

RULES OF THE SUPREME COURT OF ARIZONA

V. REGULATION OF THE PRACTICE OF LAW

Rule 31. Regulation of the Practice of Law

(a) Supreme Court Jurisdiction Over the Practice of Law

1. *Jurisdiction.* Any person or entity engaged in the practice of law or unauthorized practice of law in this state, as defined by these rules, is subject to this court's jurisdiction.

2. *Definitions.*

- A. "Practice of law" means providing legal advice or services to or for another by:
- (1) preparing any document in any medium intended to affect or secure legal rights for a specific person or entity;
 - (2) preparing or expressing legal opinions;
 - (3) representing another in a judicial, quasi-judicial, or administrative proceeding, or other formal dispute resolution process such as arbitration and mediation;
 - (4) preparing any document through any medium for filing in any court, administrative agency or tribunal for a specific person or entity; or
 - (5) negotiating legal rights or responsibilities for a specific person or entity.
- B. "Unauthorized practice of law" includes but is not limited to:
- (1) engaging in the practice of law by persons or entities not authorized to practice pursuant to paragraphs (b) or (c) or specially admitted to practice pursuant to Rule 33(d); or
 - (2) using the designations "lawyer," "attorney at law," "counselor at law," "law," "law office," "J.D.," "Esq.," or other equivalent words by any person or entity who is not authorized to practice law in this state pursuant to paragraphs (b) or (c) or specially admitted to practice pursuant to Rule 33(d), the use of which is reasonably likely to induce others to believe that the person or entity is authorized to engage in the practice of law in this state.
- C. "Legal assistant/paralegal" means a person qualified by education and training who performs substantive legal work requiring a sufficient knowledge of and expertise in legal concepts and procedures, who is supervised by an active member of the State Bar of Arizona, and for whom an active member of the state bar is responsible, unless otherwise authorized by supreme court rule.
- D. "Mediator" means an impartial individual who is appointed by a court or government entity or engaged by disputants through written agreement, signed by all disputants, to mediate a dispute.

E. "Unprofessional conduct" means substantial or repeated violations of the Oath of Admission to the Bar or the Lawyer's Creed of Professionalism of the State Bar of Arizona.

(b) Authority to Practice. Except as hereinafter provided in section (d), no person shall practice law in this state or represent in any way that he or she may practice law in this state unless the person is an active member of the state bar.

(c) Restrictions on Disbarred Attorneys' and Members' Right to Practice. No member who is currently suspended or on disability inactive status and no former member who has been disbarred shall practice law in this state or represent in any way that he or she may practice law in this state.

(d) Exemptions. Notwithstanding the provisions of section (b), but subject to the limitations of section (c) unless otherwise stated:

1. In any proceeding before the Department of Economic Security, including a hearing officer, an Appeal Tribunal or the Appeals Board, an individual party (either claimant or opposing party) may be represented by a duly authorized agent who is not charging a fee for the representation; an employer, including a corporate employer, may represent itself through an officer or employee; or a duly authorized agent who is charging a fee may represent any party, providing that an attorney authorized to practice law in the State of Arizona shall be responsible for and supervise such agent.
2. An employee may designate a representative, not necessarily an attorney, before any board hearing or any quasi-judicial hearing dealing with personnel matters, providing that no fee may be charged for any services rendered in connection with such hearing by any such designated representative not an attorney admitted to practice.
3. An officer of a corporation or a managing member of a limited liability company who is not an active member of the state bar may represent such entity before a justice court or police court provided that: the entity has specifically authorized such officer or managing member to represent it before such courts; such representation is not the officer's or managing member's primary duty to the entity, but secondary or incidental to other duties relating to the management or operation of the entity; and the entity was an original party to or a first assignee of a conditional sales contract, conveyance, transaction or occurrence that gave rise to the cause of action in such court, and the assignment was not made for a collection purpose.
4. A person who is not an active member of the state bar may represent a party in small claims procedures in the Arizona Tax Court, as provided in Title 12, Chapter 1, Article 4 of the Arizona Revised Statutes.
5. In any proceeding in matters under Title 23, Chapter 2, Article 10 of the Arizona Revised Statutes, before any administrative law judge of the Industrial Commission of Arizona or review board of the Arizona Division of Occupational Safety and Health or

any successor agency, a corporate employer may be represented by an officer or other duly authorized agent of the corporation who is not charging a fee for the representation.

