**R861. Tax Commission, Administration.**

**R861-1A. Administrative Procedures.**

**R861-1A-3. Division Conferences Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-1-210 and 63G-4-102.**

Any party directly affected by a commission action or contemplated action may request a conference with the supervisor or designated officer of the division involved in that action.

(1) A request may be oral or written.

(2) A conference will be conducted in an informal manner in an effort to clarify and narrow the issues and problems involved.

(3) The party requesting a conference will be notified of the result:

(a) orally or in writing;

(b) in person or through counsel; and

(c) at the conclusion of the conference or within a reasonable time thereafter.

(4) A conference may be held at any time prior to a hearing, whether or not a petition for hearing, appeal, or other commencement of an adjudicative proceeding has been filed.

**R861-1A-9. State Board of Equalization Procedures Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-2-1008, 59-2-1004, and 59-2-1006.**

(1) The commission sits as the state board of equalization in discharge of the equalization responsibilities given it by law. The commission may sit on its own initiative to correct the valuation of property that has been overassessed, underassessed, or nonassessed as described in Section 59-2-1008, and as a board of appeal from the various county boards of equalization described in Section 59-2-1004.

(2) Appeals to the commission shall include:

(a) a copy of the recommendation of a hearing officer if a hearing officer heard the appeal;

(b) a copy of the notice required under Section 59-2-919.1;

(c) a copy of the minutes of the board of equalization;

(d) a copy of the property record maintained by the assessor;

(e) if the county board of equalization does not include the record in its minutes, a copy of the record of the appeal required under Section R884-24P-66;

(f) a copy of the evidence submitted by the parties to the board of equalization;

(g) a copy of the petition for redetermination; and

(h) a copy of the decision of the board of equalization.

(3) A notice of appeal filed by the taxpayer with the auditor pursuant to Section 59-2-1006 shall be presumed to have been timely filed unless the county provides convincing evidence to the contrary. In the absence of evidence of the date of mailing of the county board of equalization decision by the county auditor to the taxpayer, it shall be presumed that the decision was mailed three days after the meeting of the county board of equalization at which the decision was made.

(4) Appeals to the commission shall be scheduled for hearing pursuant to commission rules.

(5) Appeals to the commission shall be on the merits except for the following:

(a) dismissal for lack of jurisdiction;

(b) dismissal for lack of timeliness;

(c) dismissal for lack of evidence to support a claim for relief.

(6)(a) The commission shall consider the facts and evidence presented to the commission, including facts and evidence presented by a party that was submitted to the county board.

(b) A party may raise a new issue before the commission.

(c)(i) If a taxpayer asserts before the commission a factual error as defined in Section R884-24P-66, the commission may issue an order to show cause as to whether the county assessor recognizes the existence of the factual error.

(ii) If the county assessor fails to respond to an order to show cause within 15 calendar days of issuance under Subsection (6)(c)(i), the commission may find that the failure to respond constitutes that the county assessor recognizes the existence of the factual error.

(7) On an appeal from a dismissal by a county board for the exceptions under Subsection (5), the only matter that will be reviewed by the commission is the dismissal itself, not the merits of the appeal.

(8) An appeal filed with the commission may be remanded to the county board of equalization for further proceedings if the commission determines that:

(a) dismissal under Subsections (5)(a) through (c) was improper;

(b) the taxpayer failed to exhaust administrative remedies at the county level;

(c) in the interest of administrative efficiency, the matter can best be resolved by the county board;

(d) the commission determines that dismissal under Subsections (5)(a) through (c) is improper under Section R884-24P-66; or

(e) a new issue is raised before the commission by a party.

(9) This rule applies only to appeals to the commission as the state board of equalization. For information regarding appeals to the county board of equalization, see Sections 59-2-1004 and R884-24P-66.

**R861-1A-10. Miscellaneous Provisions Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-210.**

A. Rights of Parties. Nothing herein shall be construed to remove or diminish any right of any party under the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the state of Utah, or any existing law.

B. Effect of Partial Invalidation. If any part of these rules be declared unconstitutional or in conflict with existing statutory law by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect.

C. Enactment of Inconsistent Legislation. Any statute passed by the Utah Legislature inconsistent with these rules or any part thereof will effect a repeal of that part of these rules with which it is inconsistent, but of no other part.

D. Presumption of Familiarity. It will be presumed that parties dealing with the Commission are familiar with:

1. these rules and the provisions thereof,

2. the revenue laws of the state of Utah, and

3. all rules enacted by the Commission in its administration thereof.

**R861-1A-11. Appeal of Corrective Action Order Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-2-704.**

A. Appeal of Corrective Action Order. Any county appealing a corrective action order issued pursuant to Section 59-2-704, shall, within 10 days of the mailing of the order, request in writing a hearing before the Commission. The Commission shall immediately set the time and place of the hearing, which shall be held no later than June 30 of the tax year to which the corrective action order applies.

B. Hearings. Hearings on corrective action order appeals shall be conducted as formal hearings and shall be governed by the procedures contained in these rules. If the parties are able to stipulate to a modification of the corrective action order, and it is evident that there is a reasonable basis for modifying the corrective action order, an amended corrective action order may be executed by the Commission. One or more commissioners may preside at a hearing under this rule with the same force and effect as if a quorum of the Commission were present. However, a decision must be made and an order signed by a quorum of the Commission.

C. Decisions and Orders. The Commission shall render its decision and order no later than July 10 of the tax year to which the corrective action order applies. Upon reaching a decision, the Commission shall immediately notify the clerk of the county board of equalization and the county assessor of that decision.

D. Sales Information. Access to Commission property sales information shall be available by written agreement with the Commission to any clerk of the county board of equalization and county assessor appealing under this rule. All other reasonable and necessary information shall be available upon request, according to Commission guidelines.

E. Conflict with Other Rules. This rule supersedes all other rules that may otherwise govern these proceedings before the Commission.

**R861-1A-12. Policies and Procedures Regarding Public Disclosure Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 41-3-209, 59-1-210, 59-1-403, and 59-1-405.**

(1) Hearings.

(a) Except as provided under Subsection (1)(b), and pursuant to Section 59-1-405, hearings related to appeals filed with the commission are confidential tax matters and not subject to Title 52, Chapter 4, Open and Public Meetings Act.

(b) Hearings related to the enforcement of Title 41, Chapter 3, Motor Vehicle Business Regulation, are open to the public.

(2) Orders.

(a) Except as provided in Subsections (2)(b) through (e), written orders signed by the commission will be mailed to the named parties in accordance with commission procedures. Copies of these orders or information about them will not be provided to any person other than the named parties except under the following circumstances:

(i) the parties have affirmatively waived any claims to confidentiality; or

(ii) the orders may be effectively sanitized through the deletion of references to the parties, specific tax amounts, witnesses, geographic information, or any other information that might identify a particular person.

(b) Property tax orders signed by the commission that do not contain commercial information will be mailed to the named parties in accordance with commission procedures. Copies of these orders or information about them will not be provided to any person other than the named parties except under the following circumstances:

(i) the parties have affirmatively waived any claims to confidentiality;

(ii) the orders may be effectively sanitized through the deletion of reference to the parties, specific tax amounts, witnesses, geographic information, or any other information that might identify any private party to the appeal; or

(iii) the disclosure is required or allowed under state law.

(c)(i) Property tax orders signed by the commission that contain commercial information will be mailed to the appropriate persons in accordance with Section 59-1-404 and Section R861-1A-37, Provisions Relating to Disclosure of Commercial Information.

(ii) Copies of property tax orders described in Subsection (2)(c)(i), or information about them, will be made available to persons other than the persons described in Section 59-1-404 and Section R861-1A-37 under the following circumstances:

(A) the parties have affirmatively waived any claims to confidentiality;

(B) the orders may be effectively sanitized through the deletion of reference to the parties, specific tax amounts, commercial information, witnesses, geographic information, or any other information that might identify any private party to the appeal; or

(C) the disclosure is required or allowed under state law.

(d) Orders resulting from a hearing related to the enforcement of Title 41, Chapter 1a, Motor Vehicle Act, will be mailed to the named parties in accordance with commission procedures. Copies of these orders or information about them will not be provided to any person other than the named parties except under the following circumstances:

(i) the parties have affirmatively waived any claims to confidentiality;

(ii) the orders may be effectively sanitized through the deletion of reference to the parties, specific tax amounts, witnesses, geographic information, or any other information that might identify any private party to the appeal; or

(iii) the disclosure is required under state law.

(e) Orders resulting from a hearing related to the enforcement of Title 41, Chapter 3, Motor Vehicle Business Regulation, are public information and may be publicized.

(3) Commission Notes and Workpapers.

(a) All workpapers, notes, and other material prepared by the commissioners, as well as staff and employees of the commission, are protected, and access to the specific material is restricted to employees of the commission and its legal counsel only.

(b) Examples of this restricted material include audit workpapers and notes, ad valorem appraisal worksheets, and notes taken during hearings and deliberations. In the case of information prepared as part of an audit, the division will, upon request, provide summary information of the findings to the taxpayer. These items will not be available to any person or party by discovery carried out pursuant to Title R861 or the Utah Rules of Civil Procedure.

(4) Reciprocal Agreements.

