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The 2025 Florida Statutes

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PUBLIC OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AND
RECORDS

[Chapter 120](#)
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE
ACT

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120.54 Rulemaking.—

(1) GENERAL PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL RULES OTHER THAN EMERGENCY RULES.—

(a) Rulemaking is not a matter of agency discretion. Each agency statement defined as a rule by s. [120.52](#) shall be adopted by the rulemaking procedure provided by this section as soon as feasible and practicable.

1. Rulemaking shall be presumed feasible unless the agency proves that:

a. The agency has not had sufficient time to acquire the knowledge and experience reasonably necessary to address a statement by rulemaking; or

b. Related matters are not sufficiently resolved to enable the agency to address a statement by rulemaking.

2. Rulemaking shall be presumed practicable to the extent necessary to provide fair notice to affected persons of relevant agency procedures and applicable principles, criteria, or standards for agency decisions unless the agency proves that:

a. Detail or precision in the establishment of principles, criteria, or standards for agency decisions is not reasonable under the circumstances; or

b. The particular questions addressed are of such a narrow scope that more specific resolution of the matter is impractical outside of an adjudication to determine the substantial interests of a party based on individual circumstances.

(b) Whenever an act of the Legislature is enacted which requires implementation of the act by rules of an agency within the executive branch of state government, the agency must publish a notice of rule development as provided in this section within 30 days after the effective date of the law that requires rulemaking and provides a grant of rulemaking authority.

(c) No statutory provision shall be delayed in its implementation pending an agency's adoption of implementing rules unless there is an express statutory provision prohibiting its application until the adoption of implementing rules.

(d) In adopting rules, all agencies must, among the alternative approaches to any regulatory objective and to the extent allowed by law, choose the alternative that does not impose regulatory costs on the regulated person, county, or city which could be reduced by the adoption of less costly alternatives that substantially accomplish the statutory objectives.

(e) No agency has inherent rulemaking authority, nor has any agency authority to establish penalties for violation of a rule unless the Legislature, when establishing a penalty, specifically provides that the penalty applies to rules.

(f) An agency may adopt rules authorized by law and necessary to the proper implementation of a statute prior to the effective date of the statute, but the rules may not be effective until the statute upon which they are based is effective. An agency may not adopt retroactive rules, including retroactive rules intended to clarify existing law, unless that power is expressly authorized by statute.

(g) Each rule adopted shall contain only one subject.

(h) In rulemaking proceedings, the agency may recognize any material which may be judicially noticed, and it may provide that materials so recognized be incorporated into the record of the proceeding. Before the record of

any proceeding is completed, all parties shall be provided a list of these materials and given a reasonable opportunity to examine them and offer written comments or written rebuttal.

(i)1. A rule may incorporate material by reference but only as the material exists on the date the rule is adopted. For purposes of the rule, changes in the material are not effective unless the rule is amended to incorporate the changes.

2. An agency rule that incorporates by specific reference another rule of that agency automatically incorporates subsequent amendments to the referenced rule unless a contrary intent is clearly indicated in the referencing rule. A notice of amendments to a rule that has been incorporated by specific reference in other rules of that agency must explain the effect of those amendments on the referencing rules.

3. In rules adopted after December 31, 2010, or reviewed pursuant to s. 120.5435, material may not be incorporated by reference unless:

a. The material has been submitted in the prescribed electronic format to the Department of State and the full text of the material can be made available for free public access through an electronic hyperlink from the rule making the reference in the Florida Administrative Code; or

b. The agency has determined that posting the material on the Internet for purposes of public examination and inspection would constitute a violation of federal copyright law, in which case a statement to that effect, along with the addresses of the locations at the Department of State and the agency at which the material is available for public inspection and examination, must be included in the notice required by subparagraph (3)(a)1.

4. In rules proposed after July 1, 2025, material may not be incorporated by reference unless:

a. The material has been submitted in the prescribed electronic format to the Department of State and the full text of the material, in a text-searchable format, can be made available for free public access through an electronic hyperlink from the rule making the reference in the Florida Administrative Register; or

b. The agency has determined that posting the material on the Internet for purposes of public examination and inspection would constitute a violation of federal copyright law, in which case a statement to that effect, along with the addresses of the locations at the Department of State and the agency at which the material is available for public inspection and examination, must be included in the notice required by subparagraph (3)(a)1.

5. A rule may not be amended by reference only. Amendments must set out the amended rule in full in the same manner as required by the State Constitution for laws.

6. Notwithstanding any contrary provision in this section, when an adopted rule of the Department of Environmental Protection or a water management district is incorporated by reference in the other agency's rule to implement a provision of part IV of chapter 373, subsequent amendments to the rule are not effective as to the incorporating rule unless the agency incorporating by reference notifies the committee and the Department of State of its intent to adopt the subsequent amendment, publishes notice of such intent in the Florida Administrative Register, and files with the Department of State a copy of the amended rule incorporated by reference. Changes in the rule incorporated by reference are effective as to the other agency 20 days after the date of the published notice and filing with the Department of State. The Department of State shall amend the history note of the incorporating rule to show the effective date of such change. Any substantially affected person may, within 14 days after the date of publication of the notice of intent in the Florida Administrative Register, file an objection to rulemaking with the agency. The objection must specify the portions of the rule incorporated by reference to which the person objects and the reasons for the objection. The agency does not have the authority under this subparagraph to adopt those portions of the rule specified in such objection. The agency shall publish notice of the objection and of its action in response in the next available issue of the Florida Administrative Register.

