

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Operating Procedures for the Delaware Judicial Branch* now online in one comprehensive, new user-friendly format.**

The Delaware Judiciary has created, for the first time, a comprehensive and easily searchable online index and database of Judicial Branch Operating Procedures – the *Operating Procedures for the Delaware Judicial Branch*.

In addition to providing a resource with greater utility, the Delaware Supreme Court and Judicial Branch also created this online guide in the spirit of openness and transparency and hopes that this new resource will be a benefit to both the public, legal community and the media long into the future.

Before this change, dozens of Administrative Directives that dated back decades were listed online (and in a few dusty binders) in chronological order only. Even an experienced court administrator had to scan the lengthy list of numbered directives, or recall the name of an old Administrative Directive, to determine Branch policy.

This new online resource makes that game of “find the policy” a thing of the past by putting all key administrative policies of the Judicial Branch in one place, with a clear subject matter index. This enables not only judges, lawyers and judicial staff to easily find the policies they are interested in, but also serves as a resource for the press and the public because it is available on the Judiciary’s website.

To make things even more user-friendly, the *Operating Procedures for the Delaware Judicial Branch* contain hyperlinks to allow readers to click directly to more detailed Branch policies on specific subjects including the Judicial Branch Personnel Rules and policies related to public access to court administrative records. Not only that, but the policies will be easier to keep current for use by readers because changes can be incorporated immediately into this new online resource.

Consistent with the goal of making Judicial Branch administrative policies and procedures more accessible and up-to-date, existing Administrative Directives have been reviewed, streamlined and updated. Many redundancies and conflicts were eliminated, and some policies were written to favor plainer English over legalese, while others were amended to bring them up to date with current practices.

The online guide outlines general policies of the Branch and is not intended to cover procedural matters governed by individual court rules, Delaware statutes or the Delaware

Constitution. Each court may have additional administrative rules and policies of its own, though all must be consistent with and guided by the overall Branch policies detailed in this online guide and the law.

This is a first but not final step in updating the Branch's policies. The more specific policies that are hyper-linked will be reviewed on a schedule to ensure all Branch policies are up to date within the next several years. The goal will be to then establish a regular schedule under which all policies will undergo regular periodic review to ensure their currency and continual utility.

The *Operating Procedures for the Delaware Judicial Branch* can be found online at <http://courts.delaware.gov/supreme/operating-procedures.stm> .

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