



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Wyoming Supreme Court's role?

The Wyoming Supreme Court is the state's highest court and serves as the final authority on matters of Wyoming law. The Court's primary responsibility is to review decisions from lower courts to ensure the law was applied correctly. The Court interprets statutes, applies constitutional principles, and provides guidance to lower courts on cases.

Does the Supreme Court choose its cases?

Generally, parties have a right to appeal to the Wyoming Supreme Court. Unlike the U.S. Supreme Court, which selects which cases to hear on appeal, the Wyoming Supreme Court hears all appeals as a matter of right when a party believes a legal error was made in the lower court.

How does the Supreme Court differ from the Legislature?

The Court interprets and applies existing law. It does not make new laws or set policy. That authority belongs to the Wyoming Legislature, whose members are elected to represent the policy preferences of their constituents. When the Supreme Court issues a decision, it is explaining what the law currently says, not what the law should be. If the Legislature disagrees with how a statute has been interpreted, it has the power to amend or clarify that statute.

Are oral arguments open to the public and media?

Usually, yes, unless the case is confidential in accordance with state law. Oral arguments before the Wyoming Supreme Court are generally open to the public, including members of the media. The Court is committed to transparency, and observers are welcome to attend arguments in person. Check the [Wyoming Judicial Branch's website](#) for the argument calendar and location.

Can oral arguments be recorded or livestreamed?

Many oral arguments are livestreamed online. Under the rules of the Supreme Court, oral arguments are not to be recorded, photographed, or videographed in any way. Reporters seeking B-roll, stock footage, or other materials should contact the Court's media contact.

When are opinions released?

The Court does not announce opinion release dates in advance. Opinions are typically released during business hours and are immediately posted to the Court's website. Reporters can monitor the website or reach out to the Court's media contact to subscribe to notifications.

Can justices speak with reporters about pending or decided cases?

Justices do not provide interviews or commentary about specific cases, as the written opinion speaks for itself and contains the Court's complete reasoning. This practice preserves judicial impartiality and ensures all parties are treated equally. For questions about court operations or general process, contact the Court's media contact.

How does a case progress through the Wyoming Supreme Court?

1. **Written Briefs:** After a case is appealed, both parties submit written briefs arguing their positions. These documents present the facts, applicable law, and legal arguments. The justices and their staff carefully review these materials before oral argument.
2. **Oral Arguments:** The Court may hear oral arguments where attorneys for each side present their case and answer questions from the justices. These sessions allow justices to probe points in arguments, clarify complex issues, and explore different legal interpretations.
3. **Conference & Discussion:** After oral arguments, the justices meet privately to discuss the case. Each justice shares their analysis and perspective. These deliberations are confidential to encourage frank discussion and independent thinking.
4. **Opinion Writing:** One justice is assigned to write the majority opinion. This draft is circulated among all justices, who may suggest revisions, raise additional issues, or express disagreement. Justices may write separate concurring opinions (agreeing with the outcome but for different reasons) or dissenting opinions (disagreeing with the outcome).
5. **Final Opinion:** Shortly after a majority of justices agree on the final language, the opinion is released to the public. Every opinion includes a detailed explanation of the Court's reasoning so that lawyers, judges, and citizens can understand the basis for the decision.

Who can reporters contact with questions?

For case status or documents, contact the Clerk of the Supreme Court. For broader media inquiries or context about court operations, contact the Court's media contact. The Court's media contact is available to assist reporters with:

- Explaining Court procedures, terminology, and processes in plain language
- Providing background on how the judicial system works in Wyoming
- Directing reporters to publicly available resources and records
- Arranging facility access for coverage of oral arguments or other public proceedings
- Coordinating logistics for media coverage of Court events
- Answering questions about Judicial Branch administration and operations

The Court's media contact cannot provide:

- Legal advice or interpretation of how the law applies to specific situations
- Commentary on the merits of pending or decided cases
- Predictions about how the Court might rule
- Information about justices' deliberations or internal discussions

Media Contact

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