delegates to the Environmental Appeals Board authority to take final action relating to the Equal Access to Justice Act. The Environmental Appeals Board is described at 40 CFR 1.25(e). This delegation does not preclude the Environmental Appeals Board from referring any matter related to the Equal Access to Justice Act to the Administrator when the Environmental Appeals Board deems it appropriate to do so. When an appeal or motion is referred to the Administrator by the Environmental Appeals Board, all parties shall be so notified and the rules in this part referring to the Environmental Appeals Board shall be interpreted as referring to the Administrator.

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