**Section 200.300 Prehearing Conferences**

a) The Hearing Examiner, on his or her own motion, upon motion by any party or staff witness, or when directed by the Commission, shall with reasonable written notice request all parties and staff witnesses to attend a prehearing conference when it appears that any of the goals set forth in subsections (a)(1) through (a)(7) of this Section can be attained. Such a conference shall be held for the purpose of formulating issues and considering:

1) Simplification of issues;

2) Amendments to the pleadings;

3) The development of docket-specific discovery schedules and procedures to facilitate the prompt and efficient resolution of the proceeding;

4) The possibility of obtaining admissions of fact and of the genuineness of documents which will avoid unnecessary proof;

5) Limitations on the number of witnesses;

6) The procedure at the hearing; and

7) Such other matters as may aid in the simplification of the evidence and disposition of the proceeding.

b) Except where the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act [5 ILCS 100] provides otherwise, the Hearing Examiner may on his or her own motion, on motion of any party or staff witness, or when directed by the Commission, with written notice to all parties and Staff witnesses, initiate an informal discussion whenever it appears that a mechanism less formal than a hearing might be useful in resolving any issue in a proceeding.

(Source: Amended at 20 Ill. Reg. 10607, effective August 15, 1996)