**Section 2605.290 Hearings**

a) All Hearings shall be conducted by the Department at one of its locations as determined by the Department, unless otherwise agreed to by the parties and the Hearing Officer. The parties may stipulate to conducting case management Hearings, prehearings, or formal Hearings by telephone, video conference, or other means acceptable to the parties and Hearing Officer.

b) The sequence to be followed for all Administrative Hearings is as follows:

1) Preliminary Hearing – The purpose is to set a date on which all parties expect to be prepared and to rule on any preliminary motions that are presented. This may be eliminated by agreement of the parties and/or ordered by the Hearing Officer.

2) Case Management and Prehearing Conferences – The purposes of the conferences are set out in Section 2605.280.

3) Hearings –

A) Preliminary Matters – Motions; attempts to narrow issues or limit evidence.

B) Opening Statements – The party bearing the burden of proof proceeds first.

C) Case in Chief – Evidence and witnesses are presented by the party bearing the burden of proof. After a witness' testimony is completed, the witness is subject to cross-examination.

D) Defense – Evidence and witnesses may be presented by the opposing party.

E) Closing Statements – The party bearing the burden of proof proceeds first, then the opposing party, then a final reply by the party bearing the burden of proof. The Hearing Officer may request the parties to submit closing statements in writing.

F) Final Decision – Described in Section 2605.410.

(Source: Amended at 43 Ill. Reg. 4056, effective March 19, 2019)