

**14.48 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS.**

Subdivision 1. **Creation.** A state Office of Administrative Hearings is created.

Subd. 2. **Chief administrative law judge.** The office shall be under the direction of a chief administrative law judge who shall be learned in the law and appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate, for a term ending on June 30 of the sixth calendar year after appointment. Senate confirmation of the chief administrative law judge shall be as provided by section 15.066. The chief administrative law judge may hear cases and shall appoint additional administrative law judges and compensation judges to serve in the office as necessary to fulfill the duties prescribed in chapters 14 and 176. The chief administrative law judge may delegate to a subordinate employee the exercise of a specified statutory power or duty as deemed advisable, subject to the control of the chief administrative law judge. Every delegation must be by written order filed with the secretary of state. The chief administrative law judge is subject to the provisions of the Minnesota Constitution, article VI, section 6, the jurisdiction of the Board on Judicial Standards, and the provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

Subd. 3. **Administrative law judges and compensation judges.** (a) All administrative law judges and compensation judges shall be in the classified service except that the chief administrative law judge shall be in the unclassified service, but may be removed only for cause.

(b) All administrative law judges and workers' compensation judges must be learned in the law and must be free of any political or economic association that would impair their ability to function in a fair and impartial manner. Administrative law judges shall have demonstrated knowledge of administrative procedures and workers' compensation judges shall have demonstrated knowledge of workers' compensation laws.

(c) The appointment of individuals as workers' compensation judges or as administrative law judges does not preclude the chief administrative law judge from establishing a system of training to enable them to acquire demonstrable knowledge and to become qualified to conduct hearings in the area other than the area of their original appointment. Conducting hearings in the other area does not affect an administrative law judge's or workers' compensation judge's job class established pursuant to section 43A.07 or seniority within that job class. The chief administrative law judge shall annually notify the Department of Finance of the amount of credit payable to the workers' compensation special fund for time spent by workers' compensation judges on noncompensation proceedings.

(d) Administrative law judges and compensation judges are subject to the provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct. Administrative law and compensation judges may, however, serve as a member of a governmental board when so directed by the legislature. The chief

administrative law judge shall provide training to administrative law and compensation judges about the requirements of the code and shall apply the provisions of the code to their actions. Only administrative law judges serving as temporary judges under a written contract are considered to be part-time judges for purposes of the code. Reports required to be filed by the code must be filed with the chief administrative law judge. The chief administrative law judge shall apply the provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct, to the extent applicable, to the other administrative law and compensation judges in a manner consistent with interpretations made by the Board on Judicial Standards. The chief administrative law judge shall follow the procedural requirements of the commissioner's plan for state employees if any adverse personnel action is taken based in whole or in part as a violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

(e) In addition to other duties provided by law, workers' compensation and administrative law judges may mediate, arbitrate, or take other appropriate action on matters referred to the Office of Administrative Hearings by any member of the federal or state judicial branch or by the Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals.

Subd. 4. **Mandatory retirement.** An administrative law judge and compensation judge must retire upon attaining age 70. The chief administrative law judge may appoint a retired administrative law judge or compensation judge to hear any proceeding that is properly assignable to an administrative law judge or compensation judge. When a retired administrative law judge or compensation judge undertakes this service, the retired judge shall receive pay and expenses in the amount payable to temporary administrative law judges or compensation judges serving under section 14.49.

**History:** 1975 c 380 s 16; 1977 c 443 s 9,10; 1980 c 509 s 2; 1980 c 615 s 26-33; 1981 c 346 s 2-6; 1Sp1981 c 4 art 4 s 40; 1982 c 424 s 130; 1983 c 305 s 5; 1984 c 640 s 32; 1Sp1985 c 13 s 86; 1986 c 444; 1987 c 332 s 1; 1995 c 233 art 2 s 30; 2000 c 355 s 1; 1Sp2003 c 1 art 2 s 30