

**HOW DOES A CASE  
GET TO THE COURT  
OF APPEALS?**

Appellant files appeal after a decision by a District Court or Agency



District Court or Agency forwards files to Court of Appeals



Appellant and respondent file briefs



Three-judge panel hears oral arguments



Court of Appeals issues written decision, called an “opinion.”



Parties may petition Supreme Court for further review

**Minnesota  
Court of Appeals**

Minnesota Judicial Center  
25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Phone: 651-297-1000  
Hours 8 a.m.—5 p.m. Monday–Friday  
[www.mncourts.gov](http://www.mncourts.gov)

Visitor’s  
Guide to Oral  
Arguments

**MINNESOTA  
COURT OF  
APPEALS**



Welcome to the Minnesota Court of Appeals, the state’s intermediate appellate court. You are about to hear oral arguments in an appeal.

The 19-judge Court of Appeals hears an appeal in a three-judge panel. The Court of Appeals does not consider any new evidence or testimony. Instead, the Court reviews the decisions and procedures of the district court or agency and decides whether an error occurred.

**MINNESOTA  
COURT OF APPEALS**



**Chief Judge  
Susan Segal**



**Judge Renee  
Worke**



**Judge Kevin  
Ross**



**Judge Francis  
Connolly**



**Judge  
Matthew  
Johnson**



**Judge Michelle  
Larkin**



**Judge Louise  
Dovre  
Bjorkman**



**Judge Peter  
Reyes, Jr.**



**Judge Tracy  
Smith**



**Judge Diane  
Bratvold**



**Judge Jeanne  
Cochran**



**Judge Randall  
Slieter**



**Judge Jeffrey  
Bryan**



**Judge Jennifer  
Frisch**



**Judge  
Theodora  
Gaitas**



**Judge Sarah  
Wheelock**



**Judge  
Elise Larson**



**Judge  
Jon Schmidt**



**Judge  
Keala Ede**

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## What happens during oral arguments?

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- **Marshal calls court to order; audience stands.** During oral arguments, the marshal maintains courtroom decorum and ensures that attorneys follow time limits.
- **Three judges enter the courtroom.** Court of Appeals cases are heard in three-judge panels. Before oral arguments, judges prepare by reading “briefs,” or written arguments submitted by the parties involved.
- **Appellant’s attorney argues the case.** The attorney representing the appealing party has fifteen minutes to highlight appellant’s best arguments and answers judges’ questions.
- **Respondent’s attorney argues and answers judges’ questions.** After respondent’s attorney argues, appellant’s attorney also has five minutes for rebuttal arguments.

- **Judges conference the case.** The three judges meet privately to decide the outcome of the appeal. One judge is assigned to draft the Court’s “opinion” or written decision.
- **Judges draft and revise the opinion.** The draft opinion is circulated among the members of the three-judge panel. A judge on the panel may also write a “concurring opinion” – agreeing with the decision but for different reasons – or a “dissenting opinion” – disagreeing with the majority opinion. Once the judges agree on a final draft, the opinion is circulated to the entire Court of Appeals for comments.
- **Opinion filed with Clerk of Appellate Courts, released to public via the Judicial Branch web site [www.mncourts.gov](http://www.mncourts.gov).** The Court of Appeals releases its opinion within 90 days, or sooner for certain case types.



Minnesota Judicial Center, St. Paul

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## Courtroom decorum

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### Please help us maintain decorum.

Important issues are decided based on oral arguments. Therefore, it is critical that the judges and attorneys work without distraction.

Please abide by the following while in court:

- Sit in the audience area of the courtroom. Standing is prohibited during oral arguments.
- Remain silent during the proceedings.
- Do not eat, drink, chew gum, or use tobacco in the courtroom.
- Remove hats before entering the courtroom.
- No demonstrations are allowed, including signs, banners or displays of symbols.
- Electronic recording devices are prohibited, except as permitted for the media.
- Turn off cell phones before entering the courtroom.
- Any distracting activity will be grounds for removal from the courtroom.

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## HOW MANY CASES DOES THE COURT OF APPEALS HANDLE?

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Approximately 2,000 appeals per year from:

- District Court decisions (except first-degree murder).
- Administrative agencies (except Tax and Workers’ Compensation courts).

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## WHEN DO ORAL ARGUMENTS OCCUR?

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- Year-round at the Minnesota Judicial Center in St. Paul.
- At various locations in Greater Minnesota, or remotely via Zoom, to keep litigation costs low and to ensure access to justice.
- Oral arguments can also be viewed live online at [www.mncourts.gov/CourtofAppeals.aspx](http://www.mncourts.gov/CourtofAppeals.aspx)