

**§ 150B-41. Evidence; stipulations; official notice.**

(a) In all contested cases, irrelevant, immaterial, and unduly repetitious evidence shall be excluded. Except as otherwise provided, the rules of evidence as applied in the trial division of the General Court of Justice shall be followed; but, when evidence is not reasonably available under such rules to show relevant facts, they may be shown by the most reliable and substantial evidence available. It shall not be necessary for a party or his attorney to object to evidence at the hearing in order to preserve the right to object to its consideration by the agency in reaching its decision, or by the court of judicial review.

(b) Evidence in a contested case, including records and documents shall be offered and made a part of the record. Other factual information or evidence shall not be considered in determination of the case, except as permitted under subsection (d) of this section. Documentary evidence may be received in the form of a copy or excerpt or may be incorporated by reference, if the materials so incorporated are available for examination by the parties. Upon timely request, a party shall be given an opportunity to compare the copy with the original if available.

(c) The parties in a contested case under this Article by a stipulation in writing filed with the agency may agree upon any fact involved in the controversy, which stipulation shall be used as evidence at the hearing and be binding on the parties thereto. Parties should agree upon facts when practicable. Except as otherwise provided by law, disposition may be made of a contested case by stipulation, agreed settlement, consent order, waiver, default, or other method agreed upon by the parties.

(d) Official notice may be taken of all facts of which judicial notice may be taken and of other facts within the specialized knowledge of the agency. The noticed fact and its source shall be stated and made known to affected parties at the earliest practicable time, and any party shall on timely request be afforded an opportunity to dispute the noticed fact through submission of evidence and argument. An agency may use its experience, technical competence, and specialized knowledge in the evaluation of evidence presented to it. (1985, c. 746, s. 1; 2014-115, s. 14.)