JUDGE NAME: Judge Lawrence Beck DISTRICT: Southeastern District ASSIGNED OFFICE: Philadelphia

WCOA-Judges-Office-Contacts (pa.gov)

JUDGE'S PROCEDURAL RULES AND POLICIES

Workers' Compensation Automation and Integration System (WCAIS) is the official repository for all documents related to a Dispute (matter pending) before a Workers' Compensation Judge. All documents, including evidence and briefs, that would have been submitted to a Workers' Compensation Judge by mail or in person prior to WCAIS should now be uploaded into WCAIS. If Social Security numbers appear on any such document, they should be completely redacted before the document is uploaded, unless otherwise specified below. All communications with the Judge, including but not limited to requests, should be submitted through WCAIS unless otherwise specified by the Judge.

HEARING PROCEDURES

1. **What is the first event and what will occur?**
   The first event will be a remote or virtual pre-trial hearing. If the petition requested supersedeas, then a combined pre-trial and supersedeas hearing will be held. It is preferred that attorneys, and unrepresented parties, appear by video; however, appearance by telephone is acceptable. It is also expected that the attorneys and/or parties have ensured they will be able to participate prior to the hearing time. The best practice may be to "sign in" a few minutes before the hearing.

   a. **List any documents required at the first event:**

      To the extent possible and relevant, the controlling Bureau document or Decision should be uploaded to WCAIS before the first hearing. This Judge will usually upload the controlling document or decision where such is readily ascertainable; however, the parties should be prepared to upload same if not done by the Judge. A pre-trial memorandum or stipulation is not required; however, if a pre-trial memorandum is to be submitted, it must be provided to opposing counsel or unrepresented party.

   b. **Should documents be uploaded as Exhibits or Letters to the Judge?**

      Exhibits. There is no requirement, but it is preferred that exhibits are uploaded prior to the hearing. If the exhibit is not yet ready (e.g. the deposition was taken but the transcript not yet received), the parties may upload it after the hearing. When uploading exhibits, please keep in mind the following: Exhibits should be named with the number preceding it (Example: "C-01 Claimant Deposition"). Exhibit descriptions are optional and not mandatory.

2. **Describe the format of your hearings (e.g., serial, one day – one trial).**

   A serial format will be used which will consist of a pre-trial hearing, status hearings and a final hearing. Status hearings following the first hearing will be used to ensure the parties are moving their case forward in accordance with the Special Rules; however, depending on the circumstances, status hearings may be waived or cancelled. All first and status hearings, as well as Compromise and Release Agreement hearings, will be scheduled to be held remotely. All final hearings, where testimony is to be taken for consideration of its credibility, will be scheduled to be held in person. In all aspects, it is intended that the Special Rules will be followed, including with respect to the presentation of expert and rebuttal witnesses. In all petitions, the claimant must testify live either at the second hearing, which will be scheduled within 30 to 45 days after the pre-trial hearing, or by deposition within 30 to 60 days after the pre-trial hearing. It is anticipated that Claimant testifying by deposition will offer the parties the greatest freedom in scheduling so as not to be at the mercy of my schedule. If the claimant testifies by deposition, the claimant must testify live at or before the final hearing; this testimony will be limited to update information or for rebuttal purposes only. Claimant can provide updated testimony at the final hearing regardless if their prior

testimony was by deposition or at hearing. Absent special requests or circumstances, claimant testimony will not be taken at the first hearing. For employer petitions (e.g., suspension, modification, termination, etc.), the presentation of the employer's fact witnesses on the case-in-chief (i.e. non-rebuttal), shall be completed within 90 days of the first hearing. For final hearings, or any hearing at which testimony will be presented, excepting hearings on Compromise and Release Agreements, the hearing will be scheduled to be in person in the Philadelphia Hearing Office. Either party may request, through WCAIS, that the hearing be moved to being held remotely; however, such request must include a valid, objective, and verifiable reason for such change. Likewise, if a party wishes to reschedule a previously scheduled remote hearing as an in-person hearing, a WCAIS request, together with justification, is required. General instructions for hearings: The parties are expected to appear/call-in at the scheduled time or early. An early call-in is recommended to ensure that the party has the proper connection information. The parties will be asked if they wish a copy of the transcript on the record. Once on the record, I will make general remarks about the pending matter. If appearing by telephone, the parties are expected to take turns speaking and introduce themselves when they do, so that the court reporter may accurately report who is speaking. The parties are to remain on the line until such time as the hearing concludes and they have provided all necessary contact information.

