

# NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

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## **Rules for Appeals Made Simpler, More Understandable**

PHOENIX – The Arizona Supreme Court today adopted simplified, clearer rules for filing a civil appeal in Arizona’s courts. Over the next few years, the Court intends to comprehensively review other rules, such as those for civil and criminal procedure, with the goal of making them more “user friendly” for lawyers, self-represented parties, and court personnel.

The restyling of court rules advances goal three of the Court’s strategic agenda, which calls for *improving court processes to better serve the public*. The agenda specifically identifies the need to restyle, simplify and clarify certain court rules.

Stylistic changes to the new Arizona Rules for Civil Appellate Procedure include:

- Using informative headings and subheadings
- Breaking up long sentences, or collapsing them into fewer words
- Converting a lengthy rule into shorter subparts, which makes it easier to find particular provisions
- Using lists
- Avoiding repetition
- Using “plain English”
- Stating things in a positive form
- Avoiding legal jargon and ambiguous terminology, including the word “shall” (which the proposed rules replace with “must,” “may,” “should,” or “will,” depending on the context.)

“Court rules should be clear, concise and understandable. We shouldn’t complicate the legal process with unnecessarily long sentences and legal jargon,” Supreme Court Chief Justice Scott Bales said. “We also improved the organization of the rules to help readers quickly locate specific sections or topics.”

Although most changes were stylistic, Chief Justice Bales noted that substantive changes are also included that recognize the influence of technology since the last update. The new rules address electronic filing, the transmission of records on appeal and other changes that conform Arizona’s rules with the Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure, where appropriate.

Under the Arizona Constitution, the Supreme Court is responsible for establishing the rules for all state courts in Arizona. These rules become effective on January 1, 2015.

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