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Title 40 —Protection of Environment
Chapter I —Environmental Protection Agency
Subchapter A —General

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Status Corrective Action Orders

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**PART 24—RULES GOVERNING ISSUANCE OF AND
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS ON INTERIM STATUS CORRECTIVE
ACTION ORDERS**

Authority: 42 U.S.C. sections 6912, 6928, 6991b.

Source: 53 FR 12263, Apr. 13, 1988, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General

§ 24.01 Scope of these rules.

- (a) These rules establish procedures governing issuance of administrative orders for corrective action pursuant to sections 3008(h) and 9003(h) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (the Act), and conduct of administrative hearings on such orders, except as specified in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.
- (b) The hearing procedures appearing at 40 CFR part 22 govern administrative hearings on any order issued pursuant to section 3008(h) of the Act which:
 - (1) Is contained within an administrative order that includes claims under section 3008(a) of the Act; or
 - (2) Includes a suspension or revocation of authorization to operate under section 3005(e) of the Act; or
 - (3) Seeks penalties under section 3008(h)(2) of the Act for non-compliance with a section 3008(h) order.
- (c) The hearing procedures appearing at 40 CFR part 22 govern administrative hearings on any order issued pursuant to section 9003(h) of the Act that is contained within an administrative order that includes claims under section 9006 of the Act.
- (d) Questions arising at any stage of the proceeding which are not addressed in these rules shall be resolved at the discretion of the Regional Administrator or Presiding Officer, as appropriate.

[53 FR 12263, Apr. 13, 1988, as amended at 56 FR 49380, Sept. 27, 1991]

§ 24.02 Issuance of initial orders; definition of final orders and orders on consent.

- (a) An administrative action under section 3008(h) or 9003(h) of the Act shall be commenced by issuance of an administrative order. When the order is issued unilaterally, the order shall be referred to as an initial administrative order and may be referenced as a proceeding under section 3008(h) or 9003(h) of the Act. When the order has become effective, either after issuance of a final order following a final decision by the Regional Administrator, or after thirty days from issuance if no hearing is requested, the order shall be referred to as a final administrative order. Where the order is agreed to by the parties, the order shall be denominated as a final administrative order on consent.
- (b) The initial administrative order shall be executed by an authorized official of EPA (petitioner), other than the Regional Administrator or the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Land and Emergency Management. For orders issued by EPA Headquarters, rather than by a Regional office, all references in these procedures to the Regional Administrator shall be understood to be to the Assistant Administrator for Land and Emergency Management or his delegatee.
- (c) The initial administrative order shall contain:
 - (1) A reference to the legal authority pursuant to which the order is issued,
 - (2) A concise statement of the factual basis upon which the order is issued, and
 - (3) Notification of respondent's right to request a hearing with respect to any issue of material fact or the appropriateness of the proposed corrective action.

[53 FR 12263, Apr. 13, 1988, as amended at 56 FR 49380, Sept. 27, 1991; 80 FR 77577, Dec. 15, 2015]

§ 24.03 Maintenance of docket and official record.

- (a) A Clerk shall be designated by the Regional Administrator to receive all initial orders, final orders, decisions, responses, memoranda, and documents regarding the order and to maintain the official record and docket.
- (b) On or before the date the initial order is served on respondent the EPA office issuing the order shall deliver to the Clerk (a copy of) the administrative record supporting the findings of fact, determinations of law, and relief sought in the initial administrative order. This record shall include all relevant documents and oral information (which has been reduced to writing), which the Agency considered in the process of developing and issuing the order, exclusive of privileged internal communications. The administrative record delivered to the Clerk must have an index and be available for review in the appropriate Agency Regional or Headquarters office during normal business hours after the order is issued.

§ 24.04 Filing and service of orders, decisions, and documents.