7. If an agency updates or makes a change to a document that the agency created and which is incorporated by reference pursuant to paragraph (3)(a) or subparagraph (3)(e)1., the update or change must be coded by underlining new text and striking through deleted text.

8. The Department of State may adopt by rule requirements for incorporating materials pursuant to this paragraph.

(j) A rule published in the Florida Administrative Code must be indexed by the Department of State within 90 days after the rule is filed. The Department of State shall by rule establish procedures for indexing rules.

(k) An agency head may delegate the authority to initiate rule development under subsection (2); however, rulemaking responsibilities of an agency head under subparagraph (3)(a)1., subparagraph (3)(e)1., or subparagraph (3)(e)6. may not be delegated or transferred.

(2) RULE DEVELOPMENT; WORKSHOPS; NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING.—

(a)1. Except when the intended action is the repeal of a rule, agencies shall provide notice of the development of proposed rules by publication of a notice of rule development in the Florida Administrative Register at least 7 days before providing notice of a proposed rule as required by paragraph (3)(a). The notice of rule development must:

- a. Indicate the subject area to be addressed by rule development.
- b. Provide a short, plain explanation of the purpose and effect of the proposed rule.
- c. Cite the grant of rulemaking authority for the proposed rule and the law being implemented.
- d. Include the proposed rule number and, if available, either the preliminary text of the proposed rule and any incorporated documents, or a statement of how a person may promptly obtain, without cost, a copy of any preliminary draft of such rule or documents.

2. A notice of a proposed rule must be published in the Florida Administrative Register within 180 days after the most recent notice of rule development, unless the Legislature expressly provides a different date. The agency may only exceed this timeframe if it submits to the committee, at least 7 business days before the end of the 180-day timeframe, a concise statement that identifies the reasons for the delay in rulemaking. The agency must update this statement each quarter thereafter until it has filed a notice of proposed rule in the applicable matter.

(b) All rules should be drafted in readable language. The language is readable if:

1. It avoids the use of obscure words and unnecessarily long or complicated constructions; and
2. It avoids the use of unnecessary technical or specialized language that is understood only by members of particular trades or professions.

(c) An agency may hold public workshops for purposes of rule development or information gathering for the preparation of the statement of estimated regulatory costs. An agency must hold public workshops, including workshops in various regions of the state or the agency's service area, for purposes of rule development if requested in writing by any affected person, unless the agency head explains in writing why a workshop is unnecessary. The explanation is not final agency action subject to review pursuant to ss. 120.569 and 120.57. The failure to provide the explanation when required may be a material error in procedure pursuant to s. 120.56(1)(c). When a workshop or public hearing is held, the agency must ensure that the persons responsible for preparing the proposed rule and the statement of estimated regulatory costs, if applicable, are available to explain the agency's proposal and to respond to questions or comments regarding the rule being developed. The workshop may be facilitated or mediated by a neutral third person, or the agency may employ other types of dispute resolution alternatives for the workshop that are appropriate for rule development. Notice of a workshop for rule development or for information gathering for the preparation of a statement of estimated regulatory costs must be by publication in the Florida Administrative Register not less than 14 days before the date on which the workshop is scheduled to be held and must indicate the subject area that will be addressed; the agency contact person; and the place, date, and time of the workshop.

(d)1. An agency may use negotiated rulemaking in developing and adopting rules. The agency should consider the use of negotiated rulemaking when complex rules are being drafted or strong opposition to the rules is anticipated. The agency should consider, but is not limited to considering, whether a balanced committee of interested persons who will negotiate in good faith can be assembled, whether the agency is willing to support the work of the negotiating committee, and whether the agency can use the group consensus as the basis for its proposed rule. Negotiated rulemaking uses a committee of designated representatives to draft a mutually acceptable proposed rule.

2. An agency that chooses to use the negotiated rulemaking process described in this paragraph shall publish in the Florida Administrative Register a notice of negotiated rulemaking that includes a listing of the representative

groups that will be invited to participate in the negotiated rulemaking process. Any person who believes that his or her interest is not adequately represented may apply to participate within 30 days after publication of the notice. All meetings of the negotiating committee must be noticed and open to the public pursuant to this chapter. The negotiating committee shall be chaired by a neutral facilitator or mediator.

3. The agency's decision to use negotiated rulemaking, its selection of the representative groups, and approval or denial of an application to participate in the negotiated rulemaking process are not agency action. This subparagraph is not intended to affect the rights of a substantially affected person to challenge a proposed rule developed under this paragraph in accordance with s. [120.56\(2\)](#).

