

WAC 208-620-615 Application of the Administrative Procedure Act.

(1) What are my rights when the department begins an administrative enforcement action against me? Under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), chapter 34.05 RCW, you have the right to request a hearing on the agency's action. Hearings are conducted as either formal adjudicative proceedings or may, under certain circumstances, be handled as a brief adjudicative proceeding (BAP).

(2) What must I do when I want to request a hearing? When you are notified of administrative charges filed against you, you are also notified of your right to request a hearing. At that time, the department will also notify you as to whether the hearing will be conducted as a brief adjudicative proceeding. You are required to notify the department, in writing, within twenty days from the date of the director's notice to you notifying you of the enforcement action against you. This notice must be received by the department by the 20th day following service of the charges on you.

(3) What is a brief adjudicative proceeding? Under the APA, a brief adjudicative proceeding is a hearing that is less formal in nature and typically resolves the charges quickly. The department provides a BAP for violations of the act in which the facts are undisputed and under circumstances where the parties may present their case without the need for witnesses. Typical matters to be heard in a BAP include, but are not limited to, license denials or revocations based on certain undisputed facts, including criminal convictions or misrepresentations on an application.

(4) May I request a brief adjudicative proceeding in response to an administrative enforcement action? Yes, but only if the matter has been designated by the department as one for which a BAP is available. The director adopts RCW 34.05.482 through 34.05.494 for the administration of brief adjudicative proceedings. Brief adjudicative proceedings may be limited to a determination of one or more of the following issues:

(a) Whether an applicant for a loan originator license meets the requirements of RCW 31.04.247;

(b) Whether an applicant for a consumer loan company license meets the requirements of RCW 31.04.045; and

(c) Whether a consumer loan company has failed to maintain the bond required by RCW 31.04.045(6).

(5) In a matter not listed in subsection (4) of this section, a brief adjudicative proceeding may be conducted at the discretion of the presiding officer when it appears that protection of the public interest does not require that the department provide notice and an opportunity to participate to persons other than the parties, and:

(a) Only legal issues exist; or

(b) Both parties have agreed to a brief proceeding. As used in this section, "persons other than the parties" does not include an attorney or representative for a party, or a witness for a party.

(6) How does the BAP work? Brief adjudicative proceedings are controlled by the provisions of RCW 34.05.482 through 34.05.494. The department will use the following procedure:

(a) Presiding officer. The director designates a presiding officer to conduct the brief adjudicative proceedings. The presiding officer must have department expertise in the subject matter, but must not have personally participated in the department's licensing application denial, or work in the department's division of consumer services, or such other division within the department delegated by the director to oversee implementation of the act and these rules.

(b) Preliminary records. The preliminary record for the brief adjudicative proceeding consists of the application and all associated documents including all documents relied upon by the department to deny the application and all correspondence between the applicant and the department regarding the application.

(c) Notice of hearing. The presiding officer will set the date, time, and place of the hearing, giving at least seven business days notice to the applicant.

(d) Written documents. The department's staff or representative and the applicant or their representative may present written documentation for consideration by the presiding officer. The presiding officer will designate the date and number of pages allowed for submission of written documents, including supporting exhibits.

(e) Oral argument. The presiding officer may exercise discretion on whether to allow oral argument.

(f) Witnesses. Live witness testimony will not be allowed. Witnesses providing testimony by sworn declaration or affidavit will be allowed at the discretion of the presiding officer.

(g) If, at the time of the hearing, the presiding officer determines that the alleged violations or evidence concerning the violations is such that a formal adjudicative proceeding is necessary, the presiding officer may immediately adjourn the hearing and direct that the matter be scheduled as a formal adjudicative proceeding.

(h) Initial order. The presiding officer must make a written initial order within ten business days of the final date for submission of materials, or oral argument, if any, to include a written statement describing the decision, the reasons for the decision, and describing the right to request review of the decision by the director. The initial order will become final twenty-one days after service on the applicant unless the applicant requests an administrative review or the department decides to review the matter.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.320.040, 31.04.165, 2009 c 120, and 2009 c 149. WSR 09-24-090, § 208-620-615, filed 12/1/09, effective 1/1/10.]