

NEWS RELEASE

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New cover sheet to be required for commencing most civil actions

HARRISBURG, March 1, 2010 — A new court form designed for people filing civil actions is being introduced by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania to enhance the flow and analysis of the thousands of cases processed annually by the Courts of Common Pleas.

An order amending the Rules of Civil Procedure to require the new civil cover sheet was issued by the Supreme Court on Feb. 25. The order requires litigants to file the new form with prothonotaries in Pennsylvania's county-level courts beginning May 26, 2010. Civil cases include those involving property disputes and damages, medical malpractice claims and zoning and tax assessment appeals, among other things. The cover sheet, which will be used in every courthouse in the state, will include a check-off list to note the type of claim filed.

The new rules exempt judicial districts with electronic filing systems, provided that the data required on the cover sheet can be transmitted to the AOPC by the county system.

While the AOPC systematically has gathered aggregate caseload data for years, use of the cover sheet is part of a broader effort to bring about greater court unification and is designed to create the first statewide detailed tracking by category — and the trending upward or downward of specific types of cases. The data then will help pinpoint areas to allocate resources at the state and local levels and serve as a valuable planning tool for court administration.

The Supreme Court's order can be found at the following link on the Web site of Pennsylvania's Unified Judicial System:

<http://www.pacourts.us/T/SupremeCourt/SupremePostings.htm>

The form for the new civil cover sheet can be found on the Web site of the Unified Judicial System at this link:

<http://www.pacourts.us/Forms/Default.htm>

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