(3) ADOPTION PROCEDURES.—

(a) *Notices.*—

1. Before the adoption, amendment, or repeal of any rule other than an emergency rule, an agency shall, upon approval of the agency head, give notice of its intended action. The notice must include the following:

- a. A short, plain explanation of the purpose and effect of the proposed action.
- b. The proposed rule number.
- c. The full text of the proposed rule or amendment and a summary thereof.
- d. A reference to the grant of rulemaking authority pursuant to which the rule is adopted.
- e. A reference to the section or subsection of the Florida Statutes or the Laws of Florida being implemented or interpreted.

f. The name, e-mail address, and telephone number of the agency employee who may be contacted regarding the intended action.

g. A concise summary of the agency's statement of the estimated regulatory costs, if one has been prepared, based on the factors set forth in s. [120.541\(2\)](#) that describes the regulatory impact of the rule in readable language.

h. An agency website address where the statement of estimated regulatory costs can be viewed in its entirety, if one has been prepared.

i. A statement that any person who wishes to provide the agency with information regarding the statement of estimated regulatory costs, or to provide a proposal for a lower cost regulatory alternative as provided by s. [120.541\(1\)](#), must do so in writing within 21 days after publication of the notice.

j. A statement as to whether, based on the statement of the estimated regulatory costs or other information expressly relied upon and described by the agency if no statement of regulatory costs is required, the proposed rule is expected to require legislative ratification pursuant to s. [120.541\(3\)](#).

k. A description of the procedure for requesting a public hearing on the proposed rule.

l. Except when the intended action is the repeal of a rule, a reference both to the date on which and to the place where the notice of rule development that is required by subsection (2) appeared.

2. The notice must be published in the Florida Administrative Register at least 7 days after the notice of rule development and at least 28 days before the intended action. The proposed rule, including all material proposed to be incorporated by reference, must be available for inspection and copying by the public at the time of the publication of notice. Material proposed to be incorporated by reference in the notice must be made available in the manner prescribed by sub-subparagraph (1)(i)3.a. or sub-subparagraph (1)(i)3.b.

3. The notice must be mailed or delivered electronically to all persons named in the proposed rule and mailed or delivered electronically to all persons who, at least 14 days before publication of the notice, have made requests of the agency for advance notice of its proceedings. The agency shall also give such notice as is prescribed by rule to those particular classes of persons to whom the intended action is directed.

4. The adopting agency shall file with the committee, at least 21 days before the proposed adoption date, a copy of each rule it proposes to adopt; a copy of any material incorporated by reference in the rule; a detailed written statement of the facts and circumstances justifying the proposed rule; a copy of any statement of estimated regulatory costs that has been prepared pursuant to s. [120.541](#); a statement of the extent to which the proposed rule relates to federal standards or rules on the same subject; and the notice required by subparagraph 1.

5. If any of the information that is required to be included in the notice under subparagraph 1., other than substantive changes to the rule text, is omitted or is incorrect, the agency must publish a notice of correction in the Florida Administrative Register at least 7 days before the intended agency action. The publication of a notice of correction does not affect the timeframes for filing the rule for adoption as set forth in paragraph (e). Technical changes must be published as a notice of correction.

(b) *Special matters to be considered in rule adoption.*—

1. Statement of estimated regulatory costs.—Before the adoption, amendment, or repeal of any rule, other than an emergency rule, an agency is encouraged to prepare a statement of estimated regulatory costs of the proposed rule, as provided by s. [120.541](#). However, an agency must prepare a statement of estimated regulatory costs of the proposed rule, as provided by s. [120.541](#), if:

- a. The proposed rule will have an adverse impact on small business; or
- b. The proposed rule is likely to directly or indirectly increase regulatory costs in excess of \$200,000 in the aggregate in this state within 1 year after the implementation of the rule.

The agency must make available any information created or used by the agency in determining whether a proposed rule meets the factors listed in sub-subparagraphs a. and b., and such information shall be a part of the rulemaking record. The agency must consider in this determination the factors outlined in s. [120.541](#)(2); however, the agency is not required to estimate the proposed rule's impact to these factors as part of this determination.

2. Small businesses, small counties, and small cities.—

a. Each agency, before the adoption, amendment, or repeal of a rule, shall consider the impact of the rule on small businesses as defined by s. [288.703](#) and the impact of the rule on small counties or small cities as defined by s. [120.52](#). Whenever practicable, an agency shall tier its rules to reduce disproportionate impacts on small businesses, small counties, or small cities to avoid regulating small businesses, small counties, or small cities that do not contribute significantly to the problem the rule is designed to address. The agency shall consider each of the following methods for reducing the impact of the proposed rule on small businesses, small counties, and small cities, or any combination of these entities:

- (I) Establishing less stringent compliance or reporting requirements in the rule.
- (II) Establishing less stringent schedules or deadlines in the rule for compliance or reporting requirements.
- (III) Consolidating or simplifying the rule's compliance or reporting requirements.
- (IV) Establishing performance standards or best management practices to replace design or operational standards in the rule.

(V) Exempting small businesses, small counties, or small cities from any or all requirements of the rule.

b.(I) If the agency determines that the proposed action will affect small businesses, the agency shall send written notice of the rule to the rules ombudsman in the Executive Office of the Governor at least 28 days before the intended action.

(II) Each agency shall adopt those regulatory alternatives offered by the rules ombudsman in the Executive Office of the Governor and provided to the agency no later than 21 days after the rules ombudsman's receipt of the written notice of the rule which it finds are feasible and consistent with the stated objectives of the proposed rule and which would reduce the impact on small businesses. When regulatory alternatives are offered by the rules ombudsman in the Executive Office of the Governor, the 90-day period for filing the rule in subparagraph (e)2. is extended for a period of 21 days. An agency shall provide the committee a copy of any regulatory alternative offered to the agency within 7 days after its delivery to the agency. The agency may not file a rule for adoption before such regulatory alternative, if applicable, has been provided to the committee.