- (a) **Filing of orders, decisions, and documents.** The original and one copy of the initial administrative order, the recommended decision of the Presiding Officer, the final decision and the final administrative order, and one copy of the administrative record and an index thereto must be filed with the Clerk designated for 3008(h) or 9003(h) orders. In addition, all memoranda and documents submitted in the proceeding shall be filed with the clerk.
- (b) **Service of orders, decisions, and rulings.** The Clerk (or in the case of the initial administrative order, any other designated EPA employee) shall arrange for the effectuation of service of the initial administrative order, the recommended decision of the Presiding Officer, the final decision, and final administrative order. Service of a copy of the initial administrative order together with a copy of these procedures, the recommended decision of the Presiding Officer, the final decision, or a final administrative order, shall be made personally or by certified mail, return receipt requested or, if personal service cannot be effectuated or certified mail is returned refused or unsigned, by regular mail, on the respondent or his representative. The Clerk shall serve other documents from the Presiding Officer by regular mail.
- (c) **Service of documents filed by the parties.** Service of all documents, filed by the parties, shall be made by the parties or their representatives on other parties or their representatives and may be regular mail, with the original filed with the Clerk. The original of any pleading, letter, or other document (other than exhibits) shall be signed by the party filing or by his counsel or other representative. The signature constitutes a representation by the signer that he has read the pleading, letter, or other document, that to the best of his knowledge, information, and belief, the statements made therein are true, and that it is not interposed for delay.
- (d) **Service in general.** Service of orders, decisions, rulings, or documents by either the Clerk or the parties shall, in the case of a domestic or foreign corporation, a partnership, or other unincorporated association, which is subject to suit under a common name, be made, as prescribed in § 24.04 (b) and (c), upon an officer, partner, managing or general agent, or any person authorized by appointment or by Federal or State law to receive service of process.
- (e) **Effective date of service.** Service of the initial administrative order and final administrative order is complete upon receipt by respondent (or the respondent's agent, attorney, representative or other person employed by respondent and receiving such service), personally or by certified mail, or upon mailing by

regular mail, if personal service or service by certified mail cannot be accomplished, in accordance with § 24.04(b). Service of all other pleadings and documents is complete upon mailing, except as provided in §§ 24.10(b) and 24.14(e).

[53 FR 12263, Apr. 13, 1988, as amended at 56 FR 49380, Sept. 27, 1991]

§ 24.05 Response to the initial order; request for hearing.

- (a) The initial administrative order becomes a final administrative order thirty (30) days after service of the order, unless the respondent files with the Clerk within thirty (30) days after service of the order, a response to the initial order and requests a hearing.
- (b) The response to the initial order and request for a hearing must be in writing and mailed to, or personally served on, the Clerk of the Regional office which issued the order.
- (c) The response to the initial order shall specify each factual or legal determination, or relief provision in the initial order the respondent disputes and shall briefly indicate the basis upon which it disputes such determination or provision.
- (d) Respondent may include with its response to the initial order and request for a hearing a statement indicating whether it believes the subpart B or subpart C hearing procedures should be employed for the requested hearing and the reason(s) therefore.

§ 24.06 Designation of Presiding Officer.

Upon receipt of a request for a hearing, the Regional Administrator shall designate a Presiding Officer to conduct the hearing and preside over the proceedings.

§ 24.07 Informal settlement conference.

The respondent may request an informal settlement conference at any time by contacting the appropriate EPA employee, as specified in the initial administrative order. A request for an informal conference will not affect the respondent's obligations to timely request a hearing. Whether or not the respondent requests a hearing, the parties may confer informally concerning any aspect of the order. The respondent and respondent's representatives shall generally be allowed the opportunity at an informal conference to discuss with the appropriate Agency technical and legal personnel all aspects of the order, and in particular the basis for the determination that a release has occurred and the appropriateness of the ordered corrective action.

§ 24.08 Selection of appropriate hearing procedures.

- (a) The hearing procedures set forth in subpart B of this part shall be employed for any requested hearing if the initial order directs the respondent—
 - (1) To undertake only a RCRA Facility Investigation and/or Corrective Measures Study, which may include monitoring, surveys, testing, information gathering, analyses, and/or studies (including studies designed to develop recommendations for appropriate corrective measures), or
 - (2) To undertake such investigations and/or studies and interim corrective measures, and if such interim corrective measures are neither costly nor technically complex and are necessary to protect human health and the environment prior to development of a permanent remedy, or
 - (3) To undertake investigations/studies with respect to a release from an underground storage tank.

- (b) The hearing procedures set forth in subpart C of this part shall be employed if the respondent seeks a hearing on an order directing that—
 - (1) Corrective measures or such corrective measures together with investigations/studies be undertaken, or
 - (2) Corrective action or such corrective action together with investigations/studies be undertaken with respect to any release from an underground storage tank.
- (c) The procedures contained in subparts A and D of this part shall be followed regardless of whether the initial order directs the respondent to undertake an investigation pursuant to the procedures in subpart B of this part, or requires the respondent to implement corrective measures pursuant to the procedures in subpart C of this part.

[56 FR 49380, Sept. 27, 1991]

Subpart B—Hearings on Orders Requiring Investigations or Studies

§ 24.09 Qualifications of Presiding Officer; *ex parte* discussion of the proceeding.

