

BEFORE THE PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY JUDGE

**IN THE MATTER OF A
SUSPENDED MEMBER OF THE
STATE BAR OF ARIZONA**

**DAXTON R. WATSON
Bar No. 020054,

Respondent.**

PDJ 2026-9025

**FINAL JUDGMENT AND
ORDER**

[State Bar No. 25-1007]

FILED MAY 8, 2026

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge having accepted the parties' Agreement for Discipline by Consent ("Agreement") submitted pursuant to Rule 57(a), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.,

IT IS ORDERED that **DAXTON R. WATSON, Bar No. 020054**, is Reprimanded for his conduct in violation of the Arizona Rules of Professional Conduct.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent Watson is placed on Probation for a period of two (2) years. The terms of probation shall include:

1. Lawyer Regulation Office ("LRO") Member Assistance

Program ("MAP") (alcohol screening assessment):

a. Respondent Watson shall contact the State Bar

Compliance Monitor at (602)340-7258, within 10 days from the date of service of this Order to schedule an alcohol screening assessment.

- b. If the provider determines after screening that a full assessment is needed, Respondent Watson shall submit to a full assessment.
- c. The Compliance Monitor shall develop terms and conditions of participation if the results of the assessment so indicate, and the terms, including reporting requirements, shall be incorporated herein.
- d. Pending completion of the assessment and the implementation of the recommendations set forth therein, Respondent Watson shall submit to random urinalysis testing (UAs) once every two weeks, to be arranged through the State Bar Compliance Monitor.
- e. Respondent Watson will be responsible for any costs associated with participation with compliance.

2. Respondent Watson shall not commit any further violations of Professional Conduct.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent Watson shall pay the costs and expenses of the State Bar of Arizona in the amount of \$1,200.00 within 30 days. There are no costs or expenses incurred by the Office of the Presiding Disciplinary Judge in these proceedings.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, upon stipulation of the parties, the interim suspension in PDJ 2025-9064, issued September 19, 2025, is vacated.

DATED this 8th day of May, 2026.

Lisa A. VandenBerg
Hon. Lisa A. VandenBerg
Presiding Disciplinary Judge

Copy of the foregoing emailed
this 8th day of May, 2026, to:

Stacy Shuman
LRO@staff.azbar.org

Daxton R. Watson
Daxwatson0204@gmail.com

by: CLopez

BEFORE THE PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY JUDGE

**IN THE MATTER OF A
SUSPENDED MEMBER OF THE
STATE BAR OF ARIZONA**

**DAXTON R. WATSON
Bar No. 020054,

Respondent.**

PDJ 2026-9025

**ORDER ACCEPTING
AGREEMENT FOR
DISCIPLINE BY CONSENT**

[State Bar No. 25-1007]

FILED MAY 8, 2026

On April 30, 2026, the parties filed an Agreement for Discipline by Consent (“Agreement”) pursuant to Rule 57(a), Arizona Rules of Supreme Court (“Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.”). The State Bar of Arizona is represented by Staff Bar Counsel Stacy Shuman. Respondent Daxton R. Watson is self-represented.¹ The Agreement seeks to address the State Bar No. 25-1007.² No probable cause order has been entered, and no formal complaint has been filed in this matter.

¹ The Agreement indicates that Respondent Watson has chosen not to seek the assistance of counsel.

² This Agreement does not resolve SBA 25-0948, which the SBA will dismiss while preserving its ability to reopen the matter for further disciplinary proceedings if Respondent Watson is again charged with criminal conduct.

Contingent upon approval of the proposed form of discipline, Respondent voluntarily waives his right to an adjudicatory hearing, as well as all motions, defenses, objections, or requests that could be asserted. The State Bar is the complainant in this matter; therefore, no notice of this agreement is required pursuant to Rule 53(c)(3), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.

