STANDARD INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

The original source of RAJI (CIVIL) Standard Instructions 1 through 8 primarily was the Manual of Model Jury Instructions for the Ninth Circuit. The first eight Standard Instructions following have been used for many years in the form herein and are not changed in substance or form in RAJI (CIVIL) 7th. Some Standard Instructions that appeared in RAJI (CIVIL) 3d have been moved to Preliminary Instructions or eliminated.

Standard Instruction 9 in RAJI (CIVIL) 4th entitled "Insurance," was a new Standard Instruction. The Committee felt that the language was a correct statement of the law, when an instruction on insurance is to be given. (*See* "Source" to Standard Instruction 9.) Differences in views concerning an insurance instruction arose over when to use an insurance instruction. Some Arizona trial judges desire to routinely use an insurance instruction in the Preliminary Instructions and/or in the final set in applicable cases. Other trial judges, until an appellate decision comes down, prefer to use an instruction only when "insurance" is referenced during trial. The Arizona Jury Project, authorized by the Arizona Supreme Court in 1993, was a strong factor in the analysis and suggested handling of the insurance problem as stated in an article entitled *Jury Room Rumination of Forbidden Topics,* 87 VA. L. REV. 1857 (Dec. 2001), noting that Arizona Jury Project shows that jurors' conversations about insurance occurred in 85% of all cases and on average four times during deliberations. This article advocates the routine use of an insurance jury instruction with the regular instructions as the better way to avoid or minimize the usual juror speculation and discussions about the parties' insurance coverage in deliberations.

In April 2019, the Committee added a new Standard 10 Instruction on Spoliation and in December 2024 an instruction on Adverse Inference.

STANDARD 1

Impeachment with Felony Conviction

Evidence that a witness has previously been convicted of a felony may be considered only as it may affect the credibility of that person as a witness. You may not consider that evidence for any other purpose.

[You must not consider that evidence as tending to prove or disprove any of the claims in this case, or as evidence that the witness is a bad person or predisposed to commit crimes.]

SOURCE: RAJI (CIVIL) 3d Standard 8; Ariz. R. Evid. 609; *State v. Canedo*, 125 Ariz. 197 (1980); *State v. Cruz*, 127 Ariz. 33 (1980); *State v. Turner*, 141 Ariz. 470 (1984).

USE NOTE: 1. Consider giving the bracketed paragraph when the felon witness is a defendant in the case, or when there is any need for a more limiting instruction than is contained in the first paragraph. A limiting instruction must be given when there is proper request. Rule 105, Arizona Rules of Evidence.

2. If the prior conviction is admitted for some purpose other than impeachment of credibility, that additional purpose (and limitation) should also be stated in the instruction, and the first paragraph of the instruction should be modified accordingly.

COMMENT: A felony conviction is admissible for impeachment purposes if the court, following a hearing, makes the findings required by Ariz. R. Evid. 609. *Wilson v. Riley Whittle, Inc.*, 145 Ariz. 317, 324 (App. 1984).

STANDARD 2

Burden of Proof
(More Probably True)

Burden of proof means burden of persuasion. On any claim, the party who has the burden of proof must persuade you, by the evidence, that the claim is more probably true than not true. This means that the evidence that favors that party outweighs the opposing evidence. In determining whether a party has met this burden, consider all the evidence that bears on that claim, regardless of which party produced it.

SOURCE: RAJI (CIVIL) 3d Standard 9.

COMMENT: This instruction was subtitled "Preponderance" in RAJI (Civil), although that word did not appear in the instruction. The subtitle has been changed to use the words that do appear in the instruction.

STANDARD 3

Burden of Proof
(Clear and Convincing)

Some of the claims in this case require proof by clear and convincing evidence.

A party who has the burden of proof by clear and convincing evidence must persuade you by the evidence that the claim is highly probable. This standard is more exacting than the standard of more probably true than not true, but it is less exacting than the standard of proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

You are to use the standard of more probably true than not true for all claims in this case except for those on which you are specifically instructed that the burden of proof is the standard of clear and convincing evidence.

