

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF NORTH CAROLINA

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ORDER AMENDING RULES 28, 29, AND 33.1 OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA RULES OF APPELLATE PROCEDURE

Pursuant to the authority vested in this Court by Article IV of the Constitution of North Carolina, Rules 28, 29, and 33.1 of the North Carolina Rules of Appellate Procedure are amended as follows:

**Rule 28. Briefs—Function and Content**

(a) **Function.** The function of all briefs required or permitted by these rules is to define clearly the issues presented to the reviewing court and to present the arguments and authorities upon which the parties rely in support of their respective positions thereon. The scope of review on appeal is limited to issues so presented in the several briefs. Issues not presented and discussed in a party's brief are deemed abandoned. Similarly, issues properly presented for review in the Court of Appeals, but not then stated in the notice of appeal or the petition accepted by the Supreme Court for review and discussed in the new briefs required by Rules 14(d)(1) and 15(g)(2) to be filed in the Supreme Court for review by that Court, are deemed abandoned. Parties shall protect the identity of juveniles covered by Rules 3(b)(1), 3.1(b), or 4(e) pursuant to said rules.

(b) **Content of Appellant's Brief.** An appellant's brief shall contain, under appropriate headings and in the form prescribed by Rule 26(g) and the appendixes to these rules, in the following order:

- (1) A cover page, followed by a subject index and table of authorities as required by Rule 26(g).
- (2) A statement of the issues presented for review. The proposed issues on appeal listed in the record on appeal shall not limit the scope of the issues that an appellant may argue in its brief.
- (3) A concise statement of the procedural history of the case. This shall indicate the nature of the case and summarize the course of proceedings up to the taking of the appeal before the court.
- (4) A statement of the grounds for appellate review. Such statement shall include citation of the statute or statutes permitting appellate review. When an appeal is based on Rule 54(b) of the Rules of Civil Procedure, the statement shall show that there has been a final judgment as to one or more but fewer than all of the claims or parties and that there has been a certification by the

trial court that there is no just reason for delay. When an appeal is interlocutory, the statement must contain sufficient facts and argument to support appellate review on the ground that the challenged order affects a substantial right.

- (5) A full and complete statement of the facts. This should be a non-argumentative summary of all material facts underlying the matter in controversy which are necessary to understand all issues presented for review, supported by references to pages in the transcript of proceedings, the record on appeal, or exhibits, as the case may be.
- (6) An argument, to contain the contentions of the appellant with respect to each issue presented. Issues not presented in a party's brief, or in support of which no reason or argument is stated, will be taken as abandoned.

The argument shall contain a concise statement of the applicable standard(s) of review for each issue, which shall appear either at the beginning of the discussion of each issue or under a separate heading placed before the beginning of the discussion of all the issues.

The body of the argument and the statement of applicable standard(s) of review shall contain citations of the authorities upon which the appellant relies. Evidence or other proceedings material to the issue may be narrated or quoted in the body of the argument, with appropriate reference to the record on appeal, the transcript of proceedings, or exhibits.

- (7) A short conclusion stating the precise relief sought.
- (8) Identification of counsel by signature, typed name, post office address, telephone number, State Bar number, and e-mail address.
- (9) The proof of service required by Rule 26(d).
- (10) Any appendix required or allowed by this Rule 28.

**(c) Content of Appellee's Brief; Presentation of Additional Issues.**

An appellee's brief shall contain a subject index and table of authorities as required by Rule 26(g), an argument, a conclusion, identification of counsel, and proof of service in the form provided in Rule 28(b) for an appellant's brief, and any appendix required or allowed by this Rule 28. It does not need to contain a statement of the issues presented, procedural history of the case, grounds for appellate review, the facts, or the standard(s) of review, unless the appellee disagrees with the appellant's statements and desires to make a restatement or unless the appellee desires to present issues in addition to those stated by the appellant.

Without taking an appeal, an appellee may present issues on appeal based on any action or omission of the trial court that deprived the appellee of an alternative basis in law for supporting the judgment, order, or other determination from which appeal has been taken. Without having taken appeal or listing proposed issues as permitted by Rule 10(c), an appellee may also argue on appeal whether a new trial should be granted to the appellee rather than a judgment notwithstanding the verdict awarded to the appellant when the latter relief is sought on appeal by the appellant. If the appellee presents issues in addition to those stated by the appellant, the appellee's brief must contain a full, non-argumentative summary of all material facts necessary to understand the new issues supported by references to pages in the record on appeal, the transcript of proceedings, or the appendixes, as appropriate, as well as a statement of the applicable standard(s) of review for those additional issues.

