



Frequently Asked Questions About Disability Hearings Before Judges

Written On February 1, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

Here are a few frequently asked questions and general answers we give to our clients preparing for their disability hearings before Administrative Law Judges at the Social Security Administration. These only scratch the surface, but give you a good idea of questions you might ask your lawyer. These are general answers that apply to most cases, and are not intended to be a guide in any particular case.

1. What time do I show up at my hearing? The hearing notice from the judge probably will ask you to arrive 30 minutes before the hearing is set to start. If you are able to show up a little earlier than that, it may be helpful if you need to make extra copies of items that need to be added to your file.

2. What should I bring to the hearing? In addition to any witnesses who are to testify on your behalf, we advise our clients to bring their prescription medications in a clear plastic bag.

3. Do I have to talk to the judge or will my lawyer communicate with the judge? Different judges handle hearings differently. One judge may want to hear almost entirely from the claimant. In those cases, the judge is relying on the lawyer to point out particular legal theories that support a favorable decision, and to bring to the judge's attention any important evidence in the record.

Some judges will divide the questioning up between the judge and the attorney or let the attorney present all the questions to the claimant. Always remember to answer the question asked and ask for clarification of questions you do not understand. Your witness, if you have one, should not jump in and answer questions that are being asked of you. It is also acceptable to answer that you do not know or do not recall, when that is true. Lawyers also can cross-examine any experts the judge has invited to your hearing.

4. How long does the hearing last? Hearings can run in the range between 30 minutes to one hour. The average seems to be around 45 minutes. If there are experts invited to testify, this makes the hearing last longer because there will be more people who need to testify.

5. When do I find out if I won? You will not know the official answer on the day of your hearing. The official decision is the written decision signed by the judge. This will come by mail usually 60 to 90 days after the date of hearing.

If you need help with a Social Security Disability claim, we advise you to speak with an attorney. We handle cases throughout the state of Texas, but we are always happy to give you a referral if we are unable to assist you.