3. **Are you willing to change the hearing format upon request?**

   Yes, provided a WCAIS request was made in sufficient time to make any changes and an acceptable reason is provided. Such change in format is solely within this Judge's discretion. If a request is made without sufficient time to make the change, a new hearing will be scheduled, resulting in delay.

4. **What factors will you consider in deciding whether to conduct a hearing in-person?**

   All final hearings where testimony will be provided, and where an in-depth consideration of the credibility of such testimony is required, will be in-person by default. The parties will be given a specific date and time to appear at the hearing. Additionally, any requirement of a personal viewing (e.g., of a scar or disfigurement) will be in-person.

5. **What factors will you consider in deciding whether to conduct a virtual hearing by audio only or by audio with video?**

   All first and status hearing will be held virtually. Likewise, all testimony that does not require an in-depth consideration of credibility (e.g., testimony on Compromise and Release Agreements, fee agreements, stipulations, and ancillary matters) will be remote. If a party wishes to change a previously scheduled in-person hearing to a virtual hearing, such request must provide reasonable cause for such change. Again, any change in format will be solely at this Judge's discretion.

6. **What procedure do you follow if a party fails to appear at a hearing?**

   It depends on the circumstances and reasons for the failure to attend. Generally, if a party fails to appear at a pre-trial hearing, the hearing will be continued and rescheduled for one additional hearing to provide the party with an opportunity to appear for trial; an Interlocutory Order may be issued directing the party's appearance at the (second) pre-trial hearing. If a party fails to appear at the rescheduled pre-trial hearing or otherwise indicate they intend to prosecute or defend the petition, their petition will be marked dismissed or, if they are the non-filing party, the petition will be decided on the evidence submitted.

7. **Do you have special procedures for psychological injury cases?**

   No.

SUPERSEDEAS PROCEDURES

1. What are your procedures for supersedeas hearings?

Supersedeas hearings will be held in coordination with a first hearing or a previously scheduled status hearing (for later filed petitions requesting supersedeas). Evidence in the form of bureau documents, underlying decisions, records, reports, and affidavits of the claimant and other witnesses will be permitted both at supersedeas hearings and special supersedeas hearings. If a party wishes to present testimony in support of or in opposition to the supersedeas request, a written request must be made within 7 days prior to the first (pre-trial) hearing. This request will usually be granted, but the testimony should be brief and address only the issues relevant to the supersedeas request. Requests for additional time to submit supersedeas documentation will usually be granted to allow the party an additional 14 days to submit this evidence. Requests for additional time beyond 14 days may be granted upon agreement of the parties. The supersedeas decision may be memorialized in a written Interlocutory Order. If a formal order is not issued, supersedeas is deemed denied. Counsel may request a formal order. Counsel may request an order for payment of interim counsel fees upon submission of an executed counsel fee agreement.

a. Will testimony be heard?

Only if requested at least 7 days before the hearing with notice to all parties.

b. Is additional time generally granted to obtain medical evidence?

Yes – within reason.

c. Under what circumstances will you reconsider a supersedeas order?

Requests for reconsideration will be heard only if new, compelling evidence is presented or a change of law occurs.

d. Do you generally use written orders for denials?

No, unless requested by the parties.

e. What is required for employee's counsel to obtain interim fee approval?

Counsel must upload a copy of the fee agreement. Additionally, the claimant must reference and approve the fee in the accompanying affidavit regarding supersedeas. If counsel already had a fee approved in a prior matter, Claimant's agreement to the fee will be presumed.

f. Describe procedures for special supersedeas hearings, if different:

No different procedures will be utilized with regard to special supersedeas hearings; however, no alteration of the time constraints contained in § 131.49 of the Special Rules will be considered, absent good cause.