An appellee may supplement the record with any materials pertinent to the issues presented on appeal, as provided in Rule 9(b)(5).

(d) **Appendixes to Briefs.** Whenever the transcript of proceedings is filed pursuant to Rule 9(c)(2), the parties must file verbatim portions of the transcript as appendixes to their briefs, if required by this Rule 28(d). Parties must modify verbatim portions of the transcript filed pursuant to this rule in a manner consistent with Rules 3(b)(1), 3.1(b), or 4(e).

(1) **When Appendixes to Appellant's Brief Are Required.**

Except as provided in Rule 28(d)(2), the appellant must reproduce as appendixes to its brief:

- a. those portions of the transcript of proceedings which must be reproduced verbatim in order to understand any issue presented in the brief;
- b. those portions of the transcript showing the pertinent questions and answers when an issue presented in the brief involves the admission or exclusion of evidence;
- c. relevant portions of statutes, rules, or regulations, the study of which is required to determine issues presented in the brief;
- d. relevant items from the Rule 11(c) or Rule 18(d)(3) supplement to the printed record on appeal, the study of which are required to determine issues presented in the brief.

(2) **When Appendixes to Appellant's Brief Are Not Required.**

Notwithstanding the requirements of Rule 28(d)(1), the appellant is not required to reproduce an appendix to its brief with respect to an issue presented:

- a. whenever the portion of the transcript necessary to understand an issue presented in the brief is reproduced verbatim in the body of the brief;
- b. to show the absence or insufficiency of evidence unless there are discrete portions of the transcript where the subject matter of the alleged insufficiency of the evidence is located; or
- c. to show the general nature of the evidence necessary to understand an issue presented in the brief if such evidence has been fully summarized as required by Rule 28(b)(4) and (5).

(3) **When Appendixes to Appellee’s Brief Are Required.** An appellee must reproduce appendixes to its brief in the following circumstances:

- a. Whenever the appellee believes that appellant’s appendixes do not include portions of the transcript or items from the Rule 11(c) or Rule 18(d)(3) supplement to the printed record on appeal that are required by Rule 28(d)(1), the appellee shall reproduce those portions of the transcript or supplement it believes to be necessary to understand the issue.
- b. Whenever the appellee presents a new or additional issue in its brief as permitted by Rule 28(c), the appellee shall reproduce portions of the transcript or relevant items from the Rule 11(c) or Rule 18(d)(3) supplement to the printed record on appeal as if it were the appellant with respect to each such new or additional issue.

(4) **Format of Appendixes.** The appendixes to the briefs of any party shall be in the format prescribed by Rule 26(g) and shall consist of clear photocopies of transcript pages that have been deemed necessary for inclusion in the appendix under this Rule 28(d). The pages of the appendix shall be consecutively numbered, and an index to the appendix shall be placed at its beginning.

(e) **References in Briefs to the Record.** References in the briefs to parts of the printed record on appeal and to parts of the verbatim transcript or parts of documentary exhibits shall be to the pages where those portions appear.

(f) **Joinder of Multiple Parties in Briefs.** Any number of appellants or appellees in a single cause or in causes consolidated for appeal may join in a single brief even though they are not formally joined on the appeal. Any party to any appeal may adopt by reference portions of the briefs of others.

(g) **Additional Authorities.** Additional authorities discovered by a party after filing its brief may be brought to the attention of the court by filing a memorandum thereof with the clerk of the court and serving copies upon all other parties. The memorandum may not be used as a reply brief or for additional argument, but shall simply state the issue to which the additional authority applies and provide a full citation of the authority. Authorities not cited in the briefs or in such a memorandum may not be cited and discussed in oral argument. Before the Court of Appeals, the party shall file an original and three copies of the memorandum; in the Supreme Court, the party shall file an original and fourteen copies of the memorandum.

(h) **Reply Briefs.** Within fourteen days after an appellee's brief has been served on an appellant, the appellant may file and serve a reply brief, subject to the length limitations set forth in Rule 28(j). Any reply brief which an appellant elects to file shall be limited to a concise rebuttal of arguments set out in the appellee's brief and shall not reiterate arguments set forth in the appellant's principal brief. Upon motion of the appellant, the Court may extend the length limitations on such a reply brief to permit the appellant to address new or additional issues presented for the first time in the appellee's brief. Otherwise, motions to extend reply brief length limitations or to extend the time to file a reply brief are disfavored.

