



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

News for Immediate Release

Dec. 4, 2014

New rules adopted to enhance court reporting services

HARRISBURG — The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has adopted a comprehensive set of new rules governing court reporting operations to standardize services provided to judges, lawyers and citizens in each of the Commonwealth's 60 judicial districts.

The move to replace an existing set of standards that were in place since 1981 was driven as much by technological advancements as a desire to unify a sometimes confusing mix of court reporting processes in districts across the state. The new rules bring greater clarity to the uniform production, ownership and fees for official transcripts of court hearings and other proceedings.

"These rules were carefully crafted in a partnership among the state's trial judges, court administrators and court reporting professionals to reflect significant changes in technology," Chief Justice of Pennsylvania Ronald D. Castille said. "Implementing these new rules will provide numerous benefits to Pennsylvania's citizens while helping to ensure a unified and efficient system of court reporting."

The Supreme Court, through the Judicial Council of Pennsylvania and the AOPC, established an ad hoc advisory committee on court reporting and transcripts to develop the new rules.

Some of the benefits of the new rules include:

- Establishing uniform maximum fees for transcripts.
The committee found a wide disparity in the fees charged for transcripts. Higher fees often adversely affected a litigant's ability to obtain transcripts.
- Reducing — or waiving — fees for litigants who are unable to pay for them.
- Encouraging the use of electronic transcripts.

This step is designed to reduce transcript costs and enhance the quality and timeliness of the transcripts. District court administrators will monitor how promptly transcripts are produced.

- Directing transcript payments directly to the court rather than to the court reporter. The counties will have the discretion to determine the amount of transcript fees to be paid to court reporting personnel.
- Creating comprehensive formats for transcription that mirror federal court standards.
The committee found discrepancies in margins, indents and lines per page that resulted in more pages and higher costs in some counties.
- Establishing standardized qualifications and responsibilities for court reporters, recorders and transcriptionists, including their duties as officers of the court.
- Authorizing the redaction of personal identifying information from transcripts to preserve privacy and security.
- Expediting cases requiring priority (e.g., Children's Fast Track appeals).
- Clarifying ownership of the transcripts as property of the court, rather than individual court reporters, and designating a place for filing and storage.

(A complete copy of the new rules can found on the Pennsylvania Judiciary's website)

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<http://www.pacourts.us/assets/opinions/Supreme/out/436jad.pdf?cb=1>

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