The Presiding Officer shall be either the Regional Judicial Officer (as described in 40 CFR 22.04(b)) or another attorney employed by the Agency, who has had no prior connection with the case, including the performance of any investigative or prosecuting functions. At no time after issuance of the initial administrative order and prior to issuance of the final order shall the Regional Administrator, Presiding Officer, or any person who will advise these officials in the decision on the case, discuss *ex parte* the merits of the proceeding with any interested person outside the Agency, with any Agency staff member who performs a prosecutorial or investigative function in such proceeding or a factually related proceeding, or with any representative of such person. If, after issuance of the initial order and prior to issuance of the final order, the Regional Administrator, Presiding Officer, or any person who will advise these officials in the decision on the case receives from or on behalf of any party in an *ex parte* communication information which is relevant to the decision on the case and to which other parties have not had an opportunity to respond, a summary of such information shall be served on all other parties, who shall have an opportunity to reply to same within ten (10) days of service of the summary.

§ 24.10 Scheduling the hearing; pre-hearing submissions by respondent.

- (a) **Date and time for hearing.** The Presiding Officer shall establish the date, time, location, and agenda for the requested public hearing and transmit this information to the parties. Subject to § 24.10(c), the hearing shall be scheduled and held within thirty (30) days of the Agency's receipt of the request for a public hearing.
- (b) **Pre-hearing submissions by respondent.** At any time up to five (5) business days before the hearing respondent may, but is not required to, submit for inclusion in the administrative record information and argument supporting respondent's positions on the facts, law and relief, as each relates to the order in question. A copy of any information or argument submitted by respondent shall be served such that the Clerk and petitioner receive same at least five (5) business days before hearing.
- (c) **Postponement of hearing.** The Presiding Officer may grant an extension of time for the conduct of the hearing upon written request of either party, for good cause shown, and after consideration of any prejudice to other parties. The Presiding Officer may not extend the date by which the request for hearing is due under § 24.05(a).

- (d) **Location of hearing.** The hearing shall be held in the city in which the relevant EPA Regional Office is located, unless the Presiding Officer determines that there is good cause to hold it in another location.

§ 24.11 Hearing; oral presentations and written submissions by the parties.

The Presiding Officer shall conduct the hearing in a fair and impartial way, taking action as needed to avoid unnecessary delay, exclude redundant material and maintain order during the proceedings. Representatives of EPA shall introduce the administrative record and be prepared to summarize the basis for the order. The respondent shall have a reasonable opportunity to address relevant issues and present its views through legal counsel or technical advisors. The Presiding Officer may also allow technical and legal discussions and interchanges between the parties, including responses to questions to the extent deemed appropriate. It is not the Agency's intent to provide EPA or respondent an opportunity to engage in direct examination or cross-examination of witnesses. The Presiding Officer may address questions to the respondent's or EPA's representative(s) during the hearing. Each party shall insure that a representative(s) is (are) present at the hearing, who is (are) capable of responding to questions and articulating that party's position on the law and facts at issue. Where respondent can demonstrate that through no fault of its own certain documents supportive of its position could not have been submitted before hearing in accordance with the requirements of § 24.10(b), it may submit such documents at the hearing. Otherwise no new documentary support may be submitted at hearing. The Presiding Officer may upon request grant petitioner leave to respond to submissions made by respondent pursuant to this section or § 24.10(b). The Presiding Officer shall have the discretion to order either party to submit additional information (including but not limited to posthearing briefs on undeveloped factual, technical, or legal matters) in whatever form he deems appropriate either at or after the hearing.

§ 24.12 Summary of hearing; Presiding Officer's recommendation.

- (a) As soon as practicable after the conclusion of the hearing a written summary of the proceeding shall be prepared. This summary shall, at a minimum, identify:
- (1) The dates of and known attendees at the hearing; and
 - (2) The bases upon which the respondent contested the terms of the order.

The summary must be signed by the Presiding Officer.

- (b) The Presiding Officer will evaluate the entire administrative record and, on the basis of that review and the representations of EPA and respondent at the hearing, shall prepare and file a recommended decision with the Regional Administrator. The recommended decision must address all material issues of fact or law properly raised by respondent, and must recommend that the order be modified, withdrawn or issued without modification. The recommended decision must provide an explanation with citation to material contained in the record for any decision to modify a term of the order, to issue the order without change, or to withdraw the order. The recommended decision shall be based on the administrative record. If the Presiding Officer finds that any contested relief provision in the order is not supported by a preponderance of the evidence in the record, the Presiding Officer shall recommend that the order be modified and issued on terms that are supported by the record or withdrawn.
- (c) At any time within twenty-one (21) days of service of the recommended decision on the parties, the parties may file comments on the recommended decision with the Clerk. The Clerk shall promptly transmit any such comments received to the Regional Administrator for his consideration in reaching a final decision.