(a) The commission may enter into individual reciprocal agreements to share specific tax information with authorized representatives of the United States Internal Revenue Service or the revenue service of any other state.

(b) For taxes other than individual income tax and corporate franchise tax, the commission may share information gathered from returns and other written statements with the federal government, other states, and political subdivisions within and without the state if the political subdivision, state, or federal government grant substantially similar privileges to this state.

(5) Statistical Information. The commission authorizes the preparation and publication of statistical information regarding the payment and collection of state taxes. The information will be made available after review and approval of the commission.

(6) Publication of Delinquent Taxpayer Information.

(a) For purposes of this Subsection (6), "delinquent taxpayer" does not include a person subject to a tax under:

(i) Title 59, Chapter 7, Corporate Franchise and Income Taxes;

(ii) Title 59, Chapter 10, Part 1, Determination and Reporting of Tax Liability and Information;

(iii) Title 59, Chapter 10, Part 2, Trusts and Estates; or

(iv) Title 59, Chapter 10, Part 14, Pass-Through Entities and Pass-Through Entity Taxpayers Act.

(b) The commission may publicize the following information relating to a delinquent taxpayer:

(i) name;

(ii) address;

(iii) the amount of money owed by tax type; and

(iv) any legal action taken by the commission, including charges filed and property seized.

**R861-1A-13. Requests for Accommodation and Grievance Procedures Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 63G-3-201, 28 CFR 35.107 1992 edition, and 42 USC 12201.**

(1) Individuals with a disability may request reasonable accommodations to services, programs, or activities, or a job or work environment in the following manner.

(a) Requests shall be directed to:

Accommodations Coordinator

Utah State Tax Commission

210 North 1950 West

Salt Lake City, Utah 84134

Telephone: 801-297-3811 TDD: 801-297-3819 or relay at 711

(b) Requests shall be made at least three working days prior to any deadline by which the accommodation is needed.

(c) Requests shall include the following information:

(i) the individual's name and address;

(ii) a notation that the request is made in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act;

(iii) a description of the nature and extent of the individual's disability;

(iv) a description of the service, program, activity, or job or work environment for which an accommodation is requested; and

(v) a description of the requested accommodation if an accommodation has been identified.

(2) The accommodations coordinator shall review all requests for accommodation with the applicable division director and shall issue a reply within two working days.

(a) The reply shall advise the individual that:

(i) the requested accommodation is being supplied; or

(ii) the requested accommodation is not being supplied because it would cause an undue hardship, and shall suggest alternative accommodations. Alternative accommodations must be described; or

(iii) the request for accommodation is denied. A reason for the denial must be included; or

(iv) additional time is necessary to review the request. A projected response date must be included.

(b) All denials of requests under Subsections (2)(a)(ii) and (2)(a)(iii) shall be approved by the executive director or designee.

(c) All replies shall be made in a suitable format. If the suitable format is a format other than writing, the reply shall also be made in writing.

(3) Individuals with a disability who are dissatisfied with the reply to their request for accommodation may file a request for review with the executive director in the following manner.

(a) Requests for review shall be directed to:

Executive Director

Utah State Tax Commission

210 North 1950 West

Salt Lake City, Utah 84134

Telephone: 801-297-3841 TDD: 801-297-3819 or relay at 711

(b) A request for review must be filed within 180 days of the accommodations coordinator's reply.

(c) The request for review shall include:

(i) the individual's name and address;

(ii) the nature and extent of the individual's disability;

(iii) a copy of the accommodation coordinator's reply;

(iv) a statement explaining why the reply to the individual's request for accommodation was unsatisfactory;

(v) a description of the accommodation desired; and

(vi) the signature of the individual or the individual's legal representative.

(4) The executive director shall review all requests for review and shall issue a reply within 15 working days after receipt of the request for review.

(a) If unable to reach a decision within the 15 working day period, the executive director shall notify the individual with a disability that the decision is being delayed and the amount of additional time necessary to reach a decision.

(b) All replies shall be made in a suitable format. If the suitable format is a format other than writing, the reply shall also be made in writing.

(5) The record of each request for review, and all written records produced or received as part of each request for review, shall be classified as protected under Section 63G-2-305 until the executive director issues a decision.

(6) Once the executive director issues a decision, any portions of the record that pertain to the individual's medical condition shall remain classified as private under Section 63G-2-302 or controlled under Section 63G-2-304, whichever is appropriate. All other information gathered as part of the appeal shall be classified as private information. Only the written decision of the executive director shall be classified as public information.

(7) Individuals with a disability who are dissatisfied with the executive director's decision may appeal that decision to the commission in the manner provided in Sections 63G-4-102 through 63G-4-105.

**R861-1A-15. Requirement of Social Security and Federal Identification Numbers Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-210.**

A. Taxpayers shall provide the Tax Commission with their social security number or federal identification number, as required by the Tax Commission.

B. Sole proprietor and partnership applicants shall provide the Tax Commission with the following information for every owner or partner of the applying entity:

1. name;

2. home address;

3. social security number and federal identification number, as required by the Tax Commission.

C. Corporation and limited liability applicants shall provide the Tax Commission with the following information for every officer or managing member of the applying entity:

1. name;

2. home address; and

3. social security number and federal identification number, as required by the Tax Commission.

D. Business trust applicants shall provide the Tax Commission with the following information for the responsible trustees:

1. name;

2. home address; and

3. social security number and federal identification number, as required by the Tax Commission.

**R861-1A-16. Utah State Tax Commission Management Plan Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-207.**

(1) The executive director reports to the commission. The executive director shall meet with the commission periodically to report on the status and progress of this agreement, update the commission on the affairs of the agency and seek policy guidance. The commission chair shall designate a liaison of the commission to coordinate with the executive director in the execution of this agreement.

(2) The structure of the agency is as follows:

(a) The Office of the Commission, including the commissioners and the following units that report to the commission:

(i) Internal Audit;

(ii) Appeals; and

(iii) Economic and Statistical.

(b) The Office of the Executive Director, including the executive director's staff and the following functional areas that report to the executive director:

(i) Administration;

(ii) Customer Services;

(iii) Tax and Revenue;

(iv) Enforcement; and

(v) Property and Miscellaneous Tax.

(3) The Executive Director shall oversee service agreements from other departments.

(4) The commission delegates full authority for the following functions to the executive director:

(a) general supervision and management of the day to day management of the operations and business of the agency;

(b) management of the day to day relationships with the customers of the agency;

(c) all original assessments, including adjustments to audit, assessment, and collection actions, except as provided in Subsections (4)(d) and (5);

(d) in conformance with standards established by the commission, waivers of penalty and interest pursuant to Section 59-1-401 in amounts under $10,000, or offers in compromise agreements in amounts under $10,000;

(e) except as provided in Subsection (5)(g), voluntary disclosure agreements with companies, including multilevel marketers;

(f) determination of whether a county or taxing entity has satisfied its statutory obligations with respect to taxes and fees administered by the commission;

(g) human resource management functions, including employee relations, final agency action on employee grievances, and development of internal policies and procedures; and

(h) administration of Title 63G, Chapter 2, Government Records Access and Management Act.

(5) The executive director shall prepare and, upon approval by the commission, implement the following actions, agreements, and documents:

(a) the agency budget;

(b) the strategic plan of the agency;

(c) administrative rules;

(d) waivers of penalty and interest in amounts of $10,000 or more pursuant to Section 59-1-401 as per the waiver of penalty and interest policy;

(e) offer in compromise agreements that abate tax, penalty and interest over $10,000 as per the offer in compromise policy;

(f) the annual report;

(g) stipulated or negotiated agreements that dispose of matters on appeal; and

(h) voluntary disclosure agreements that meet the following criteria:

(i) the company participating in the agreement is not licensed in Utah and does not collect or remit Utah sales or corporate income tax; and

(ii) the agreement forgives a known past tax liability of $10,000 or more.

(6) Subject to Subsections (5) and (7) through (10), the commission shall retain authority for the following functions:

(a) rulemaking;

(b) adjudicative proceedings;

(c) private letter rulings issued in response to requests from individual taxpayers for guidance on specific facts and circumstances;

(d) internal audit processes;

(e) liaison with the governor's office:

(i) correspondence received from the governor's office relating to tax policy will be directed to the Office of the Commission for response, correspondence received from the governor's office that relates to operating issues of the agency will be directed to the Office of the Executive Director for research and appropriate action, the executive director shall prepare a timely response for the governor with notice to the commission as appropriate; and

(ii) the executive director and staff may have other contact with the governor's office upon appropriate notice to the commission;

(f) liaison with the Legislature:

(i) The commission will set legislative priorities and communicate those priorities to the executive director.

(ii) Under the direction of the executive director, staff may be assigned to assist the commission and the executive director in monitoring legislative meetings and assisting legislators with policy issues relating to the agency;

(g) litigation:

(i) The executive director shall advise the commission on matters under litigation.

(ii) If a settlement offer is received, the executive director shall inform the commission of the:

(A) terms of the offer; and

(B) the division's recommendations with regards to that offer, and

(h) public information.

(7) Correspondence that has been directed to the commission or individual commissioners that relates to matters delegated to the executive director shall be forwarded to a staff member of the Office of the Executive Director for research and appropriate action.

