order to avoid prejudice to a party, the judge may provide the parties opportunity to make arrangements that permit a party or a representative to have access to such matter without compromising sensitive information. Such arrangements may include obtaining security clearances, obtaining a national interest determination under section 12(c) of the EAA, or giving counsel for a party access to sensitive information and documents subject to assurances against further disclosure, including a protective order, if necessary.

§ 766.12 Prehearing conference.

(a) The administrative law judge, on the judge's own motion or on request of a party, may direct the parties to participate in a prehearing conference, either in person or by telephone, to consider:

(1) Simplification of issues;

(2) The necessity or desirability of amendments to pleadings;

(3) Obtaining stipulations of fact and of documents to avoid unnecessary proof; or

(4) Such other matters as may expedite the disposition of the proceedings.

(b) The administrative law judge may order the conference proceedings to be recorded electronically or taken by a reporter, transcribed and filed with the judge.

(c) If a prehearing conference is impracticable, the administrative law judge may direct the parties to correspond with the judge to achieve the purposes of such a conference.

(d) The administrative law judge will prepare a summary of any actions agreed on or taken pursuant to this section. The summary will include any written stipulations or agreements made by the parties.

§ 766.13 Hearings.

(a) *Scheduling.* The administrative law judge, by agreement with the parties or upon notice to all parties of not less than 30 days, will schedule a hearing. All hearings will be held in Washington, D.C., unless the administrative law judge determines, for good cause shown, that another location would better serve the interests of justice.

(b) *Hearing procedure.* Hearings will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner by the administrative law judge, who may limit attendance at any hearing or portion thereof to the parties, their representatives and witnesses if the judge deems this necessary or advisable in order to protect sensitive matter (see § 766.11 of this part) from improper disclosure. The rules of evidence prevailing in courts of law do not apply, and all evidentiary material deemed by the administrative law judge to be relevant and material to the proceeding and not unduly repetitious will be received and given appropriate weight.

(c) *Testimony and record.* Witnesses will testify under oath or affirmation. A verbatim record of the hearing and of any other oral proceedings will be taken by reporter or by electronic recording, transcribed and filed with the administrative law judge. A respondent may examine the transcript and may obtain a copy by paying any applicable costs. Upon such terms as the administrative law judge deems just, the judge may direct that the testimony of any person be taken by deposition and may admit an affidavit or declaration as evidence, provided that any affidavits or declarations have been filed and served on the parties sufficiently in advance of the hearing to permit a party to file and serve an objection thereto on the grounds that it is necessary that the affiant or declarant testify at the hearing and be subject to cross-examination.

(d) *Failure to appear.* If a party fails to appear in person or by counsel at a scheduled hearing, the hearing may nevertheless proceed, and that party's failure to appear will not affect the validity of the hearing or any proceedings or action taken thereafter.

§ 766.14 Interlocutory review of rulings.

(a) At the request of a party, or on the judge's own initiative, the administrative law judge may certify to the Under Secretary for review a ruling that does not finally dispose of a proceeding, if the administrative law judge determines that immediate review may hasten or facilitate the final disposition of the matter.

(b) Upon certification to the Under Secretary of the interlocutory ruling

for review, the parties will have 10 days to file and serve briefs stating their positions, and five days to file and serve replies, following which the Under Secretary will decide the matter promptly.

§ 766.15 Proceeding without a hearing.

If the parties have waived a hearing, the case will be decided on the record by the administrative law judge. Proceeding without a hearing does not relieve the parties from the necessity of proving the facts supporting their charges or defenses. Affidavits or declarations, depositions, admissions, answers to interrogatories and stipulations may supplement other documentary evidence in the record. The administrative law judge will give each party reasonable opportunity to file rebuttal evidence.

§ 766.16 Procedural stipulations; extension of time.

(a) *Procedural stipulations.* Unless otherwise ordered, a written stipulation agreed to by all parties and filed with the administrative law judge will modify any procedures established by this part.

(b) *Extension of time.* (1) The parties may extend any applicable time limitation, by stipulation filed with the administrative law judge before the time limitation expires.

(2) The administrative law judge may, on the judge's own initiative or upon application by any party, either before or after the expiration of any applicable time limitation, extend the time within which to file and serve an answer to a charging letter or do any other act required by this part.

§ 766.17 Decision of the administrative law judge.

(a) *Predecisional matters.* Except for default proceedings under § 766.7 of this part, the administrative law judge will give the parties reasonable opportunity to submit the following, which will be made a part of the record:

(1) Exceptions to any ruling by the judge or to the admissibility of evidence proffered at the hearing;

(2) Proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law;

(3) Supporting legal arguments for the exceptions and proposed findings and conclusions submitted; and

(4) A proposed order.

(b) *Decision and order.* After considering the entire record in the proceeding, the administrative law judge will issue a written decision.

(1) *Initial decision.* For proceedings charging violations relating to part 760 of the EAR, the decision rendered shall be an initial decision. The decision will include findings of fact, conclusions of law, and findings as to whether there has been a violation of the EAA, the EAR, or any order, license or authorization issued thereunder. If the administrative law judge finds that the evidence of record is insufficient to sustain a finding that a violation has occurred with respect to one or more charges, the judge shall order dismissal of the charges in whole or in part, as appropriate. If the administrative law judge finds that one or more violations have been committed, the judge may issue an order imposing administrative sanctions, as provided in part 764 of the EAR. The decision and order shall be served on each party, and shall become effective as the final decision of the Department 30 days after service, unless an appeal is filed in accordance with § 766.21 of this part.

(2) *Recommended decision.* For proceedings not involving violations relating to part 760 of the EAR, the decision rendered shall be a recommended decision. The decision will include recommended findings of fact, conclusions of law, and findings as to whether there has been a violation of the EAA, the EAR or any order, license or authorization issued thereunder. If the administrative law judge finds that the evidence of record is insufficient to sustain a recommended finding that a violation has occurred with respect to one or more charges, the judge shall recommend dismissal of any such charge. If the administrative law judge finds that one or more violations have been committed, the judge shall recommend an order imposing administrative sanctions, as provided in part 764 of the EAR, or such other action as the judge deems appropriate. The administrative law judge shall immediately certify the record, including the original copy of