Subpart C—Hearings on Orders Requiring Corrective Measures

§ 24.13 Qualifications of Presiding Officer; *ex parte* discussion of the proceeding.

- (a) **Qualifications of Presiding Officer.** The Presiding Officer shall be either the Regional Judicial Officer (as described in 40 CFR 22.04(b)) of another attorney employed by the Agency, who has had no prior connection with the case, including the performance of any investigative or prosecuting functions.
- (b) ***Ex parte* discussion of the proceeding.** At no time after issuance of the initial administrative order and prior to issuance of the final order shall the Regional Administrator, Presiding Officer, or any person who will advise these officials in the decision on the case, discuss *ex parte* the merits of the proceeding with any interested person outside the Agency, with any Agency staff member who performs a prosecutorial or investigative function in such proceeding or a factually related proceeding, or with any representative of such person. If, after issuance of the initial order and prior to issuance of the final order, the Regional Administrator, Presiding Officer, or any person who will advise these officials in the decision on the case receives from or on behalf of any party in an *ex parte* communication information which is relevant to the decision on the case and to which other parties have not had an opportunity to respond, a summary of such information shall be served on all other parties, who shall have an opportunity to reply to same within ten (10) days of service of the summary.

§ 24.14 Scheduling the hearing; pre-hearing submissions by the parties.

- (a) The Presiding Officer shall establish an expeditious schedule for:
 - (1) The submission by respondent of a memorandum, with appropriate affidavits and exhibits, stating and supporting respondent's position on the facts, law and relief, specifying the bases upon and manner in which such determinations or relief provisions, if erroneous, require modification or withdrawal of the order:
 - (2) Submission of a response by EPA; and
 - (3) A public hearing.

Subject to § 24.14(b), a hearing shall be scheduled within 45 days of the order setting the schedule. The Presiding Officer shall establish the date, time, location and agenda for the hearing and shall transmit this information to the parties along with the schedule for the hearing.

- (b) ***Postponement of the hearing.*** The Presiding Officer, as appropriate, may grant an extension of time for the filing of any document, other than a request for a hearing under § 24.05(a), or may grant an extension of time for the conduct of the hearing, upon written request of either party, for good cause shown and after consideration of any prejudice to other parties.
- (c) ***Respondent's pre-hearing submission.*** In accordance with the schedule set by the Presiding Officer, the respondent shall file a memorandum stating and supporting respondent's position on the facts, law and relief. The memorandum must identify each factual allegation and all issues regarding the appropriateness of the terms of the relief in the initial order that respondent contests and for which respondent requests a hearing. The memorandum must clearly state respondent's position with respect to each such issue. Respondent must also include any proposals for modification of the order. The memorandum shall also present any arguments on the legal conclusions contained in the order.
- (d) ***Written questions to EPA.*** The respondent may file a request with the Presiding Officer for permission to submit written questions to the EPA Regional Office issuing the order concerning issues of material fact in the order.

- (1) Requests shall be accompanied by the proposed questions. In most instances, no more than twenty-five (25) questions, including subquestions and subparts, may be posed. The request and questions must be submitted to the Presiding Officer at least twenty-one (21) days before the hearing.
 - (2) The Presiding Officer may direct EPA to respond to such questions as he designates. In deciding whether or not to direct the Agency to respond to written questions the Presiding Officer should consider whether such responses are required for full disclosure and adequate resolution of the facts. No questions shall be allowed regarding privileged internal communications. The Presiding Officer shall grant, deny, or modify such requests expeditiously. If a request is granted the Presiding Officer may revise questions and may limit the number and scope of questions. Questions may be deleted or revised in the discretion of the Presiding Officer for reasons, which may include the fact that he finds the questions to be irrelevant, redundant, unnecessary, or an undue burden on the Agency. The Presiding Officer shall transmit the questions as submitted or as modified to EPA. EPA shall respond to the questions within fourteen (14) calendar days of service of the questions by the Presiding Officer, unless an extension is granted.
- (e) **Submission of additional information.** The Presiding Officer shall have the discretion to order either party to submit additional information (including but not limited to post-hearing briefs on undeveloped factual, technical, or legal matters) in whatever form he deems appropriate either before, at, or after the hearing. The Presiding Officer may issue subpoenas for the attendance and testimony of persons and the production of relevant papers, books and documents. Since these hearing procedures provide elsewhere that the parties are not to engage in direct or cross-examination of witnesses, the subpoena power is to serve only as an adjunct to the Presiding Officer's authority to ask questions and otherwise take steps to clarify factual matters which are in dispute. Upon request of the respondent the Presiding Officer may, in his discretion, allow submittal by the respondent of additional information in support of its claim, if it is received by the Clerk and petitioner at least five (5) business days before the hearing.
- (f) **Location of hearing.** The hearing shall be held in the city in which the relevant EPA Regional Office is located, unless the Presiding Officer determines that there is good cause to hold it in another location.