(8) The executive director's staff may occasionally act as support staff to the commission for purposes of conducting research or making recommendations on tax issues.

(a) Official communications or assignments from the commission or individual commissioners to the staff reporting to the executive director shall be made through the executive director.

(b) The commissioners and the Office of the Commission staff reserve the right to contact agency staff directly to facilitate a collegial working environment and maintain communications within the agency. These contacts will exclude direct commands, specific policy implementation guidance, or human resource administration.

(9) The executive director shall meet with the commission periodically to exchange information and coordinate operations.

(a) The commission shall inform the executive director of all policy decisions, appeal decisions, or other commission actions that affect the day to day operations of the agency.

(b) The executive director shall keep the commission apprised of significant actions or issues arising in the course of the daily operation of the agency.

(c) When confronted with circumstances that are not covered by established policy or by instances of real or potential conflicts of interest, the executive director shall refer the matter to the commission.

(10) Subject to supervision and input by the commission, the executive director shall oversee the following:

(a) publications;

(b) bulletins; and

(c) formal responses to media and public inquiries.

**R861-1A-18. Allocations of Remittances Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-1-210 and 59-1-705.**

A. Remittances received by the commission shall be applied first to penalty, then interest, and then to tax for the filing period and account designated by the taxpayer.

B. If no designation for period is made, the commission shall allocate the remittance so as to satisfy all penalty, interest, and tax for the oldest period before applying any excess to other periods.

C. Fees associated with Tax Commission collection activities shall be allocated from remittances in the manner designated by statute. If a statute does not provide for the manner of allocating those fees from remittances, the commission shall apply the remittance first to the collection activity fees, then to penalty, then interest, and then to tax for the filing period.

**R861-1A-20. Time of Appeal Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 63G-4-201 and 68-3-8.5.**

(1) Except as provided in Subsection (2), a petition for adjudicative action must be received in the commission offices no later than 30 days from the date of the action that creates the right to appeal. The petition is deemed to be timely if:

(a) in the case of mailed or hand-delivered documents:

(i) the petition is received in the commission offices on or before the close of business of the last day of the 30-day period; or

(ii) the date of the postmark on the envelope or cover indicates that the petition was mailed on or before the last day of the 30-day period; or

(b) in the case of electronically-filed documents, the petition is received no later than midnight of the last day of the 30-day period.

(c) A petition for adjudicative action that is mailed but not received in the commission offices shall be considered timely filed if the sender complies with the provisions of Subsections 68-3-8.5(2)(b) and (c).

(2) If a statute provides the period within which an appeal may be filed, a petition for adjudicative action is deemed to be timely if:

(a) in the case of mailed or hand-delivered documents:

(i) the petition is received in the commission offices on or before the close of business of the last day of the time frame provided by statute; or

(ii) the date of the postmark on the envelope or cover indicates that the request was mailed on or before the last day of the time frame provided by statute; or

(b) in the case of electronically-filed documents, the petition is received no later than midnight of the last day of the time frame provided by statute.

(c) A petition for adjudicative action that is mailed but not received in the commission offices shall be considered timely filed if the sender complies with the provisions of Subsections 68-3-8.5(2)(b) and (c).

(3) Any party adversely affected by an order of the commission may seek judicial review within the time frame provided by statute. Copies of the appeal shall be served upon the commission and upon the Office of the Attorney General.

**R861-1A-22. Petitions for Commencement of Adjudicative Proceedings Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-1-501, and 63G-4-201.**

(1) Time for Petition. Unless otherwise provided by Utah statute, petitions for adjudicative actions shall be filed within the time frames specified in R861-1A-20. If the last day of the 30-day period falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the period shall run until the end of the next Tax Commission business day.

(2) Contents. A petition for adjudicative action need not be in any particular form, but shall be in writing and, in addition to the requirements of 63G-4-201, shall contain the following:

(a) name and street address and, if available, a fax number or e-mail address of petitioner or the petitioner's representative;

(b) a telephone number where the petitioning party or that party's representative can be reached during regular business hours;

(c) petitioner's tax identification, social security number or other relevant identification number, such as real property parcel number or vehicle identification number;

(d) particular tax or issue involved, period of alleged liability, amount of tax in dispute, and, in the case of a property tax issue, the lien date;

(e) if the petition results from a letter or notice, the petition will include the date of the letter or notice and the originating division or officer; and

(f) in the case of property tax cases, the assessed value sought.

(3) Effect of Nonconformance. The commission will not reject a petition because of nonconformance in form or content, but may require an amended or substitute petition meeting the requirements of this section when such defects are present. An amended or substitute petition must be filed within 15 days after notice of the defect from the commission.

**R861-1A-23. Designation of Adjudicative Proceedings Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 63G-4-202.**

(1) All matters shall be designated as formal proceedings and set for an initial hearing, a status conference, or a scheduling conference pursuant to R861-1A-26.

(2) A matter may be diverted to a mediation process pursuant to R861-1A-32 upon agreement of the parties and the presiding officer.

**R861-1A-24. Formal Adjudicative Proceedings Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-1-502.5, 63G-4-206, and 63G-4-208.**

(1) The following may preside at a formal proceeding:

(a) a commissioner;

(b) an administrative law judge appointed by the commission; or

(c) in the case of a formal proceeding that relates to a matter that is not a tax, fee, or charge as defined under Section 59-1-1402:

(i) a commissioner;

(ii) an administrative law judge appointed by the commission; or

(iii) a hearing officer appointed by the commission.

(2) Assignment of a presiding officer to a case will be made pursuant to agency procedures and not at the request of any party to the appeal.

(a) A party may request that one or more commissioners be present at any hearing. However, the decision of whether the request is granted rests with the commission.

(b) If more than one commissioner, administrative law judge, or hearing officer is present at any hearing, the hearing will be conducted by the presiding officer assigned to the appeal, unless otherwise determined by the commission.

(3) A formal proceeding includes an initial hearing pursuant to Section 59-1-502.5, unless it is waived upon agreement of all parties, and a formal hearing on the record, if the initial hearing is waived or if a party appeals the initial hearing decision.

(a) Initial Hearing.

(i) An initial hearing pursuant to Section 59-1-502.5 shall be in the form of a conference.

(ii) In accordance with Section 59-1-502.5, the commission shall make no record of an initial hearing.

(iii) Any issue may be settled in the initial hearing, but any party has a right to a formal hearing on matters that remain in dispute after the initial hearing decision is issued.

(iv) Any party dissatisfied with the result of the initial hearing must file a timely request for a formal hearing before pursuing judicial review of unsettled matters.

(b) Formal Hearing.

(i) The commission shall make a record of all formal hearings, which may include a written record or an audio recording of the proceeding.

(ii) Evidence presented at the initial hearing will not be included in the record of the formal hearing, unless specifically requested by a party and admitted by the presiding officer.

**R861-1A-26. Procedures for Formal Adjudicative Proceedings Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-1-501 and 63G-4-204 through 63G-4-209.**

(1) A scheduling or status conference may be held.

(a) At the conference, the parties and the presiding officer may:

(i) establish deadlines and procedures for discovery;

(ii) discuss scheduling;

(iii) clarify other issues;

(iv) determine whether to refer the action to a mediation process; and

(v) determine whether the initial hearing will be waived.

(b) The scheduling or status conference may be converted to an initial hearing upon agreement of the parties.

(2) Notice of Hearing. At least ten days prior to a hearing date, the commission shall notify the petitioning party or the petitioning party's representative by mail, e-mail, or facsimile of the date, time and place of any hearing or proceeding.

(3) Proceedings Conducted by Telephone. Any proceeding may be held with one or more of the parties on the telephone if the presiding officer determines that it will be more convenient or expeditious for one or more of the parties and does not unfairly prejudice the rights of any party. Each party to the proceeding is responsible for notifying the presiding officer of the telephone number where contact can be made for purposes of conducting the hearing.

(4) Representation.

(a) A party may pursue an appeal before the commission without assistance of legal counsel or other representation. However, a party may be represented by legal counsel or other representation at every stage of adjudication. Failure to obtain legal representation shall not be grounds for complaint at a later stage in the adjudicative proceeding or for relief on appeal from an order of the commission.

(i) An attorney licensed in a jurisdiction outside Utah may represent a taxpayer before the commission without being admitted pro hac vice in Utah.

(ii) For appeals concerning Utah corporate franchise and income taxes or Utah individual income taxes, legal counsel must file a power of attorney or the taxpayer must submit a signed petition for redetermination (Tax Commission form TC-738) on which the taxpayer has authorized legal counsel to represent him or her in the appeal. For all other appeals, legal counsel may, as an alternative, submit an entry of appearance.

(iii) Any representative other than legal counsel must submit a signed power of attorney authorizing the representative to act on the party's behalf and binding the party by the representative's action, unless the taxpayer submits a signed petition for redetermination (Tax Commission form TC-738) on which the taxpayer has authorized the representative to represent him or her in the appeal.

(iv) If a party is represented by legal counsel or other representation, all documents will be directed to the party's representative. Documents will be mailed to the representative's street or other address as shown in documents submitted by the representative. Documents may also be transmitted by facsimile number, e-mail address or other electronic means.

(b) Any division of the commission named as party to the proceeding may be represented by the Attorney General's Office upon an attorney of that office submitting an entry of appearance.

