



ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

MEDIA ADVISORY

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The Arizona Judicial Branch Announces New Ways to Access Courts

Supreme Court Publishes Helpful Guide for Litigants Without Lawyers

To help the many Arizonans who lack legal representation in appeals from the Superior Court to the Appellate courts (Arizona Court of Appeals, Arizona Supreme Court) the Arizona Judicial Branch is delighted to announce the publication of the "Guide for Self Represented ("Pro Se" or "Pro Per") Appellants and Appellees." The Guide provides basic information about civil appeals (including family court cases) and is available on the web at <http://www.supreme.state.az.us/appellateguide.htm>.

Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Ruth McGregor remarked that, "The Arizona Judicial Branch is always looking for new ways to educate the public about the courts. We recognize that the court system is complex and hope this publication will help self represented litigants better navigate the waters of the appellate courts."

Arizona Supreme Court Justice Scott Bales, who led the effort to produce the guide, stated, "Litigants without lawyers face a significant challenge when appealing their cases. Thanks to efforts by several judges and attorneys, those litigants now have some tools. We look forward to publishing other useful guides this spring."

Court of Appeals "Memo" Decisions Now Available Online

The Arizona Court of Appeals has made viewing its decisions more convenient by posting more of them on its websites. The Court of Appeals, with Divisions in Phoenix and Tucson, decides thousands of cases each year. Case decisions usually take one of two formats: memorandum (memo) decisions and opinions. Beginning in July 2007, both Divisions began posting their memo decisions on their respective websites.

A memo decision decides only the case it pertains to and has limited legal use. Unlike opinions, memo decisions may not be cited or referred to in other cases, except as provided in certain limited instances governed by court rules. In contrast, opinions may be cited as legal authority in other cases. Opinions have been available on the web for many years.

"We're delighted to offer the public easier access to our memo decisions," said John Gemmill, Chief Judge of Division One. As John Pelander, Chief Judge of Division Two, further explained: "It allows the public and the legal community to better understand the issues presented to the Court and to see how our Court operates. This enhances accessibility and transparency."

Although memo decisions now appear on the web, this access does not mean that a memo decision may be treated as an opinion. Memo decisions will generally be available on the court's websites for approximately six months after issuance. The memo decisions may not be used commercially.

In addition, starting February 1, 2008, Division Two of the Court of Appeals will launch a pilot project under which pro se litigants may file briefs and access the record in their particular case electronically. Details of that project can be found on Division Two's website.

To find and read both memo decisions and opinions issued by the Court of Appeals please visit:

- Court of Appeals, Division One – www.cofad1.state.az.us
- Court of Appeals, Division Two – www.appeals2.az.gov

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