The Agreement details a factual basis in support of Respondent Watson's conditional admissions and is incorporated by reference.³ Daxton R. Watson conditionally admits his conduct violated Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., Rule 42, specifically ER 8.4(b) (commit a criminal act), ER 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice), and Rule 41(b)(7) (engaging in unprofessional conduct and advancing a fact prejudicial to the honor or reputation of a party or a witness), of the Arizona Rules of Professional Conduct. As a sanction, the parties agree to Reprimand with Probation.

There are no conditional dismissals, and restitution is not an issue in this matter.

³ See Rule 57(a), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.

Generally speaking, the ethical issues arose when on August 9, 2024, Mr. Watson was seen driving aggressively at approximately 11:30 p.m. with no lights, almost causing a collision after running a red light. When police made contact, Mr. Watson refused field sobriety tests but admitted to drinking and driving. Mr. Watson was arrested and later entered a plea and received a sentence for a class 1 misdemeanor, Extreme DUI .15 or More, with a prior conviction from 2021.

Sanctions imposed against lawyers “shall be determined in accordance with the American Bar Association’s *Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions*” (“ABA Standards”). Rule 58(k), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct. In determining an appropriate sanction, the PDJ considers: the duties violated, the lawyer’s mental state, the actual or potential injury caused by the misconduct, and the existence of aggravating and mitigating factors. ABA Standard 3.0.

Mr. Watson agrees that he “knowingly” committed the criminal offense. Mr. Watson violated duties to the profession, the legal system, and the public, resulting in actual harm to the profession and the legal system, and potential harm to the public.

The Agreement relies on ABA *Standard 7.2 (Violations of Other Duties Owed as a Professional)* as the appropriate *Standard* given the facts and circumstances of this matter. *Standard 7.2* provides,

Suspension is generally appropriate when a lawyer knowingly engages in conduct that is a violation of a duty owed as a professional, and causes injury or potential injury to a client, the public, or the legal system.

The Agreement recites one aggravating factor, 9.22(k) illegal conduct, including that involved the use of controlled substances.

The Agreement identifies three mitigating factors: 9.32(e) full and free disclosure; 9.32(k) imposition of other penalties or sanctions; and 9.32(l) remorse.

The responsibility to determine the appropriate measure of discipline “imposes a concomitant responsibility to pay special care to the purposes served by such discipline.” *In re Rivkind*, 164 Ariz. 154, 157 (1990). The objective of attorney discipline proceedings “is not to punish the lawyer, but to protect the public and deter similar conduct by other lawyers.” *Id.* The Court has also included the purpose to “‘deter[s] the [disciplined] attorney [f]rom engaging in the same or similar misconduct.’” *In re Witt*, 257

Ariz. 39, 52, ¶ 55 (2024), (quoting *In re Alexander*, 232 Ariz. at 15 ¶ 63, 300 P.3d at 550) (alterations in original).” The PDJ has concerns as to Mr. Watson’s relationship with alcohol but finds the stipulated terms of probation attached to the Agreement demonstrate a commitment to seek insight and treatment on the part of Mr. Watson.

After reviewing the matters presented, the PDJ concludes that the Agreement achieves appropriate protections to the public and the other recognized purposes of the lawyer discipline process.

IT IS ORDERED accepting the Agreement for Discipline by Consent.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, upon stipulation of the parties, the interim suspension in PDJ 2025-9064, issued September 19, 2025, is vacated.

A final judgment and order is separately filed this date.

DATED this 8th day of May, 2026.

Lisa A. VandenBerg
Hon. Lisa A. VandenBerg
Presiding Disciplinary Judge

Copy of the foregoing e-mailed
this 8th day of May, 2026 to:

Stacy Shuman
LRO@staff.azbar.org

Daxton R. Watson
Daxwatson0204@gmail.com

by: CLopez

C.LOPEZ

DISCIPLINARY CLERK

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718 W. McDowell Rd., Unit 3
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
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Respondent

BEFORE THE PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY JUDGE

**IN THE MATTER OF A
SUSPENDED MEMBER OF
THE STATE BAR OF ARIZONA,**

**DAXTON R. WATSON
Bar No. 020054**

Respondent.

