

Rules of Procedure for Code Enforcement Cases Before the City of Kirkland Hearing Examiner

1. Authority

Kirkland Municipal Code Section 3.34.050 requires that the Hearing Examiner adopt rules of procedure to govern hearings conducted by the Hearing Examiner pursuant to the Code.

2. Applicability

A. These Rules apply to all matters that are before the Hearing Examiner pursuant to a Notice of Civil Violation issued under Chapter 1.12 of the Kirkland Municipal Code. The Rules do not include all ordinance or Code requirements. Parties are responsible for familiarizing themselves with those requirements.

B. When questions of practice and procedure arise that are not addressed by these Rules, the Hearing Examiner shall determine the practice or procedure most appropriate and consistent with providing fair treatment and due process.

3. Definitions

A. "Code" or "KMC" – the Kirkland Municipal Code as adopted or hereafter amended.

B. "Department" – the department that issued a Notice of Civil Violation under Chapter 1.12 KMC.

C. "Discovery" – the exchange and sharing of information relevant to, or likely to lead to information relevant to a Notice of Civil Violation issued under Chapter 1.12 KMC.

D. "Motion" - a request made to the Hearing Examiner for an order or other ruling.

E. "Notice of Civil Violation" – A notice issued pursuant to KMC 1.12.040 describing a violation of any of the City regulations listed in KMC 1.12.020.

F. "Order" - A ruling, instruction, or other directive issued by the Hearing Examiner in response to a request or motion by a party, or on the Hearing Examiner's own initiative.

G. "Party" - the person, group or other entity served with a Notice of Civil Violation; the owner of the property that is the subject of the Notice of Civil Violation (if different from the person, group or entity served); and the Department.

4. Filing of Documents

Any documents intended for the Hearing Examiner shall be filed with the Hearing Examiner either by facsimile or electronically. Any documents intended for the Hearing Examiner but erroneously filed with the Department shall be immediately forwarded to the Hearing Examiner.

5. Service of Documents

All documents filed for consideration by the Hearing Examiner shall also be served by the party filing the documents on all other parties, during regular business hours, on the date they are filed. The Department is not responsible for copying a party's documents or delivering them to any other party. Documents shall be served electronically, or by facsimile or personal service.

6. Prehearing Conference

A. On the Hearing Examiner's own initiative, or at the request of a party, the Hearing Examiner may hold a conference prior to the hearing to consider:

1. Identification, clarification and simplification of the issues;
2. Disclosure of witnesses to be called and exhibits to be presented;
3. Discovery;
4. Prehearing motions;
5. Other matters deemed by the Hearing Examiner appropriate for the orderly and efficient disposition of the appeal.

B. Prehearing conferences may be held by telephone conference call.

C. The Hearing Examiner shall give notice to all parties of any prehearing conference. Notice may be written or oral.

D. All parties shall appear or be represented at a prehearing conference unless a party has waived the right to be present or represented and been excused by the Hearing Examiner.

E. Following the prehearing conference, the Hearing Examiner may issue an order reciting the actions taken and deadlines imposed, and ruling upon any motions made at the conference.

7. Presiding Official

The Hearing Examiner conducting the hearing has the duty to ensure a fair and impartial hearing, to take all necessary action to avoid delay in the proceedings, to gather facts

necessary for making the decision, and to regulate the course of the hearing and the conduct of the parties and others so as to maintain order.

8. Burden of Proof

The City has the burden of proof to demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence that a violation has occurred and that the required corrective action, if applicable, is reasonable.

9. Party Representative Required

When a party consists of more than one person, or is a group or other entity, the party shall designate an individual to be its representative and inform the Hearing Examiner of the contact information for the designated representative. The rights of such an appellant shall be exercised by the person designated as the party representative. Notice or other communication to the party representative is notice or communication to the party.

10. Expected Conduct

A. All parties appearing before the Hearing Examiner shall conduct themselves with civility and courtesy to everyone involved in the hearing.

B. No one shall communicate with the Hearing Examiner outside the hearing in an attempt to discuss the merits or influence the outcome of an appeal.

