



NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 18, 2005

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Arizona Supreme Court Creates Statewide Family Law Rules

Tomorrow, the Arizona Supreme Court will formally adopt a set of statewide, uniform and comprehensive rules for family law cases, which include divorce, legal separation, paternity, child custody, child support and protective orders.

The rules are the work of a Supreme Court appointed Committee consisting of 16 members from around the state and many more workgroup members who participated in the process.

The goal of the committee's work was to establish a comprehensive, statewide set of rules of procedure for family law cases aimed at achieving fair, effective, uniform and timely resolution of family disputes, using non-adversarial, problem-solving means to the extent possible and appropriate.

Some of the most significant changes to be brought about by the new rules include:

- Comprehensive new rules that strongly encourage problem-solving approaches to resolve family law cases, including the use of mediators, family law masters and parenting coordinators;
- New rules of procedure for temporary orders and post-divorce proceedings, which have never before existed on a statewide level;
- New requirements for the timely disposition of temporary orders at times when families often are in crisis;
- New requirements to ensure the timely disposition of all family law matters;
- A new rule providing for representation of children whose voices are often unheard in family law cases;
- A new rule providing for "limited scope representation" that allows an attorney to represent a client for a limited purpose or time period. This rule should greatly enhance access to legal representation in family law cases, particularly for persons of limited means;

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- New rules for disclosure and discovery that are tailored to family law and should be easier to understand;
- Relaxation of the formal rules of evidence to enhance both truth-seeking and efficiency;
- Provisions for protecting addresses and other safety measures in cases of domestic violence;
- Provisions for service of process by certified mail and other delivery methods that are less expensive than personal service by a certified process server;
- Provision for a “consent decree” that allows agreeing parties to resolve their family law case without a hearing; and
- Provision for required and commonly used forms that will also be available in interactive form on the Supreme Court’s website.

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