§ 24.15 Hearing; oral presentations and written submissions by the parties.

- (a) The Presiding Officer shall conduct the hearing in a fair and impartial manner, take action to avoid unnecessary delay in the disposition of the proceedings, and maintain order. The Presiding Officer shall permit oral statements on behalf of the respondent and EPA. The Presiding Officer may address questions to the respondent's or the EPA's representative(s) during the hearing. Each party shall ensure that a representative(s) is (are) present at the hearing, who is (are) capable of responding to questions and articulating that party's position on the law and facts at issue. Apart from questions by the Presiding Officer, no direct examination or cross-examination shall be allowed.
- (b) Upon commencement of the hearing, a representative of EPA shall introduce the order and record supporting issuance of the order, and summarize the basis for the order. The respondent may respond to the administrative record and offer any facts, statements, explanations or documents which bear on any issue for which the hearing has been requested. Any such presentation by respondent may include new documents only to the extent that respondent can demonstrate that, through no fault of its own, such documents could not have been submitted before hearing in accordance with the requirements of § 24.14 (c) and (e). The Agency may then present matters solely in rebuttal to matters previously presented by the

respondent. The Presiding Officer may allow the respondent to respond to any such rebuttal submitted. The Presiding Officer may exclude repetitive or irrelevant matter. The Presiding Officer may upon request grant petitioner leave to respond to submissions made by respondent pursuant to this paragraph or § 24.14(e).

§ 24.16 Transcript or recording of hearing.

- (a) The hearing shall be either transcribed stenographically or tape recorded. Upon written request, such transcript or tape recording shall be made available for inspection or copying.
- (b) The transcript or recording of the hearing and all written submittals filed with the Clerk by the parties subsequent to initial issuance of the order including post-hearing submissions will become part of the administrative record for the proceeding, for consideration by the Presiding Officer and Regional Administrator.

§ 24.17 Presiding Officer's recommendation.

- (a) The Presiding Officer will, as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the hearing, evaluate the entire administrative record and, on the basis of the administrative record, prepare and file a recommended decision with the Regional Administrator. The recommended decision must address all material issues of fact or law properly raised by respondent, and must recommend that the order be modified, withdrawn or issued without modification. The recommended decision must provide an explanation, with citation to material contained in the record for any decision to modify a term of the order, to issue the order without change or to withdraw the order. The recommended decision shall be based on the administrative record. If the Presiding Officer finds that any contested relief provision in the order is not supported by a preponderance of the evidence in the record, the Presiding Officer shall recommend that the order be modified and issued on terms that are supported by the record, or withdrawn.
- (b) At any time within twenty-one (21) days of service of the recommended decision on the parties, the parties may file comments on the recommended decision with the Clerk. The Clerk shall promptly transmit any such comments received to the Regional Administrator for his consideration in reaching a final decision.

Subpart D—Post-Hearing Procedures

§ 24.18 Final decision.

As soon as practicable after receipt of the recommended decision, the Regional Administrator will either sign or modify such recommended decision, and issue it as a final decision. If the Regional Administrator modifies the recommended decision, he shall insure that the final decision indicates the legal and factual basis for the decision as modified. The Regional Administrator's decision shall be based on the administrative record.

§ 24.19 Final order.

If the Regional Administrator does not adopt portions of the initial order, or finds that modification of the order is necessary, the signatory official on the initial administrative order shall modify the order in accordance with the terms of the final decision and file and serve a copy of the final administrative order. If the Regional Administrator finds the initial order appropriate as originally issued, the final decision shall declare the initial administrative order to be a final order, effective upon service of the final decision. If the Regional Administrator declares that the initial order must be withdrawn, the signatory official on the initial administrative order will file and serve a withdrawal of the initial administrative order. This may be done without prejudice.

§ 24.20 Final agency action.

The final decision and the final administrative order are final agency actions that are effective on filing and service. These actions are not appealable to the Administrator.