

Federal Communications Commission

§ 1.311

THE DISCOVERY AND PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

AUTHORITY: Sections 1.311 through 1.325 are issued under secs. 4, 303, 409, 48 Stat., as amended, 1066, 1082, 1096; 47 U.S.C. 154, 303, 409, 5 U.S.C. 552.

§ 1.311 General.

Sections 1.311 through 1.325 provide for taking the deposition of any person (including a party), for interrogatories to parties, and for orders to parties relating to the production of documents and things and for entry upon real property. These procedures may be used for the discovery of relevant facts, for the production and preservation of evidence for use at the hearing, or for both purposes.

(a) *Applicability.* For purposes of discovery, these procedures may be used in any case of adjudication (as defined in the Administrative Procedure Act) which has been designated for hearing. For the preservation of evidence, they may be used in any case which has been designated for hearing and is conducted under the provisions of this subpart (see § 1.201).

(b) *Scope of examination.* Persons and parties may be examined regarding any matter, not privileged, which is relevant to the hearing issues, including the existence, description, nature, custody, condition and location of any books, documents, or other tangible things and the identity and location of persons having knowledge of relevant facts. It is not ground for objection to use of these procedures that the testimony will be inadmissible at the hearing if the testimony sought appears reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence. The use of these procedures against the Commission is subject to the following additional limitations:

(1) The informer's privilege shall encompass information which may lead to the disclosure of an informer's identity.

(2) Commission personnel may not be questioned by deposition for the purposes of discovery except on special order of the Commission, but may be questioned by written interrogatories under § 1.323. Interrogatories shall be served on the appropriate Bureau Chief

(see § 1.21(b)). They will be answered and signed by those personnel with knowledge of the facts. The answers will be served by the Secretary of the Commission upon parties to the proceeding.

(3) Commission records are not subject to discovery under § 1.325. The inspection of Commission records is governed by the Freedom of Information Act, as amended, and by §§ 0.451 through 0.467 of this chapter. Commission employees may be questioned by written interrogatories regarding the existence, nature, description, custody, condition and location of Commission records, but may not be questioned concerning their contents unless the records are available (or are made available) for inspection under §§ 0.451 through 0.467. See § 0.451(b)(5) of this chapter.

(4) Subject to paragraphs (b) (1) through (3) of this section, Commission personnel may be questioned generally by written interrogatories regarding the existence, description, nature, custody, condition and location of relevant documents and things and regarding the identity and location of persons having knowledge of relevant facts, and may otherwise only be examined regarding facts of the case as to which they have direct personal knowledge.

(c) *Schedule for use of the procedures.*

(1) In comparative broadcast proceedings involving applicants for only new facilities, discovery commences with the release of the hearing designation order, and, in routine cases, the discovery phase of the proceeding will be conducted in a manner intended to conclude that portion of the case within 90 days of the release of the designation order.

(2) In all other proceedings, except as provided by special order of the presiding officer, discovery may be initiated before or after the prehearing conference provided for in § 1.248 of this part.

(3) In all proceedings, the presiding officer may at any time order the parties or their attorneys to appear at a conference to consider the proper use of these procedures, the time to be allowed for such use, and/or to hear

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argument and render a ruling on disputes that arise under these rules.

(d) *Who shall act.* Actions provided for in §§ 1.311 through 1.325 will, in most cases, be taken by the officer designated to preside at the hearing (see § 1.241). If the proceeding, or a particular matter to which the action relates, is before the Commission, a commissioner or panel of commissioners, or the Chief Administrative Law Judge, the action will be taken by such officer or body. The term *presiding officer*, as used in §§ 1.311 through 1.325 shall be understood to refer to the appropriate officer or body. See §§ 0.341, 0.351, 0.365, and 1.271 of this chapter.

(e) *Stipulations regarding the taking of depositions.* If all of the parties so stipulate in writing and if there is no interference to the conduct of the proceeding, depositions may be taken before any person, at any time (subject to the limitation below) or place, upon any notice and in any manner, and when so taken may be used like other depositions. An original and one copy of the stipulation shall be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, and a copy of the stipulation shall be served on the presiding officer, at least 3 days before the scheduled taking of the deposition.

[33 FR 463, Jan. 12, 1968, as amended at 40 FR 39509, Aug. 28, 1975; 47 FR 51873, Nov. 18, 1982; 56 FR 794, Jan. 9, 1991; 62 FR 4171, Jan. 29, 1997]

§ 1.313 Protective orders.

The use of the procedures set forth in §§ 1.311 through 1.325 of this part is subject to control by the presiding officer, who may issue any order consistent with the provisions of those sections which is appropriate and just for the purpose of protecting parties and deponents or of providing for the proper conduct of the proceeding. Whenever doing so would be conducive to the efficient and expeditious conduct of the proceeding, the presiding officer may convene a conference to hear argument and issue a ruling on any disputes that may arise under these rules. The ruling, whether written or delivered on the record at a conference, may specify any measures, including the following to assure proper conduct of the proceeding or to protect any party or de-

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ponent from annoyance, expense, embarrassment or oppression:

(a) That depositions shall not be taken or that interrogatories shall not be answered.

(b) That certain matters shall not be inquired into.

(c) That the scope of the examination or interrogatories shall be limited to certain matters.

(d) That depositions may be taken only at some designated time or place, or before an officer, other than that stated in the notice.

(e) That depositions may be taken only by written interrogatories or only upon oral examination.

(f) That, after being sealed, the deposition shall be opened only by order of the presiding officer.

[33 FR 463, Jan. 12, 1968, as amended at 56 FR 794, Jan. 9, 1991]

§ 1.315 Depositions upon oral examination—notice and preliminary procedure.

(a) *Notice.* A party to a hearing proceeding desiring to take the deposition of any person upon oral examination shall give a minimum of 21 days notice in writing to every other party, to the person to be examined, and to the presiding officer. An original and three copies of the notice shall be filed with the Secretary of the Commission. Related pleadings shall be served and filed in the same manner. The notice shall contain the following information:

(1) The name and address of each person to be examined, if known, and if the name is not known, a general description sufficient to identify him or the particular class or group to which he belongs.

(2) The time and place for taking the deposition of each person to be examined, and the name or descriptive title and address of the officer before whom the deposition is to be taken.

(3) The matters upon which each person will be examined. See § 1.319.

(b) *Responsive pleadings.* (1) Within 7 days after service of the notice to take depositions, a motion opposing the taking of depositions may be filed by any party to the proceeding or by the person to be examined. See § 1.319(a).