11. Notice of Appearance

When a party is represented by an attorney, the attorney shall file a notice of appearance with the Hearing Examiner and send a copy to the other parties.

12. Discovery

Appropriate prehearing discovery is permitted. Discovery is generally left to the parties, and unless otherwise provided by the Hearing Examiner, the Hearing Examiner should not be copied on discovery documents, or correspondence and electronic mail about discovery matters. In response to a motion, or on the Hearing Examiner's initiative, the Hearing Examiner may order discovery that is being withheld, or prohibit or limit discovery that the Examiner determines is unduly burdensome, harassing, or unnecessary.

13. Site Inspection

The Hearing Examiner will inspect the property subject to an appeal prior to the close of the record. Failure to conduct a site inspection shall not affect the validity of the Hearing Examiner's decision.

14. Evidence at Hearing

A. All witnesses testifying at hearing must take an oath or affirmation to be truthful in their testimony and are subject to cross examination by the other party.

B. Evidence that is relevant to the Notice of Civil Violation and comes from a reliable source is admissible at hearing. Such evidence is that which responsible people would commonly rely upon in the conduct of their important affairs.

C. The Hearing Examiner may impose reasonable limits on the number of witnesses testifying at the hearing, and the nature and length of the testimony, and may allow for written testimony and other evidence to be submitted.

15. Continuing the Hearing

A. A scheduled hearing may be continued to a different date for good cause as determined by the Hearing Examiner. Written notice of the date, time and place of the continued hearing shall be provided to each party, but need not observe the time requirements for the original notice include in the Notice of Civil Citation.

B. If the Hearing Examiner determines at hearing that there is good cause to continue the hearing, and then and there specifies the date, time and place of the continued hearing, no further notice is required.

16. Hearing Format

The order of presentation at hearings on Notices of Civil Violation” is generally as follows:

- A. Examiner’s introductory remarks;
- B. Parties' opening statements (optional);
- C. City’s presentation of evidence;
- D. Presentation of evidence by party served with the Notice of Civil Violation;
- E. Property Owner’s presentation of evidence (if applicable);
- F. Parties' rebuttal evidence;
- H. Parties' closing arguments (optional).

The Hearing Examiner may modify the order of hearing to promote the clear and fair presentation of evidence. With the Hearing Examiner’s approval, the order of presentation may be modified by agreement of the parties.

17. Leaving the Record Open

At the conclusion of the hearing, the Hearing Examiner may close the hearing, but leave the record open to receive additional evidence from the parties or for other good purpose.

Parties shall be provided notice of any evidence received after hearing and have the opportunity to review the evidence and file evidence or argument rebutting it.

18. Hearing Examiner Decision

A. Issuance. The Hearing Examiner shall issue a written decision within 10 working days of the hearing and provide a copy to each party representative. The Hearing Examiner's decision may affirm, vacate or modify the City's decision regarding the alleged violation and/or required corrective action and may include written conditions.

B. Contents. A decision of the Hearing Examiner shall include, but not be limited to, a statement regarding the following:

1. Background. The nature and background of the proceeding, including identification of party representatives participating in the hearing, prehearing determinations, and similar information.
2. Findings. The individual facts that the Hearing Examiner finds relevant, credible, and requisite to the decision, based on the evidence presented at hearing and matters officially noticed.
3. Conclusions. Legal and factual conclusions based upon specific provisions of law and the findings of fact.
4. Decision. The Hearing Examiner's decision as to the outcome of the matter based upon a consideration of the whole record and the applicable burden of proof.
5. Order. If the Notice of Civil Citation is affirmed, or affirmed with modifications, an order to the person responsible for the violation that includes all information required by KMC 1.12.050.D.2.
6. Information regarding any subsequent procedural steps for appealing the Hearing Examiner's decision.

19. Notice of Decision

The Hearing Examiner's decision shall be provided to the parties in accordance with the Code.

20. Subsequent Appeal

Hearing Examiner decisions may be appealed as provided by law.

(Adopted September 30, 2011 pursuant to KMC 3.34.050)