6. An ambulance service may be represented by a corporate officer or employee who has been specifically authorized by the ambulance service to represent it in an administrative hearing or rehearing before the Arizona Department of Health Services as provided in Title 36, Chapter 21.1, Article 2 of the Arizona Revised Statutes.

7. A person who is not an active member of the state bar may represent a corporation in small claims procedures, so long as such person is a full-time officer or authorized full-time employee of the corporation who is not charging a fee for the representation.

8. In any administrative appeal proceeding of the Department of Health Services, for behavioral health services, pursuant to A.R.S. § 36-3413 (effective July 1, 1995), a party may be represented by a duly authorized agent who is not charging a fee for the representation.

9. An officer or employee of a corporation or unincorporated association who is not an active member of the state bar may represent the corporation or association before the superior court (including proceedings before the master appointed according to A.R.S. § 45-255) in the general stream adjudication proceedings conducted under Arizona Revised Statutes Title 45, Chapter 1, Article 9, provided that: the corporation or association has specifically authorized such officer or employee to represent it in this adjudication; such representation is not the officer's or employee's primary duty to the corporation but secondary or incidental to other duties related to the management or operation of the corporation or association; and the officer or employee is not receiving separate or additional compensation (other than reimbursement for costs) for such representation. Notwithstanding the foregoing provision, the court may require the substitution of counsel whenever it determines that lay representation is interfering with the orderly progress of the litigation or imposing undue burdens on the other litigants. In addition, the court may assess an appropriate sanction against any party or attorney who has engaged in unreasonable, groundless, abusive or obstructionist conduct.

10. An officer or full-time, permanent employee of a corporation who is not an active member of the state bar may represent the corporation before the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality in an administrative proceeding authorized under Arizona Revised Statutes. Title 49, provided that: the corporation has specifically authorized such officer or employee to represent it in the particular administrative hearing; such representation is not the officer's or employee's primary duty to the corporation but secondary or incidental to other duties related to the management or operation of the corporation; the officer or employee is not receiving separate or additional compensation (other than reimbursement for costs) for such representation; and the corporation has been provided with a timely and appropriate written general warning relating to the potential effects of the proceeding on the corporation's and its owners' legal rights.

11. Unless otherwise specifically provided for in this rule, in proceedings before the

Office of Administrative Hearings, a legal entity may be represented by a full-time officer, partner, member or manager of a limited liability company, or employee, provided that: the legal entity has specifically authorized such person to represent it in the particular matter; such representation is not the person's primary duty to the legal entity, but secondary or incidental to other duties relating to the management or operation of the legal entity; and the person is not receiving separate or additional compensation (other than reimbursement for costs) for such representation.

12. In any administrative appeal proceeding relating to the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, an individual may be represented by a duly authorized agent who is not charging a fee for the representation.

13. In any administrative matter before the Arizona Department of Revenue, the Office of Administrative Hearings relating to the Arizona Department of Revenue, a state or county board of equalization, the Arizona Department of Transportation, the Arizona Department of Economic Security, the Arizona Corporation Commission, or any county, city, or town taxing or appeals official, a taxpayer may be represented by (1) a certified public accountant, (2) a federally authorized tax practitioner, as that term is defined in A.R.S. § 42-2069(D)(1), or (3) in matters in which the dispute, including tax, interest and penalties, is less than \$5,000.00 (five thousand dollars), any duly appointed representative. A legal entity, including a governmental entity, may be represented by a full-time officer, partner, member or manager of a limited liability company, or employee, provided that: the legal entity has specifically authorized such person to represent it in the particular matter; such representation is not the person's primary duty to the legal entity, but secondary or incidental to other duties relating to the management or operation of the legal entity; and the person is not receiving separate or additional compensation (other than reimbursement for costs) for such representation.

14. If the amount in any single dispute before the State Board of Tax Appeals is less than twenty-five thousand dollars, a taxpayer may be represented in that dispute before the board by a certified public accountant or by a federally authorized tax practitioner, as that term is defined in A.R.S. § 42-2069(D)(1).

