

Rule 32. Form of Briefs, Appendices, and Other Papers

(a) Form of a Brief.

(1) Reproduction.

- (A) A brief may be reproduced by any process that yields a clear black image on light paper. The paper must be opaque and unglazed. Only one side of the paper may be used.
- (B) Text must be reproduced with a clarity that equals or exceeds the output of a laser printer.
- (C) Photographs, illustrations, and tables may be reproduced by any method that results in a good copy of the original; a glossy finish is acceptable if the original is glossy.

(2) Cover. Except for filings by unrepresented parties, the cover of the appellant's brief must be blue; the appellee's, red; an intervenor's or amicus curiae's, green; and any reply brief, gray; and any supplemental brief, tan. The front cover of a brief must contain:

- (A) the number of the case centered at the top;
- (B) the name of the court;
- (C) the title of the case (see Rule 12(a));
- (D) the nature of the proceeding (e.g., Appeal, Petition for Review) and the name of the court, agency, or board below;
- (E) the title of the brief, identifying the party or parties for whom the brief is filed; and
- (F) the name, office address, and telephone number of counsel representing the party for whom the brief is filed.

(3) Binding. The brief must be bound in any manner that is secure, does not obscure the text, and permits the brief to lie reasonably flat when open.

(4) Paper Size, Line Spacing, and Margins. The brief must be on 8 ½ by 11 inch paper. The text must be double-spaced, but quotations more than two lines long may be indented and single-spaced. Headings and footnotes may be single-spaced. Margins must be at least one inch on all four sides. Page numbers may be placed in the margins, but no text may appear there.

(5) Typeface. Either a proportionally spaced or a monospaced face may be used.

- (A) A proportionally spaced face must include serifs, but sans-serif type may be used in headings and captions. A proportionally spaced face must be 14-point or larger.

(B) A monospaced face may not contain more than 10½ characters per inch.

(6) **Type Styles.** A brief must be set in a plain, roman style, although italics or boldface may be used for emphasis. Case names must be italicized or underlined.

(7) **Length.**

(A) **Page limitation.** A principal brief may not exceed 30 pages, or a reply brief 15 pages, unless it complies with Rule 32(a)(7)(B).

(B) **Type-volume limitation.**

(i) A principal brief is acceptable if it:

- contains no more than 13,000 words; or
- uses a monospaced face and contains no more than 1,300 lines of text.

(ii) A reply brief is acceptable if it contains no more than half of the type volume specified in Rule 32(a)(7)(B)(i).

(b) **Form of an Appendix.** An appendix must comply with Rule 32(a)(1), (2), (3), and (4), with the following exceptions:

(1) The cover of a separately bound appendix must be white.

(2) An appendix may include a legible photocopy of any document found in the record or of a printed judicial or agency decision.

(3) When necessary to facilitate inclusion of odd-sized documents such as technical drawings, an appendix may be a size other than 8 ½ by 11 inches, and need not lie reasonably flat when opened.

(c) **Form of Other Papers.**

(1) **Motion.** The form of a motion is governed by Rule 27(d).

(2) **Other Papers.** Any other paper, including a petition for panel rehearing and a petition for hearing or rehearing en banc, and any response to such a petition, must be reproduced in the manner prescribed by Rule 32(a), with the following exceptions:

(A) A cover is not necessary if the caption and signature page of the paper together contain the information required by Rule 32(a)(2). If a cover is used, it must be white.

(B) Rule 32(a)(7) does not apply.

(d) Signature. Every brief, motion, or other paper filed with the court must be signed by the party filing the paper or, if the party is represented, by one of the party's attorneys.

(e) Local Variation. Every court of appeals must accept documents that comply with the form requirements of this rule and the length limits set by these rules. By local rule or order in a particular case, a court of appeals may accept documents that do not meet all the form requirements of this rule or the length limits set by these rules.

(f) Items Excluded from Length. In computing any length limit, headings, footnotes, and quotations count toward the limit but the following items do not:

- cover page;
- disclosure statement;
- table of contents;
- table of citations;
- statement regarding oral argument;
- addendum containing statutes, rules, or regulations;
- certificates of counsel;
- signature block;
- proof of service; and
- any item specifically excluded by these rules or by local rule.

(g) Certificate of Compliance.

(1) Briefs and Papers That Require a Certificate. A brief submitted under Rules 28.1(e)(2), 29(b)(4), or 32(a)(7)(B)—and a paper submitted under Rules 5(c)(1), 21(d)(1), 27(d)(2)(A), 27(d)(2)(C), 35(b)(2)(A), or 40(b)(1)—must include a certificate by the attorney, or an unrepresented party, that the document complies with the type-volume limitation. The person preparing the certificate may rely on the word or line count of the word-processing system used to prepare the document. The certificate must state the number of words—or the number of lines of monospaced type—in the document.

(2) Acceptable Form. Form 6 in the Appendix of Forms meets the requirements for a certificate of compliance.

Local Rule 32(a). Reproduction of Appendices.

Double-sided copying of appendices is preferred in all cases. No joint appendix in a court-appointed case should exceed 500 pages without advance permission from the Court; unless such permission is granted, reimbursement of copy expenses will be limited to 500 pages.

Local Rule 32(b). Length of Briefs.

The Fourth Circuit encourages short, concise briefs. Under no circumstances may a brief exceed the length limitations in FRAP 32(a)(7) and FRAP 28.1(e) without the Court's advance permission.

A motion for permission to submit a longer brief must be made to the Court of Appeals at least 10 days prior to the due date of the brief and must be supported by a statement of reasons. These motions are not favored and will be granted only for exceptional reasons.

Local Rule 32(c). Correction of Briefs and Appendices.

If briefs, appendices, or other papers are illegible or are not in the form required by the federal rules or by this Court's local rules or standards when filed, counsel will be required to file corrected copies of the document. If the corrected copies are not submitted within the time allowed by the clerk, they must be accompanied by a motion to file out of time.

Former I.O.P.-32.2 amended September 28, 1994; redesignated Local Rule 32(a) December 1, 1995.

Former I.O.P.-32.1 amended December 1, 1992; amended and redesignated Local Rule 32(b) December 1, 1995; amended and redesignated Local Rule 32(a) December 1, 1998; amended December 1, 2002, and October 1, 2015.

Former Local Rule 28(d) amended and redesignated Local Rule 32(b) December 1, 1998; amended December 1, 2002, December 1, 2009, July 2, 2012, October 1, 2015, and December 9, 2019.

Former I.O.P.-32.3 redesignated Local Rule 32(c) December 1, 1995; rescinded December 1, 1998.

Local Rule 32(d) adopted December 1, 1995; redesignated Local Rule 32(c) December 1, 1998.

Former Local Rule 32(d) rescinded December 1, 1998.

Former I.O.P.-32.4 rescinded December 1, 1995.