WITNESSES/EXHIBITS

1. What are your rules regarding taking testimony?

In all petitions, the claimant must testify live either at the second hearing, which will be scheduled within 30 to 45 days after the pre-trial hearing, or by deposition within 30 to 60 days after the pre-trial hearing. It is anticipated that Claimant testifying by deposition will offer the parties the greatest freedom in scheduling so as not to be at the mercy of my schedule. If the claimant testifies by deposition, the claimant must testify live at or before the final hearing; this testimony will be limited to update information or for rebuttal purposes only. Claimant can provide updated testimony at the final hearing regardless if their prior testimony was by deposition or at hearing. Absent special requests or circumstances, claimant testimony will not be taken at the first hearing. For employer petitions (e.g., suspension, modification, termination, etc.), the presentation of the employer's fact witnesses on the case-in-chief (i.e. non-rebuttal), shall be completed within 90 days of the first hearing. For final hearings, or any hearing at which testimony will be presented, excepting hearings on Compromise and Release Agreements, the hearing will be scheduled to be in person in the Philadelphia Hearing Office. Either party may request, through WCAIS, that the hearing be moved to being held remotely; however, such request must include a valid, objective, and verifiable

reason for such change. Likewise, if a party wishes to hold a previously scheduled remote hearing to be rescheduled as an in person hearing, a WCAIS request, together with justification, is required

2. **Do you require testimony at a virtual hearing, an in-person hearing, or by deposition?**

   For substantive Claimant testimony it is anticipated that Claimant will testify in-person at least once, usually the final hearing. Preliminary testimony, or a "discovery deposition", is expected to occur within the time frame referenced above. Claimant's testimony at the final hearing will be limited to "updated" testimony. While some background testimony at the final hearing is acceptable, if a question could have been asked at the time of the deposition, it should have been asked and this Judge may limit counsel's questioning. All expert (medical, vocational, investigative, etc.) and fact witnesses may testify by deposition at the discretion of the presenting party. Prior notice must be provided if the party will be presenting a witness other than the claimant at a hearing. Notice of witness testimony should be provided at the pre-trial hearing or by WCAIS as soon as possible after the pre-trial hearing, subject to objection by the opposing party. If a non-regularly scheduled listing is required, a WCAIS request should be made no later than 10 days before the regularly scheduled hearing.

3. **Under what circumstances will you change your requirements for presentation of testimony?**

   For good cause shown.

4. **If counsel wishes to present the testimony of a witness (either virtually or in-person), do you require prior notice?** Yes. **If yes, how much notice do you require?** As soon as practicable. Regardless of timing, however, the parties should anticipate that the request, if granted, will result in a rescheduling of the hearing.

5. **What is your procedure regarding the order of expert medical testimony when cross petitions are filed?**

   It is anticipated that the first party that filed will go first. If that expert's testimony will require the consideration of the other party's expert's opinion, the first party may secure and submit a supplemental report addressing the opinion of the other party. Subject to hearsay objection, this Judge will consider such report as a continuation of the first expert's testimony. The supplemental report shall be limited to only a consideration or comment of that which was previously unavailable to the expert – it is not a "second bite at the apple".

6. **Do the parties need to upload the Bureau and WCOA documents as exhibits or will you admit them electronically as Judge exhibits?**

   This Judge will admit Bureau and WCOA documents as Judge exhibits; however, the parties may also upload them if they wish. All WCOA and Bureau documents will be Judge exhibits regardless of who uploads them.

7. **Do you require counsel to upload exhibits to WCAIS before or after the hearing?** Before is preferred. **If before, how far in advance of the hearing must they be uploaded?** There is no minimum time; however, if there is to be discussion regarding the exhibit, the other party should be aware of the exhibit and have sufficient time to review it. When uploading exhibits, please keep in mind the following: Exhibits should be named with the number preceding it (Example: C-01 Claimant Deposition). Exhibit descriptions are optional and not mandatory.

8. **When will you rule on objections to exhibits?**

   At the hearing it is presented. If a "special" hearing is required, it is anticipated counsel will request it.

9. What is your procedure for handling discovery disputes?

In general, discovery disputes presented to this Judge are discouraged and the parties are encouraged to communicate with each other to resolve such disputes. When necessary, discovery disputes may be presented in writing and will be resolved by order, or other writing at the judge's discretion. Discovery disputes will usually be discussed at a hearing on the record, which will be scheduled as soon as practical after the request is received by this workers' compensation judge. Absent special circumstances, this Judge will not make rulings by telephone contemporaneously with the taking of any deposition. Any objections should be stated on the record at the time of the deposition to be ruled upon at a later time. Special circumstances include objections as to the occurrence of the deposition itself due to a previously unknown discovery violation or other such exigent circumstances. The parties are cautioned to be judicious regarding their requests for contemporaneous rulings on objections. The parties may anticipate that this judge will be available for telephone conferences regarding discovery disputes during normal business hours. Rulings on discovery disputes presented during telephone conferences will be memorialized either through confirming letter or Interlocutory Order as the circumstances warrant.

