

State of California

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

Section 5334

5334. (a) Capacity hearings required by Section 5332 shall be heard within 24 hours of the filing of the petition whenever possible. However, if any party needs additional time to prepare for the hearing, the hearing shall be postponed for 24 hours. In case of hardship, hearings may also be postponed for an additional 24 hours, pursuant to local policy developed by the county mental health director and the presiding judge of the superior court regarding the scheduling of hearings. The policy developed pursuant to this subdivision shall specify procedures for the prompt filing and processing of petitions to ensure that the deadlines set forth in this section are met, and shall take into consideration the availability of advocates and the treatment needs of the patient. In no event shall hearings be held beyond 72 hours of the filing of the petition. The person who is the subject of the petition and his or her advocate or counsel shall receive a copy of the petition at the time it is filed.

(b) Capacity hearings shall be held in an appropriate location at the facility where the person is receiving treatment, and shall be held in a manner compatible with, and the least disruptive of, the treatment being provided to the person.

(c) Capacity hearings shall be conducted by a superior court judge, a court-appointed commissioner or referee, or a court-appointed hearing officer. All commissioners, referees, and hearing officers shall be appointed by the superior court from a list of attorneys unanimously approved by a panel composed of the local mental health director, the county public defender, and the county counsel or district attorney designated by the county board of supervisors. No employee of the county mental health program or of any facility designated by the county and approved by the department as a facility for 72-hour treatment and evaluation may serve as a hearing officer. All hearing officers shall receive training in the issues specific to capacity hearings.

(d) The person who is the subject of the capacity hearing shall be given oral notification of the determination at the conclusion of the capacity hearing. As soon thereafter as is practicable, the person, his or her counsel or advocate, and the director of the facility where the person is receiving treatment shall be provided with written notification of the capacity determination, which shall include a statement of the evidence relied upon and the reasons for the determination. A copy of the determination shall be submitted to the superior court.

(e) (1) The person who is the subject of the capacity hearing may appeal the determination to the superior court or the court of appeal.

(2) The person who has filed the original petition for a capacity hearing may request the district attorney or county counsel in the county in which the person is receiving

treatment to appeal the determination to the superior court or the court of appeal, on behalf of the state.

(3) Nothing shall prohibit treatment from being initiated pending appeal of a determination of incapacity pursuant to this section.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude the right of a person to bring a writ of habeas corpus pursuant to Section 5275, subject to the provisions of this chapter.

(f) All appeals to the superior court pursuant to this section shall be subject to de novo review.

(Added by Stats. 1991, Ch. 681, Sec. 5.)