(III) If an agency does not adopt all alternatives offered pursuant to this sub-subparagraph, it must, before rule adoption or amendment and pursuant to subparagraph (d)1., file a detailed written statement with the committee explaining the reasons for failure to adopt such alternatives. Within 3 working days after the filing of such notice, the agency shall send a copy of such notice to the rules ombudsman in the Executive Office of the Governor.

(c) *Hearings.*—

1. If the intended action concerns any rule other than one relating exclusively to procedure or practice, the agency shall, on the request of any affected person received within 21 days after the date of publication of the notice of intended agency action, give affected persons an opportunity to present evidence and argument on all issues under consideration. The agency may schedule a public hearing on the rule and, if requested by any affected person, shall schedule a public hearing on the rule. When a public hearing is held, the agency must ensure that staff are available to explain the agency's proposal and to respond to questions or comments regarding the rule. If the agency head is a board or other collegial body created under s. 20.165(4) or s. 20.43(3)(g), and one or more requested public hearings is scheduled, the board or other collegial body shall conduct at least one of the public hearings itself and may not delegate this responsibility without the consent of those persons requesting the public hearing. Any material pertinent to the issues under consideration submitted to the agency within 21 days after the date of publication of the notice or submitted to the agency between the date of publication of the notice and the end of the final public hearing shall be considered by the agency and made a part of the record of the rulemaking proceeding.

2. Rulemaking proceedings shall be governed solely by the provisions of this section unless a person timely asserts that the person's substantial interests will be affected in the proceeding and affirmatively demonstrates to the agency that the proceeding does not provide adequate opportunity to protect those interests. If the agency determines that the rulemaking proceeding is not adequate to protect the person's interests, it shall suspend the rulemaking proceeding and convene a separate proceeding under the provisions of ss. 120.569 and 120.57. Similarly situated persons may be requested to join and participate in the separate proceeding. Upon conclusion of the separate proceeding, the rulemaking proceeding shall be resumed.

(d) *Modification or withdrawal of proposed rules.*—

1. After the final public hearing on the proposed rule, or after the time for requesting a hearing has expired, if the proposed rule has not been changed from the rule as previously filed with the committee, or contains only technical changes, the adopting agency must file a notice to that effect with the committee at least 7 days before filing the proposed rule for adoption. Any change, other than a technical change, must be supported by the record of public hearings held on the proposed rule, must be in response to written material submitted to the agency within 21 days after the date of publication of the notice of intended agency action or submitted to the agency between the date of publication of the notice and the end of the final public hearing, or must be in response to a proposed objection by the committee. Any change, other than a technical change, to a statement of estimated regulatory costs requires a notice of change. In addition, any change, other than a technical change, to proposed rule text or any material incorporated by reference requires the adopting agency to provide a copy of a notice of change by certified mail or actual delivery to any person who requests it in writing no later than 21 days after the notice required in paragraph (a). The agency shall file the notice of change with the committee, along with the reasons for the change, and provide the notice of change to persons requesting it, at least 21 days before filing the rule for adoption. The notice of change must be published in the Florida Administrative Register at least 21 days before filing the proposed rule for adoption. The notice of change must include a summary of any revision to the statement of estimated regulatory costs required by s. 120.541(1)(c). This subparagraph does not apply to emergency rules adopted pursuant to subsection (4). Material proposed to be incorporated by reference in the notice of change must be made available in the manner prescribed by sub-subparagraph (1)(i)3.a. or sub-subparagraph (1)(i)3.b. and include a summary of substantive revisions to any material proposed to be incorporated by reference in the proposed rule.

2. After the notice required by paragraph (a) and before adoption, the agency may withdraw the proposed rule in whole or in part.

3. After the notice required by paragraph (a), the agency must withdraw the proposed rule if the agency has either failed to adopt it within the prescribed timeframes in this chapter or failed to submit the concise statement required under subparagraph (2)(a)2. If, 30 days after notice by the committee that the agency has failed to either adopt the proposed rule within the prescribed timeframes in this chapter or submit the required statement, the agency has not given notice of the withdrawal of the proposed rule, the committee must notify the Department of State that the date for adoption of the rule or submission of the required statement has expired, and the

Department of State must publish a notice of withdrawal of the proposed rule. Within 30 days after the withdrawal, the agency must initiate rulemaking again if the mandatory grant of rulemaking authority the agency relied upon as authority to pursue the original rule action is still in effect at the time of the original rule's withdrawal.

4. After adoption and before the rule becomes effective, a rule may be modified or withdrawn only in the following circumstances:

- a. When the committee objects to the rule;
- b. When a final order, which is not subject to further appeal, is entered in a rule challenge brought pursuant to s. 120.56 after the date of adoption but before the rule becomes effective pursuant to subparagraph (e)6.;
- c. If the rule requires ratification, when the Legislature does not ratify the rule by the adjournment sine die of the regular session immediately following the timely filing for adoption of the rule, in which case the rule must be withdrawn, and within 90 days after adjournment sine die, the agency:
 - (I) May initiate rulemaking again by publishing the notice required by paragraph (a); or
 - (II) Must initiate rulemaking again by publishing the notice required by paragraph (a), if the mandatory grant of rulemaking authority the agency relied upon as authority to pursue the original rule action is still in effect at the time of the original rule's withdrawal; or
- d. When the committee notifies the agency that an objection to the rule is being considered, in which case the rule may be modified to extend the effective date by not more than 60 days.