15. In any administrative proceeding pursuant to 20 U.S.C. § 1415(f) or (k) regarding any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education for a child with a disability or suspected disability, a party may be represented by an individual with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of children with disabilities as determined by the administrative law judge, and who is not charging the party a fee for the representation. The hearing officer shall have discretion to remove the individual, if continued representation impairs the administrative process or causes harm to the parties represented.

16. Nothing in these rules shall limit a certified public accountant or other federally authorized tax practitioner, as that term is defined in A.R.S. § 42-2069(D)(1), from practicing before the Internal Revenue Service or other federal agencies where so authorized.

17. Nothing in these rules shall prohibit the rendering of individual and corporate financial and tax advice to clients or the preparation of tax-related documents for filing with governmental agencies by a certified public accountant or other federally authorized tax practitioner as that term is defined in A.R.S. § 42-2069(D)(1).

18. Nothing in this rule shall affect the ability of nonlawyer assistants to act under the supervision of a lawyer in compliance with ER 5.3 of the rules of professional conduct. This exemption is not subject to section (c).

19. Nothing in these rules shall prohibit the supreme court, court of appeals, superior courts, or limited jurisdiction courts in this state from creating and distributing form documents for use in Arizona courts.

20. Nothing in these rules shall prohibit the preparation of documents incidental to a regular course of business when the documents are for the use of the business and not made available to third parties.

21. Nothing in these rules shall prohibit the preparation of tax returns.

22. Nothing in these rules shall affect the rights granted in the Arizona or United States Constitutions.

23. Nothing in these rules shall prohibit an officer or employee of a governmental entity from performing the duties of his or her office or carrying out the regular course of business of the governmental entity.

24. Nothing in these rules shall prohibit a certified legal document preparer from performing services in compliance with Arizona Code of Judicial Administration, Part 7, Chapter 2, Section 7-208. This exemption is not subject to paragraph (c) of this rule, as long as the disbarred attorney or member has been certified as provided in § 7-208 of the Arizona Code of Judicial Administration.

25. Nothing in these rules shall prohibit a mediator as defined in these rules from facilitating a mediation between parties, preparing a written mediation agreement, or filing such agreement with the appropriate court, provided that:

(A) the mediator is employed, appointed or referred by a court or government entity and is serving as a mediator at the direction of the court or government entity; or

(B) the mediator is participating without compensation in a non-profit mediation program, a community-based organization, or a professional association.

In all other cases, a mediator who is not a member of the state bar and who prepares or provides legal documents for the parties without the supervision of an attorney must be certified as a legal document preparer in compliance with the Arizona Code of judicial Administration, Part 7, Chapter 2, Section 7- 208.

26. Nothing in these rules shall prohibit a property tax agent, as that term is defined in A.R.S. § 32-3651, who is registered with the Arizona State Board of Appraisal pursuant to A.R.S. § 32-3642, from practicing as authorized pursuant to A.R.S. § 42-16001.

27. Nothing in these rules shall affect the ability of lawyers licensed in another jurisdiction to engage in conduct that is permitted under ER 5.5 of the rules of professional conduct.

28. In matters before the Arizona Corporation Commission, a public service corporation, an interim operator appointed by the Commission, or a non-profit organization may be represented by a corporate officer, employee, or a member who is not an active member of the state bar if:

- (A) the public service corporation, interim operator, or non-profit organization has specifically authorized the officer, employee, or member to represent it in the particular matter,
- (B) such representation is not the person's primary duty to the public service corporation, interim operator, or non-profit organization, but is secondary or incidental to such person's duties relating to the management or operation of the public service corporation, interim operator, or non-profit organization, and
- (C) the person is not receiving separate or additional compensation (other than reimbursement for costs) for such representation.

Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, the Commission or presiding officer may require counsel in lieu of lay representation whenever it determines that lay representation is interfering with the orderly progress of the proceeding, imposing undue burdens on the other parties, or causing harm to the parties represented.

29. In any landlord/tenant dispute before the Arizona Department of Fire, Building and Life Safety, an individual may be represented by a duly authorized agent who is not charging a fee for the representation, other than reimbursement for actual costs.