In determining whether a party has met any burden of proof, you will consider all the evidence, whether presented by [*name of plaintiff*] or [*name of defendant*].

SOURCE: *Matter of Neville*, 147 Ariz. 106 (1985); *Matter of Weiner*, 120 Ariz. 349 (1978); *State v. Renforth*, 155 Ariz. 385 (App. 1987), *rev. denied*, 158 Ariz. 487 (1988); *State v. King*, 158 Ariz. 419, 422 (1988) *See also United States v. Owens*, 854 F.2d 432, 436 (11th Cir. 1988), which accepted the *Renforth* definition of the clear and convincing standard of proof.

USE NOTE: Use with Standard 2 where there are claims in the case requiring proof by clear and convincing evidence.

STANDARD 4

Corporate Party

A corporation is a party in this lawsuit. Corporations and individuals are entitled to the same fair and impartial consideration and to justice reached by the same legal standards.

When I use the word "person" in these instructions, or when I use any personal pronoun referring to a party, those instructions also apply to [*name of corporation*].

COMMENT: Modify as necessary for partnerships or other entities.

STANDARD 5a

Respondeat Superior Liability
(for use in cases where Defendant's legal responsibility for employee's/agent's acts is not disputed)

In this case, [*name of defendant*] is responsible for the actions of its [employee] [agent], [*name of person claimed to be agent*].

SOURCE: *Engler v. Gulf Interstate Engineering, Inc.,* 230 Ariz. 55 (2012); RESTATEMENT (THIRD) OF AGENCY § 7.07; *Higginbotham v. AN Motors of Scottsdale*, 228 Ariz. 550 (App. 2012); *Love v. Liberty Mut. Ins. Co.,* 158 Ariz. 36 (App. 1988); *Duncan v. State,* 157 Ariz. 56 (App. 1988); *Robarge v. Bechtel Power Corp.,* 131 Ariz. 280 (App. 1982); *Scott v. Allstate Ins. Co.,* 27 Ariz. App. 236 (1976); *Olson v. Staggs-Bilt Homes, Inc.,* 23 Ariz. App. 574 (1975); A.R.S. § 12-2506(D)(2).

USE NOTE: This instruction is to be given in cases where the Defendant's vicarious liability for the acts of one or more of its employees or agents has been admitted or judicially determined. In cases where Defendant's vicarious liability for a purported employee/agent is a disputed issue of fact, RAJI Standard 5b should be given. In cases where vicarious liability is admitted or judicially determined as to certain employees/agents, and disputed as to others, both instructions (RAJI Standard 5a and 5b) should be given, placing the names of the persons claimed to be agents in the appropriate instructions.

STANDARD 5b

Respondeat Superior Liability
(Use in cases where vicarious liability is a jury issue)

[*Name of plaintiff*] claims that [*name of defendant*] is responsible for the actions of [*name of person claimed to be agent*], as its [employee] [agent]. [*Name of defendant*] is responsible for the actions of [*name of person claimed to be agent*] if [*name of person claimed to be agent*] was acting within the scope of [his] [her] [employment][authority].

To establish the claim that [*name of defendant*] is responsible for [*name of person claimed to be agent*]'s actions, [*name of plaintiff*] must prove that when [*name of person claimed to be agent*] [*describe allegedly tortious act*], [he/she] was:

1. Performing a task or work assigned or authorized by [*name of defendant*], or
2. [*Name of person claimed to be agent*] was, at the time, subject to [*name of defendant*]'s control or right to control.

If the [*describe allegedly tortious act*] was an independent course of conduct not intended by [*name of person claimed to be agent*] to serve any purpose of [*name of defendant*], then the act would be outside the scope of employment, and therefore [*name of defendant*] is not responsible for the actions of [*name of person claimed to be agent*].

