

**FIRST CIRCUIT JUDICIAL COUNCIL
PATTERN JURY INSTRUCTIONS COMMITTEE CHARTER, MISSION STATEMENT, AND
COMPOSITION**

JUNE, 2022

In recognition of the useful role that pattern jury instructions can play in assisting district judges in communicating effectively and consistently with juries, at the First Circuit Judicial Conference on October 1, 1997, the assembled federal judges voted to approve the publication of Pattern Criminal Jury Instructions for the District Courts of the First Circuit. [See D. Brock Hornby, U.S. Chief District Judge, District of Maine, Pattern Criminal Jury Instructions for the District Courts of the First Circuit, Preface to 1998 Edition](#). Judge Hornby took responsibility for maintaining and updating the patterns until 2014 when Judge Nancy Torresen, U.S. District Judge for the District of Maine, took over those responsibilities. [See 2022 Revisions To Pattern Criminal Jury Instructions for the District Courts of the First Circuit](#).¹ While available as a resource for judges across the First Circuit, there has not been a circuit-wide process for maintaining and updating these instructions.

Meanwhile, a number of federal circuits have appointed committees to promulgate civil and/or criminal pattern jury instructions and to develop a method for reviewing and updating the instructions periodically in accordance with developments in the law.² While the composition and practices of these committees vary significantly, the committees share the common goal of providing clear instructions in simple language "that are as balanced, accurate, and user friendly as possible." [See Fifth Circuit Committee on Civil Pattern Jury Instructions, Pattern Jury Instructions, Foreword to 2014 Edition](#), at p. v. [See also Model Civil Jury Instructions for the District Courts in the Third Circuit, 2018 Edition](#) ("The Committee [on Model Civil Jury Instructions] hopes that this work will ease the burden of district judges in preparing their jury instructions and will also provide a technique for the rapid preparation and assembly of complete instructions in suitable form for submission to the jury."). Further, the pattern or model jury instructions are in no way mandatory; nor are they approved by the courts of appeals.³

In an effort to provide the district judges in the First Circuit with a similar resource, Chief Judge Barron, as Chair of the First Circuit Judicial Council, has established a First Circuit Council Pattern Jury Instructions Committee (Committee). The Committee is charged with developing

¹ Judge Hornby drafted pattern [civil jury instructions](#) for some types of cases, as well, but these have not been updated.

² The [Third](#), [Fifth](#), [Seventh](#), [Eighth](#), [Ninth](#), and [Eleventh](#) Circuits have committees that address both civil and criminal jury instructions. (The Fifth and Eighth Circuits have pattern jury instruction committees of their respective district judge associations.) The [Sixth](#) and [Tenth](#) Circuits' Committees address only criminal instructions. The committees also differentiate between model and pattern jury instructions. [See eg., U.S. Courts for the Ninth Circuit, Manual of Model Jury Instructions](#) ("It should be emphasized that the instructions in these Manuals are models and are not intended to be pattern instructions. They must be reviewed carefully before use in a particular case.").

³ The Eleventh Circuit requires its Judicial Council to approve its pattern jury instructions.

and maintaining pattern jury instructions for the district courts in the First Circuit that reflect the characteristics and goals described above.

The Committee shall report directly to the Judicial Council of the First Circuit. All members of the Committee are appointed by the Chief Circuit Judge.