

PREFACE TO THE 2026 HANDBOOK

Thank you for adding this 33rd edition of *Federal Civil Rules Handbook* to your office or home law library. Creating it has been a labor of love for us since its journey began in the early 1990s, and we are so grateful for the tremendous reception our *Handbook* has received nationwide. It is used by many thousands of lawyers, judges, and legal scholars across and outside the country, and over the past 33 years, the *Handbook* has been cited by federal trial and appellate court judges and in scholarly articles. We regularly hear from you, our readers, about how you've come to depend on the *Handbook*. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and advice with us.

Our goal, now a third of a century ago, was to design a resource to address what seemed, then, a truly unmet need—to provide practitioners, judges, and scholars with easy-to-find, practical, quickly understood, citation-supported, legally reliable answers to pressing questions in federal civil practice. When we started, the choices back then for guidance in applying the Federal Civil Rules were either a simple, unannotated copy of the Rules themselves (which lacked nuance or precedential data) or a prohibitively-expensive multi-volume treatise that included more scholarly and historical background than most practitioners needed in the moment. The *Handbook*, we hoped, would bridge the gap as a pragmatic but appropriately thorough and comprehensive guide to applying the Rules.

The *Handbook* has found its place in that middle ground. It remains a single-volume, soft-bound, annually-updated resource containing the Rules' text accompanied by dependable, up-to-date commentary on how the Rules operate in practice. In this period of remote working, the *Handbook* serves a further purpose, allowing individual lawyers to take with them to their home or workplace, in a single volume, what amounts to an entire federal practice library.

The format of the *Handbook* remains familiar. It begins with an introduction to **general concepts in federal practice** (jurisdiction, removal and remand, venue and *forum non conveniens*, the *Erie* doctrine, and preclusion). Each Rule is then set out and discussed in turn, beginning with the **current text of each Rule**, followed by a quick summary of each Rule's "**Purpose and Scope**," an introduction to the "**Core Concept**" of each Rule's various subsections, and "**Applications**" which describe (with accompanying citations) how those various subsections function in practice. The *Handbook* also includes a bundle of practitioner-helpful added features: a complete set of all of the **Advisory Committee Notes** to the Rules, an orienting summary to **federal appellate practice**, the text of often-consulted sections of the **federal Judiciary Code** (Title 28), a description of **federal multidistrict litigation** (MDL), and the full text of both the federal **appellate rules** (with forms) and **evidence rules**.

What's New in this 2026 Edition:

- **Nearly 1,600 New Citations:** This edition contains nearly *1,600 new citations*, most to opinions from the Nation's federal courts decided between Fall 2024 and late Summer 2025.
- **New AMENDMENTS taking effect December 1:** Yet again, the Rules have been amended and this edition of the *Handbook* captures the December 1 changes to *Rule 16(b)* and *Rule 26(f)*, both of which are intended to better facilitate proper disclosures by parties who are withholding discovery on privilege or work product grounds. The *Handbook* also addresses the arrival of new *Rule 16.1*, which establishes, for new MDL cases, the procedures for initial management conferences and pre-conference submission responsibilities. Finally, this *Handbook* edition includes the December 1 amendments to the *Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure*.
- **Incorporating New U.S. Supreme Court Rulings:** This past Court Term was quite eventful for federal civil procedure, and this edition of the *Handbook* addresses those impacts, including the Court's rulings in:
 - *A.A.R.P. v. Trump*
 - *BLOM Bank SAL v. Honickman*
 - *CC/Devas (Mauritius) v. Antrix Corp.*
 - *Cunningham v. Cornell University*
 - *Fuld v. Palestine Liberation Organization*
 - *Parrish v. United States*
 - *Perttu v. Richards*
 - *Royal Canin USA Inc. v. Wullschleger*
 - *Stanley v. City of Sanford*
 - *Smith & Wesson Brands v. Estados Unidos Mexicanos*
 - *Waetzig v. Halliburton Energy Services*

With each edition of the *Handbook*, we end our Preface with the same invitation. Please email us, write us, or phone us with any recommendations on how to improve the *Handbook*. (Contact information for each of us appears in *The Authors*, the section that follows this Preface.) We consider carefully every such recommendation we receive. Reader advice has often helped us to sharpen the *Handbook* and make it a more useful, valuable, and responsive tool for practitioners and jurists. Thank you, in advance, for your thoughts. We appreciate them all!

THE AUTHORS

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