10. What is the last day to file written preservations of deposition objections?

In general, discovery disputes presented to this Judge are discouraged and the parties are encouraged to communicate with each other to resolve such disputes. When necessary, discovery disputes may be presented in writing and will be resolved by order, or other writing at the judge's discretion. Discovery disputes will usually be discussed at a hearing on the record, which will be scheduled as soon as practical after the request is received by this workers' compensation judge. Absent special circumstances, this Judge will not make rulings by telephone contemporaneously with the taking of any deposition. Any objections should be stated on the record at the time of the deposition to be ruled upon at a later time. Special circumstances include objections as to the occurrence of the deposition itself due to a previously unknown discovery violation or other such exigent circumstances. The parties are cautioned to be judicious regarding their requests for contemporaneous rulings on objections. The parties may anticipate that this judge will be available for telephone conferences regarding discovery disputes during normal business hours. Rulings on discovery disputes presented during telephone conferences will be memorialized either through confirming letter or Interlocutory Order as the circumstances warrant.

COMPROMISE & RELEASES (C&Rs)

1. Describe your procedures regarding the review of C&R Agreements:

This Judge will review C&R Agreements to ensure they comply with the Act. It is expected they be uploaded prior to the hearing, preferably the day before at least.

a. Are you willing to allow amendments of existing petitions or do you require the filing of a separate Petition Seeking Approval of a C&R Agreement?

Amendments are fine.

b. Are parties required to provide a draft of the C&R Agreement before the hearing? If yes, how far in advance of the hearing do you need to receive it?

See above.

c. Should the parties upload the signed C&R Agreement, including the fee agreement and any other attachments, before or after the hearing?

Before the hearing.

d. Should child support documents be uploaded as a separate exhibit?

No – all one exhibit.

e. Should Social Security numbers and other confidential information be redacted from the C&R Agreement and Act 109 documents?

Two copies of the entire agreement must be uploaded. The first will be the original, unredacted Agreement. All social security numbers and dates of birth must be visible. It will remain as an exhibit, but uncirculated. The second is the redacted Agreement – all social security numbers and dates of birth removed/blacked out. This will be the exhibit that is circulated with the decision.

f. Will you sign bench orders?

No – C&R decisions usually are circulated the same day.

g. Describe any other procedures you have for C&R Agreements:

The exhibit should include all attachments (as one exhibit) the parties wish to include with the decision: the Agreement, the fee agreement, Act 109 child support documents, any Medicare/MSA/Social Security documents, and any alternative delivery forms.

STIPULATIONS RESOLVING DISPUTES

1. What are your usual procedures regarding the submission, review, and adoption of stipulations?

The executed Stipulation may be uploaded, with notice to the Judge of such uploading, or mailed. The Stipulation will be reviewed for conformity to the Rules and adopted if acceptable.

2. Should the fee agreement be part of the stipulation or separate exhibit?

No preference.

3. Should child support documents be uploaded as a separate exhibit?

Yes.

4. What other exhibits should be uploaded (i.e. medical bills, etc.)?

It is up to the parties, but when in doubt include it.

5. Should other exhibits uploaded as be part of the stipulation or as separate exhibits?
If the exhibit is referenced in the stipulation (e.g., payment of a certain medical bill, lien, etc.) it should be included.

6. When should Social Security numbers and other confidential information be redacted from the stipulation and Act 109 documents?

When the exhibit is to be attached as part of the order. An original should be uploaded as a separate exhibit.

BRIEFS AND PROPOSED FINDINGS

1. **Will you close a case via WCAIS submission or is a final hearing required?**

   A final hearing will take place where the certification of the record will be made and a briefing schedule provided. If an exhibit is not available at the time of the hearing, it will be noted and may be uploaded when received. If there is a question of concern after the hearing, the parties may submit a WCAIS request.

2. **What are the time requirements for final submissions and what procedures are taken when time requirements are not met?**

   A briefing schedule will be issued at the final hearing and on the record. No Interlocutory Order will be issued. Proposed Findings of Fact and Briefs are strongly suggested but not required. All reasonable briefing schedule requests will be accommodated and a reminder may be provided for late filings; however, if briefs and other required documents are not submitted in a timely manner, the case may be decided upon the materials present before the judge at the close of the briefing schedule.