PDJ 2026-9025

**AGREEMENT FOR DISCIPLINE
BY CONSENT**

[State Bar File No. 25-1007]

The State Bar of Arizona, and Respondent Daxton R. Watson who has chosen not to seek the assistance of counsel, hereby submit their Agreement for Discipline by Consent pursuant to Rule 57(a), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct. No Probable Cause Order has been entered in this matter. Respondent voluntarily waives the right to an adjudicatory hearing, unless otherwise ordered, and waives all motions, defenses, objections or requests which have been made or raised, or could be

asserted thereafter, if the conditional admission and proposed form of discipline is approved.

The State Bar is the complainant in this matter; therefore, no notice of this agreement is required pursuant to Rule 53(c)(3), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct.

Respondent conditionally admits that his conduct, as set forth below, violated Rule 42, ER 8.4(b), ER 8.4(d) and Rule 41(b)(7). Upon acceptance of this agreement, Respondent agrees to accept imposition of the following discipline: Reprimand with Probation, the terms of which are set forth in the Sanctions section below.

Respondent also agrees to pay the costs and expenses of the disciplinary proceeding, within 30 days from the date of this order. If costs are not paid within 30 days, interest will begin to accrue at the legal rate.¹ The State Bar's Statement of Costs and Expenses is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

FACTS

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

1. Respondent was licensed to practice law in Arizona on October 25, 1999.

¹ Respondent understands that the costs and expenses of the disciplinary proceeding include the costs and expenses of the State Bar of Arizona, the Disciplinary Clerk, the Probable Cause Committee, the Presiding Disciplinary Judge and the Supreme Court of Arizona.

2. On September 18, 2025, Respondent and the SBA filed a Stipulation for Interim Suspension and Motion to Stay disciplinary proceedings pending the resolution of two criminal court cases in PDJ 2025-9064 [SBA Nos. 25-0948 and 25-1007]: in State Bar File No. 25-0948, Respondent was named as a defendant in Phoenix Municipal Court, M-0741-PX-5947367, which included four (4) misdemeanor charges (Phoenix Municipal Court Case); and in State Bar File No. 25-1007, Respondent was named as a defendant in Chandler Municipal Court, 24-Z-1204141 and 24-Z-1204142, which included two (2) misdemeanor charges (Chandler Municipal Court Case).

3. On September 19, 2025, the PDJ granted the Stipulation and ordered Respondent be interim suspended effective that date.

4. On April 6, 2026, Respondent and the SBA filed a Stipulated Motion to Lift Stay after Respondent accepted a plea and was sentenced in the Chandler Municipal Court Case; and the Phoenix Municipal Court Case was dismissed and referred to the Maricopa County Attorney's Office for charging consideration. As of the date of this agreement, Respondent has not been charged and this Consent Agreement does not resolve SBA 25-0948, which the SBA will dismiss while preserving its ability to reopen the matter for further disciplinary proceedings if Respondent is again charged with criminal conduct.

5. By order dated April 8, 2026, the PDJ granted the Stipulated Motion and ordered that the disciplinary proceedings proceed.

6. The parties stipulate that if the PDJ accepts this Agreement for Discipline by Consent that the interim suspension should be terminated.

COUNT ONE (File no. 25-1007/ARIZONA)

7. On August 9, 2024, Respondent was seen driving with no lights and driving aggressively, almost hitting a reporting party after running a red light at 23:36 hours.

8. When police made contact with Respondent, he refused to participate in field sobriety tests and admitted to officers that he had been drinking and driving. The preliminary breath test measured Respondent's blood alcohol level at .362.

8. Officers conducted an inventory of Respondent's car and found an empty 50 ml bottle of Fireball in the center console (the lid was on the driver seat), another empty bottle of Fireball with the cap on in the driver side door panel; and a package of 10 50 ml Fireball bottles on the passenger floor—the package was open and there were five unopened bottles. The passenger side seat in the rear of the vehicle had one empty 12 oz. can of Coors Light. The pocket had nine empty 50 ml Fireball bottles.