(5) Subpoena Power.

(a) Issuance. Subpoenas may be issued to secure the attendance of witnesses or the production of evidence.

(i) If all parties are represented by counsel, an attorney admitted to practice law in Utah may issue and sign the subpoena.

(ii) In all other cases, the party requesting the subpoena must prepare it and submit it to the presiding officer for review and, if appropriate, signature. The presiding officer may inform a party of its rights under the Utah Rules of Civil Procedure.

(b) Service. Service of the subpoena shall be made by the party requesting it in a manner consistent with the Utah Rules of Civil Procedure.

(6) Motions.

(a) Consolidation. The presiding officer has discretion to consolidate cases when the same tax assessment, series of assessments, or issues are involved in each, or where the fact situations and the legal questions presented are virtually identical.

(b) Continuance. A continuance may be granted at the discretion of the presiding officer.

(i) In the absence of a scheduling order:

(A) Each party to an appeal may receive one continuance, upon request, prior to the initial hearing.

(B) If the initial hearing is waived or a formal hearing is timely requested after an initial hearing decision is issued, each party may receive one continuance, upon request, prior to the formal hearing.

(C) A request must be submitted no later than ten days prior to the proceeding for which the continuance is requested and may be denied if a party is prejudiced by the continuance.

(ii) If a scheduling order has been issued or the requesting party has already been granted a continuance, a continuance request must be submitted in writing to the presiding officer. The request must set forth specific reasons for the continuance. After reviewing the request with one or more commissioners, the presiding officer shall grant the request only if the presiding officer determines that adequate cause has been shown and that no other party or parties will be unduly prejudiced.

(c) Default. The presiding officer may enter an order of default against a party in accordance with Section 63G-4-209.

(i) The default order shall include a statement of the grounds for default and shall be delivered to all parties.

(ii) A defaulted party may seek to have the default set aside according to procedures set forth in the Utah Rules of Civil Procedure.

(d) Ruling on Motions. Motions may be made during the hearing or by written motion.

(i) Each motion shall include the grounds upon which it is based and the relief or order sought. Copies of written motions shall be served upon all other parties to the proceeding.

(ii) Upon the filing of any motion, the presiding officer may:

(A) grant or deny the motion; or

(B) set the matter for briefing, hearing, or further proceedings.

(iii) If a hearing on a motion is held that may dispose of all or a portion of the appeal or any claim or defense in the appeal, the commission shall make a record of the proceeding, which may include a written record or an audio recording of the proceeding.

(e) Requests to Withdraw Locally-Assessed Property Tax Appeals.

(i) A party who appeals a county board of equalization decision to the commission may unilaterally withdraw its appeal if:

(A) it submits a written request to withdraw the appeal 20 or more days prior to:

(I) the initial hearing; or

(II) the formal hearing, if the parties waived the initial hearing or participated in a mediation conference in lieu of the initial hearing; and

(B) no other party has filed a timely appeal of the county board of equalization decision.

(ii) A party who appeals an initial hearing decision issued by the commission may unilaterally withdraw its appeal if:

(A) it submits a written request to withdraw 20 or more days prior to the formal hearing, regardless of whether the party who appealed the initial hearing order is also the party who appealed the county board of equalization decision; and

(B) no other party has filed a timely appeal of the initial hearing decision.

**R861-1A-27. Discovery Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 63G-4-205.**

(1) Discovery procedures in formal proceedings shall be established during the scheduling, and status conference in accordance with the Utah Rules of Civil Procedure and other applicable statutory authority.

(2) The party requesting information or documents may be required to pay in advance the costs of obtaining or reproducing such information or documents.

**R861-1A-28. Evidence in Adjudicative Proceedings Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-1-210, 63G-4-206, 76-8-502, and 76-8-503.**

(1) Except as otherwise stated in this rule, formal proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the Utah Rules of Evidence, and the degree of proof in a hearing before the commission shall be the same as in a judicial proceeding in the state courts of Utah.

(2) Every party to an adjudicative proceeding has the right to introduce evidence. The evidence may be oral or written, real or demonstrative, direct or circumstantial.

(a) The presiding officer may admit any reliable evidence possessing probative value which would be accepted by a reasonably prudent person in the conduct of his affairs.

(b) The presiding officer may admit hearsay evidence. However, no decision of the commission will be based solely on hearsay evidence.

(c) If a party attempts to introduce evidence into a hearing, and that evidence is excluded, the party may proffer the excluded testimony or evidence to allow the reviewing judicial authority to pass on the correctness of the ruling of exclusion on appeal.

(3) At the discretion of the presiding officer or upon stipulation of the parties, the parties may be required to reduce their testimony to writing and to prefile the testimony.

(a) Prefiled testimony may be placed on the record without being read into the record if the opposing parties have had reasonable access to the testimony before it is presented. Except upon finding of good cause, reasonable access shall be not less than ten working days.

(b) Prefiled testimony shall have line numbers inserted at the left margin and shall be authenticated by affidavit of the witness.

(c) The presiding officer may require the witness to present a summary of the prefiled testimony. In that case, the witness shall reduce the summary to writing and either file it with the prefiled testimony or serve it on all parties within 10 days after filing the testimony.

(d) If an opposing party intends to cross-examine the witness on prefiled testimony or the summary of prefiled testimony, that party must file a notice of intent to cross-examine at least 10 days prior to the date of the hearing so that witness can be scheduled to appear or within a time frame agreed upon by the parties.

(4) The presiding officer shall rule and sign orders on matters concerning the evidentiary and procedural conduct of the proceeding.

(5) Oral testimony at a formal hearing will be sworn. The oath will be administered by the presiding officer or a person designated by him. Anyone testifying falsely under oath may be subject to prosecution for perjury in accordance with the provisions of Sections 76-8-502 and 76-8-503.

(6) Any party appearing in an adjudicative proceeding may submit a memorandum of authorities. The presiding officer may request a memorandum from any party if deemed necessary for a full and informed consideration of the issues.

**R861-1A-29. Decisions, Orders, and Reconsideration Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-1-205 and 63G-4-302.**

(1) "Taxpayer" for purposes of the requirement under Section 59-1-205 that in a tie vote of the commission the position of the taxpayer is considered to have prevailed, includes:

(a) a person that has received a license issued by the commission; or

(b) an applicant for a license issued by the commission.

(2) Decisions and Orders.

(a) Initial hearing decisions, formal hearing decisions, and other dispositive orders.

(i) A quorum of the commission shall deliberate all hearing decisions and other orders that could dispose of all or a portion of an appeal or any claim or defense in the appeal.

(ii) A quorum of the commission shall sign all hearing decisions and other orders that dispose of all or a portion of an appeal or any claim or defense in the appeal.

(iii) An administrative law judge, if he or she was the presiding officer for an appeal, may elect not to sign the commission's hearing decisions and other orders that dispose of all or a portion of an appeal or any claim or defense in the appeal.

(iv) An initial hearing decision shall become final upon the expiration of 30 days after the date of its issuance, except in any case where a party has earlier requested a formal hearing in writing.

(A) The date a party requests a formal hearing is the earlier of the date the envelope containing the request is postmarked or the date the request is received at the commission.

(B) If a party withdraws an appeal, the initial decision becomes final as of the date that is 30 days after the date of the issuance of the initial hearing decision.

(b) Orders that are not dispositive.

(i) A quorum of the commission is not required to participate in an order that does not dispose of a portion of an appeal or any claim or defense in the appeal.

(ii) The presiding officer is authorized to sign all orders that do not dispose of a portion of an appeal or any claim or defense in the appeal.

(iii) The commission may, at its option, sign any order that does not dispose of a portion of an appeal or any claim or defense in the appeal.

(3) Reconsideration. Within 20 days after the date that an order that is dispositive of a portion or all of an appeal or any claim or defense in the appeal is issued, any party may file a written request for reconsideration alleging mistake of law or fact, or discovery of new evidence.

(a) The commission shall respond to the petition within 20 days after the date that it was received in the appeals unit to notify the petitioner whether the reconsideration is granted or denied, or is under review.

(i) If no notice is issued within the 20-day period, the commission's lack of action on the request shall be deemed to be a denial and a final order.

(ii) For purposes of calculating the 30-day limitation period for pursuing judicial review, the date of the commission's order on the reconsideration or the order of denial is the date of the final agency action.

(b) If no petition for reconsideration is made, the 30-day limitation period for pursuing judicial review begins to run from the date of the final agency action.

**R861-1A-30. Ex Parte Communications Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 63G-4-203 and 63G-4-206.**

(1) No commissioner or administrative law judge shall make or knowingly cause to be made to any party to an appeal any communication relevant to the merits of a matter under appeal unless notice and an opportunity to be heard are afforded to all parties.

(2) No party shall make or knowingly cause to be made to any commissioner or administrative law judge an ex parte communication relevant to the merits of a matter under appeal for the purpose of influencing the outcome of the appeal. Discussion of procedural matters are not considered ex parte communication relevant to the merits of the appeal.

(3) A presiding officer may receive aid from staff assistants if:

(a) the assistants do not receive ex parte communications of a type that the presiding officer is prohibited from receiving, and,

(b) in an instance where assistants present information which augments the evidence in the record, all parties shall have reasonable notice and opportunity to respond to that information.

