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Criminal Instructions Advisory Panel

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Staff:

Roger B. Meilton, *Assistant Reporter and Secretary*

Legal Authorization:

Pa. Constitution Article V, § 10(c)

**Committee
for
Proposed
Standard
Jury
Instructions**

c/o Pa. Bar Institute
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History/Background

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court Committee for Proposed Standard Jury Instructions was first appointed in 1968 by Chief Justice John C. Bell for the express purpose of developing pattern jury charges for the assistance of both the bench and the bar. The committee's mission from the outset has been to assist the administration of justice in both civil and criminal court proceedings through the availability of model jury instructions.

As a result, the committee has published comprehensive volumes of suggested civil and criminal jury instructions. The suggested instructions guide judges and lawyers in the preparation and consideration of instructions during the trial process. The ongoing purpose of the committee is to monitor developments in civil and criminal law, recommending and publishing revised and new instructions as required.

Since 1979 the Pennsylvania Bar Institute (PBI) has provided both administrative and publishing support for the committee as well as funding for this important work. Project costs are underwritten through the sale and distribution of the published suggested standard instructions to the legal community.

Committee Activities

The third supplement to the Civil Jury Instructions was published in 1997. With this supplement, the instructions became available on computer diskette. In 2001 a working Advisory Committee began reviewing every existing instruction. Substantial changes are being made to many instructions; citations are being updated; and, where appropriate, new

instructions are being written. Review of the instructions will continue into 2002 with the goal being to publish a new, two-volume civil jury instruction edition and companion CD-ROM in late 2002.

The eighth supplement to the Criminal Jury Instructions was published in the fall of 2000. With it, the instructions also became available on CD-ROM.

Professor Arthur Murphy, who has served as reporter for the criminal instructions subcommittee for many years, has retired. Although he has agreed to work on particular instructions, a new reporter or co-reporters are being recruited to work on the next edition, scheduled for publication in 2003.

The immediate goal is to publish new supplements or new editions of both the civil and criminal instructions every two years. The three-year goal is to publish shorter, more frequent supplements or new editions on an annual basis.

Contact Person

Members of the bench and bar are urged to provide their comments and suggestions to the committee. Such comments are of great assistance to the reporters and subcommittee members in their ongoing efforts to ensure that the instructions reflect the current state of the law in Pennsylvania.

Those interested may contact David Hominik, PBI Publications Director. He can be reached at the Pennsylvania Bar Institute; 5080 Ritter Road; Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-6903; (800) 932-4637 or (717) 796-0804, ext. 2258; or dhominik@pbi.org. **AGPC**