9. Respondent was arrested for DUI Liquor/Drugs/Vapors (TR 28-1381A1) and DUI Liquor with BAC .08 or more (TR 28-1381A2) and he was charged in the Chandler Municipal Court, Case Nos. 24-Z-1204141 and 24-Z-1204142.

10. On October 6, 2025, Respondent entered a guilty plea to Extreme DUI .15 or More with a prior conviction within 5/7 years, a class 1 Misdemeanor (A.R.S. §28-1382A1). He was sentenced to 2 days in jail; 22 days of 12 hours in and 12 hours out of jail; and then 96 days of home detention. Respondent was ordered to attend a MADD class and have an ignition interlock device installed for at least 12 months; although his license was suspended for 1 year. He was also ordered to complete 30 hours of Community Restitution.

11. The parties stipulate that Respondent had a prior misdemeanor DUI in 2021, which resulted in Respondent being placed on diversion by the SBA for violating ER 8.4(b) [It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to . . . commit a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's . . . fitness as a lawyer..."]²

CONDITIONAL ADMISSIONS

Respondent's admissions are being tendered in exchange for the form of discipline stated below and are submitted freely and voluntarily and not as a result

² The parties note that the Comment to ER 8.4(b) might be applicable under the circumstances. It states, in pertinent part, that "[a] pattern of repeated offenses, even one of minor significance when considered separately, can indicate indifference to legal obligation" and "reflect adversely on fitness to practice law."

of coercion or intimidation. Respondent conditionally admits that he violated Rule 42, Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., specifically ER 8.4(b), ER 8.4(d), and Rule 41(b)(7).

CONDITIONAL DISMISSALS

There are no conditional dismissals.

RESTITUTION

Restitution is not an issue in this matter.

SANCTION

Respondent and the State Bar of Arizona agree that based on the facts and circumstances of this matter, as set forth above, the following sanctions are appropriate: **Reprimand with Probation for two (2) years, the terms of probation to include the following:**

1. LRO MAP (alcohol screening assessment): Respondent shall contact the State Bar Compliance Monitor, at (602) 340-7258, within 10 days from the date of service of this Order, to schedule an alcohol screening assessment. If the provider determines after screening that a full assessment is needed, Respondent shall submit to a full assessment. The Compliance Monitor shall develop terms and conditions of participation if the results of the assessment so indicate, and the terms, including reporting requirements, shall be incorporated herein. Pending completion of the assessment and the implementation of the recommendations set

forth therein, Respondent shall submit to random, urinalysis testing (UAs) once every two weeks, to be arranged through the State Bar Compliance Monitor. Respondent will be responsible for any costs associated with participation with compliance.

Respondent shall commit no further violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH PROBATION

If Respondent fails to comply with any of the foregoing probation terms and the State Bar of Arizona receives information thereof, Bar Counsel shall file a notice of noncompliance with the Presiding Disciplinary Judge, pursuant to Rule 60(a)(5), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct. The Presiding Disciplinary Judge may conduct a hearing within 30 days to determine whether Respondent breached a term of probation and, if so, to recommend an appropriate sanction. If the State Bar alleges that Respondent failed to comply with any of the foregoing terms the burden of proof shall be on the State Bar of Arizona to prove noncompliance by a preponderance of the evidence.

If Respondent violates any of the terms of this agreement, the State Bar may bring further discipline proceedings.

LEGAL GROUNDS IN SUPPORT OF SANCTION

In determining an appropriate sanction, the parties consulted the American Bar Association's *Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions (Standards)* pursuant to Rule 57(a)(2)(E). The *Standards* are designed to promote consistency in the imposition of sanctions by identifying relevant factors that courts should consider and then applying those factors to situations where lawyers have engaged in various types of misconduct. *Standard 1.3, In re Pappas*, 159 Ariz. 516, 768 P.2d 1161 (1988). The *Standards* provide guidance with respect to an appropriate sanction in this matter.

