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About the Three-Judge Panel in the Indiana Court of Appeals

The three-judge panel system has been traditional in this country for intermediate appellate courts, has been the practice in Indiana since at least 1972, and is consistent with the standard adopted by the [American Bar Association](#). The underlying rationale for panels of three is that cases should be resolved by a collective judicial judgment so that appeals are more than substituting the decision of a single appellate judge for that of a single trial judge. A panel of three provides this opportunity without incurring the costs which would be involved in panels of a greater number. The three-judge panel also avoids the possibility of an evenly divided court.

Although there are some variations from three judge panels in courts in other states, it is the structure for most intermediate appellate courts including the [United States Circuit Courts of Appeal](#).

Unlike some of our sister states, Indiana does not have a procedure for the Court of Appeals to sit *en banc*. As a result, there is a possibility that different panels may resolve a particular issue in different ways with no internal mechanism for resolving the conflict. Such conflict between panels is a very significant factor considered by our [Supreme Court](#) in deciding whether to grant a petition to transfer.

Our three-judge panels sit together for terms of four months after which the judges rotate. The panels are selected by a mathematical formula which assures that each member of our court will work with every other member of the court for at least four months out of every thirty months.

Case assignments are made by rotation. When a case is fully briefed, it is transmitted by the [Clerk of the Supreme Court](#), Court of Appeals and [Tax Court](#) to the Court of Appeals Administrator. The Administrator then routes it according to the rotational system. There are four rotational wheels: criminal, civil, expedited and child-related. Each judge gets every fifteenth criminal case, every fifteenth civil case and so forth. This assures an even division of the cases across the court both in terms of numbers and types of cases.

Note: The above material was prepared by the Court in answer to a question posed by the Indiana Law Blog.

Frequently Asked Questions About Court of Appeals Judges

- What information is available on the mycase.in.gov case search?
- How can I find out if a court has issued a warrant for a person's arrest?
- How up-to-date is the case information on the mycase.in.gov case search?
- Is full sentencing information available in case records on the mycase.in.gov website?
- Are both original and amended charges and their offense types listed in criminal records on the mycase.in.gov website?