



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions (CJEO)?

A: [CJEO](#) is an advisory committee that issues written opinions and gives advice on judicial ethics topics of interest to judicial officers, candidates for judicial office, and members of the public. The committee has [12 members](#), including appellate justices, trial court judges, and a commissioner.

Q: What's the committee's relationship to the California Supreme Court?

A: The committee is appointed and authorized by the California Supreme Court as part of the court's constitutional responsibility to guide the conduct of judges and judicial candidates. (Cal. Const., [art. VI](#), § 18, subd. (m).) The committee's advice, however, does not necessarily reflect the views of the court, and its work is independent of the court, the [Commission on Judicial Performance](#), the Judicial Council, and all other entities. (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 9.80(b).)

Q: Who can ask for advice?

A: Judicial officers and candidates for judicial office may request a formal or informal written opinion, or oral advice. Members of the public and representatives of entities, such as courts, may suggest topics for the committee to address in formal written opinions.

Q: Why is the requesting judge's name and other information about these opinions and advice and not made public?

A: The committee keeps all names and identifying information [confidential](#)—within the committee during deliberations and outside of the committee in all circumstances, including in its final opinions and posted summaries of informal opinions and oral advice. Maintaining strict confidentiality is crucial to encouraging judicial officers and candidates for judicial office to seek opinions and advice from CJEO, which promotes ethical conduct and the fair administration of justice. (Cal. Rules of Court, [rule 9.80\(h\)](#).)

Q: What's the difference between formal and informal opinions and oral advice?

A: Formal opinions are the committee's public responses to requests for advice from judicial officers or candidate for judicial office and to suggestions for opinions from the public. Formal opinions are posted on the CJEO website for [public comment](#) in draft form, maintained on the website in [final form](#) when adopted by the committee, and [distributed](#) to interested parties.

Informal opinions are the committee's written responses to requests for advice that are given to the requesting judicial officer or candidate for judicial office and [summarized](#) on the CJEO website in most cases.

Oral advice is the committee's response to requests for immediate advice that is given orally and in writing to a requesting judicial officer or candidate for judicial office and [summarized](#) on the CJEO website in most cases.

Q: What's CJEO's relationship to the California Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Code of Judicial Ethics?

A: Like CJEO, the California Supreme Court [Advisory Committee](#) on the Code of Judicial Ethics is also appointed by the court. Both are committees of the court rather than of the Judicial Council. The advisory committee's main function is to recommend amendments to the California Code of Judicial Ethics and to provide commentary following canons that are adopted by the court. In its opinions and advice, CJEO interprets and relies on the advisory committee's commentary in the Code of Judicial Ethics, but CJEO's work is independent of the advisory committee and all other entities, including the court and the Judicial Council.