SOURCE: *Engler v. Gulf Interstate Engineering, Inc.,* 230 Ariz. 55 (2012) (adopting RESTATEMENT (THIRD) OF AGENCY § 7.07); *Higginbotham v. AN Motors of Scottsdale*, 228 Ariz. 550 (App. 2012); *Tarron v. Bowen Mach. & Fabricating, Inc.*, 225 Ariz. 147 (2010); *Carnes v. Phoenix Newspapers Inc.*, 227 Ariz. 32 (App. 2011); *Simon v. Safeway, Inc.*, 217 Ariz. 330 (App. 2007); *Ruelas v. Staff Builders Personnel Services, Inc.*, 199 Ariz. 344 (App. 2001); *Baker v. Stewart Title & Trust of Phoenix*, 197 Ariz. 535 (App. 2000); *Ortiz v. Clinton*, 187 Ariz. 294 (App. 1996); *McDaniel v. Troy Design Services Co.*, 186 Ariz. 552 (App. 1996); *Love v. Liberty Mut. Ins. Co.,* 158 Ariz. 36 (App. 1988); *Duncan v. State,* 157 Ariz. 56 (App. 1988); *Robarge v. Bechtel Power Corp.,* 131 Ariz. 280 (App. 1982); *Scott v. Allstate Ins. Co.,* 27 Ariz. App. 236 (1976); *Olson v. Staggs-Bilt Homes, Inc.,* 23 Ariz. App. 574 (1975); A.R.S. § 12-2506(D)(2).

Use Note: This instruction is for use in cases where the jury is called upon to decide whether an employer or principal is vicariously liable for the act of an agent or employee. In cases where vicarious liability is admitted, RAJI Standard 5a should be given. In cases where vicarious liability is admitted or judicially determined as to certain employees/agents, and disputed as to others, both instructions (RAJI Standard 5a and 5b) should be given, placing the names of the persons claimed to be agents in the appropriate instructions.

Continued

STANDARD 5b

Respondeat Superior Liability
(Use in cases where vicarious liability is a jury issue)

Continued

COMMENT: In some cases involving unique fact patterns, or where the defendant disputes that an agency or employment relationship existed, additional instructions may be necessary. (See RAJI Agency Instructions.) If an agency but not an employment relationship existed, this instruction may need to be modified to instruct the jury on issues of ratification and apparent authority. (*See* RAJI Agency Instructions.) An employer may also be liable for the torts of its agents acting outside the scope of their employment if: (a) the employer intended the conduct or the consequences; (b) the employer was negligent or reckless; (c) the conduct violated a nondelegable duty of the employer; or (d) the employee purported to act or to speak on behalf of the employer and there was reliance upon apparent authority, or the employee was aided in accomplishing the tort by the existence of the agency relationship. RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF AGENCY § 219(2).

This instruction also does not apply in instances of an employer's alleged liability for an employee's tortious conduct toward a fellow employee.

In *Engler v. Gulf Interstate Engineering, Inc.,* 230 Ariz. 55 (2012), the Arizona Supreme Court adopted RESTATEMENT (THIRD) OF AGENCY § 7.07 as the appropriate test for evaluating whether an employee is acting within the scope of employment. This Restatement section is a consolidated treatment of topics covered in several separate sections of RESTATEMENT (SECOND) OF AGENCY, including §§ 219, 220, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, and 267. The Committee drafted the elements of proof in this instruction in an effort to follow *Engler*, Restatement § 7.07 and other Arizona cases.

STANDARD 6

Impasse in Jury Deliberations

I have been informed you are having difficulty reaching a verdict. This instruction is offered to help you, not to force you to reach a verdict.

You may want to identify areas of agreement and disagreement and discuss the law and the evidence as they relate to the areas of disagreement.

If you still disagree, you may wish to tell the attorneys and me which issues, questions, law or facts you would like us to assist you with. If you decide to follow these steps, please write down the areas of disagreement and give the note to the bailiff. We will then discuss your note and try to help you.

SOURCE: Ariz. R. Civ. P. 39(h) and Comment to 1995 Amendment.

USE NOTE: This instruction should not be routinely given. However, the instruction should be used only if the jury indicates it is at an impasse.

The options for helping the jury identified in the Comment to Rule 39(h) include giving additional instructions, clarifying earlier instructions, directing the attorneys to give additional closing argument, reopening the evidence for limited purposes, or a combination of these measures. The list is not exclusive.

