

Washington State Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is the state's highest court. Its opinions are published, become the law of the state, and set precedent for subsequent cases decided in Washington.

The Court has original jurisdiction over petitions against state officers and can review decisions of lower courts if the money or value of property involved exceeds \$200. The \$200 limitation is not in effect if the case involves a question of the legality of a tax, duty, assessment, toll, or municipal fine, or the validity of a statute.

Direct Supreme Court review of a trial court decision is permitted if the action involves a state officer, a trial court has ruled a statute or ordinance unconstitutional, conflicting statutes or rules of law are involved, or the issue is of broad public interest and requires a prompt and ultimate determination.

All cases in which the death penalty has been imposed are reviewed directly by the Supreme Court. In all other cases, review of Court of Appeals' decisions is left to the discretion of the court.

Motions to be determined by the Court, as well as petitions for review of Court of Appeals' decisions, are heard by five-member departments of the Court. A less-than-unanimous vote on a petition requires that the entire court consider the matter.

All nine justices hear and dispose of cases argued on the appeal calendar. Each case is decided on the basis of the record, plus written and oral arguments. Exhibits are generally not allowed and no live testimony is heard.

The Supreme Court is the final rule-making authority for all of the state's courts. Though local courts make their own rules of procedure, these rules must conform to, or not conflict with, those established by the Supreme Court. In addition, the Supreme Court has administrative responsibility for operation of the state court system. It also has a supervisory responsibility over certain activities of the *Washington State Bar Association*, including attorney disciplinary matters.