~~(i) — **Amicus Curiae Briefs.** A brief of an amicus curiae may be filed only by leave of the appellate court wherein the appeal is docketed or in response to a request made by that court on its own initiative.~~

~~A person desiring to file an amicus curiae brief shall present to the court a motion for leave to file, served upon all parties. The motion shall state concisely the nature of the applicant's interest, the reasons why an amicus curiae brief is believed desirable, the issues of law to be addressed in the amicus curiae brief, and the applicant's position on those issues. The proposed amicus curiae brief may be conditionally filed with the motion for leave. Unless otherwise ordered by the court, the application for leave will be determined solely upon the motion and without responses thereto or oral argument.~~

~~The clerk of the appellate court will forthwith notify the applicant and all parties of the court's action upon the application. Unless other time limits are set out in the order of the court permitting the brief, the amicus curiae shall file the brief within the time allowed for the filing of the brief of the party supported or, if in support of neither party, within the time allowed for filing appellant's brief. Motions for leave to file an amicus curiae brief submitted to the court after the time within which the amicus curiae brief normally would be due are disfavored in the absence of good cause. Reply briefs of the parties to an amicus curiae brief will be limited to points or authorities presented in the amicus curiae brief which are not presented in the main briefs of the parties. No reply brief of an amicus curiae will be received.~~

~~A motion of an amicus curiae to participate in oral argument will be allowed only for extraordinary reasons.~~

(i) **Amicus Curiae Briefs.** An amicus curiae may file a brief with the permission of the appellate court in which the appeal is docketed.

(1) **Motion.** To obtain the court’s permission to file a brief, amicus curiae shall file a motion with the court that states concisely the nature of amicus curiae’s interest, the reasons why the brief is desirable, the issues of law to be addressed in the brief, and the position of amicus curiae on those issues.

(2) **Brief.** The motion must be accompanied by amicus curiae’s brief. The amicus curiae brief shall contain, in a footnote on the first page, a statement that identifies any person or entity—other than amicus curiae, its members, or its counsel—who, directly or indirectly, either wrote the brief or contributed money for its preparation.

(3) **Time for Filing.** If the amicus curiae brief is in support of a party to the appeal, then amicus curiae shall file its motion and brief within the time allowed for filing that party’s principal brief. If amicus curiae’s brief does not support either party, then amicus curiae shall file its motion and proposed brief within the time allowed for filing appellee’s principal brief.

(4) **Service on Parties.** When amicus curiae files its motion and brief, it must serve a copy of its motion and brief on all parties to the appeal.

(5) **Action by Court.** Unless the court orders otherwise, it will decide amicus curiae’s motion without responses or argument. An amicus motion filed by an individual on his or her own behalf will be disfavored.

(6) **Reply Briefs.** A party to the appeal may file and serve a reply brief that responds to an amicus curiae brief no later than thirty days after having been served with the amicus curiae brief. A party’s reply brief to an amicus curiae brief shall be limited to a concise rebuttal of arguments set out in the amicus curiae brief and shall not reiterate or rebut arguments set forth in the party’s principal brief. The court will not accept a reply brief from an amicus curiae.

(7) **Oral Argument.** The court will allow a motion of an amicus curiae requesting permission to participate in oral argument only for extraordinary reasons.

**(j) Word-Count Limitations Applicable to Briefs Filed in the Court of Appeals.** Each brief filed in the Court of Appeals, whether filed by an appellant, appellee, or amicus curiae, shall be set in font as set forth in Rule 26(g)(1) and described in Appendix B to these rules. A principal brief may contain no more than

8,750 words. A reply brief may contain no more than 3,750 words. An amicus curiae brief may contain no more than 3,750 words.

- (1) **Portions of Brief Included in Word Count.** Footnotes and citations in the body of the brief must be included in the word count. Covers, captions, indexes, tables of authorities, certificates of service, certificates of compliance with this rule, counsel's signature block, and appendixes do not count against these word-count limits.
- (2) **Certificate of Compliance.** Parties shall submit with the brief, immediately before the certificate of service, a certification, signed by counsel of record, or in the case of parties filing briefs pro se, by the party, that the brief contains no more than the number of words allowed by this rule. For purposes of this certification, counsel and parties may rely on word counts reported by word-processing software, as long as footnotes and citations are included in those word counts.

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## **Rule 29. Sessions of Courts; Calendar of Hearings**

### **(a) Sessions of Court.**

- (1) **Supreme Court.** The Supreme Court shall be in continuous session for the transaction of business. Appeals will be heard in accordance with a schedule promulgated by the Chief Justice.~~Unless otherwise scheduled by the Court, hearings in appeals will be held during the months of February through May and September through December. Additional settings may be authorized by the Chief Justice.~~
- (2) **Court of Appeals.** Appeals will be heard in accordance with a schedule promulgated by the Chief Judge. Panels of the Court will sit as scheduled by the Chief Judge. For the transaction of other business, the Court of Appeals shall be in continuous session.

