



Ohio Administrative Code Rule 4901-1-24 Motions for protective orders.

Effective: April 11, 2024

(A) Upon motion of any party or person from whom discovery is sought, the commission, the legal director, the deputy legal director, or an ALJ may issue any order that is necessary to protect a party or person from annoyance, embarrassment, oppression, or undue burden or expense. Such a protective order may provide that:

- (1) Discovery not be had.
- (2) Discovery may be had only on specified terms and conditions.
- (3) Discovery may be had only by a method of discovery other than that selected by the party seeking discovery.
- (4) Certain matters not be inquired into.
- (5) The scope of discovery be limited to certain matters.
- (6) Discovery be conducted with no one present except persons designated by the commission, the legal director, the deputy legal director, or the ALJ.
- (7) A trade secret or other confidential research, development, commercial, or other information not be disclosed or be disclosed only in a designated way.
- (8) Information acquired through discovery be used only for purposes of the pending proceeding, or that such information be disclosed only to designated persons or classes of persons.

(B) No motion for a protective order shall be filed under paragraph (A) of this rule until the person or party seeking the order has exhausted all other reasonable means of resolving any differences with the party seeking discovery. A motion for a protective order filed pursuant to paragraph (A) of this



rule shall be accompanied by:

(1) A memorandum in support, setting forth the specific basis of the motion and citations of any authorities relied upon.

(2) Copies of any specific discovery requests that are the subject of the request for a protective order.

(3) An affidavit of counsel, or of the person seeking a protective order if such person is not represented by counsel, setting forth the efforts that have been made to resolve any differences with the party seeking discovery.

(C) If a motion for a protective order filed pursuant to paragraph (A) of this rule is denied in whole or in part, the commission, the legal director, the deputy legal director, or the ALJ may require that the party or person seeking the order provide or permit discovery, on such terms and conditions as are just.

(D) Upon motion of any party or person with regard to the filing of a document with the commission's docketing division relative to a case before the commission, the commission, the legal director, the deputy legal director, or an ALJ may issue any order which is necessary to protect the confidentiality of information contained in the document, to the extent that state or federal law prohibits release of the information, including where the information is deemed by the commission, the legal director, the deputy legal director, or the ALJ to constitute a trade secret under Ohio law, and where nondisclosure of the information is not inconsistent with the purposes of Title 49 of the Revised Code. Any order issued under this paragraph will minimize the amount of information protected from public disclosure. The following requirements apply to a motion filed under this paragraph:

(1) All documents submitted pursuant to paragraph (D) of this rule should be filed with only such information redacted as is essential to prevent disclosure of the allegedly confidential information. Such redacted documents should be filed with the otherwise required number of copies for inclusion in the public case file.

(2) Two unredacted copies of the allegedly confidential information shall be filed under seal, along



with a motion for protection of the information, with the secretary of the commission, the chief of the docketing division, or the chief's designee. Each page of the allegedly confidential material filed under seal must be marked as "confidential," "proprietary," or "trade secret."

(3) The motion for protection of allegedly confidential information shall be accompanied by a memorandum in support setting forth the specific basis of the motion, including a detailed discussion of the need for protection from disclosure, and citations of any authorities relied upon. The motion and memorandum in support shall be made part of the public record of the proceeding.

(E) Pending a ruling on a motion filed in accordance with paragraph (D) of this rule, the information filed under seal will not be included in the public record of the proceeding or disclosed to the public until otherwise ordered. The commission and its employees will undertake reasonable efforts to maintain the confidentiality of the information pending a ruling on the motion. A document or portion of a document filed with the docketing division that is marked "confidential," "proprietary," or "trade secret," or with any other such marking will not be afforded confidential treatment and protected from disclosure unless it is filed in accordance with paragraph (D) of this rule.

(F) Unless otherwise ordered, any order prohibiting public disclosure pursuant to paragraph (D) of this rule automatically expires twenty-four months after the date of its issuance, and such information may then be included in the public record of the proceeding. A party wishing to extend a protective order beyond twenty-four months shall file an appropriate motion at least forty-five days in advance of the expiration date of the existing order. The motion shall include a detailed discussion of the need for continued protection from disclosure. A timely-filed motion will be automatically approved on the expiration date of the existing order, unless otherwise ordered by the commission. Nothing precludes the commission from reexamining the need for protection de novo if there is an application for rehearing on confidentiality or a public records request for the redacted information.

(G) The requirements of this rule do not apply to information submitted to the commission staff. However, information submitted directly to the legal director, the deputy legal director, or the ALJ that is not filed in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (D) of this rule may be filed with the docketing division as part of the public record. No document received via fax will be given confidential treatment by the commission.