

John R. Kasich, Governor
Karen L. Gillmor, Ph.D., *Chairman*
Gary M. DiCeglio, *Member*
Jodie M. Taylor, *Member*

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION AMENDS **DOCKETING POLICY AND SCHEDULING PROCEDURES**

Changes Effective December 31, 2012

COLUMBUS, OH – Chairman and CEO Karen L. Gillmor announced today that the Industrial Commission of Ohio amended its administrative hearing policies, specifically the policies involving the docketing of claims and scheduling of hearings. The Commission rescinded Commission Resolution R12-1-02 (rescission effective December 31, 2012), and enacted Commission Resolution R12-1-03 (effective for requests for hearing blocks and requests to continue hearings filed on or after December 31, 2012). Attached to this press release is a copy of Commission Resolution R12-1-03.

Prior to 2011, the Industrial Commission utilized a Kaizen process to solicit input from customers regarding the Commission's docketing process. The Kaizen group's intent was to reduce the number of continuances by implementing a docketing policy founded with a heavy emphasis on hearing dates that were "blocked out" in advance by the authorized representatives to ensure that hearings were not scheduled for those dates.

"When the Commission last revised its policy for scheduling hearings, the Commission indicated that it would review and evaluate the policy by December 31, 2012. The Commission completed the review process," Chairman Gillmor said. "The Commission found the block-out dates have virtually no effect on the number of continuances requested and granted. As well, the vast majority of authorized representatives used far fewer than the number of block-out dates allowed."

Therefore, the following changes go into effect for requests for hearing blocks and requests to continue hearings filed on or after December 31, 2012:

- Authorized representatives of parties may request that the Industrial Commission not schedule hearings for particular dates, or a series of dates, as long as the Industrial Commission receives notice at least 15 state business days prior to the requested "block out date(s)" pursuant to the following limitations:
 - Requests for hearing blocks for half of a day (i.e., the morning or afternoon only of a hearing day) will be honored for a maximum of 50 half-days per calendar year.
 - Two half-day hearing blocks may be used together to obtain a hearing block for a given day.

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- Requests for partial (i.e., less than statewide) hearing blocks, also referred to as site blocks, will continue to be honored, but the site blocks will be included within the 50 half-days per calendar year.
- Requests for “magistrate blocks” may be submitted by an individual serving as a magistrate or prosecutor for a court of record.
- A hearing block will be honored only if a representative is designated as the docketing representative for a claim.
- Continuances for either good cause or for extraordinary circumstances that could not have been foreseen may still be requested and granted if the requests meet the standards contained in Rule 4121-3-09 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

The ability of parties and representatives to block-out hearing days is relied on by the Commission’s frequent customers to manage their business practices. The concern of the Commission’s customers’ business practices, however, must be balanced with the ability of the Commission to adjudicate claims in a timely manner.

“The emphasis on the half-day hearing blocks allows the greatest flexibility for the Commission’s customers as well as for the Commission to docket claims where possible,” Chairman Gillmor said. “If a representative has a conflict for only part of the day, the representative has the ability to block just that period of time, so that the Commission may schedule hearings on that day and still avoid a possible conflict. Should a representative wish to block an entire day, the representative will simply need to use two of the partial day blocks to accomplish that goal.”

Should a party, or representative, have questions or concerns about how to proceed in the coming year under the amended Commission Docketing Policy, they should contact either their local hearing administrator or Tom Connor, the Commission’s Director of Hearing Services, at 614-466-8189.

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