

**RULES GOVERNING THE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE  
DISTRICT JUDGES' CONFERENCE**

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## Statement of Authority

These rules are promulgated pursuant to:

- W.S. 9-2-1002 (c) ...procedures affecting the administration of the judiciary shall be determined by the judges of their respective courts...
- W.S. 5-3-102 (b) The district courts shall be free of administrative and fiscal control by the supreme court. There shall be a judicial conference comprised of all district judges which shall meet no less than twice per year. The conference shall coordinate improvement efforts with the judicial administrative conference and shall report to the joint judiciary interim committee of such efforts annually on or before November 1. The conference shall adopt rules governing the organization and procedures of the conference which shall be published in the court rules volume of the Wyoming statutes. The conference shall adopt rules, which shall be binding on all the district judges, governing the administration of the district courts to include, without limitation, personnel, fiscal and budgetary policy except technology which shall be done to provide an integrated statewide system in accordance with the efforts of the judicial technology task force. The judicial conference shall also adopt suitable rules to provide the division of the work between the judges in multi judge districts. The judicial conference shall keep minutes of all meetings which, along with all rules adopted by the conference, shall be filed with the supreme court and be made available to the public.
- Wyoming Constitution Article 5, 1 The judicial power of the state shall be vested in the senate, sitting as a court of impeachment, in a supreme court, district courts, and such subordinate courts as the legislature may, by general law, establish and ordain from time to time.
- Wyoming Constitution Article 5, 2 The supreme court shall have general appellate jurisdiction, co-extensive within the state, in both civil and criminal causes, and shall have a general superintending control over all inferior courts, under such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by law.

### **Rule 101. Definitions.**

- (a) “District Judges’ Conference” means the body comprising all of the judges of the various district courts.
- (b) “Chair” means the district judge elected to preside over the judicial conference.
- (c) “Member” means a current district judge.

### **Rule 102. District Judges’ Conference**

- (a) Pursuant to W.S. 5-3-102(b), the organization consisting of all current, Wyoming district court judges shall be known as the “Wyoming District Judges’ Conference.”
- (b) The Chair of the Conference shall call meetings of the Conference at least two times per year, in April on a date set by the Chair and during the week of the annual Wyoming State Bar meeting in September. All meeting dates for the upcoming year will be announced at the September meeting.
- (c) Officers of the Conference shall consist of a: Chair; Vice Chair; and Secretary/Treasurer, who shall serve for a term of one year (from the election in September until new officers are elected in September for the following year).
- (d) Each member of the Conference should attend all meetings called by the Chair.
- (e) Members unable to attend meetings may vote on any agenda item by offering their vote, in writing, by email or letter, to the Secretary prior to the meeting.
- (f) The Conference shall act by majority vote of a quorum of the members (1) at a meeting or (2) on a special question as set out in Rule 106(d).

### **Rule 103. Election and Duties of the Chair**

- (a) At the September meeting the Conference shall designate by majority vote one of its members to act as Chair whose term shall commence after the close of the meeting.
- (b) The Chair is the designated spokesperson for the Conference
- (c) The Chair shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Conference at the September meeting in a form suitable for submission to the State Joint Judiciary Interim Committee. Once approved by the Conference, the Chair shall submit said

report to the Joint Judiciary Interim Committee on or before November 1 of each year.

- (d) The Chair shall prepare and distribute an agenda to the members of the Conference at least 14 days prior to any regular meeting, and as soon as possible prior to any other meeting.
- (e) At the written request of any member prior to any meeting, the Chair shall add items to the agenda, and shall, if feasible, provide written notice of the addition to the members of the Conference before the meeting.
- (f) The Chair shall have the authority to do any act necessary to effectuate an act of the Conference.

**Rule 104. Election and Duties of the Vice Chair.**

- (a) At the September meeting, the Conference shall designate by majority vote one of its members to act as Vice Chair for the next succeeding term.
- (b) The Vice Chair shall act as presiding officer in the absence of the Chair and shall assist the Chair upon request.

**Rule 105. Election and Duties of the Secretary/Treasurer.**

- (a) At the September meeting the Conference shall designate by majority vote one of its members to act as Secretary/Treasurer for the next succeeding term.
- (b) The Secretary/Treasurer shall keep minutes of Conference proceedings pursuant to 5-3-102 (b) and file the same with the Supreme Court and shall assist in the preparation of the annual report.
- (c) The Secretary/Treasurer shall collect any annual dues and shall keep a record of the finances of the Conference.

**Rule 106. Meetings.**

- (a) Regular meetings will be held in April on a date set by the Chair and during the week of the State Bar meeting in September each year.

- (b) Special meetings may be called by the Chair upon 24 hours notice, given by telephone, e-mail, fax, or in person. Special meetings may be held by teleconference, video conference, or in person at the discretion of the conference chair.
- (c) Actual travel expenses for any district judge attending meetings shall be reimbursed at a rate to be established by the B.J.P.A.
- (d) **QUORUM** - At any meeting, a quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of twelve judges. A vote by a majority of judges present at a meeting where a quorum is present shall constitute the binding act of the Conference. However, for votes upon a special question, at least 12 votes must be submitted and the majority of those votes shall constitute the binding act of the conference.
- (e) **SPECIAL QUESTIONS** – A special question can be called for vote of the conference by a majority vote of the officers. Not less than 24 hours notice of the special question(s) to be voted on shall then be given to the conference by telephone, email, fax, or in person. A judge may vote on the special question(s) by email, fax, in person, or voice vote given to the conference chair or his/her designate, or at any special meeting called to entertain such question. No special meeting is required for a special question. The conference chair shall report the result of the vote on any special question to the Secretary/Treasurer. The special question and the result of the vote shall be included in any minutes circulated prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

#### **Rule 107. Agenda Items**

- (a) The agenda for any meeting may include, but is not limited to:
  - (1) uniformity of practice and procedure;
  - (2) means to facilitate cooperation among all courts; and
  - (3) education.