(4) Any commissioner or administrative law judge who receives an ex parte communication relevant to the merits of a matter under appeal shall place the communication into the case file and afford all parties an opportunity to comment on the information.

**R861-1A-31. Declaratory Orders Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 63G-4-503.**

(1) A party has standing to bring a declaratory action if that party is directly and adversely affected or aggrieved by an agency action within the meaning of the relevant statute.

(2) The commission shall not accept a petition for declaratory order on matters pending before the commission in an audit assessment, refund request, collections action or other agency action, or on matters pending before the court on judicial review of a commission decision.

(3) The commission may refuse to render a declaratory order if the order will not completely resolve the controversy giving rise to the proceeding or if the petitioner has other remedies through the administrative appeals processes. The commission's decision to accept or reject a petition for declaratory order rests in part on the petitioner's standing to raise the issue and on a determination that the petitioner has not already incurred tax liability under the statutes or rules challenged.

(4) A declaratory order that invalidates all or part of an administrative rule shall trigger the rulemaking process to amend the rule.

**R861-1A-32. Mediation Process Pursuant to Utah Code Section 63G-4-102.**

(1) Except as otherwise precluded by law, a resolution to any matter of dispute may be pursued through mediation.

(a) The parties may agree to pursue mediation any time before the formal hearing on the record.

(b) The choice of mediator and the apportionment of costs shall be determined by agreement of the parties.

(2) If mediation produces a settlement agreement, the agreement shall be submitted to the presiding officer pursuant to R861-1A-33.

(a) The settlement agreement shall be prepared by the parties or by the mediator, and promptly filed with the presiding officer.

(b) The settlement agreement shall be adopted by the commission if it is not contrary to law.

(c) If the mediation does not resolve all of the issues, the parties shall prepare a stipulation that identifies the issues resolved and the issues that remain in dispute.

(d) If any issues remain unresolved, the appeal will be scheduled for a formal hearing pursuant to R861-1A-23.

**R861-1A-33. Settlement Agreements Pursuant to Utah Code Sections 59-1-210 and 59-1- 502.5.**

A. "Settlement agreement" means a stipulation, consent decree, settlement agreement or any other legally binding document or representation that resolves a dispute or issue between the parties.

B. Procedure:

1. Parties with an interest in a matter pending before a division of the Tax Commission may submit a settlement agreement for review and approval, whether or not a petition for hearing has been filed.

2. Parties to an appeal pending before the commission may submit a settlement agreement to the presiding officer for review and approval.

3. Each settlement agreement shall be in writing and executed by each party or each party's legal representative, if any, and shall contain:

a) the nature of the claim being settled and any claims remaining in dispute;

b) a proposed order for commission approval; and

c) a statement that each party has been notified of, and allowed to participate in settlement negotiations.

4. A settlement agreement terminates the administrative action on the issues settled before all administrative remedies are exhausted, and, therefore, precludes judicial review of the issues. Each settlement agreement shall contain a statement that the agreement is binding and constitutes full resolution of all issues agreed upon in the settlement agreement.

5. The signed agreement shall stay further proceedings on the issues agreed upon in the settlement until the agreement is accepted or rejected by the commission or the commission's designee.

a) If approved, the settlement agreement shall take effect by its own terms.

b) If rejected, action on the claim shall proceed as if no settlement agreement had been reached. Offers made during the negotiation process will not be used as an admission against that party in further adjudicative proceedings.

**R861-1A-34. Private Letter Rulings Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-210.**

A. Private letter rulings are written, informational statements of the commission's interpretation of statutes or administrative rules, or informational statements concerning the application of statutes and rules to specific facts and circumstances.

1. Private letter rulings address questions that have not otherwise been addressed in statutes, rules, or decisions issued by the commission.

2. The commission shall not knowingly issue a private letter ruling on a matter pending before the commission in an audit assessment, refund request, or other agency action, or regarding matters that are pending before the court on judicial review of a commission decision. Any private letter ruling inadvertently issued on a matter pending agency or judicial action shall be set aside until the conclusion of that action.

3. Requests for private letter rulings must be addressed to the commission in writing. If the requesting party is dissatisfied with the ruling, that party may resubmit the request along with new facts or information for commission review.

B. The weight afforded a private letter ruling in a subsequent audit or administrative appeal depends upon the degree to which the underlying facts addressed in the ruling were adequate to allow thorough consideration of the issues and interests involved.

C. A private letter ruling is not a final agency action. Petitioner must use the designated appeal process to address judiciable controversies arising from the issuance of a private letter ruling.

1. If the private letter ruling leads to a denial of a claim, an audit assessment, or some other agency action at a divisional level, the taxpayer must use the appeals procedures to challenge that action within 30 days of the final division decision.

2. If the only matter at issue in the private letter ruling is a challenge to the commission's interpretation of statutory language or a challenge to the commission's authority under a statute, the matter may come before the commission as a petition for declaratory order submitted within 30 days of the date of the ruling challenged.

**R861-1A-35. Manner of Retaining Records Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-1-210, 59-5-104, 59-5-204, 59-6-104, 59-7-506, 59-8-105, 59-8a-105, 59-10-501, 59-12-111, 59-13-211, 59-13-312, 59-13-403, 59-14-303, and 59-15-105.**

A. Definitions.

1. "Database Management System" means a software system that controls, relates, retrieves, and provides accessibility to data stored in a database.

2. "Electronic data interchange" or "EDI technology" means the computer-to-computer exchange of business transactions in a standardized, structured electronic format.

3. "Hard copy" means any documents, records, reports, or other data printed on paper.

4. "Machine-sensible record" means a collection of related information in an electronic format. Machine-sensible records do not include hard-copy records that are created or recorded on paper or stored in or by an imaging system such as microfilm, microfiche, or storage-only imaging systems.

5. "Storage-only imaging system" means a system of computer hardware and software that provides for the storage, retention, and retrieval of documents originally created on paper. It does not include any system, or part of a system, that manipulates or processes any information or data contained on the document in any manner other than to reproduce the document in hard copy or as an optical image.

6. "Taxpayer" means the person required, under Title 59 or other statutes administered by the Tax Commission, to collect, remit, or pay the tax or fee to the Tax Commission.

B. If a taxpayer retains records in both machine-sensible and hard-copy formats, the taxpayer shall make the records available to the commission in machine-sensible format upon request by the commission.

C. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to prohibit a taxpayer from demonstrating tax compliance with traditional hard-copy documents or reproductions thereof, in whole or in part, whether or not the taxpayer also has retained or has the capability to retain records on electronic or other storage media in accordance with this rule. However, this does not relieve the taxpayer of the obligation to comply with B.

D. Recordkeeping requirements for machine-sensible records.

1. Machine-sensible records used to establish tax compliance shall contain sufficient transaction-level detail information so that the details underlying the machine-sensible records can be identified and made available to the commission upon request. A taxpayer has discretion to discard duplicated records and redundant information provided its responsibilities under this rule are met.

2. At the time of an examination, the retained records must be capable of being retrieved and converted to a standard record format.

3. Taxpayers are not required to construct machine-sensible records other than those created in the ordinary course of business. A taxpayer who does not create the electronic equivalent of a traditional paper document in the ordinary course of business is not required to construct such a record for tax purposes.

4. Electronic Data Interchange Requirements.

a) Where a taxpayer uses electronic data interchange processes and technology, the level of record detail, in combination with other records related to the transactions, must be equivalent to that contained in an acceptable paper record.

b) For example, the retained records should contain such information as vendor name, invoice date, product description, quantity purchased, price, amount of tax, indication of tax status, and shipping detail. Codes may be used to identify some or all of the data elements, provided that the taxpayer provides a method that allows the commission to interpret the coded information.

c) The taxpayer may capture the information necessary to satisfy D.4.b) at any level within the accounting system and need not retain the original EDI transaction records provided the audit trail, authenticity, and integrity of the retained records can be established. For example, a taxpayer using electronic data interchange technology receives electronic invoices from its suppliers. The taxpayer decides to retain the invoice data from completed and verified EDI transactions in its accounts payable system rather than to retain the EDI transactions themselves. Since neither the EDI transaction nor the accounts payable system captures information from the invoice pertaining to product description and vendor name, i.e., they contain only codes for that information, the taxpayer also retains other records, such as its vendor master file and product code description lists and makes them available to the commission. In this example, the taxpayer need not retain its EDI transaction for tax purposes.

5. Electronic data processing systems requirements.

a) The requirements for an electronic data processing accounting system should be similar to that of a manual accounting system, in that an adequately designed accounting system should incorporate methods and records that will satisfy the requirements of this rule.

6. Business process information.

a) Upon the request of the commission, the taxpayer shall provide a description of the business process that created the retained records. The description shall include the relationship between the records and the tax documents prepared by the taxpayer, and the measures employed to ensure the integrity of the records.

b) The taxpayer shall be capable of demonstrating:

(1) the functions being performed as they relate to the flow of data through the system;

(2) the internal controls used to ensure accurate and reliable processing; and

(3) the internal controls used to prevent unauthorized addition, alteration, or deletion of retained records.

c) The following specific documentation is required for machine-sensible records retained pursuant to this rule:

(1) record formats or layouts;

(2) field definitions, including the meaning of all codes used to represent information;

(3) file descriptions, e.g., data set name; and

(4) detailed charts of accounts and account descriptions.