5. The agency shall give notice of its decision to withdraw or modify a rule in the first available issue of the publication in which the original notice of rulemaking was published, shall notify those persons described in subparagraph (a)3. in accordance with the requirements of that subparagraph, and must notify the Department of State if the rule is required to be filed with the Department of State.

6. After a rule has become effective, it may be repealed or amended only through the rulemaking procedures specified in this chapter.

7. The committee must, within 15 days after the end of each calendar quarter, compile and post on its website a list of each failure by an agency to file a notice of proposed rule within the timeframe prescribed by subparagraph (2)(a)2. that has occurred within the last quarter. The committee's list must provide the following:

- a. The name of the agency that failed to timely file a notice of proposed rule.
 - b. The website address where the relevant notice of rule development may be found.
 - c. A citation to the applicable grant of rulemaking authority for the proposed rule and the law being implemented.
 - d. If the timeframe for filing a notice of proposed rule prescribed in subparagraph (2)(a)2. has been exceeded but a notice of proposed rule has not been filed, the length of time since the filing of the notice of rule development.
 - e. If the timeframe for filing a notice of proposed rule in subparagraph (2)(a)2. has been exceeded and a notice of proposed rule has been filed, the length of time between the agency filing the notice of rule development and the filing of the notice of proposed rule.
 - f. A copy of the agency's concise statement required under subparagraph (2)(a)2.
- (e) *Filing for final adoption; effective date.*—

1. If the adopting agency is required to publish its rules in the Florida Administrative Code, the agency, upon approval of the agency head, must electronically file with the Department of State a certified copy of the rule it proposes to adopt; one copy of any material incorporated by reference in the rule, certified by the agency; a summary of the rule; a summary of any hearings held on the rule; and a detailed written statement of the facts and circumstances justifying the rule. Agencies not required to publish their rules in the Florida Administrative Code shall file one certified copy of the proposed rule, and the other material required by this subparagraph, in the office of the agency head, and such rules must be open to the public.

2. A rule may not be filed for adoption less than 28 days or more than 90 days after the notice required by paragraph (a), until 21 days after the notice of change required by paragraph (d), until 14 days after the final public hearing, until 21 days after a statement of estimated regulatory costs required under s. 120.541 has been provided to all persons who submitted a lower cost regulatory alternative and made available to the public, or until

the administrative law judge has rendered a decision under s. 120.56(2), whichever applies. When a required notice of change is published before the expiration of the time to file the rule for adoption, the period during which a rule must be filed for adoption is extended to 45 days after the date of publication. If notice of a public hearing is published before the expiration of the time to file the rule for adoption, the period during which a rule must be filed for adoption is extended to 45 days after adjournment of the final hearing on the rule, 21 days after receipt of all material authorized to be submitted at the hearing, or 21 days after receipt of the transcript, if one is made, whichever is latest. The term “public hearing” includes any public meeting held by any agency at which the rule is considered. If a petition for an administrative determination under s. 120.56(2) is filed, the period during which a rule must be filed for adoption is extended to 60 days after the administrative law judge files the final order with the clerk or until 60 days after subsequent judicial review is complete.

3. At the time a rule is filed, the agency shall certify that the time limitations prescribed by this paragraph have been complied with, that all statutory rulemaking requirements have been met, and that there is no administrative determination pending on the rule.

4. At the time a rule is filed, the committee shall certify whether the agency has responded in writing to all material and timely written comments or written inquiries made on behalf of the committee. The department shall reject any rule that is not filed within the prescribed time limits; that does not comply with all statutory rulemaking requirements and rules of the department; upon which an agency has not responded in writing to all material and timely written inquiries or written comments; upon which an administrative determination is pending; or which does not include a statement of estimated regulatory costs, if required.

5. If a rule has not been adopted within the time limits imposed by this paragraph or has not been adopted in compliance with all statutory rulemaking requirements, the agency proposing the rule must withdraw the rule and give notice of its action in the next available issue of the Florida Administrative Register.

6. The proposed rule is adopted upon being filed with the Department of State and becomes effective 20 days after being filed, on a later date specified in the notice required by subparagraph (a)1., on a date required by statute, or upon ratification by the Legislature pursuant to s. 120.541(3). Rules not required to be filed with the Department of State become effective when adopted by the agency head, on a later date specified by rule or statute, or upon ratification by the Legislature pursuant to s. 120.541(3). If the committee notifies an agency that an objection to a rule is being considered, the agency may postpone the adoption of the rule to accommodate review of the rule by the committee. When an agency postpones adoption of a rule to accommodate review by the committee, the 90-day period for filing the rule is tolled until the committee notifies the agency that it has completed its review of the rule.

For the purposes of this paragraph, the term “administrative determination” does not include subsequent judicial review.