3. **Describe any preferences regarding the format and content of final submissions:**

   This Judge has a preference for formatting of the post-trial submissions as follows: the format of the submission should track the formatting of the judge's decision (hearing dates, exhibits, preserved objections, proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and proposed Order). Findings of Fact should be concise and without editorial or argumentative comment with the exception of proposed credibility findings. A supporting Memorandum of Law or Brief in separate writing is encouraged – this is where you argue your case, not in the proposed Findings or Conclusions.
   The following is a list of preferences for content:
   The Proposed Findings of Fact should:
   1) clearly state what relief they are requesting from this Workers' Compensation Judge;
   2) the issues which are not in dispute and the issues that are in dispute;
   3) outline and summarize the evidence of record with citation to the record (identifying the document and page where the information may be found);
   4) outline the reasons the testimony of their witnesses should be found credible;
   5) outline the reasons why the testimony of the opposing party's witnesses should be found to be neither credible nor persuasive;
   6) fully discuss whether there has been a reasonable basis for the contest of the petition(s), making specific reference to the record;
   7) discuss any sub-issues in the case, particularly requests for credits and subrogation;
   8) provide all monetary calculations and the method of calculation when these issues are material to the case.
   The Memorandum of Law or Brief: The parties should avoid duplication; they should not "copy and paste" their Proposed Findings of Fact into their brief. The brief should be reserved for argument, discussion, and application of the law to the facts. A letter brief is acceptable for matters not requiring extensive argument (e.g., disfigurement, utilization review, penalty, etc.).

MANDATORY MEDIATIONS

1. **List the offices where you conduct mandatory mediations:**
   Philadelphia

2. **What factors will you consider in deciding whether to conduct a mandatory mediation virtually or in-person?**

   If the parties request an in-person mediation, every attempt will be made to have it in-person. The default is virtual. A request for in-person mandatory mediation should be made at least four weeks prior to the scheduled mediation to allow for office preparations to be completed.

3. **What factors will you consider in deciding whether to conduct a virtual mandatory mediation by audio only or by audio with video?**
   The default is remote – video is preferred.

4. **Are you willing to allow counsel or a party to participate virtually in an in-person mandatory mediation? If so, under what circumstances?**

   Yes – if circumstances require it.

5. **Do you require a Mediation Statement?** Yes. **If yes:**

   a. **What information do you require in that Statement?**

      The parties should provide the information contained in the Mandatory Mediation Disclosure Report regardless of whether the mediation is mandatory or voluntary. Additionally, all parties should also include the following information in the memorandum :Is the Claimant a Medicare beneficiary? If so, has a lien letter regarding the payment of conditional benefits been requested or obtained? Has an MSA proposal been prepared? Does Claimant or Employer wish to close out medical benefits? What is the amount of the proposed MSA? For Claimants only: Does Claimant agree that the accepted (or alleged) injuries are the only injuries related to the work injury? If not, what other injuries are believed related? Has a Review or Claim Petition been filed regarding those additional injuries? For Employers only: If medical benefits are being settled and a Medicare Set-Aside is necessary, is Employer willing to pay medical benefits while waiting for approval? If Medicare approves an amount higher than Employer's proposal, will Employer still go through with funding the MSA or will the settlement be limited to indemnity only.

   b. **What documents, if any, must accompany the Statement?**

      Any the parties wish me to consider. When possible, I would like to see copies of the Bureau Documents (NCP, Statement of Wages, Supplemental Agreements).

   c. **How far in advance of the mediation must the parties submit the Statement and accompanying documents?**

      At least one day is required to allow for adequate consideration. Failure to provide a mediation statement at least a day before the mediation may result, in this judge's sole discretion, in the cancellation of the mediation. Please note that lack of authority at the time of the authoring of a mediation statement is not a valid reason to not file a mediation statement.

6. **If there is a request to postpone a mandatory mediation, will it be rescheduled?** No. **If so, how long until it is rescheduled?**

7. **Are you willing to conduct more than one mandatory mediation session per Dispute?**

   Yes, if I and the parties deem it necessary.

8. **What is the latest day before the mediation that cancellation or postponement, absent an emergency, can be requested?**

   A week is preferred but not required.

9. **What else should the parties know or do before the mediation?**

Do not argue your case in mediation – I am not the finder of fact.

VOLUNTARY MEDIATIONS

1. **Do you conduct Voluntary Mediations?**

   Yes

2. **How should the parties request a Voluntary Mediation?**

   The parties may contact my secretary.

3. **List the locations where you conduct in-person voluntary mediations:**

   Philadelphia.

