

(7) Unless timely objection is made, documents properly filed with the ODRA will be deemed admitted into the administrative record.

(j) Hearings are not typically held in bid protests. The DRO or Special Master may conduct hearings, and may limit the hearings to the testimony of specific witnesses and/or presentations regarding specific issues. The DRO or Special Master shall control the nature and conduct of all hearings, including the sequence and extent of any testimony. Hearings will be conducted:

(1) Where the DRO or Special Master determines that there are complex factual issues in dispute that cannot adequately or efficiently be developed solely by means of written presentations and/or that resolution of the controversy will be dependent on his/her assessment of the credibility of statements provided by individuals with first-hand knowledge of the facts; or

(2) Upon request of any party to the protest, unless the DRO or Special Master finds specifically that a hearing is unnecessary and that no party will be prejudiced by limiting the record in the adjudication to the parties' written submissions. All witnesses at any such hearing shall be subject to cross-examination by the opposing party and to questioning by the DRO or Special Master.

(k) The Director of the ODRA may review the status of any protest in the Adjudicative Process with the DRO or Special Master.

(l) After the closing of the administrative record, the DRO or Special Master will prepare and submit findings and recommendations to the ODRA that shall contain the following:

(1) Findings of fact;

(2) Application of the principles of the AMS, and any applicable law or authority to the findings of fact;

(3) A recommendation for a final FAA order; and

(4) If appropriate, suggestions for future FAA action.

(m) In preparing findings and recommendations in protests, the DRO or Special Master, using the preponderance of the evidence standard, shall consider whether the Product Team actions in question were consistent with

the requirements of the AMS, had a rational basis, and whether the Product Team decision was arbitrary, capricious or an abuse of discretion. Notwithstanding the above, allegations that government officials acted with bias or in bad faith must be established by clear and convincing evidence.

(n) The DRO or Special Master has broad discretion to recommend a remedy that is consistent with §17.23.

(o) A DRO or Special Master shall submit findings and recommendations only to the Director of the ODRA or the Director's designee. The findings and recommendations will be released to the parties and to the public upon issuance of the final FAA order in the case. If an ODRA protective order was issued in connection with the protest, or if a protest involves proprietary or competition-sensitive information, a redacted version of the findings and recommendations, omitting any protected information, shall be prepared wherever possible and released to the public, as soon as is practicable, along with a copy of the final FAA order. Only persons admitted by the ODRA under the protective order and Government personnel shall be provided copies of the unredacted findings and recommendations that contain proprietary or competition-sensitive information.

(p) Other than communications regarding purely procedural matters or ADR, there shall be no substantive *ex parte* communication between ODRA personnel and any principal or representative of a party concerning a pending or potentially pending matter. A potential or serving ADR neutral may communicate on an *ex parte* basis to establish or conduct the ADR.

§ 17.23 Protest remedies.

(a) The ODRA has broad discretion to recommend and impose protest remedies that are consistent with the AMS and applicable law. Such remedies may include, but are not limited to one or a combination of, the following:

(1) Amend the SIR;

(2) Refrain from exercising options under the contract;

(3) Issue a new SIR;

(4) Require a recompetition or reevaluation;