(4) EMERGENCY RULES.—

(a) If an agency finds that an immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare requires emergency action, or if the Legislature authorizes the agency to adopt emergency rules and finds that all conditions specified in this paragraph are met, the agency may, within the authority granted to the agency under the State Constitution or delegated to it by the Legislature, adopt any rule necessitated by the immediate danger or legislative finding. The agency may adopt a rule by any procedure which is fair under the circumstances if:

1. The procedure provides at least the procedural protection given by other statutes, the State Constitution, or the United States Constitution.
2. The agency takes only that action necessary to protect the public interest under the emergency procedure.
3. The agency publishes in writing at the time of, or prior to, its action the specific facts and reasons for finding an immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare and its reasons for concluding that the procedure used is fair under the circumstances. In any event, notice of emergency rules, other than those of educational units or units of government with jurisdiction in only one or a part of one county, including the full text of the rules and the agency’s findings of immediate danger, necessity, and procedural fairness or a citation to the grant of emergency rulemaking authority, must be published in the first available issue of the Florida Administrative

Register and provided to the committee along with any material incorporated by reference in the rules. The agency's findings of immediate danger, necessity, and procedural fairness are judicially reviewable.

(b) Rules pertaining to the public health, safety, or welfare must include rules pertaining to perishable agricultural commodities or rules pertaining to the interpretation and implementation of the requirements of chapters 97-102 and chapter 105 of the Election Code.

(c)1. An emergency rule adopted under this subsection may not be effective for a period longer than 90 days and may not be renewable, except when the agency has initiated rulemaking to adopt rules addressing the subject of the emergency rule and either:

- a. A challenge to the proposed rules has been filed and remains pending; or
- b. The proposed rules are awaiting ratification by the Legislature pursuant to s. 120.541(3). If the proposed rule is not ratified during the next regular legislative session, the emergency rule shall expire at adjournment sine die of that regular legislative session. The proposed rule must be withdrawn from ratification in accordance with paragraph (3)(d).

2. This paragraph does not prohibit the agency from adopting a rule or rules identical to the emergency rule through the rulemaking procedures specified in subsection (3).

(d) Notice of the renewal of an emergency rule must be published in the Florida Administrative Register before the expiration of the existing emergency rule. The notice of renewal must state the specific facts and reasons for such renewal.

(e) For emergency rules with an effective period greater than 90 days which are intended to replace existing rules, a note must be added to the history note of the existing rule which specifically identifies the emergency rule that is intended to supersede the existing rule and includes the date that the emergency rule was filed with the Department of State.

(f) Emergency rules must be published in the Florida Administrative Code.

(g) An agency may supersede an emergency rule in effect through adoption of another emergency rule before the superseded rule expires. The reason for adopting the superseding rule must be stated in accordance with the procedures set forth in paragraph (a). The superseding rule may not be in effect longer than the duration of the effective period of the superseded rule.

(h) An agency may make technical changes to an emergency rule within the first 7 days after the rule is adopted, and such changes must be published in the Florida Administrative Register as a notice of correction.

(i) Subject to applicable constitutional and statutory provisions, an emergency rule becomes effective immediately on filing, or on a date less than 20 days thereafter if specified in the rule, if the adopting agency finds that such effective date is necessary because of immediate danger to the public health, safety, or welfare.

(j) An agency may repeal an emergency rule before it expires by providing notice of its intended action in the Florida Administrative Register. The notice must include the full text of the emergency rule and a summary thereof; if applicable, a reference to the rule number; and a short, plain explanation as to why the conditions specified in accordance with paragraph (a) no longer require the emergency rule.

(5) UNIFORM RULES.—

(a)1. By July 1, 1997, the Administration Commission shall adopt one or more sets of uniform rules of procedure which shall be reviewed by the committee and filed with the Department of State. Agencies must comply with the uniform rules by July 1, 1998. The uniform rules shall establish procedures that comply with the requirements of this chapter. On filing with the department, the uniform rules shall be the rules of procedure for each agency subject to this chapter unless the Administration Commission grants an exception to the agency under this subsection.

2. An agency may seek exceptions to the uniform rules of procedure by filing a petition with the Administration Commission. The Administration Commission shall approve exceptions to the extent necessary to implement other statutes, to the extent necessary to conform to any requirement imposed as a condition precedent to receipt of federal funds or to permit persons in this state to receive tax benefits under federal law, or as required for the most efficient operation of the agency as determined by the Administration Commission. The reasons for the exceptions shall be published in the Florida Administrative Register.

3. Agency rules that provide exceptions to the uniform rules shall not be filed with the department unless the Administration Commission has approved the exceptions. Each agency that adopts rules that provide exceptions to the uniform rules shall publish a separate chapter in the Florida Administrative Code that delineates clearly the provisions of the agency's rules that provide exceptions to the uniform rules and specifies each alternative chosen from among those authorized by the uniform rules. Each chapter shall be organized in the same manner as the uniform rules.

(b) The uniform rules of procedure adopted by the commission pursuant to this subsection shall include, but are not limited to:

1. Uniform rules for the scheduling of public meetings, hearings, and workshops.
2. Uniform rules for use by each state agency that provide procedures for conducting public meetings, hearings, and workshops, and for taking evidence, testimony, and argument at such public meetings, hearings, and workshops, in person and by means of communications media technology. The rules shall provide that all evidence, testimony, and argument presented shall be afforded equal consideration, regardless of the method of communication. If a public meeting, hearing, or workshop is to be conducted by means of communications media technology, or if attendance may be provided by such means, the notice shall so state. The notice for public meetings, hearings, and workshops utilizing communications media technology shall state how persons interested in attending may do so and shall name locations, if any, where communications media technology facilities will be available. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to diminish the right to inspect public records under chapter 119. Limiting points of access to public meetings, hearings, and workshops subject to the provisions of s. 286.011 to places not normally open to the public shall be presumed to violate the right of access of the public, and any official action taken under such circumstances is void and of no effect. Other laws relating to public meetings, hearings, and workshops, including penal and remedial provisions, shall apply to public meetings, hearings, and workshops conducted by means of communications media technology, and shall be liberally construed in their application to such public meetings, hearings, and workshops. As used in this subparagraph, "communications media technology" means the electronic transmission of printed matter, audio, full-motion video, freeze-frame video, compressed video, and digital video by any method available.