(b) **Calendaring of Cases for Hearing.** Each appellate court will calendar the hearing of all appeals docketed in the court. In general, appeals will be calendared for hearing in the order in which they are docketed, but the court may vary the order for any cause deemed appropriate. On motion of any party, with notice to all other parties, the court may determine without hearing to give an appeal peremptory setting or otherwise to vary the normal calendar order. Except as advanced for peremptory setting on motion of a party or the court's own initiative, no appeal will be calendared for hearing at a time less than thirty days after the filing

of the appellant's brief. The clerk of the appellate court will give reasonable notice to all counsel of record of the setting of an appeal for hearing by either e-mailing or mailing a copy of the calendar.

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### **Rule 33.1. Secure-Leave Periods for Attorneys**

~~(a) — **Purpose; Authorization.** In order to secure for the parties to actions and proceedings pending in the appellate division, and to the public at large, the heightened level of professionalism that an attorney is able to provide when the attorney enjoys periods of time that are free from the urgent demands of professional responsibility and to enhance the overall quality of the attorney's personal and family life, any attorney may from time to time designate and enjoy one or more secure leave periods each year as provided in this rule.~~

~~(b) — **Length; Number.** A secure leave period shall consist of one or more complete calendar weeks. During any calendar year, an attorney's secure leave periods pursuant to this rule and to Rule 26 of the General Rules of Practice for the Superior and District Courts shall not exceed, in the aggregate, three calendar weeks.~~

~~(c) — **Designation; Effect.** To designate a secure leave period, an attorney shall file a written designation containing the information required by subsection (d), with the official specified in subsection (e), and within the time provided in subsection (f). Upon such filing, the secure leave period so designated shall be deemed allowed without further action of the court, and the attorney shall not be required to appear at any argument or other in-court proceeding in the appellate division during that secure leave period.~~

~~(d) — **Content of Designation.** The designation shall contain the following information: (1) the attorney's name, address, telephone number, State Bar number, and e-mail address; (2) the date of the Monday on which the secure leave period is to begin and of the Friday on which it is to end; (3) the dates of all other secure leave periods during the current calendar year that have previously been designated by the attorney pursuant to this rule and to Rule 26 of the General Rules of Practice for the Superior and District Courts; (4) a statement that the secure leave period is not being designated for the purpose of delaying, hindering, or interfering with the timely disposition of any matter in any pending action or proceeding; (5) a statement that no argument or other in-court proceeding has been scheduled during the designated secure leave period in any matter pending in the appellate division in which the attorney has entered an appearance; and (6) a listing of all cases, by caption and docket number, pending before the appellate court in which the designation is being filed. The designation shall apply only to those cases pending in that appellate court on the date of its filing. A separate designation shall be filed as to any cases on appeal subsequently filed and docketed.~~

~~(e) — **Where to File Designation.** The designation shall be filed as follows: (1) if the attorney has entered an appearance in the Supreme Court, in the office of~~

~~the clerk of the Supreme Court, even if the designation was filed initially in the Court of Appeals; (2) if the attorney has entered an appearance in the Court of Appeals, in the office of the clerk of the Court of Appeals.~~

~~(f) **When to File Designation.** The designation shall be filed: (1) no later than ninety days before the beginning of the secure leave period, and (2) before any argument or other in-court proceeding has been scheduled for a time during the designated secure leave period.~~

(a) **Definition; Authorization.** A “secure-leave period” is a period of time that is designated by an attorney in which the appellate courts will not hold oral argument in any case in which that attorney is listed as an attorney of record. An attorney may designate secure-leave periods as provided in this rule.

(b) **Length; Number.** A secure-leave period shall consist of one complete calendar week. During a calendar year, an attorney may designate three different weeks as secure-leave periods.

(c) **Designation.** An attorney shall designate his or her secure-leave periods on the electronic filing site of the appellate courts at <https://www.ncappellatecourts.org>.

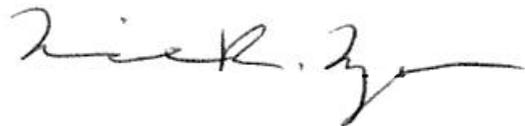
(d) **When to Designate.** An attorney shall designate a secure-leave period at least ninety days before it begins.

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These amendments to the North Carolina Rules of Appellate Procedure shall be effective immediately.

These amendments shall be published in the North Carolina Reports and posted on the Court’s web site.

Ordered by the Court in Conference, this the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2018.



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For the Court

WITNESS my hand and the seal of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, this  
the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of March, 2018.



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AMY L. FUNDERBURK  
Clerk of the Supreme Court