

PROPOSED RULE FOR THE EFFICIENT USE OF PAPER

Introduction

To produce 500 reams of paper, twenty trees are cut. Not only this, 100,000 liters of water are used in the process. And this water is not reusable since it is already laden with chemicals. It is just released to nearby streams to poison the rivers and seas. So when the judicial system reduces its paper consumption, it saves the trees, the water, and mother earth.

The purpose of these rules is to cut the judicial system's use of excessive quantities of costly paper, save our forest, and mitigate the worsening climate changes that the world is experiencing. With more trees, we avoid landslides and the tragedies of mass death.

The Proposed Rule

Sec. 1. *Title of the Rule.* – This Rule shall be known and cited as the Rule for the Efficient Use of Paper.

Sec. 2. *Applicability.* – It shall apply to all courts and quasi-judicial bodies. **References to courts in this Rule shall include quasi-judicial bodies.**

Efficient Use of Paper

Sec. 3. *Format and Style.* -- a) All pleadings, motions, and similar papers intended for consideration of the court (court-bound papers) shall be written in single space **with a one-and-a-half space between paragraphs**, using an easily readable font style of the party's choice, under a 13 or 14-size font,¹ and on a 13-inch by 8.5-inch white bond paper; and

b) All decisions, resolutions, and orders issued by courts and quasi-judicial bodies as well as all papers emanating from their staffs, including transcripts of stenographic notes, shall comply with these requirements.

Sec. 4. *Margins and Prints.* -- The parties shall maintain the following margins on all court-bound papers: a left hand margin of 1.5 inch from the edge; an upper margin of 1.2 inch from the edge, a right hand margin of 1.0 inch from the edge; and a lower margin of 1.0 inch from the edge. Further, if the party uses paper of sufficient thickness

¹ This Rule uses a 14-size font.

to take on back-to-back printing, **say substance 20 or higher**,² he shall have the option to use both sides for that purpose. Every page must be consecutively numbered.

Sec. 5. Copies to be Filed. -- Unless otherwise directed by the court, the number of court-bound papers that a party is required or desires to file shall be as follows:

a. In the Supreme Court, one original and four copies, **unless the case is referred to the Court En Banc in which event, the parties shall be required to file ten additional copies.**³ The parties need to submit only two sets of annexes, attached to the original and one copy, which sets shall be shared by all the Members of the Court in the interest of economy of paper.

b. In the Court of Appeals, the Sandiganbayan, and the Court of Tax Appeals, one original and two copies, with the stated annexes attached only to the original and one copy; and

c. In other courts, one original with the stated annexes attached to it.

Sec. 6. Additional copies when needed. -- The above notwithstanding, the courts concerned may require the parties to submit additional copies of the court-bound papers and the annexes that they have filed as the need arises.

Sec. 7. Annexes served on adverse party. -- A party required by the rules to serve a copy of his court-bound paper on the adverse party need not enclose copies of those annexes where it may be presumed from the circumstances that such party already has them.

Sec. 8. Date of Effectivity. -- This rule shall take effect on December 1, 2011 after publication in two newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Copies of this Rule shall immediately be disseminated to all courts and quasi-judicial bodies for implementation and to the National Prosecution Service, the Public Attorney's Office, the Office of the Solicitor General, and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines for the information and compliance of their concerned attorneys and members.

² As suggested by Justice Antonio T. Carpio.

³ To meet a concern expressed by Justice Jose Portugal Perez and others that, without this explanation, the reduction of copies to be filed may imply that not all the members of the Court read the pleadings and annexes that the parties file.