#### **Rule 108. Committees and Advisory Panels.**

- (a) Budget Review Committee. There shall be a standing Budget Review Committee consisting of the Chair, the immediate past Chair, and the Vice Chair. The Budget Review Committee shall review each district court judge's budget request and present those requests to the Joint Judiciary Interim Committee and the Joint

Appropriations Committee of the Wyoming Legislature, with the Committee's recommendations.

- (b) The Conference, or the Chair, may establish committees from time to time as deemed appropriate. The Chair shall appoint members to such committees.
- (c) The Conference may, for the purpose of carrying out its functions and duties pursuant to W.S. 5-3-102 (b), establish advisory panels consisting of members, members of the bar, members of the public, or any combination thereof. Such panels shall be established to provide expertise and assistance in specific areas, as the Conference deems necessary.
- (d) There shall be a standing docket review committee consisting of the Chair, Vice Chair, and immediate Past Chair. The Docket Review Committee may assist each judge's internal management by reviewing the docket and making recommendations.

#### **Rule 109. Effective Date.**

These rules, any part thereof, or any future amendment thereto shall become effective upon majority vote of the judges present at a meeting where a quorum is present and which meeting is called for the purpose of considering these rules or amendments.

District Judges' Conference rules were legislatively required July 1, 2000.

The first written rules were unanimously adopted April 27, 2001 at a meeting in Thermopolis.

These rules were amended on December 12, 2014 and on April 24, 2020.

#### **Rule 110. B.J.P.A. and Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics Terms.**

Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics. Two members of the Conference shall serve on the Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics. The terms of the members shall be three years and shall be staggered. Election of representatives to the Commission shall be on an as needed basis. A member of the Conference shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

The Conference has determined for the time being to participate in the Board of Judicial Policy and Administration and therefore, three members of the Conference shall serve on the BJPA . The terms of the members shall be for three years and shall be staggered so that a member of the Conference is elected to the BJPA each year at the April meeting of the Conference. A member of the Conference shall not serve more than two consecutive terms on the BJPA.

### **Rule 111. Personnel.**

- (a) All District Court personnel are at-will employees.
- (b) Judicial Assistants receive vacation/sick leave in the same manner as executive branch state employees.
- (c) Each judge may hire a Law Clerk for a term determined appropriate by the judge. Law Clerks serve at-will. Law Clerks may receive vacation/sick leave as approved by the judge, but shall not receive compensation for any unused vacation or sick leave.
- (d) Court reporters.
  - 1. Official Court Reporters serve at-will and receive vacation/sick leave as determined by the judge.
  - 2. Official Court Reporters shall not receive compensation for any unused vacation or sick leave
  - 3. Official Court Reports shall not perform any free-lance work.
  - 4. Each judge may require his/her Court Reporter to provide real time.  
The Court Reporter shall provide the equipment and software necessary for real-time, unless the judge determines that the court's budget can provide equipment and software. Court Reporters who become certified in real-time receive a 10% pay increase.

### **Rule 112. Budgets.**

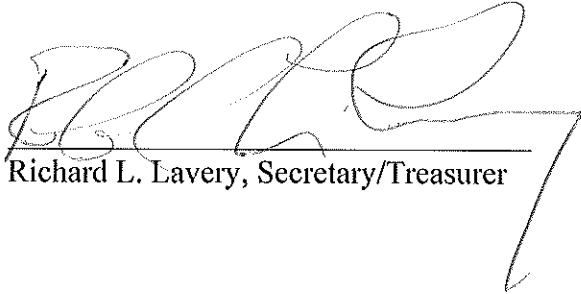
Each judge is responsible for management of his/her own court's budget. Each judge must annually submit his/her court's proposed budgets to the Budget Review Committee one month before the judicial branch submits their budgets to the legislature. Each judge is responsible for appropriate management and use of funds in his/her court's budget.

### **Rule 113. Dockets.**

- (a) It is the goal for each district court to comply with the Model Time Standards for State Trial Courts as published by the National Center for State Courts.
- (b) Each judge is responsible for scheduling and management of his/her own workload and for assuring that work is timely completed. Each judge is responsible for implementation of improvements in case-flow management.
- (c) Each judge shall conduct docket review of his/her own court's docket at least twice annually.
- (d) In each district, the judges shall adopt a case assignment system which assigns cases randomly or by type in a manner which balances the judge's workloads. The case assignment system for each district shall be reported to the Docket Review Committee. The Committee may recommend a particular plan if any questions arises.

- (e) Any reports, data or communications within a particular court or with the Docket Review Committee are confidential internal working matters, to be used for the improvement of the court.

Passed and adopted April 24, 2020



Richard L. Lavery, Secretary/Treasurer