

Author's Introduction to the 2026 Edition

No matter how intense the preparation, an unanticipated legal issue or two is sure to arise during trial. While counsel may know or have a good hunch what the answer is, there is usually little time to provide the judge with authority.

A primary purpose of this book is to provide on the spot authority in a single-volume trial handbook that can be carried into the courtroom in the lawyer's briefcase.

Since eleventh hour settlements are often the norm and months can pass without the lawyer trying a case to a jury, a second purpose of the book is to serve as a quick refresher course on topics set forth in the Summary of Contents that likely play a role in the pending trial. A sage once observed, "The world does not need to be informed as much as it needs to be reminded." That applies even to experienced trial lawyers.

A third purpose of the book is to assist lawyers who are going to try their first civil lawsuit, beginning with their first meeting with a client through the post-verdict appeal stage.

In the 2026 legislative session certain immunity statutes were passed. There were no amendments to court rules affecting civil practice. There were a number of Iowa Supreme Court decisions affecting civil practice.

Since this is a book for lawyers involved in civil litigation, criminal case decisions have been omitted unless the rulings are equally applicable to the trial of a civil case. The book is organized in such a way that general subjects will be found quickly in the Table of Contents. The publisher has provided a comprehensive and detailed Index for searching specific subjects. Every effort has been taken to keep this work up-to-date for the lawyer and the trial judge through annual recompilation. The authors welcome suggestions that will help accomplish this objective.

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