4. **Will you conduct virtual voluntary mediations? If yes, for which WCOA Districts will you conduct them?**

   Yes – for all districts.

5. **Do you mediate Disputes assigned to you for hearing and decision?**

   It is discouraged, but I will do it upon request. I may require the parties to execute a stipulation or state on the record that the mediation efforts will not constitute a basis for recusal.

6. **Do you mediate Disputes in which one or both parties are unrepresented? If yes, describe any special procedures you have for such cases:**

   Yes. I have no special procedures – I will expect appropriate conduct.

7. **What factors will you consider in deciding whether to conduct a voluntary mediation virtually or in-person?** Request of the parties at the time of scheduling.

8. **What factors will you consider in deciding whether to conduct a virtual voluntary mediation by audio only or by audio with video?**

   Request of the parties at the time of scheduling.

9. **Are you willing to allow counsel or a party to participate virtually in an in-person voluntary mediation? If so, under what circumstances?**

   Yes – by request and need.

10. **Do you require a Mediation Statement?** Yes **If yes:**

    a. **What information do you require in that Statement?**

       The same as a mandatory mediation statement.

    b. **What documents, if any, must accompany the Statement?**

The same as a mandatory mediation statement.

c. How far in advance of the mediation must the parties submit the Statement and accompanying documents?

The same as a mandatory mediation statement.

11. After you approve a Voluntary Mediation Request, how long until it is scheduled?

It depends upon my schedule and the parties' availability.

12. Are you willing to conduct more than one voluntary mediation session per Dispute?

Yes.

13. If the party wants to request cancellation or postponement of a voluntary mediation on a Dispute assigned to you, should they contact you or the mediating Judge?

Both - the mediating Judge first.

14. What is the latest day before the mediation that cancellation or postponement, absent an emergency, can be requested?

Preferably a week, but no requirement.

REQUESTS/MISCELLANEOUS

1. How far in advance do you require Requests for continuances, changes in hearing times, and extensions to be uploaded into WCAIS?

Where continuance requests are unopposed, continuances will be usually granted; however, the parties are reminded that the trial schedule provided to the parties and established at the first hearing is more than a guide and should be adhered to as closely practicable. Continuance requests must be made using WCAIS upon the party's learning of the need for the continuance – you likely did not just learn of a conflict the day before the hearing. Continuance requests made at the time of the hearing will be considered but are strongly discouraged. Hearing times may be changed by request and agreement of the parties. A party's request for an extension of time to take depositions of its fact or expert witnesses will be considered and granted for good cause shown, including a witness's unavailability. In such cases, the trial schedule may need to be adjusted. As such, it is important for the parties to communicate with me and each other and any difficulty they are having meeting the trial schedule timeline so that delays do not become compounded. For final hearings, or any hearing at which testimony will be presented, excepting hearings on Compromise and Release Agreements, the hearing will be scheduled to be in person in the Philadelphia Hearing Office. Either party may request, through WCAIS, that the hearing be moved to being held remotely; however, such request must include a valid, objective, and verifiable reason for such change.

2. Under what circumstances do you conduct off the record conference calls?

Most matters can/should be handled at a hearing or, if appropriate, with a written response following a WCAIS request. Off the record calls are discouraged.

3. **Under what conditions/circumstances do you accept e-mails from parties?**

   WCAIS requests are preferred; however, emails are acceptable for ancillary matters such as counsel may be having difficulty signing in to a remote hearing or is running late. All parties/counsel must be copied on any email

4. **Do you adhere strictly to the duration listed for a Hearing or Mediation?**

   I try to and will end the hearing if I feel it is necessary. If additional time is needed, another event can be scheduled. That being said, going over a few minutes is not an issue and I will inform the participants in the next hearing that there may be a delay.

5. **What is the best way to contact you in an emergency situation?**

   Email, or my secretary by email or phone.

6. **What is your snow/emergency cancellation policy regarding in-person and virtual events (i.e., do you follow a specific school district closing schedule, etc.)?**

   There is no cancellation policy for virtual events. A normal request for continuance will be considered.
   For in-person events, if Philadelphia public and parochial schools are closed, events are cancelled. If they are delayed, continuances will be considered liberally. Use your best judgment – if you cannot physically make it in – or the snow/emergency has resulted in hardship (your own school district is closed and you cannot, or do not want to, bring your child with you) you are not expected to come, but you are expected to communicate such inability to this Judge and the opposing party. Above all, your safety comes first.