

relevant documents. OWCP will provide any such comments to the employee, who will have 20 days from the date the comments are sent to him or her within which to comment. If no comments are received from the employer, OWCP will proceed with the merit review of the case.

(b) A claims examiner who did not participate in making the contested decision will conduct the merit review of the claim. When all evidence has been reviewed, OWCP will issue a new merit decision, based on all the evidence in the record. A copy of the decision will be provided to the agency.

(c) An employee dissatisfied with this new merit decision may again request reconsideration under this subpart or appeal to the ECAB. An employee may not request a hearing on this decision.

§ 10.610 What is a review by the Director?

The FECA specifies that an award for or against payment of compensation may be reviewed at any time on the Director's own motion. Such review may be made without regard to whether there is new evidence or information. If the Director determines that a review of the award is warranted (including, but not limited to circumstances indicating a mistake of fact or law or changed conditions), the Director (at any time and on the basis of existing evidence) may modify, rescind, decrease or increase compensation previously awarded, or award compensation previously denied. A review on the Director's own motion is not subject to a request or petition and none shall be entertained.

(a) The decision whether or not to review an award under this section is solely within the discretion of the Director. The Director's exercise of this discretion is not subject to review by the ECAB, nor can it be the subject of a reconsideration or hearing request.

(b) Where the Director reviews an award on his or her own motion, any resulting decision is subject as appropriate to reconsideration, a hearing and/or appeal to the ECAB. Jurisdiction on review or on appeal to ECAB is limited to a review of the merits of the resulting decision. The Director's de-

termination to review the award is not reviewable.

HEARINGS

§ 10.615 What is a hearing?

A hearing is a review of an adverse decision by a hearing representative. Initially, the claimant can choose between two formats: An oral hearing or a review of the written record. At the discretion of the hearing representative, an oral hearing may be conducted by telephone or teleconference. In addition to the evidence of record, the employee may submit new evidence to the hearing representative.

§ 10.616 How does a claimant obtain a hearing?

(a) A claimant, injured on or after July 4, 1966, who has received a final adverse decision by the district office may obtain a hearing by writing to the address specified in the decision. The hearing request must be sent within 30 days (as determined by postmark or other carrier's date marking) of the date of the decision for which a hearing is sought. The claimant must not have previously submitted a reconsideration request (whether or not it was granted) on the same decision.

(b) The claimant may specify the type of hearing desired when making the original hearing request. If the request does not specify a format, OWCP will schedule an oral hearing. The claimant can request a change in the format of the hearing by making a written request to the Branch of Hearings and Review. OWCP will grant a request received by the Branch of Hearings and Review within 30 days of: The date OWCP acknowledges the initial hearing request, or the date OWCP issues a notice setting a date for an oral hearing, in cases where the initial request was for, or was treated as a request for, an oral hearing. A request received after those dates will be subject to OWCP's discretion. The decision to grant or deny a change of format is not reviewable.

§ 10.617 How is an oral hearing conducted?

(a) The hearing representative retains complete discretion to set the

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time and place of the hearing, including the amount of time allotted for the hearing, considering the issues to be resolved.

(b) Unless otherwise directed in writing by the claimant, the hearing representative will mail a notice of the time and place of the oral hearing to the claimant and any representative at least 30 days before the scheduled date. The employer will also be mailed a notice at least 30 days before the scheduled date.

(c) The hearing is an informal process, and the hearing representative is not bound by common law or statutory rules of evidence, by technical or formal rules of procedure or by section 5 of the Administrative Procedure Act, but the hearing representative may conduct the hearing in such manner as to best ascertain the rights of the claimant. During the hearing process, the claimant may state his or her arguments and present new written evidence in support of the claim.

(d) Testimony at oral hearings is recorded, then transcribed and placed in the record. Oral testimony shall be made under oath.

(e) OWCP will furnish a transcript of the oral hearing to the claimant and the employer, who have 20 days from the date it is sent to comment. Any comments received from the employer shall be sent to the claimant, who will be given an additional 20 days to comment from the date OWCP sends any agency comments.

(f) The hearing remains open for the submittal of additional evidence until 30 days after the hearing is held, unless the hearing representative, in his or her sole discretion, grants an extension. Only one such extension may be granted. A copy of the decision will be mailed to the claimant's last known address, to any representative, and to the employer.

(g) The hearing representative determines the conduct of the oral hearing and may terminate the hearing at any time he or she determines that all relevant evidence has been obtained, or because of misbehavior on the part of the claimant and/or representative at or near the place of the oral presentation.

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§ 10.618 How is a review of the written record conducted?

(a) The hearing representative will review the official record and any additional evidence submitted by the claimant and by the agency. The hearing representative may also conduct whatever investigation is deemed necessary. New evidence and arguments are to be submitted at any time up to the time specified by OWCP, but they should be submitted as soon as possible to avoid delaying the hearing process.

(b) The claimant should submit, with his or her application for review, all evidence or argument that he or she wants to present to the hearing representative. A copy of all pertinent material will be sent to the employer, which will have 20 days from the date it is sent to comment. (Medical evidence is not considered "pertinent" for review and comment by the agency, and it will therefore not be furnished to the agency. OWCP has sole responsibility for evaluating medical evidence.) The employer shall send any comments to the claimant, who will have 20 more days from the date of the agency's certificate of service to comment.

§ 10.619 May subpoenas be issued for witnesses and documents?

A claimant may request a subpoena, but the decision to grant or deny such a request is within the discretion of the hearing representative. The hearing representative may issue subpoenas for the attendance and testimony of witnesses, and for the production of books, records, correspondence, papers or other relevant documents. Subpoenas are issued for documents only if they are relevant and cannot be obtained by other means, and for witnesses only where oral testimony is the best way to ascertain the facts.

(a) A claimant may request a subpoena only as part of the hearings process, and no subpoena will be issued under any other part of the claims process. To request a subpoena, the requestor must:

(1) Submit the request in writing and send it to the hearing representative as early as possible but no later than 60 days (as evidenced by postmark, electronic marker or other objective date