3. Uniform rules of procedure for the filing of notice of protests and formal written protests. The Administration Commission may prescribe the form and substantive provisions of a required bond.

4. Uniform rules of procedure for the filing of petitions for administrative hearings pursuant to s. 120.569 or s. 120.57. Such rules shall require the petition to include:

- a. The identification of the petitioner, including the petitioner's e-mail address, if any, for the transmittal of subsequent documents by electronic means.
- b. A statement of when and how the petitioner received notice of the agency's action or proposed action.
- c. An explanation of how the petitioner's substantial interests are or will be affected by the action or proposed action.
- d. A statement of all material facts disputed by the petitioner or a statement that there are no disputed facts.
- e. A statement of the ultimate facts alleged, including a statement of the specific facts the petitioner contends warrant reversal or modification of the agency's proposed action.
- f. A statement of the specific rules or statutes that the petitioner contends require reversal or modification of the agency's proposed action, including an explanation of how the alleged facts relate to the specific rules or statutes.
- g. A statement of the relief sought by the petitioner, stating precisely the action petitioner wishes the agency to take with respect to the proposed action.

5. Uniform rules for the filing of request for administrative hearing by a respondent in agency enforcement and disciplinary actions. Such rules shall require a request to include:

- a. The name, address, e-mail address, and telephone number of the party making the request and the name, address, and telephone number of the party's counsel or qualified representative upon whom service of pleadings and other papers shall be made;

- b. A statement that the respondent is requesting an administrative hearing and disputes the material facts alleged by the petitioner, in which case the respondent shall identify those material facts that are in dispute, or that the respondent is requesting an administrative hearing and does not dispute the material facts alleged by the petitioner; and
- c. A reference by file number to the administrative complaint that the party has received from the agency and the date on which the agency pleading was received.

The agency may provide an election-of-rights form for the respondent's use in requesting a hearing, so long as any form provided by the agency calls for the information in sub-subparagraphs a. through c. and does not impose any additional requirements on a respondent in order to request a hearing, unless such requirements are specifically authorized by law.

6. Uniform rules of procedure for the filing and prompt disposition of petitions for declaratory statements. The rules shall also describe the contents of the notices that must be published in the Florida Administrative Register under s. 120.565, including any applicable time limit for the filing of petitions to intervene or petitions for administrative hearing by persons whose substantial interests may be affected.

7. Provision of a method by which each agency head shall provide a description of the agency's organization and general course of its operations. The rules shall require that the statement concerning the agency's organization and operations be published on the agency's website.

8. Uniform rules establishing procedures for granting or denying petitions for variances and waivers pursuant to s. 120.542.

(6) **ADOPTION OF FEDERAL STANDARDS.**—Notwithstanding any contrary provision of this section, in the pursuance of state implementation, operation, or enforcement of federal programs, an agency is empowered to adopt rules substantively identical to regulations adopted pursuant to federal law, in accordance with the following procedures:

(a) The agency shall publish notice of intent to adopt a rule pursuant to this subsection in the Florida Administrative Register at least 21 days prior to filing the rule with the Department of State. The agency shall provide a copy of the notice of intent to adopt a rule to the committee at least 21 days prior to the date of filing with the Department of State. Prior to filing the rule with the Department of State, the agency shall consider any written comments received within 14 days after the date of publication of the notice of intent to adopt a rule. The rule shall be adopted upon filing with the Department of State. Substantive changes from the rules as noticed shall require republishing of notice as required in this subsection.

(b) Any rule adopted pursuant to this subsection shall become effective upon the date designated by the agency in the notice of intent to adopt a rule; however, no such rule shall become effective earlier than the effective date of the substantively identical federal regulation.

(c) Any substantially affected person may, within 14 days after the date of publication of the notice of intent to adopt a rule, file an objection to rulemaking with the agency. The objection shall specify the portions of the proposed rule to which the person objects and the specific reasons for the objection. The agency shall not proceed pursuant to this subsection to adopt those portions of the proposed rule specified in an objection, unless the agency deems the objection to be frivolous, but may proceed pursuant to subsection (3). An objection to a proposed rule, which rule in no material respect differs from the requirements of the federal regulation upon which it is based, is deemed to be frivolous.

(d) Whenever any federal regulation adopted as an agency rule pursuant to this subsection is declared invalid or is withdrawn, revoked, repealed, remanded, or suspended, the agency shall, within 60 days thereafter, publish a notice of repeal of the substantively identical agency rule in the Florida Administrative Register. Such repeal is effective upon publication of the notice. Whenever any federal regulation adopted as an agency rule pursuant to this subsection is substantially amended, the agency may adopt the amended regulation as a rule. If the amended regulation is not adopted as a rule within 180 days after the effective date of the amended regulation, the original rule is deemed repealed and the agency shall publish a notice of repeal of the original agency rule in the next available Florida Administrative Register.

