

Legal Terms

A.R.S.	Arizona Revised Statutes; laws of Arizona.
ACQUITTAL	Finding a criminal defendant not guilty of the charges against him/her.
ADJUDICATE	To decide or settle something in a legal setting.
ADJUDICATION	The pronouncing of a judgment or the judgment itself.
ADMISSIBILITY	The ability to legally and properly introduce evidence in a civil or criminal trial.
AFFIDAVIT	A voluntary statement or declaration of facts which has been written down and confirmed under oath.
AFFIRM	Upholding a decision made by a lower court.
ALLEGATION	An assertion, declaration, or statement which is made in a pleading by one of the parties to the action, and tells what that party intends to prove.
AMENDMENT	Change in legal document.
APPEAL	legal process used to ask a higher court to review a lower court's decision.
APPELLANT	The party appealing a judgment or decision.
APPELLATE COURT	A court having jurisdiction (authority) to hear appeals.
APPELLEE	The party against whom the appeal is taken.
ARRAIGNMENT	Case proceeding in which the defendant is brought before the court to answer to the charges by entering a plea of guilty or not guilty.
ATTORNEY AT LAW	Individual who is admitted to the State Bar of Arizona, and thus may represent clients in legal proceedings.
BAIL	Monetary sum which can be assessed by a judge to insure that a criminal defendant, who is being released prior to trial, will in fact appear in court on the trial date.
BRIEF	Written statement explaining facts of a case and laws that apply.
BURDEN OF PROOF	Responsibility for affirmatively proving the disputed facts in a case.
CASE	An action being resolved through the use of the court system.
CASE LAW	Law based on previous decisions of appellate courts, particularly the Supreme Court.
CHAMBERS	Private office of the Judge.
CHIEF JUSTICE	Presiding Justice of the Supreme Court.

COMPLAINT	The first pleading in a case filed by the plaintiff. It alleges the material facts and legal theories to support the plaintiff's claim against the defendant.
DEFENDANT	The person or party accused.
DIRECTED VERDICT	An instruction by the judge to the jury to return a specific verdict.
DISCOVERY	The pre-trial process by which one party discovers the evidence that will be relied upon at trial by the opposing party.
DISCRETIONARY	The power to act on one's own judgment with fairness and justice.
DUE PROCESS	The regular course of administration through the courts of justice, under the protection of the law and U.S. Constitution, enabling every person to have a fair and impartial trial or hearing.
EVIDENCE	A fact presented in court through the testimony of a witness, an object, or written documents.
EXHIBIT	A document or object, which is offered in evidence during a trial or hearing.
FOR CAUSE	Based upon some good reason.
IMPANEL	The act in making up a list of jurors who have been selected for the trial of a particular case.
INJUNCTION	A writ or order by a court which requires a party to refrain from doing a particular thing or commanding that the party perform a particular act.
JUDGE	The public officer authorized to preside over, hear and determine causes in a court of law.
JUDGE PRO TEM	A temporary judge.
JURISDICTION	The legal authority of a court to hear and decide cases; the exercise of judicial power within certain geographic boundaries.
LAW	Provisions which regulate the conduct of society, primarily generated by the legislature through statutes and sometimes by court decisions.
LEGAL	Permitted by law.
LIABILITY	A legal responsibility or obligation.
LJC	Limited Jurisdiction Court is a court, which may hear and decide only a limited number of types of cases. In Arizona, these are Justice of the Peace and Municipal Courts.
MISDEMEANOR	A classification for offenses which are less serious than felonies; a misdemeanor is punishable by a sentence other than being placed in the custody of the Department of Corrections.
MOTION	An application for a rule or order, made to a court or judge.
OATH	A pledge, affirmation, or declaration to provide true information.
OPINION	Written statement issued to report the decision of an appellate court.

PETITION	Written application made to the court asking for legal intervention.
PETITION FOR REVIEW	An application asking a higher court to examine a lower court ruling.
PLAINTIFF	In a civil action, the party who files the lawsuit; in a criminal case, the state is the plaintiff.
PLEA	Response of a defendant to the charges stated; the plea will usually be “guilty” or “not guilty.”
PRESIDING JUDGE	Supervisory judge who handles the administrative duties of the court.
PROBABLE CAUSE	Sufficient legal reason for arresting a person or searching a premises or item.
PROSECUTION	The act of instituting legal proceedings against someone or something.
PROSECUTOR	Attorney representing the citizens of a particular community or the state in a criminal case; this may be the city attorney, county attorney, or attorney general.
RECORD ON APPEAL	Papers, transcripts, and exhibits filed and presented to the trial court, which are forwarded to the appellate court to review.
REMAND	To send back; and appellate court may remand a case to the trial court for re-trial or other action.
REVERSE	Decision of an appellate court to change, in whole or in part, the decision of a lower court.
SENTENCE	Punishment imposed by the court in accordance with the range of punishments authorized by statute.
STATUTE	Law enacted by the legislature and published as the Arizona Revised Statutes.
SUBPOENA	Legal document issued by the courts to order a person to appear as specified and give testimony and/or bring evidence.
SUMMONS	Legal document issued by the court which directs the sheriff or other officer to notify the named defendant that a complaint has been filed and that he/she is required to appear and answer the complaint on or before the time and date specified.
TESTIMONY	Statements made by a witness who has taken an oath to tell the truth.
TRANSCRIPT	Official, verbatim record of court proceedings.
TRIAL	Formal presentation of facts to a court or jury in order to reach a legal resolution.
TRIAL DE NOVO	A new trial which is held upon appeal from a non-record limited jurisdiction court or from appeal of an arbitration award.
VERDICT	Formal decision of a trial jury.
WITNESS	Individual who gives testimony regarding what he/she has seen, heard, or otherwise observed.