STANDARD 7

Excused Alternate Jurors

Recall that the law provides for a jury of [*twelve, six*] in this trial. We seated [*an*] additional juror(s) just in case a juror member became ill or otherwise could not continue. At this time, the Clerk will draw the number(s) of the [*one, two*] juror(s) who will serve as [*the*] alternate(s).

Juror [_____], your name has been drawn as an alternate juror. While you will be physically excused from your service as a juror in just a moment, there remains a possibility you may be called back to deliberate should one of the other jurors be unable to continue. The bailiff will retain your notes [and notebook] for your use if you are called back.

The admonition that I gave you at the beginning of the case continues to apply to you. I remind you that you must not do any research or attempt to conduct any type of investigation about the matters involved, or the parties, witnesses, attorneys or any individual or corporation related to the case. Do not consult any individuals, newspapers, books, dictionaries, or look for information using any other reference materials. This means that you should not search the internet, or use any other electronic tools to obtain information about this case or help you decide the case should you be recalled to deliberate.

Do not talk to anyone about the case, or about anyone who has anything to do with the case, and do not let anyone talk to you about anything having to do with the case until you have been notified a verdict has been reached or the jury has been discharged. Particularly if you are not called back, I want to thank you for your service on this jury
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SOURCE: Ariz. R. Civ. P. 47(f).

USE NOTE: This instruction should not be given in cases where the parties have stipulated the alternates may deliberate.

The bracketed language regarding the retention of a notebook should be used if the court, in its discretion, has authorized their use pursuant to Ariz. R. Civ. P. 47(g).

STANDARD 8

Closing Instruction

The case is now submitted to you for decision. When you go to the jury room you will choose a foreman. He or she will preside over your deliberations.

At least six of you must agree on a verdict. If all eight agree on a verdict, only the foreman need sign it, on the line marked "Foreman." If six or seven agree on a verdict, all those who agree, and only those who agree, must sign the verdict on the numbered lines provided, leaving the line marked "Foreman" blank. Please print your name under your signature.

You will be given _____ forms of verdict. They read as follows (there is no significance to the order in which they are read):

SOURCE: RAJI (CIVIL) 3d Standard 15.

USE NOTE: The court could type onto this instruction the substance of the verdict forms; however, it seems preferable to read the verdict possibilities from the original verdict forms themselves, and to send only the original verdict forms to the jury, with no copies or paraphrasing.

COMMENT: The Committee recognizes a gender issue in the use of the word "foreman." There are various ways to instruct on this point; *i.e.,* "presiding juror," "foreperson," "foreman, who may be a man or a woman," etc. The Committee considered the alternatives and decided that the traditional "foreman" was the best and least strained way to say it, but that "foreman" should be followed by "he or she" in the next sentence so there could be no doubt that the foreman could be anybody on the jury. If the trial court uses some word other than "foreman," use that same other word in the verdict forms.

STANDARD 9

Insurance

In reaching your verdict, you should not consider [or discuss] whether a party was or was not covered by insurance. Insurance or the lack of insurance has no bearing on whether or not a party was at fault, or the damages, if any, a party has suffered.

SOURCE: Modified version of the insurance instruction proposed in 87 VA. L. REV. 1857, at 1910 (Dec. 2001). *See also* JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA CIVIL JURY INSTRUCTIONS (2003-04), CACI No. 105.

USE NOTE: 87 VA. L. REV. 1857, at 1911 states that: "The proposed instruction could be offered to jurors on a routine basis as part of the ordinary jury instructions, or it could be reserved for occasions on which a jury asks a question about insurance. The latter strategy would avoid introducing the topic of insurance to a jury that had previously not considered it. In light of the high frequency of insurance talk among jurors in the Arizona Jury Project and the reluctance of some of them to ask the court about insurance, however, simply ignoring the topic generally will not prevent it from being raised. The alternative strategy of routinely incorporating the instruction in the jurors' normal instruction package promises to be the most effective way to combat misinformation about, and inappropriate influence from, jury discussions about insurance."

