

RULE 575. MOTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(A) MOTIONS

- (1) All motions shall be in writing, except as permitted by the court or when made in open court during a trial or hearing.
- (2) A written motion shall comply with the following requirements:
 - (a) The motion shall be signed by the person or attorney making the motion. The signature of an attorney shall constitute a certification that the attorney has read the motion, that to the best of the attorney's knowledge, information, and belief there is good ground to support the motion, and that it is not interposed for delay.
 - (b) The motion shall include the court, caption, term, and number of the case in which relief is requested.
 - (c) The motion shall state with particularity the grounds for the motion, the facts that support each ground, and the types of relief or order requested.
 - (d) The motion shall be divided into consecutively numbered paragraphs, each containing only one material allegation as far as practicable.
 - (e) The motion shall include any requests for hearing or argument, or both.
 - (f) The motion shall include a certificate of service as required by Rule 576(B)(4).
 - (g) If the motion sets forth facts that do not already appear of record in the case, the motion shall be verified by the sworn affidavit of some person having knowledge of the facts or by the unsworn written statement of such a person that the facts are verified subject to the penalties for unsworn falsification to authorities under the Crimes Code § 4904, 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.
- (3) The failure, in any motion, to state a type of relief or a ground therefor shall constitute a waiver of such relief or ground.
- (4) Any motion may request such alternative relief as may be appropriate.

(5) Rules to Show Cause and Rules Returnable are abolished. Notices of hearings are to be provided pursuant to Rules 114 ~~[(C)] (B)~~ and 577(A)(2).

(B) ANSWERS

(1) Except as provided in Rule 906 (Answer to Petition for Post-Conviction Collateral Relief), an answer to a motion is not required unless the judge orders an answer in a specific case as provided in Rule 577. Failure to answer shall not constitute an admission of the facts alleged in the motion.

(2) A party may file a written answer, or, if a hearing or argument is scheduled, may respond orally at that time, even though an answer is not required.

(3) A written answer shall comply with the following requirements:

(a) The answer shall be signed by the person or attorney making the answer. The signature of an attorney shall constitute a certification that the attorney has read the answer, that to the best of the attorney's knowledge, information, and belief there is good ground to support the answer, and that it is not interposed for delay.

(b) The answer shall meet the allegations of the motion and shall specify the type of relief, order, or other action sought.

(c) The answer shall include a certificate of service as required by Rule 576(B)(4).

(d) If the answer sets forth facts that do not already appear of record in the case, the answer shall be verified by the sworn affidavit of some person having knowledge of the facts or by the unsworn written statement of such a person that the facts are verified subject to the penalties for unsworn falsification to authorities under the Crimes Code § 4904, 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.

(e) The answer shall be filed not later than 10 days after service of the motion, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

(C) Format of Motions, Answers, and Briefs

All motions, answers, and briefs must conform to the following requirements:

(1) The document shall be on 8 1/2 inch by 11 inch paper.

(2) The document shall be prepared on white paper (except for dividers and similar sheets) of good quality.

(3) The first sheet shall contain a 3-inch space from the top of the paper for all court stampings, filing notices, etc.

(4) The text must be double spaced, but quotations more than two lines long may be indented and single spaced. Margins must be at least one inch on all four sides.

(5) The lettering shall be clear and legible and no smaller than point 12. The lettering shall be on only one side of a page, except that exhibits and similar supporting documents may be lettered on both sides of a page.

(6) Documents and papers shall be firmly bound.

[(C)] **(D)** Unified Practice

Any local rule that is inconsistent with the provisions of this rule is prohibited, including any local rule requiring a party to attach a proposed order to a motion or an answer, requiring an answer to every motion, or requiring a cover sheet or a backer for any motion or answer.

COMMENT: For the definition of "motion," see Rule 103.

See Rule 1005 for the procedures for pretrial applications for relief in the Philadelphia Municipal Court.

"Rules to Show Cause" and "Rules Returnable" were abolished in 2004 because the terminology is arcane, and the concept of these "rules" has become obsolete. These "rules" have been replaced by the plain language "notice of hearings" provided in Rule 577(A)(2).

Pursuant to paragraphs (A)(2)(f) and (B)(3)(c), and Rule 576(B)(4), all filings by the parties must include a certificate of service setting forth the date and manner of service, and the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the persons served.

Although paragraph (B)(1) does not require an answer to every motion, the rule permits a judge to order an answer in

a specific case. See Rule 114 for the requirements for the filing and serving of orders, and for making docket entries.

Paragraph (B)(1) changes prior practice by providing that the failure to answer a motion in a criminal case never constitutes an admission. Although this prohibition applies in all cases, even those in which an answer has been ordered in a specific case or is required by the rules, the judge would have discretion to impose other appropriate sanctions if a party fails to file an answer ordered by the judge or required by the rules.

Paragraph (C), added in 2006, sets forth the format requirements for all motions, answers, and briefs filed in criminal cases. These new format requirements are substantially the same as the format requirements in Pennsylvania Rule of Appellate Procedure 124(a) and Pennsylvania Rule of Civil Procedure 204.1.

The format requirements in paragraph (C) are not intended to apply to pre-printed and computer-generated forms prepared by the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts; to charging documents; to documents routinely used by court-related agencies; or to documents routinely prepared or utilized by the courts.

Pro se defendants may submit handwritten documents that comply with the other requirements in paragraph (C) and are clearly readable.

Paragraph [(C)] (D), titled "Unified Practice," was added in 2004 to emphasize that local rules must not be inconsistent with the statewide rules. Although this prohibition on local rules that are inconsistent with the statewide rules applies to all criminal rules through Rule 105 (Local Rules), the reference to the specific prohibitions is included because these types of local rules have been identified by practitioners as creating significant impediments to the statewide practice of law within the unified judicial system. See the first paragraph of the Rule 105 *Comment*. The term "local rule" includes every rule, regulation, directive, policy,

custom, usage, form or order of general application. See Rule 105(A).

The prohibition on local rules mandating cover sheets was added because cover sheets are no longer necessary with the addition of the Rule 576(B)(1) requirement that the court administrator be served a copy of all motions and answers.

Although paragraph ~~[(C)]~~ (D) precludes local rules that require a proposed order be included with a motion, a party should consider whether to include a proposed order. Proposed orders may aid the court by defining the relief requested in the motion or answer.

NOTE: Former Rule 9020 adopted October 21, 1983, effective January 1, 1984; renumbered Rule 574 and amended March 1, 2000, effective April 1, 2001; rescinded March 3, 2004, effective July 1, 2004. Former Rule 9021 adopted October 21, 1983, effective January 1, 1984; renumbered Rule 575 and amended March 1, 2000, effective April 1, 2001; Rules 574 and 575 combined as Rule 575 and amended March 3, 2004, effective July 1, 2004 ~~[.]~~ ;
amended July 7, 2006, effective February 1, 2007.

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COMMITTEE EXPLANATORY REPORTS:

Final Report explaining the March 1, 2000 reorganization and renumbering of the rules published with the Court's Order at 30 Pa.B. 1478 (March 18, 2000).

Final Report explaining the March 3, 2004 rule changes combining Rule 574 with Rule 575 published with the Court's Order at 34 Pa.B. 1561 (March 20, 2004).

Final Report explaining the July 7, 2006 addition of the format requirements in paragraph (C) published with the Court's Order at 36 Pa.B. (, 2006).