

NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

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Arizona Supreme Court Approves Rewriting of Rules of Criminal Procedure

PHOENIX – As part of its annual review of proposed changes to court rules, the Arizona Supreme Court has approved a comprehensive restyling of the Arizona Rules of Criminal Procedure. These rules govern criminal cases filed in courts throughout Arizona.

The amendments reflect the first comprehensive revision of Arizona’s criminal rules since 1973. They are largely based on recommendations made by the [Criminal Rules Task Force](#), which Chief Justice Scott Bales established at the end of 2015 with the charge of identifying possible changes that would help clarify and simplify the rules.

The 20-person committee, chaired by Judge Joseph Welty, Associate Presiding Judge of the Maricopa County Superior Court, included lawyers, judges, and court personnel from throughout Arizona. Working extensively over nearly eighteen months, the Task Force sought input from various stakeholders and the [Commission on Victims in the Courts](#) before submitting its final recommendations to the Arizona Supreme Court this past summer.

Chief Justice Bales praised the Task Force’s work, noting, “Arizona’s court rules should promote the just resolution of cases without unnecessary delay or complexity. Rewriting the rules to achieve these goals is tremendously difficult, and the Task Force members and court staff did an extraordinary job that will improve justice across our state.”

The [revised rules](#) generally become effective on January 1, 2018. In addition to restyling prior rules, the revisions also make certain substantive changes, including:

- Rule 6.3 regarding a lawyer’s withdrawal from a case;
- New Rule 6.7 regarding the appointment of investigators and expert witnesses;
- Rule 15.1 regarding disclosure of expected expert testimony;
- Rule 16.3 regarding pretrial conferences; and,
- Rule 39 regarding the rights of victims to be heard and to be represented by counsel.

The restyling of the Arizona Criminal Rules of Procedure furthers one of the goals of the Arizona Supreme Court’s [Strategic Agenda](#). Similar restyling projects have been completed for the Arizona Rules of Civil Procedure, the Rules of Civil Appellate Procedure, the Rules of Protective Order Procedure, and the Justice Court Rules of Civil Procedure. A [Family Law Rules Task Force](#) is now reviewing the family law rules with the goal of submitting proposed amendments in January 2018.

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