This instruction may need to be modified or omitted in those cases where the collateral source rule has been abrogated by statute. *See, e.g.,* A.R.S. § 12-565.

Arizona Superior Court judges have differing views as to whether to use the insurance instruction just situationally or routinely.

STANDARD 10

Spoliation – Lost, Destroyed or Unpreserved Evidence

[*Name of party*] failed to preserve evidence regarding [*describe unpreserved evidence*] that [he] [she] [it] was required to preserve. Because [*name of party*] failed to preserve the evidence, you may, but are not required to, assume that the evidence would have been unfavorable to [*name of party*].

SOURCE: *Souza v. Fred Carries Contracts, Inc.,* 191 Ariz. 247 (App. 1997); *Smyser v. City of Phoenix,* 215 Ariz. 428 (App. 2007); *McMurtry v. Weatherford Hotel, Inc.,* 231 Ariz. 244 (App. 2013).

USE NOTE 1: The law imposes on parties a duty to preserve evidence if they know or reasonably should know that the evidence is relevant to a case or which they reasonably should anticipate will be relevant in a future case. *Souza,* 191 Ariz. at 250. If the court determines that a party has failed to preserve evidence, the trial judge has discretion to determine if a party's conduct warrants sanctions, and if so, what type of sanction would be appropriate under the circumstances. *Souza,* 191 Ariz. at 250; *McMurtry,* 231 Ariz. at 260. In deciding what sanction is appropriate, the court is to consider all relevant information including the degree of culpability and the prejudice to the opposing party. *Souza,* 191 Ariz. at 250; *Smyser,* 215 Ariz. at 440; *McMurtry,* 231 Ariz. at 260. The range of permissible sanctions include: (1) monetary sanctions, (2) precluding the offending party from opposing a claim or defense, or (3) allowing the offending party to dispute the claim or defense, but instructing the jury that because the offending party failed to preserve evidence, the jury may draw an adverse inference regarding the unpreserved evidence. *Souza,* 191 Ariz. at 249; *McMurtry,* 231 Ariz. at 260. This instruction is to be used when the court has determined that the jury should be instructed regarding an adverse inference that may be drawn because of a party's failure to preserve evidence.

USE NOTE 2: In some cases, the court may conclude that a party intentionally destroyed evidence for the purpose of preventing the opposing party to establish a claim or a defense. In such situations the court may conclude that stronger language is needed to accurately describe the court's findings. In such cases the word "destroyed" (or other similar phrase suggesting intent) may be substituted for the phrase "failed to preserve."

COMMENT 1: RAJI Criminal Standard Instruction No. 42 includes language giving the jury the power to evaluate whether the offending party's conduct was sufficient to conclude that spoliation had occurred ("If you find that the State has lost, destroyed, or failed to preserve evidence . . . ."). While there is language in *State v. Willits,* 96 Ariz. 184 (1964), to support this provision in the criminal context, there is no similar law in the civil context. The committee concluded that in the civil context, the court in pretrial proceedings would determine whether the offending party's conduct was sufficiently egregious to warrant sanctions. If the court has determined that the offending party's conduct was sanctionable and that the appropriate sanction is an adverse inference instruction to the jury, the committee concluded that it would make no sense to instruct the jury to re-evaluate the judge's determination that the offending party's conduct was sufficiently egregious to warrant sanctions.

Continued

STANDARD 10

Spoliation – Lost, Destroyed or Unpreserved Evidence

Continued

COMMENT 2: RAJI Criminal Standard Instruction No. 42 also includes language giving the sanctioned party the opportunity to rebut the adverse inference by presenting evidence that its failure to preserve the evidence was excusable. ("If you find . . . , then you should weigh the explanation given for the loss or unavailability of the evidence.") The criminal instruction allows the jury to make an adverse inference "unless [the jury] accepts the party's explanation" regarding the reason why the evidence was not preserved. The committee could not find any legal support for this language in the civil context. As set forth above, the committee concluded that in the civil context the court in pretrial proceedings would determine whether the offending party's conduct was sufficiently egregious to warrant sanctions, and the court's evaluation at that hearing would necessarily include the court's consideration of the alleged offending party's explanation of why the evidence was not preserved. The committee is not aware of any case law which either permits or prohibits the offending party from offering evidence and argument to the jury to explain its failure to preserve evidence. Accordingly, the committee takes no position on whether the court may allow such evidence and argument to the jury in its consideration of whether to assume the adverse inference allowed by the instruction.