E. Records maintenance requirements.

1. The commission recommends but does not require that taxpayers refer to the National Archives and Record Administration's (NARA) standards for guidance on the maintenance and storage of electronic records, such as labeling of records, the location and security of the storage environment, the creation of back-up copies, and the use of periodic testing to confirm the continued integrity of the records. The NARA standards may be found at 36 C.F.R., Section 1234,(1995).

2. The taxpayer's computer hardware or software shall accommodate the extraction and conversion of retained machine-sensible records.

F. Access to machine-sensible records.

1. The manner in which the commission is provided access to machine-sensible records as required in B. may be satisfied through a variety of means that shall take into account a taxpayer's facts and circumstances through consultation with the taxpayer.

2. Access will be provided in one or more of the following manners:

a) The taxpayer may arrange to provide the commission with the hardware, software, and personnel resources necessary to access the machine-sensible records.

b) The taxpayer may arrange for a third party to provide the hardware, software, and personnel resources necessary to access the machine-sensible records.

c) The taxpayer may convert the machine-sensible records to a standard record format specified by the commission, including copies of files, on a magnetic medium that is agreed to by the commission.

d) The taxpayer and the commission may agree on other means of providing access to the machine-sensible records.

G. Taxpayer responsibility and discretionary authority.

1. In conjunction with meeting the requirements of D., a taxpayer may create files solely for the use of the commission. For example, if a data base management system is used, it is consistent with this rule for the taxpayer to create and retain a file that contains the transaction-level detail from the data base management system and meets the requirements of D. The taxpayer should document the process that created the separate file to show the relationship between that file and the original records.

2. A taxpayer may contract with a third party to provide custodial or management services of the records. The contract shall not relieve the taxpayer of its responsibilities under this rule.

H. Alternative storage media.

1. For purposes of storage and retention, taxpayers may convert hard-copy documents received or produced in the normal course of business and required to be retained under this rule to microfilm, microfiche or other storage-only imaging systems and may discard the original hard-copy documents, provided the conditions of this section are met. Documents that may be stored on these media include general books of account, journals, voucher registers, general and subsidiary ledgers, and supporting records of details, such as sales invoices, purchase invoices, exemption certificates, and credit memoranda.

2. Microfilm, microfiche and other storage-only imaging systems shall meet the following requirements:

a) Documentation establishing the procedures for converting the hard-copy documents to microfilm, microfiche, or other storage-only imaging system must be maintained and made available on request. This documentation shall, at a minimum, contain a sufficient description to allow an original document to be followed through the conversion system as well as internal procedures established for inspection and quality assurance.

b) Procedures must be established for the effective identification, processing, storage, and preservation of the stored documents and for making them available for the period they are required to be retained.

c) Upon request by the commission, a taxpayer must provide facilities and equipment for reading, locating, and reproducing any documents maintained on microfilm, microfiche, or other storage-only imaging system.

d) When displayed on equipment or reproduced on paper, the documents must exhibit a high degree of legibility and readability. For this purpose, legibility is defined as the quality of a letter or numeral that enables the observer to identify it positively and quickly to the exclusion of all other letters or numerals. Readability is defined as the quality of a group of letters or numerals being recognizable as words or complete numbers.

e) All data stored on microfilm, microfiche, or other storage-only imaging systems must be maintained and arranged in a manner that permits the location of any particular record.

f) There is no substantial evidence that the microfilm, microfiche or other storage-only imaging system lacks authenticity or integrity.

I. Effect on hard-copy recordkeeping requirements.

1. Except as otherwise provided in this section, the provisions of this rule do not relieve taxpayers of the responsibility to retain hard-copy records that are created or received in the ordinary course of business as required by existing law and regulations. Hard-copy records may be retained on a recordkeeping medium as provided in H.

2. Hard-copy records not produced or received in the ordinary course of transacting business, e.g., when the taxpayer uses electronic data interchange technology, need not be created.

3. Hard-copy records generated at the time of a transaction using a credit or debit card must be retained unless all the details necessary to determine correct tax liability relating to the transaction are subsequently received and retained by the taxpayer in accordance with this rule. These details include those listed in D.4.a) and D.4.b).

4. Computer printouts that are created for validation, control, or other temporary purposes need not be retained.

5. Nothing in this section shall prevent the commission from requesting hard-copy printouts in lieu of retained machine-sensible records at the time of examination.

**R861-1A-36. Signatures Defined Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 41-1a-209, 59-7-505, 59-10-512, 59-12-107, 59-13-206, and 59-13-307.**

(1) Individuals who submit an application to renew their vehicle registration on the Internet web site authorized by the Tax Commission shall use the Tax Commission assigned personal identification number included with their registration renewal information as their signature for the renewal application submitted over the Internet.

(2) Taxpayers who use the Tax Commission authorized Internet web site to file tax return information for tax types that may be filed on that web site shall use the personal identification number provided by the Tax Commission as their signature for the tax return information filed on that web site.

(3) Taxpayers who file a tax return under Title 59, Chapter 10, Individual Income Tax Act, electronically and who meet the signature requirement of the Internal Revenue Service shall be deemed to meet the signature requirement of Section 59-10-512.

(4) Taxpayers who file a corporate franchise and income tax return electronically and who meet the signature requirement of the Internal Revenue Service shall be deemed to meet the signature requirement of Section 59-7-505.

**R861-1A-37. Provisions Relating to Disclosure of Commercial Information Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-404.**

(1) The provisions of this rule apply to the disclosure of commercial information under Section 59-1-404. For disclosure of information other than commercial information, see rule R861-1A-12.

(2) For purposes of Section 59-1-404, "assessed value of the property" includes any value proposed for a property.

(3) For purposes of Subsection 59-1-404(2), "disclosure" does not include the issuance by the commission of a decision, order, or private letter ruling containing commercial information to a:

(a) named party of a decision or order;

(b) party requesting a private letter ruling; or

(c) designated representative of a party described in Subsection (3)(a) or (3)(b).

(4) For purposes of Subsection 59-1-404(6), "published decision" does not include the issuance by the commission of a decision, order, or private letter ruling containing commercial information to a:

(a) named party of a decision or order;

(b) party requesting a private letter ruling; or

(c) designated representative of a party described in Subsection (4)(a) or (4)(b).

(5) Information that may be disclosed under Subsection 59-1-404(3) includes:

(a) the following information related to the property's tax exempt status:

(i) information provided on the application for property tax exempt status;

(ii) information used in the determination of whether a property tax exemption should be granted or revoked; and

(iii) any other information related to a property's property tax exemption;

(b) the following information related to penalty or interest relating to property taxes that the commission or county legislative body determines should be abated:

(i) the amount of penalty or interest that is abated;

(ii) information provided on an application or request for abatement of penalty or interest;

(iii) information used in the determination of the abatement of penalty or interest; and

(iv) any other information related to the amount of penalty or interest that is abated; and

(c) the following information related to the amount of property tax due on property:

(i) the amount of taxes refunded or deducted as an erroneous or illegal assessment under Section 59-2-1321;

(ii) information provided on an application or request that property has been erroneously or illegally assessed under Section 59-2-1321; and

(iii) any other information related to the amount of taxes refunded or deducted under Subsection (5)(c)(i).

(6)(a) Except as provided in statute and Subsection (6)(b), commercial information disclosed during an action or proceeding may not be disclosed outside an action or proceeding by any person conducting or participating in any action or proceeding.

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (6)(a), commercial information contained in a decision issued by the commission may be disclosed outside the action or proceeding if all of the parties named in the decision agree in writing to the disclosure.

(7) The commission may disclose commercial information in a published decision as follows.

(a) If the property taxpayer that provided the commercial information does not respond in writing to the commission within 30 days of the decision's issuance, requesting that the commercial information not be published and identifying the specific commercial information the taxpayer wants protected, the commission may publish the entire decision.

(b) If the property taxpayer that provided the commercial information indicates to the commission in writing the specific commercial information that the taxpayer wants protected, the commission may publish a version of the decision that contains commercial information not identified by the taxpayer under Subsection (7)(a).

(8) The commission may share commercial information gathered from returns and other written statements with the federal government, any other state, any of the political subdivisions of another state, or any political subdivision of this state, if these political subdivisions, or the federal government grant substantially similar privileges to this state.

**R861-1A-38. Class Actions Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-304.**

A. Unless the limitations of Section 59-1-304(2) apply, the commission may expedite the exhaustion of administrative remedies required by individuals desiring to be included as a member of the class.

B. In expediting exhaustion of administrative remedies, the commission may take any of the following actions:

1. publish sample claim forms that provide the information necessary to process a claim in a form that will reduce the burden on members of the putative class and expedite processing by the commission;

2. provide for waiver of initial hearings where requested by any party;

3. provide for expedited rulings on motions for summary judgment where the facts are not contested and the legal issues have been previously determined by the commission in ruling on the case brought by class representatives. The parties may waive oral hearing and have final orders issued based upon information submitted in the claims and division responses;

4. consolidate the cases for hearing at the commission, where a group of claims presents identical legal issues and it is agreed by the parties that the resolution of the legal issues would be dispositive of the claims;

5. designate a claim as a test or sample claim with any rulings on that test or sample claim to be applicable to all other similar claims, upon agreement of the claiming parties; or

6. any other action not listed in this rule if that action is not contrary to procedures required by statute.

