(8) To hold conferences for settlement or simplification of issues by consent of the parties;

(9) To make decisions in accordance with the Act, this part, and section 557 of title 5 of the United States Code; and

(10) To take any other appropriate action authorized by this part, section 556 of title 5 of the United States Code, or the Act.

(b) *Disqualification.* (1) When an administrative law judge deems himself disqualified to preside over a particular hearing, he shall withdraw therefrom by notice on the record directed to the Chief Administrative Law Judge.

(2) Any party who deems an administrative law judge for any reason to be disqualified to preside or continue to preside over a particular hearing, may file with the Chief Administrative Law Judge of the Department of Labor a motion to be supported by affidavits setting forth the alleged grounds for disqualification. The Chief Administrative Law Judge shall rule upon the motion.

(c) *Contumacious conduct; failure or refusal to appear or obey rulings of a presiding administrative law judge.* (1) Contumacious conduct at any hearing before the administrative law judge shall be grounds for exclusion from the hearing.

(2) If a witness or party refuses to answer a question after being directed to do so or refuses to obey an order to provide or permit discovery, the administrative law judge may make such orders with regard to the refusal as are just and appropriate, including an order denying the application of a petitioner or regulating the contents of the record of the hearing.

(d) *Referral to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and Evidence.* On any procedural question not regulated by this part, the act, or the Administrative Procedure Act, an administrative law judge shall be guided to the extent practicable by any pertinent provisions of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or Federal Rules of Evidence, as appropriate.

(e) *Remand.* The presiding administrative law judge shall be authorized to remand the petition for modification proceeding to the appropriate Administrator based upon new evidence which was not available to the Administrator and which may have materially affected the Administrator's proposed decision and order. Remand may be upon the judge's own motion or the motion of any party, and shall be granted in the discretion of the presiding administrative law judge.

[43 FR 29518, July 7, 1978, as amended at 55 FR 53442, Dec. 28, 1990]

§ 44.23   Prehearing conferences.

(a) *Convening a conference.* Upon his own motion or the motion of a party, the administrative law judge may direct the parties or their counsel to meet with him for a conference to consider:

(1) Simplification of issues;

(2) Necessity or desirability of amendments to documents for clarification, simplification, or limitation;

(3) Stipulations and admissions of facts;

(4) Limitation of the number of parties and expert witnesses; and

(5) Such other matters as may tend to expedite the disposition of the proceeding and assure a just conclusion thereof.

(b) *Record of conference.* The administrative law judge may, where appropriate, issue an order which recites the action taken at the conference, amendments allowed to any filed documents, and agreements made between the parties as to any of the matters considered. The order shall limit the issues for hearing to those not disposed of by admissions or agreements. Such an order controls the subsequent course of the hearing, unless modified at the hearing to prevent manifest injustice.

§ 44.24   Discovery.

Parties shall be governed in their conduct of discovery by appropriate provisions of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, except as provided in § 44.25 of this part. After consultation with the parties, the administrative law judge shall prescribe a time of not more than 45 days to complete discovery. Alternative periods of time for discovery may be prescribed by the presiding administrative law judge upon the request of any party. As soon as is practicable after completion of discovery, the administrative law judge