

SUPREME COURT OF THE NAVAJO NATION

---

In the Matter of a Universal Citation System  
for the Decisions of the Courts of the Navajo Nation

**ORDER ESTABLISHING A UNIFORM CITATION SYSTEM FOR OPINIONS**

Before BATES ARTHUR, Chief Justice and FERGUSON, Associate Justice.

This matter came before the Court on the Court's own motion for the purpose of creating a uniform citation system for Navajo Nation court opinions for use in litigants' pleadings submitted to Navajo Nation courts. The Court issued a proposed order and asked for comments from the Navajo Bar Association. No comments were filed with this Court. Upon further review, the Court amended its previous proposal.

There presently is no uniform citation system and practitioners have asked this Court how to cite to various documents. Pursuant to 7 N.N.C. § 601(C) (as amended by Navajo Nation Council Resolution No. CO-72-03 (October 24, 2003)), authorizing the Court to independently adopt standard forms for pleadings, motions and other papers filed in the Navajo Nation courts, the Court hereby sets official citation guidelines for practitioners in the future:

1. When the opinion appears in the official Navajo Reporter, citations to opinions of the Navajo Nation Supreme Court shall use the volume number and page number of the Navajo Reporter in which it appears, followed by the exact page number if citing to a particular part of an opinion. The Navajo Reporter shall be cited as "Nav. R." The citation shall also include the abbreviation "Nav. Sup. Ct." and the year the

opinion was issued in parenthesis after the Navajo Reporter information.

*Example: Navajo Nation v. Hunter*, 7 Nav. R. 194, 195 (Nav. Sup. Ct. 1996).

2. Citations to Supreme Court opinions not yet published in the Navajo Reporter shall use the Supreme Court docket number, and include the page number of the official slip opinion if citing to a particular part of an opinion. The citation shall also include the abbreviation "Nav. Sup. Ct." and the exact date the opinion was issued in parenthesis after the docket number information.

*Example: Nelson v. Pfizer*, No. SC-CV-01-02, slip op. at 4 (Nav. Sup. Ct. November 24, 2003).

3. District and family courts may set their own guidelines for the citation of trial court opinions in their courts. The Court encourages the trial courts to create a uniform citation system for use in all trial courts of the Navajo Nation.

4. When citing to district or family court opinions in Supreme Court briefs, however, when the opinion has been published in the Navajo Reporter, practitioners should cite to the volume number and page number of the official Navajo Reporter in which it appears followed by the exact page number if citing to a particular part of an opinion. The citation shall also include the abbreviation for the judicial district followed by "Dist. Ct." or "Fam. Ct." and the year the opinion was issued in parenthesis following the Navajo Reporter information. The following abbreviations shall be used for the judicial districts:

|             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| Alamo       | Alam.  |
| Chinle      | Chin.  |
| Crownpoint  | Crwn.  |
| Kayenta     | Kay.   |
| Ramah       | Ram.   |
| Shiprock    | Ship.  |
| To'hajiilee | Tohaj. |
| Tuba City   | T.C.   |
| Window Rock | W.R.   |


*Example: Farley v. Kerr McGee*, 7 Nav. R. 600, 601 (Ship. Dist. Ct. 1999).

5. If the district or family court opinion was not or has not been published in the official Navajo Reporter, the citation should include the district or family court docket number, and cite to the page number of the slip opinion if citing to a particular part of the opinion. The citation shall also include the abbreviation for the judicial district followed by "Dist. Ct." or "Fam. Ct." and the exact date the opinion was issued in parenthesis following the Navajo Reporter information.

*Example: Benally v. Benally*, No. KY-FC-583-02 CV, slip op. at 2 (Kay. Fam. Ct. December 29, 2003).

The Clerk of the Supreme Court shall distribute copies of this order to each Navajo Nation Judicial District, the Office of Legislative Counsel, the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, and the Navajo Bar Association.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of January, 2004

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Associate Justice