**R861-1A-39. Penalty for Failure to File a Return Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 10-1-405, 59-1-401, 59-12-118, and 69-2-5.**

(1)(a) Subject to Subsection (1)(b), "failure to file a tax return," for purposes of the penalty for failure to file a tax return under Subsection 59-1-401(1) includes a tax return that does not contain information necessary for the commission to make a correct distribution of tax revenues to counties, cities, and towns.

(b) Subsection (1)(a) applies to a tax return filed under:

(i) Chapter 12, Sales and Use Tax Act;

(ii) Title 10, Chapter 1, Part 4, Municipal Telecommunications License Tax Act; or

(iii) Title 69, Chapter 2, Emergency Telephone Service Law.

(2)(a) "Unpaid tax," for purposes of the penalty for failure to file a tax return under Subsection 59-1-401(1) includes tax remitted to the commission under Subsection (2)(b) that is:

(i) not accompanied by a tax return; or

(ii) accompanied by a tax return that is subject to the penalty for failure to file a tax return.

(b) Subsection (2)(a) applies to a tax remitted under:

(i) Chapter 12, Sales and Use Tax Act;

(ii) Title 10, Chapter 1, Part 4, Municipal Telecommunications License Tax Act; or

(iii) Title 69, Chapter 2, Emergency Telephone Service Law.

**R861-1A-40. Waiver of Requirement to Post Security Prior to Judicial Review Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-611.**

(1) "Post security" is as defined in Section 59-1-611.

(2)(a) A taxpayer that seeks judicial review of a final commission determination of a deficiency may apply for a waiver of the requirement to post security with the commission by:

(i) submitting a letter requesting the waiver;

(ii) providing financial information requested by the commission; and

(iii) providing a copy of the financial information to the attorney general that is representing the commission in the judicial review.

(b) The financial information described in Subsection (2)(a) shall be signed by the taxpayer under penalties of perjury.

(3) Upon review of the financial information described in Subsection (2), the commission shall:

(a) determine whether the taxpayer qualifies for a waiver of the requirement to post security with the commission; or

(b) if unable to make the determination under Subsection (3)(a) from the financial information, request additional information from the taxpayer as necessary to make that determination.

**R861-1A-42. Waiver of Penalty and Interest for Reasonable Cause Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-401.**

(1) Procedure.

(a) A taxpayer may request a waiver of penalties or interest for reasonable cause under Section 59-1-401 if the following conditions are met:

(i) the taxpayer provides a signed statement, with appropriate supporting documentation, requesting a waiver;

(ii) the total tax owed for the period has been paid;

(iii) the tax liability is based on a return the taxpayer filed with the commission, and not on an estimate provided by the taxpayer or the commission;

(iv) the taxpayer has not previously received a waiver review for the same period; and

(v) the taxpayer demonstrates that there is reasonable cause for waiver of the penalty or interest.

(b) Upon receipt of a waiver request, the commission shall:

(i) review the request;

(ii) notify the taxpayer if additional documentation is needed to consider the waiver request; and

(iii) review the account history for prior waiver requests, taxpayer deficiencies, and historical support for the reason given.

(c) Each request for waiver is judged on its individual merits.

(d) If the request for waiver of penalty or interest is denied, the taxpayer has a right to appeal. Procedures for filing appeals are found in Title 63G, Chapter 4, Administrative Procedures Act, and commission rules.

(e) If a taxpayer first requests a waiver of penalties or interest in an appeal to the commission, the taxpayer is not required to meet Subsections (1)(a)(i) through (iv).

(2) Reasonable Cause for Waiver of Interest. Grounds for waiving interest are more stringent than for penalty. To be granted a waiver of interest, the taxpayer must prove that the commission gave the taxpayer erroneous information or took inappropriate action that contributed to the error.

(3) Reasonable Cause for Waiver of Penalty. The following clearly documented circumstances may constitute reasonable cause for a waiver of penalty:

(a) Timely Mailing or Electronic Submission:

(i) The taxpayer mailed or electronically submits the return and payment to the commission by the due date and it was not timely delivered or electronically transmitted to the commission through no fault of the taxpayer.

(ii) In cases where the taxpayer cannot document a delivery or electronic transmission error, the penalties may be waived if the taxpayer:

(A) has an excellent history of compliance;

(B) proves that sufficient funds were in the bank as of the date of payment, and if applicable, the check was written in numerical order; and

(C) presents documentation showing that the return and payment was mailed or electronically submitted timely.

(b) Wrong Filing Place: The return or payment was filed on time, but was delivered to the wrong office or agency.

(c) Death or Serious Illness:

(i) The death or serious illness of a taxpayer or a member of the taxpayer's immediate family caused the delay.

(ii) With respect to a business, trust, or estate, the death or illness must have been of the individual, or the immediate family of the individual, who had sole authority to file the return.

(iii) The death or illness must have occurred on or immediately before the due date of the return.

(d) Unavoidable Absence: The person having sole responsibility to file the return was absent from the state due to circumstances beyond their control.

(e) Disaster Relief:

(i) A delay in reporting, filing, or paying was due either to a governmentally declared disaster or to a natural disaster, such as fire or accident, that results in the destruction of records or disruption of business.

(ii) For purposes of this Subsection (3)(e), "governmentally declared disaster" means a disaster declared by:

(A) a state;

(B) the District of Columbia;

(C) a possession or territory of the United States; or

(D) the United States government.

(iii) If delinquency or delay is due to a federally declared disaster, federal relief guidelines shall be followed.

(iv) In the absence of federal guidelines, and for other listed disasters, the taxpayer must demonstrate the matter was corrected within a reasonable time, given the circumstances.

(f) Reliance on Erroneous Tax Commission Information:

(i) Underpayments and late filings or payments were attributable to incorrect advice obtained from the commission, unless the taxpayer gave the commission inaccurate or insufficient information.

(ii) Proof of erroneous information may be based on written communication provided by the commission or, if the taxpayer clearly documents, verbal communication. Clear documentation of verbal communication should include the dates, times, and names of commission employees who provided the erroneous information.

(iii) A failure to comply will also be excused if it is demonstrated that the taxpayer requested the necessary tax forms and instructions timely, and the commission failed to timely provide the forms and instructions requested.

(g) Tax Commission Office Visit: The taxpayer proves that before expiration of the time for filing the return or making the payment, the taxpayer visited a commission office for information or help in preparing the return and a commission employee was not available for consultation.

(h) Unobtainable Records: For reasons beyond the taxpayer's control, the taxpayer was unable to obtain records to determine the amount of tax due.

(i) Reliance on Competent Tax Advisor: The taxpayer:

(i) furnishes all necessary and relevant information to a competent tax advisor, and the tax advisor:

(A) incorrectly advises the taxpayer;

(B) fails to timely file a return on behalf of the taxpayer; or

(C) fails to make a payment on behalf of the taxpayer; and

(ii) demonstrates that the taxpayer exercised ordinary business care, prudence, and diligence in determining whether to seek further advice.

(j) First Time Filer:

(i) It is the first return required to be filed and the taxes were filed and paid within a reasonable time after the due date.

(ii) The commission may also consider waiving penalties on the first return after a filing period change if the return is filed and tax is paid within a reasonable time after the due date.

(k) Bank Error:

(i) The taxpayer's bank has made an error in returning a check, making a deposit or transferring money.

(ii) A letter from the bank verifying its error is required.

(l) Compliance History:

(i) The commission will consider the taxpayer's recent history for payment, filing, and delinquencies in determining whether a penalty may be waived.

(ii) The commission will also consider whether other tax returns or reports are overdue on the date the waiver is requested.

(m) Employee Embezzlement: The taxpayer shows that failure to pay was due to employee embezzlement of the tax funds and the taxpayer was unable to obtain replacement funds from any other source.

(n) Recent Tax Law Change: The taxpayer's failure to file and pay was due to a recent change in tax law that the taxpayer could not reasonably be expected to be aware of.

(4) Other Considerations for Determining Reasonable Cause.

(a) The commission allows for equitable considerations in determining whether reasonable cause exists to waive a penalty. Equitable considerations include:

(i) whether the commission had to take legal means to collect the taxes;

(ii) if the error is caught and corrected by the taxpayer;

(iii) the length of time between the event cited and the filing date;

(iv) typographical or other written errors; and

(v) other factors the commission deems appropriate.

(b) Other clearly supported extraordinary and unanticipated reasons for late filing or payment, which demonstrate reasonable cause and the inability to comply, may justify a waiver of the penalty.

(c) In most cases, ignorance of the law, carelessness, or forgetfulness does not constitute reasonable cause for waiver. Nonetheless, other supporting circumstances may indicate that reasonable cause for waiver exists.

(d) Intentional disregard, evasion, or fraud does not constitute reasonable cause for waiver under any circumstance.

**R861-1A-43. Electronic Meetings Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 52-4-207.**

(1) A commissioner may participate electronically in a meeting open to the public under Section 52-4-207.

