

3-7.7 | PROCEDURES BEFORE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

All reports of a referee and all judgments entered in proceedings under these rules shall be subject to review by the Supreme Court of Florida in the following manner:

(a) Right of Review.

(1) Any party to a proceeding may procure review of a report of a referee or a judgment, or any specified portion thereof, entered under these rules.

(2) The Supreme Court of Florida shall review all reports and judgments of referees recommending probation, public reprimand, suspension, disbarment, or resignation pending disciplinary proceedings.

(3) A referee's report that does not recommend probation, public reprimand, suspension, disbarment, or resignation pending disciplinary proceedings, shall be final if not appealed.

(b) Appointment of Bar Counsel. The board or staff counsel, if authorized by the board, may appoint new or additional bar counsel to represent The Florida Bar on any review.

(c) Procedure for Review. Review by the Supreme Court of Florida shall be in accordance with the following procedures:

(1) *Notice of Intent to Seek Review of Report of Referee.* A party to a bar disciplinary proceeding wishing to seek review of a report of referee shall give notice of such intent within 60 days of the date on which the referee's report is docketed by the Clerk of the Supreme Court of Florida. Prompt written notice of the board's action, if any, shall be communicated to the respondent. The proceeding shall be commenced by filing with the Supreme Court of Florida notice of intent to seek review of a report of referee, specifying those portions of the report of a referee sought to be reviewed. Within 20 days after service of such notice of intent to seek review, the opposing party may file a cross-notice for review specifying any additional portion of the report that said party desires to be reviewed. The filing of such notice or cross-notice shall be jurisdictional as to a review to be procured as a matter of right, but the

court may, in its discretion, consider a late-filed notice or cross-notice upon a showing of good cause.

(2) *Record on Review.* The report and record filed by the referee shall constitute the record on review. If hearings were held at which testimony was heard, but no transcripts thereof were filed in the matter, the party seeking review shall order preparation of all such transcripts, file the original thereof with the court, and serve copies on the opposing party, on or before the time of filing of the initial brief, as provided elsewhere in this rule. The party seeking review shall be responsible for, and pay directly to the court reporter, the cost of preparation of transcripts. Failure to timely file and serve all of such transcripts may be cause for dismissal of the party's petition for review.

(3) *Briefs.* The party first seeking review shall file a brief in support of the notice of intent to seek review within 30 days of the filing of the notice. The opposing party shall file an answer brief within 20 days after the service of the initial brief of the party seeking review, which answer brief shall also support any cross-notice for review. The party originally seeking review may file a reply brief within 20 days after the service of the answer brief. The cross-reply brief, if any, shall be served within 20 days thereafter. Computation of time for filing briefs under this rule shall follow the applicable Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure. The form, length, binding, type, and margin requirements of briefs filed under this rule shall follow the requirements of Fla. R. App. P 9.210.

(4) *Oral Argument.* Request for oral argument may be filed in any case wherein a party files a notice of intent to seek review at the time of filing the first brief. If no request is filed, the case will be disposed of without oral argument unless the court orders otherwise.

(5) *Burden.* Upon review, the burden shall be upon the party seeking review to demonstrate that a report of a referee sought to be reviewed is erroneous, unlawful, or unjustified.



(6) Judgment of Supreme Court of Florida.

(A) Authority. After review, the Supreme Court of Florida shall enter an appropriate order or judgment. If no review is sought of a report of a referee entered under the rules and filed in the court, the findings of fact shall be deemed conclusive and the disciplinary measure recommended by the referee shall be the disciplinary measure imposed by the court, unless the court directs the parties to submit briefs or oral argument directed to the suitability of the disciplinary measure recommended by the referee. A referee's report that becomes final when no review has been timely filed shall be reported in an order of the Supreme Court of Florida.

(B) Form. The judgment of the court shall include, where appropriate, judgment in favor of:

- (i) the party to whom costs are awarded;
- (ii) the person(s) to whom restitution is ordered; or
- (iii) the person(s) to whom a fee is ordered to be forfeited.

(7) Procedures on Motions to Tax Costs. The court may consider a motion to assess costs if the motion is filed within 10 days of the entry of the court's order or opinion where the referee finds the respondent not guilty at trial and the supreme court, upon review, finds the respondent guilty of at least 1 rule violation and does not remand the case to the referee for further proceedings or where the respondent was found guilty at trial and the supreme court, upon review, finds the respondent not guilty of any rule violation. The party from whom costs are sought shall have 10 days from the date the motion was filed in which to serve an objection. Failure to timely file a petition for costs or to timely serve an objection, without good cause, shall be considered a waiver of request or objection to the costs and the court may enter an order without further proceedings. If an objection is timely filed, or the court otherwise directs, the motion shall be remanded to



the referee. Upon remand, the referee shall file a supplemental report that shall include a statement of costs incurred and the manner in which the costs should be assessed. Any party may seek review of the supplemental report of referee in the same manner as provided for in this rule for other reports of the referee.

(d) Precedence of Proceedings. Notices of intent to seek review in disciplinary proceedings shall take precedence over all other civil causes in the Supreme Court of Florida.

(e) Extraordinary Writs. All applications for extraordinary writs that are concerned with disciplinary proceedings under these rules of discipline shall be made to the Supreme Court of Florida.

(f) Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure. To the extent necessary to implement this rule and if not inconsistent herewith, the Florida Rules of Appellate Procedure shall be applicable to notices of intent to seek review in disciplinary proceedings, provided service on The Florida Bar shall be accomplished by service on bar counsel and staff counsel.

(g) Contempt by Respondent. Whenever it is alleged that a respondent is in contempt in a disciplinary proceeding, a petition for an order to show cause why the respondent should not be held in contempt and the proceedings on such petition may be filed in and determined by the Supreme Court of Florida or as provided under rule 3-7.11(f).

(h) Pending Disciplinary Cases. If disbarment or disciplinary revocation is ordered by the court, dismissal without prejudice of other pending cases against the respondent may be ordered in the court's disbarment or disciplinary revocation order.

(Former Rule 3-7.6 renumbered as Rule 3-7.7 March 16, 1990, effective March 17, 1990 (558 So.2d 1008). Amended July 23, 1992, effective Jan. 1, 1993 (605 So.2d 252); Sept. 24, 1998, effective Oct. 1, 1998 (718 So.2d 1179); April 25, 2002 (820 So.2d 210); November 19, 2009, effective February 1, 2010, SC08-1890, (34 Fla.L.Weekly S628a). Amended April 12, 2012, effective July 1, 2012 (101 So.3d 807).)



Comments

Subdivision (c)(7) of this rule applies to situations which arise when a referee finds a respondent not guilty but the supreme court, on review, finds the respondent guilty and does not remand the case back to the referee for further proceedings. See, e.g., *The Florida Bar v. Pape*, 918 So.2d 240 (Fla. 2005). A similar situation may also occur where a respondent is found guilty at trial, but not guilty by the supreme court on review of the referee's report and recommendation