(e) Whenever all or part of any rule proposed for adoption by the agency is substantively identical to a regulation adopted pursuant to federal law, such rule shall be written in a manner so that the rule specifically references the regulation whenever possible.

(7) PETITION TO INITIATE RULEMAKING.—

(a) Any person regulated by an agency or having substantial interest in an agency rule may petition an agency to adopt, amend, or repeal a rule or to provide the minimum public information required by this chapter. The petition must specify the proposed rule and action requested. The agency shall provide to the committee a copy of the petition within 7 days after its receipt. No later than 30 calendar days following the date of filing a petition, the agency shall initiate rulemaking proceedings under this chapter, otherwise comply with the requested action, or deny the petition with a written statement of its reasons for the denial. The agency shall notify the committee of its intended action or response within 7 days.

(b) If the petition filed under this subsection is directed to an unadopted rule, the agency shall, not later than 30 days following the date of filing a petition, initiate rulemaking, or provide notice in the Florida Administrative Register that the agency will hold a public hearing on the petition within 30 days after publication of the notice. The purpose of the public hearing is to consider the comments of the public directed to the agency rule which has not been adopted by the rulemaking procedures or requirements of this chapter, its scope and application, and to consider whether the public interest is served adequately by the application of the rule on a case-by-case basis, as contrasted with its adoption by the rulemaking procedures or requirements set forth in this chapter.

(c) If the agency does not initiate rulemaking or otherwise comply with the requested action within 30 days after the public hearing provided for in paragraph (b), the agency shall publish in the Florida Administrative Register a statement of its reasons for not initiating rulemaking or otherwise complying with the requested action and of any changes it will make in the scope or application of the unadopted rule. The agency shall file the statement with the committee. The committee shall forward a copy of the statement to the substantive committee with primary oversight jurisdiction of the agency in each house of the Legislature. The committee or the committee with primary oversight jurisdiction may hold a hearing directed to the statement of the agency. The committee holding the hearing may recommend to the Legislature the introduction of legislation making the rule a statutory standard or limiting or otherwise modifying the authority of the agency.

(d) If the agency initiates rulemaking after the public hearing provided for in paragraph (b), the agency shall publish a notice of rule development within 30 days after the hearing and file a notice of proposed rule within 180 days after the notice of rule development unless, before the 180th day, the agency publishes in the Florida Administrative Register a statement explaining its reasons for not having filed the notice. If rulemaking is initiated under this paragraph, the agency may not rely on the unadopted rule unless the agency publishes in the Florida Administrative Register a statement explaining why rulemaking under paragraph (1)(a) is not feasible or practicable until the conclusion of the rulemaking proceeding.

(8) RULEMAKING RECORD.—In all rulemaking proceedings the agency shall compile a rulemaking record. The record shall include, if applicable, copies of:

- (a) All notices given for the proposed rule.
- (b) Any statement of estimated regulatory costs for the rule.
- (c) A written summary of hearings on the proposed rule.
- (d) The written comments and responses to written comments as required by this section and s. 120.541.
- (e) All notices and findings made under subsection (4).
- (f) All materials filed by the agency with the committee under subsection (3).
- (g) All materials filed with the Department of State under subsection (3).
- (h) All written inquiries from standing committees of the Legislature concerning the rule.

Each state agency shall retain the record of rulemaking as long as the rule is in effect. When a rule is no longer in effect, the record may be destroyed pursuant to the records-retention schedule developed under s. 257.36(6).

History.—s. 1, ch. 74-310; s. 3, ch. 75-191; s. 3, ch. 76-131; ss. 1, 2, ch. 76-276; s. 1, ch. 77-174; s. 13, ch. 77-290; s. 3, ch. 77-453; s. 2, ch. 78-28; s. 2, ch. 78-425; s. 7, ch. 79-3; s. 3, ch. 79-299; s. 69, ch. 79-400; s. 5, ch. 80-391; s. 1, ch. 81-309; s. 2, ch. 83-351; s. 1, ch.

84-173; s. 2, ch. 84-203; s. 7, ch. 85-104; s. 1, ch. 86-30; s. 3, ch. 87-385; s. 36, ch. 90-302; ss. 2, 4, 7, ch. 92-166; s. 63, ch. 93-187; s. 758, ch. 95-147; s. 6, ch. 95-295; s. 10, ch. 96-159; s. 6, ch. 96-320; s. 9, ch. 96-370; s. 3, ch. 97-176; s. 3, ch. 98-200; s. 4, ch. 99-379; s. 9, ch. 2001-75; s. 2, ch. 2003-94; s. 50, ch. 2005-278; s. 3, ch. 2006-82; ss. 5, 6, ch. 2008-104; s. 7, ch. 2008-149; s. 4, ch. 2009-187; ss. 1, 5, ch. 2010-279; HJR 9-A, 2010 Special Session A; s. 49, ch. 2011-142; s. 8, ch. 2011-208; s. 1, ch. 2011-225; s. 2, ch. 2012-27; s. 1, ch. 2012-63; s. 4, ch. 2013-14; s. 13, ch. 2013-15; s. 1, ch. 2015-162; s. 1, ch. 2016-116; s. 3, ch. 2025-189.