In determining an appropriate sanction, the Court considers the duty violated, the lawyer's mental state, the actual or potential injury caused by the misconduct and the existence of aggravating and mitigating factors. *Standard 3.0*.

The parties agree that the following *Standard* is applicable given the facts and circumstances of this matter: *Standard 7.2* [Violations of Other Duties Owed as a Professional] provides that Suspension is generally appropriate when a lawyer knowingly engages in conduct that is a violation of a duty owed as a professional, and causes injury or potential injury to a client, the public, or the legal system.

The duty violated

Respondent's conduct violated his duty to the profession, the legal system, and the public.

The lawyer's mental state

Respondent knowingly drank alcohol and drove his automobile, which resulted in his arrest and misdemeanor conviction for DUI, which violated the Rules of Professional Conduct.

The extent of the actual or potential injury

There was actual harm to the profession and the legal system, and potential harm to the public.

Aggravating and mitigating circumstances

The presumptive sanction is Suspension. The parties conditionally agree that the following aggravating and mitigating factors should be considered³:

In aggravation:

- a) 9.22(k) illegal conduct, including that involving the use of controlled substances. Respondent pleaded guilty and was sentenced for a misdemeanor DUI.

In mitigation:

- a) 9.32(e) full and free disclosure to disciplinary board or cooperative attitude toward proceedings. Respondent has been forthcoming and cooperative

³ The parties stipulate that Respondent had a prior misdemeanor DUI, which resulted in him being placed on diversion by the SBA. The parties agree that neither aggravating factor 9.22(a) [prior disciplinary offenses] or mitigating factor 9.32(a) [absence of prior disciplinary record] should be considered for purposes of this Agreement.

with the disciplinary process as evidenced by his agreement to file a Stipulation of Interim Suspension and Motion to Stay disciplinary proceedings.

- b) 9.32(k) imposition of other penalties or sanctions. Respondent pleaded guilty to misdemeanor DUI and was sentenced, as discussed *supra*.
- c) 9.32(l) remorse.

Discussion

The parties conditionally agree that upon application of the aggravating and mitigating factors that the presumptive sanction is Suspension, but that the lesser sanction of a Reprimand is appropriate under the facts and circumstances of the matter. The parties conditionally agree that the sanction set forth above is within the range of appropriate sanctions and will serve the purposes of lawyer discipline.

CONCLUSION

The object of lawyer discipline is not to punish the lawyer, but to protect the public, the profession and the administration of justice. In re *Peasley*, 208 Ariz. 27 (2004). Recognizing that determination of the appropriate sanction is the prerogative of the Presiding Disciplinary Judge, the State Bar and Respondent believe that the objectives of discipline will be met by the imposition of the proposed sanction of Reprimand with Probation and the imposition of costs and expenses. A proposed form of order is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

DATED this 30th day of April 2026

STATE BAR OF ARIZONA



Stacy L. Shuman
Staff Bar Counsel

This agreement, with conditional admissions, is submitted freely and voluntarily and not under coercion or intimidation.

Respondent authorized Bar Counsel by email to e-sign this agreement on his behalf.

DATED this 30th day of April, 2026.

/s/Daxton R. Watson

Daxton R. Watson
Respondent

Approved as to form and content



Maret Vessella
Chief Bar Counsel

Original filed with the Disciplinary Clerk of
the Office of the Presiding Disciplinary Judge
of the Supreme Court of Arizona
this 30th day of April, 2026.

Copy of the foregoing emailed
this 30th day of April, 2026, to:

Honorable Lisa A. VandenBerg
Presiding Disciplinary Judge
Supreme Court of Arizona
1501 West Washington Street, Suite 102
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
E-mail: officepdj@courts.az.gov

Daxton R. Watson
718 W. McDowell Rd., Unit 3
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
daxwatson0204@gmail.com
Respondent

Lawyer Regulation Records Manager
State Bar of Arizona
4201 N. 24th St., Suite 100
Phoenix, Arizona 85016-6266
LRO@staff.azbar.org

by: /s/Jackie Brokaw
SLS/jlb

EXHIBIT A

Statement of Costs and Expenses

In the Matter of a Suspended Member of
The State Bar of Arizona, Daxton R. Watson
Bar No. 020054, Respondent.