COMMENT 3: This instruction is based on the common law rule regarding spoliation. Ariz. R. Civ. P. 37(g) was substantially amended in 2016 to add new rules regarding the preservation of electronically stored information. The amended rule sets forth requirements that are similar to, but different from, the common law rule applicable to tangible and documentary evidence. Rule 37(g)(1) sets forth the duty to preserve electronic evidence. Rule 37(g)(2) identifies the remedies and sanctions that are available if the court determines that a party has failed to properly preserve electronic evidence. Rule 37(g)(2)(B) provides that a court may instruct the jury regarding an adverse inference only if the court finds that a party intended to deprive another party of the opportunity to use electronic information.

STANDARD 11

Adverse Inference – Invocation of the Constitutional Right Against Self-Incrimination

Under the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, a person has the right to remain silent and refuse to answer a question if the answer might incriminate the person. During the case, [*name of party*] asserted (his) (her) constitutional right under the Fifth Amendment and refused to answer a question(s). You may, but are not required to, conclude that had [*name of party*] answered the question(s), the testimony would have been unfavorable to [*name of party*].

SOURCE: *Baxter v. Palmigiano*, 425 U.S. 308 (1976); *Montoya v. Superior Court*, 173 Ariz. 129 (App. 1992); *Castro v. Ballesteros-Suarez*, 222 Ariz. 48 (App. 2009).

USE NOTE 1: An issue that may arise is how the assertion of the right against self-incrimination is shown at trial. The party seeking an adverse inference instruction must present evidence that another party has refused to answer a question (or questions) based on his or her right against self-incrimination. Evidence of a refusal to answer may be established when a person is called as a witness at trial and refuses to answer a question (or questions) by invoking the right against self-incrimination. *See Castro*, 222 Ariz. at 51 (widow questioned about involvement in husband's murder). A refusal to answer may also be shown by a discovery response. *See Montoya*, 173 Ariz. at 130 (father refused to answer requests for admissions). In *Montoya*, the court ruled that the father could withdraw his assertion of the right against self-incrimination by testifying at trial; nevertheless, if the father did not waive his right against self-incrimination, then the fact-finder could draw a negative inference from the father's refusal to answer the discovery requests. *Id.* at 131 (citing *Buzard v. Griffin*, 89 Ariz. 42 (1960)).

USE NOTE 2: A number of federal courts have addressed the issue of whether and when a non-party witness's invocation of the right against self-incrimination can give rise to an adverse inference against a party. *See, e.g.*, *LiButti v. United States*, 107 F.3d 110 (2d Cir. 1997); *F.D.I.C. v. Fidelity & Deposit Co. of Md.*, 45 F.3d 969 (5th Cir. 1995). The ABA Model Jury Instructions in Civil Antitrust Cases include an instruction (7.B.2) under which a jury may consider whether a non-party witness is sufficiently associated with a party to justify drawing an adverse inference against that party. The Committee is not aware of any Arizona case addressing this non-party witness issue.

COMMENT 1: The United States Supreme Court has adopted the "adverse inference" rule when a party invokes the right against self-incrimination in a civil proceeding: "Our conclusion is consistent with the prevailing rule that the Fifth Amendment does not forbid adverse inferences against parties to civil actions when they refuse to testify in response to probative evidence offered against them." *Baxter*, 425 U.S. at 318. Arizona also has adopted the adverse inference rule. *See Montoya*, 173 Ariz. at 131; *Castro*, 222 Ariz. at 53. In *Montoya*, the court held that, under Arizona law, a party has the right to "extinguish the negative inference" by later choosing to testify. *Montoya*, 173 Ariz. at 131 (citing *Buzard v. Griffin*, 89 Ariz. 42 (1960)).