

**WAC 10-16-010 Procedure for complaints regarding improper conduct of an administrative law judge.** (1) Administrative law judges must at all times adhere to the fundamental principles of law, fairly and equitably. Administrative law judges should be fair in their rulings and should conduct the proceedings in a judicious manner.

(2) Any interested party to an administrative proceeding may file a complaint alleging improper conduct of an administrative law judge. For purposes of this section, an interested party is a person who has a right to receive notice of the administrative hearing.

(3) A complaint concerning a decision or order shall be handled through the appeal or petition for review process. This includes initial or final orders and interim orders or discretionary rulings from which further appeal may be taken.

(4) A complaint concerning the conduct of an administrative law judge, apart from a decision from which further appeal may be filed, shall be in writing and sent to the supervising administrative law judge.

(5) The written complaint must set forth in detail all pertinent facts and information. It shall include, among other things, the name of the administrative law judge, the date of the incident, the individuals present, and any other information which would assist in investigation of the complaint. The complaint should be no more than five pages.

(6) Within ten days of receipt of a written complaint, the supervising administrative law judge shall send a letter acknowledging receipt of the complaint. The supervising administrative law judge shall conduct an investigation of the complaint. For matters no longer pending before the office of administrative hearings at the time the complaint is filed, the supervising administrative law judge shall issue a written response to the complaining party within thirty days of receipt of the complaint. However, for matters pending before the office of administrative hearings at the time the complaint is filed, the supervising administrative law judge shall issue a written response within thirty days after issuance of the administrative law judge's decision. If additional time is needed, the supervising administrative law judge shall notify the complaining party in writing and indicate an expected response date.

(7) If, after investigation, the complaint is found to have merit, the supervising administrative law judge shall take appropriate corrective action. If disciplinary action is warranted, it shall be handled internally subject to the individual's privacy rights as in other personnel matters.

(8) Should the complaining party not be satisfied with the result of the investigation, he or she may request review of the complaint by the chief administrative law judge. The chief administrative law judge shall review all facts and information pertinent to the complaint and issue a written response. The response of the chief administrative law judge shall be final.

(9) Any inquiries concerning the grievance procedure may be made through the administrative office or any field office of the office of administrative hearings. A directory listing the names and mailing addresses of supervising administrative law judges, deputy chief administrative law judges and the chief administrative law judge will be available through these offices.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 34.05.020 and 34.12.030. WSR 99-20-115, § 10-16-010, filed 10/6/99, effective 11/6/99.]