File No. 25-1007

Administrative Expenses

The Supreme Court of Arizona has adopted a schedule of administrative expenses to be assessed in lawyer discipline. If the number of charges/complainants exceeds five, the assessment for the general administrative expenses shall increase by 20% for each additional charge/complainant where a violation is admitted or proven.

Factors considered in the administrative expense are time expended by staff bar counsel, paralegal, secretaries, typists, file clerks and messenger; and normal postage charges, telephone costs, office supplies and all similar factors generally attributed to office overhead. As a matter of course, administrative costs will increase based on the length of time it takes a matter to proceed through the adjudication process.

***General Administrative Expenses
for above-numbered proceedings***

\$1,200.00

Additional costs incurred by the State Bar of Arizona in the processing of this disciplinary matter, and not included in administrative expenses, are itemized below.

Additional Costs

Total for additional costs \$ 0.00

TOTAL COSTS AND EXPENSES INCURRED \$ 1,200.00

EXHIBIT B

BEFORE THE PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY JUDGE

**IN THE MATTER OF A
SUSPENDED MEMBER OF
THE STATE BAR OF ARIZONA,**

**DAXTON R. WATSON
Bar No. 020054**

Respondent.

PDJ

**FINAL JUDGMENT AND
ORDER**

State Bar No. 25-1007

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge of the Supreme Court of Arizona, having reviewed the Agreement for Discipline by Consent pursuant to Rule 57(a), Ariz. R. Sup. Ct., accepts the parties' proposed agreement.

Accordingly:

IT IS ORDERED that Respondent, **Daxton R. Watson**, is **Reprimanded** for his conduct in violation of the Arizona Rules of Professional Conduct, as outlined in the consent documents.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent is placed on probation for a period of two (2) years. The terms of probation are:

1. LRO MAP (alcohol screening assessment): Respondent shall contact the State Bar Compliance Monitor, at (602) 340-7258, within 10 days from

the date of service of this Order, to schedule an alcohol screening assessment. If the provider determines after screening that a full assessment is needed, Respondent shall submit to a full assessment. The Compliance Monitor shall develop terms and conditions of participation if the results of the assessment so indicate and the terms, including reporting requirements, shall be incorporated herein. Pending completion of the assessment and the implementation of the recommendations set forth therein, Respondent shall submit to random, urinalysis testing (UAs) once every two weeks, to be arranged through the State Bar Compliance Monitor. Respondent will be responsible for any costs associated with participation with compliance.

Respondent shall commit no further violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent pay the costs and expenses of the State Bar of Arizona in the amount of \$ _____, within 30 days from the date of service of this Order. If not paid within the 30 days interest will begin to accrue at the legal rate.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall pay the costs and expenses incurred by the disciplinary clerk and/or Presiding Disciplinary Judge's Office in connection with these disciplinary proceedings in the amount of _____, within 30 days from the date of service of this Order. If not paid within the 30 days interest will begin to accrue at the legal rate.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the September 19, 2025 Order of Interim Suspension in PDJ 2025-9064, by and hereby is vacated.

DATED this _____ day of April, 2026.

**Honorable Lisa A. VandenBerg,
Presiding Disciplinary Judge**

Original filed with the Disciplinary Clerk of
the Office of the Presiding Disciplinary Judge
of the Supreme Court of Arizona
this _____ day of April, 2026.

Copies of the foregoing emailed
this _____ day of April, 2026, to:

Daxton R. Watson
718 W. McDowell Rd., Unit 3
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
daxwatson0204@gmail.comRespondent

Stacy L. Shuman
Staff Bar Counsel
State Bar of Arizona
4201 N 24th Street, Suite 100
Phoenix, Arizona 85016-6266
Email: LRO@staff.azbar.org

by: _____