



Supreme Court of Illinois

Joseph R. Tybor
Press Secretary

222 North LaSalle Street, 13th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Telephone (312) 793-2323
Mobile (312) 636-0479
Fax (312) 793-0871

DECEMBER 8, 2011

CHIEF JUSTICE KILBRIDE ANNOUNCES PATTERN JURY INSTRUCTIONS NOW ONLINE

Chief Justice Thomas L. Kilbride and the Illinois Supreme Court announced Thursday another step to provide better public access to legal information and to improve the efficiency of lawyers practicing in Illinois.

Effective immediately, Illinois Pattern Jury Instructions, for both civil and criminal cases, will be available on the website of the Supreme Court at www.state.il.us/court. Previously, the complete instructions were available only in bulky, bound volumes and supplemental inserts through a paid subscription or through a law library.

A new letter of agreement, between the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts and Thomson Reuters, who publishes the volumes under the West Group name, made the change possible. Thomson Reuters retains an exclusive license for publication for commercial purposes.

"This is a very welcome step forward as we move in Illinois to integrate our court systems and processes with the latest technology," said Chief Justice Kilbride. "This was made possible by the renegotiation of our publishing contract with Thomson Reuters, and the continued efforts of the Supreme Court's E-Business Committee to make the practice of law more efficient for lawyers, more cost-effective for clients and court information more accessible to everyone—lawyer and non-lawyer.

"I also wish to thank those members of the Committee on Pattern Jury Instructions, both civil and criminal."

The online publication of the pattern jury instructions coincides with the 50th anniversary of the publication of the original IPI Civil edition, which revolutionized the trial of cases in Illinois. With the publication of the Pattern Jury Instructions for both civil and criminal cases, the Supreme Court required their use in all trials, providing uniformity in the elements to be proved at trial. Pattern Jury Instructions, which now exist in virtually every state, not only outline the elements of what needs to be proved in a case but also provide jurors with a legal road map to determine liability or guilt.

MORE

Pattern Jury Instructions Add One

Before their use in Illinois, one study found that 38 percent of all reversals were caused in whole or part by errors in jury instructions.

"When the IPI Jury Instruction books first came out 50 years ago, that was hailed as one of the best things that ever happened for the trial practitioner," said Michael J. Warner, a Rock Island attorney who serves as chair of the Committee on Jury Instructions in Civil Cases. "And this is the second big step in that evolution. Everybody will now have access to these instructions and it will be a tremendous benefit to the trial bar and judiciary."

"This will greatly help judges, lawyers and law students in Illinois," said Bruce Pfaff, chair of the Supreme Court Special E-Business Committee. "For the first time in Illinois, everyone will have access for no charge to the approved jury instructions for civil and criminal cases."

"The site allows for very easy navigation. It permits the download of any or all instructions, and notes on use and comments. It makes preparing jury instructions for trial much easier and less time consuming. Clients, as well as the legal community, will benefit."

The Pattern Jury Instructions are available through the Illinois Supreme Court website at www.state.il.us/court. Once on the home page of the Court, it can be found under "Legal Community" below "Quick Links" on the left side of the page.

This is the link for the pattern jury instructions in civil cases:

<http://www.state.il.us/court/CircuitCourt/CivilJuryInstructions/default.asp>

This is the link for pattern jury instructions in criminal cases:

<http://www.state.il.us/court/CircuitCourt/CriminalJuryInstructions/default.asp>

The online publication of the Pattern Jury Instructions is another step in an initiative announced in June by the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court to move Illinois courts forward in the electronic age by implementing new ways of doing court business to achieve efficiency and economy in the court system.

Since then, pilot projects have been initiated in DuPage County, Ogle County, and Adams County in the Second and Fourth Appellate Districts to provide an electronic trial record for easier access and viewing by attorneys, parties and appellate justices.

--30--

(FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Joseph Tybor, press secretary to the Illinois Supreme Court, at 312.793.2323)