

Rule 239. Instructions

(a) Use of IPI Instruction; Requirements of Other Instructions. Whenever Illinois Pattern Jury Instructions (IPI), Civil, contains an instruction applicable in a civil case, giving due consideration to the facts and the prevailing law, and the court determines that the jury should be instructed on the subject, the IPI instruction shall be used, unless the court determines that it does not accurately state the law. The most current version of the IPI Civil instructions is maintained on the Supreme Court website. Whenever IPI does not contain an instruction on a subject on which the court determines that the jury should be instructed, the instruction given in that subject should be simple, brief, impartial, and free from argument.

(b) Court's Instructions. At any time before or during the trial, the court may direct counsel to prepare designated instructions. Counsel shall comply with the direction, and copies of instructions so prepared shall be marked "Court's Instruction." Counsel may object at the conference on instructions to any instruction prepared at the court's direction, regardless of who prepared it, and the court shall rule on these objections as well as objections to other instructions. The grounds of the objections shall be particularly specified.

(c) Procedure. Each instruction shall be accompanied by a copy, and a copy shall be delivered to opposing counsel. In addition to numbering the copies and indicating who tendered them, as required by section 2-1107 of the Code of Civil Procedure, the copy shall contain a notation substantially as follows:

"IPI No. _____" or "IPI No. _____ Modified" or "Not in IPI"

as the case may be. All objections made at the conference and the rulings thereon shall be shown in the report of proceedings. The original instructions given by the court to the jury shall be taken by the jury to the jury room.

(d) Instructions Before Opening Statements. After the jury is selected and before opening statements, the court may orally instruct the jury as follows:

(i) On cautionary or preliminary matters, including, but not limited to, the burden of proof, the believability of witnesses, and the receipt of evidence for a limited purpose.

(ii) On the substantive law applicable to the case, including, but not limited to, the elements of the claim or affirmative defense.

(e) Instructions After the Close of Evidence. After the close of evidence, the court shall repeat any applicable instructions given to the jury before opening statements and instruct the jury on procedural issues and the substantive law applicable to the case, including, but not limited to, the elements of the claim or affirmative defense. The court may, in its discretion, read the instructions to the jury prior to closing argument. Whether or not the instructions are read prior to closing argument, the court shall read the instructions to the jury following closing argument and may, in its discretion, distribute a written copy of the instructions to each juror. Jurors shall not be given a written copy of the jury instructions prior to counsel concluding closing argument.

(f) Instructions During Trial. Nothing in this rule is intended to restrict the court's authority to give any appropriate instruction during the course of the trial.

Amended May 28, 1982, effective July 1, 1982; amended October 1, 1998, effective January 1, 1999; amended June 11, 2009, effective September 1, 2009; amended December 16, 2010, effective January

1, 2011; amended Apr. 8, 2013, eff. immediately.

Committee Comments

This is former Rule 25-1 without change in substance.