

WAC 44-10-170 Powers and duties of arbitrators. (1) Arbitrators shall have the duty to conduct fair and impartial hearings, to take all necessary actions to avoid delay in the disposition of proceedings, to maintain order, and to meet the sixty day time frame required by RCW 19.118.090 for the rendering of a decision. They shall have all powers necessary to meet these ends including, but not limited to, the power:

(a) To consider any and all evidence offered by the parties which the arbitrator deems necessary to an understanding and determination of the dispute;

(b) To regulate the course of the hearings and the conduct of the parties, their representatives and witnesses;

(c) To schedule vehicle inspection by the technical experts, if deemed necessary, at such time and place as the arbitrator determines;

(d) To continue the arbitration hearing to a subsequent date if, at the initial hearing, the arbitrator determines that additional information is necessary in order to render a fair and accurate decision. Such continuance shall be held within ten calendar days of the initial hearing;

(e) To impose sanctions for failure of a party to comply with a subpoena pursuant to RCW 19.118.080 (2)(b);

(f) To calculate and order the joint liability for compliance obligations of motor home manufacturers, when applicable, as part of arbitration decisions when ordering repurchase or replacement of a new motor vehicle.

(2) The board is responsible for the assignment of arbitrators to arbitration hearings. The selection and assignment of arbitrators is not subject to the approval of either party.

(3) Arbitrators must not have a personal interest in the outcome of any hearing, nor be acquainted with any of the participants except as such acquaintance may occur in the hearing process, nor hold any prejudice toward any party. Arbitrators shall not be directly involved in the manufacture, distribution, sale, or warranty service of any motor vehicle. Arbitrators shall maintain their impartiality throughout the course of the arbitration proceedings.

(a) An arbitrator shall sign a written oath prior to the commencement of each arbitration hearing to which he or she has been assigned, attesting to his or her impartiality in that case.

(b) There shall be no direct communication between the parties and the arbitrators other than at the arbitration hearing. Any other oral or written communications between the parties and the arbitrators shall be channeled through the board. Any prohibited contact shall be reported by the arbitrators to the board and noted in the case record.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 19.118.080(2) and 19.118.061. WSR 10-01-069, § 44-10-170, filed 12/11/09, effective 1/11/10; WSR 02-12-093, § 44-10-170, filed 6/4/02, effective 7/5/02. Statutory Authority: RCW 19.118.808(2), 19.118.061, and 1998 c 298 § 6. WSR 00-08-068, § 44-10-170, filed 4/3/00, effective 5/4/00. Statutory Authority: RCW 19.118.080 (2) and (7), 19.118.061 and 1995 c 254 § 4. WSR 96-03-155, § 44-10-170, filed 1/24/96, effective 2/24/96. Statutory Authority: RCW 19.118.061, 19.118.080 and 19.118.090. WSR 89-16-024 (Order 89-4), § 44-10-170, filed 7/24/89, effective 8/24/89. Statutory Authority: RCW 19.118.080 (2) and (7). WSR 88-01-093 (Order 87-4), § 44-10-170, filed 12/22/87.]