(2)(a) The commission shall indicate in a public notice if the public may participate electronically in a meeting open to the public under Section 52-4-207.

(b) A notice provided under Subsection (2)(a) shall direct the public on how to participate electronically in the meeting.

(3) A commissioner who is participating electronically pursuant to Subsection (1) shall be included in calculating a quorum if the commissioner is:

(a) connected by audio means; and

(b) verbally recognized as electronically present by another commissioner.

**R861-1A-44. Definition of Delivery Service Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-1404.**

For purposes of determining the date on which a document has been mailed under Section 59-1-1404, "delivery service" means the following delivery services the Internal Revenue Service has determined to be a designated delivery service under Section 7502, Internal Revenue Code:

(1) DHL Express (DHL):

(a) DHL Same Day Service;

(b) DHL Next Day 10:30 a.m.;

(c) DHL Next Day 12:00 p.m.;

(d) DHL DHL Next Day 3:00 p.m.; and

(e) DHL 2nd Day Service;

(2) Federal Express (FedEx):

(a) FedEx Priority Overnight;

(b) FedEx Standard Overnight;

(c) FedEx 2 Day;

(d) FedEx International Priority; and

(e) FedEx International First; and

(3) United Parcel Service (UPS):

(a) UPS Next Day Air;

(b) UPS Next Day Air Saver;

(c) UPS 2nd Day Air;

(c) UPS 2nd Day Air A.M.;

(d) UPS Worldwide Express Plus; and

(e) UPS Worldwide Express.

**R861-1A-45. Procedures for Commission Meetings Not Open to the Public Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Section 59-1-405.**

(1) When the commission holds a meeting that is not open to the public pursuant to Section 59-1-405, the commission shall:

(a) follow the procedures set forth in commission rules:

(i) R861-1A-9, Tax Commission as Board of Equalization;

(ii) R861-1A-11, Appeal of Corrective Action;

(iii) R861-1A-20, Time of Appeal;

(iv) R861-1A-22, Petitions for Commencement of Adjudicative Proceedings;

(v) R861-1A-23, Designation of Adjudicative Proceedings;

(vi) R861-1A-24, Formal Adjudicative Proceedings;

(vii) R861-1A-26, Procedures for Formal Adjudicative Proceedings;

(viii) R861-1A-27, Discovery;

(ix) R861-1A-28, Evidence in Adjudicative Proceedings;

(x) R861-1A-29, Decision, Orders, and Reconsideration;

(xi) R861-1A-30, Ex Parte Communications;

(xii) R861-1A-31, Declaratory Orders;

(xiii) R861-1A-32, Mediation Process;

(xiv) R861-1A-33, Settlement Agreements;

(xv) R861-1A-34, Private Letter Rulings;

(xvi) R861-1A-38, Class Actions;

(xvii) R861-1A-40, Waiver of Requirement to Post Security Prior to Judicial Review; and

(xviii) R861-1A-42, Waiver of Penalty and Interest for Reasonable Cause; and

(b) for all meetings other than initial hearings, or the deliberating and issuing of an order relating to adjudicative proceedings, keep confidential written minutes and a confidential recording of the meeting.

(2) Written minutes of a meeting under Subsection (1)(b) shall include:

(a) the date, time, and place of the meeting;

(b) the names of each person present at the meeting;

(c) the substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided by the commission, which may include a summary of comments made by the commissioners;

(d) a record, by commissioner, of each vote taken by the commission;

(e) a summary of comments made by a person, other than a commissioner, present at the meeting; and

(f) any other information that is a record of the proceedings of the meeting that any commissioner requests be entered in the minutes or recording.

(3) Recorded minutes of a meeting under Subsection (1)(b) shall be:

(a) properly labeled or identified with the date, time, and place of the meeting; and

(b) a complete and unedited record of the meeting.

**R861-1A-46. Procedures for Purchaser Refund Requests Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. Sections 59-1-1410 and 59-12-110.**

(1) Definitions.

(a) "Division" means the Business Taxes and Discovery Division of the commission.

(b) "Purchaser refund request" means:

(i) a refund request for sales tax that was overpaid; and

(ii) submitted by a person other than the seller that originally collected and remitted the sales tax to the commission.

(c) "Required information and documents" means, for each transaction included in a purchaser refund request:

(i) a description of the item for which a refund is requested;

(ii) the invoiced transaction date;

(iii) the taxable purchase amount;

(iv) the tax rate applied to the purchase amount;

(v) the invoice number;

(vi) invoices or receipts or other books and records that show the items purchased and sales tax charged;

(vii) the sales tax paid;

(viii) the reason and basis in Utah law for exempting or excluding the item from sales tax;

(ix) documentation that verifies that the item qualifies for a sales tax exemption or exclusion;

(x) the amount of sales tax overpaid;

(xi) proof of payment of sales tax, such as a canceled check, bank statement, credit card statement or receipt, letter from the seller, or other books and records that demonstrate payment was made;

(xii) if an agent applies for the refund on behalf of a purchaser, a power of attorney;

(xiii) the name and address of the seller; and

(xiv) a signed statement that the seller that calculated and remitted the sales tax:

(A) has not provided a sales tax refund or credit; and

(B) will not be asked to provide a sales tax refund or credit.

(2)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (3), a person submitting a purchaser refund request shall include the required information and documents with the application to the division.

(b) The items described in Subsection (2)(a) shall be provided to the division in the format and manner prescribed by the division.

(c) If the application is not accompanied by the required information and documents, the division shall send a notice to the person that submitted the purchaser refund request.

(d) The notice described in Subsection (2)(c) shall:

(i) indicate the required information and documents that are missing; and

(ii) allow the person submitting the purchaser refund request 30 days to provide the missing required information and documents to the division.

(e)(i) A person submitting a purchaser refund request who cannot provide the information and documents described in Subsection (2)(d)(i) within the time period described in Subsection (2)(d)(ii) may contact the division to request an extension of time to provide the required information and documents that are missing.

(ii) The division shall grant reasonable requests for extension that will not unnecessarily prolong the processing of the refund request. If an extension is granted, the division shall provide written notice to the person submitting the purchaser refund request of the length of an extension of time granted under Subsection (2)(e)(i).

(f) If the division has not received the required information and documents within the time period described in Subsection (2)(d), or if applicable, within an extension of time granted under Subsection (2)(e), the division shall:

(i) evaluate the purchaser refund request based solely on the required information and documents received; and

(ii) dismiss for lack of evidence requests for refunds on items for which the division has not received the required information and documents.

(g)(i) Dismissals under Subsection (2)(f) may be appealed to the commission.

(ii) On an appeal under Subsection (2)(g)(i), the commission shall review whether information and documents adequate to determine the validity of the purchaser refund request were received by the division within the time period prescribed under Subsection (2)(d), or if applicable, within an extension of time granted under Subsection (2)(e).

(iii) If a person prevails on an appeal under Subsection (2)(g)(i), the commission shall hold a hearing for disposition of the underlying tax issue.

(3)(a) At the time a person submits a purchaser refund request, the person may request the division use a sampling method in its review of the purchaser refund request.

(b) A person requesting a sampling method of review under Subsection (3)(a) shall include the following information for each transaction included in the purchaser refund request with the application to the division:

(i) the invoice number;

(ii) the invoiced transaction date;

(iii) the taxable purchase amount;

(iv) the tax rate applied to the purchase amount;

(v) the sales tax paid;

(vi) the amount of sales tax overpaid;

(vii) the name and address of the seller;

(viii) a description of the item for which a refund is requested; and

(ix) the reason and basis in Utah law the item is exempt or excluded from sales tax.

(c) The items described in Subsection (3)(b) shall be provided to the division in the format and manner prescribed by the division.

(4)(a) If the division and a person submitting a purchaser refund request agree to the division's use of a sampling method in its review of the purchaser refund request, the division shall:

(i) determine the items that will be included in the sample;

(ii) notify the person submitting the purchaser refund request of the items that will be included in the sample and the information and documents that must be submitted to the division; and

(iii) allow the person submitting the purchaser refund request 30 days to provide the information and documents to the division in the format and manner prescribed by the division.

(b)(i) A person submitting a purchaser refund request who cannot provide the information and documents described in Subsection (4)(a)(ii) within the time period described in Subsection (4)(a)(iii) may contact the division to request an extension of time to provide the information and documents that are missing.

(ii) The division shall grant reasonable requests for extension that will not unnecessarily prolong the processing of the refund request. If an extension is granted, the division shall provide written notice to the person submitting the purchaser refund request of the length of an extension of time granted under Subsection (4)(b)(i).

(c) Information and documents described in Subsection (4)(a)(ii) that are not received by the end of the period described in Subsection(4)(a), or if applicable, within an extension of time granted under Subsection (4)(b), shall be:

(i) considered errors; and

(ii) included in the overall error factor by which the purchaser refund request is decreased.

(d)(i) Errors under Subsection (4)(c) may be appealed to the commission.

(ii) On an appeal under Subsection (4)(d)(i), the only matter that will be reviewed by the commission is whether information and documents adequate to determine the validity of the purchaser refund request were received by the division within the time period prescribed under Subsection (4)(a), or if applicable, within an extension of time granted under Subsection (4)(b).

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