

INDEX

	Page
I. Business Associations	2
II. Civil Procedure	8
III. Estates	18
IV. Evidence	22
V. Family Law	25
VI. Missouri Administrative Law	29
VII. Missouri Courts	36
VIII. Real Property	42
IX. Torts	46
X. Trust Law	53

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

General and Business Corporation Law of Missouri (Chapter 351) Missouri has enacted the GBCL. Missouri law initially followed Illinois law, but more recently has tended to pattern itself after provisions of Delaware law.

1. Corporate Formation

- a. **Articles of Incorporation**--to form a de jure corporation, Articles of Incorporation must be filed with the Missouri Secretary of State, along with the required fee. The Missouri Secretary of State website (www.sos.mo.gov) has standard forms available online. The person or entity who forms the corporation is the incorporator.

(1) Mandatory provisions-Section 351.055

- a. The Articles of Incorporation must include the name of the corporation, and that name must include the word "corporation," "company," "incorporated," or end with an abbreviation of one of these words.
- b. The Articles of Incorporation must identify the registered agent and office for the corporation for purposes of receiving service of process and communications from the Secretary of State. The registered agent must reside in Missouri. Section 351.370
- c. The Articles of Incorporation must identify the number of shares authorized to be issued, the par value of the shares, and the classification of shares (if shares are to be divided in classes).
NOTE: single shareholder corporations are permitted in Missouri.
- d. The Articles of Incorporation must identify the incorporator.
- e. The Articles of Incorporation must state the corporation's purpose.
- f. The Articles of Incorporation must provide for the corporation's duration, which can be "perpetual."

(2) Optional provisions

- a. The Articles of Incorporation may limit personal liability for directors to the corporation or its shareholders, subject to statutory

constraints on the limitation. Section 351.055.2(3); see also section 351.345

- b. Corporations may opt out of cumulative voting, but must do so in the Articles of Incorporation. Section 351.245(3)
 - c. Provisions required to modify statutory default provisions. For example, section 351.290 provides that By-Laws are to be amended by the corporation's shareholders unless the Articles of Incorporation place this power with the Board of Directors.
 - d. The Articles of Incorporation can include any other provisions desired by the incorporator that are not inconsistent with the law.
 - e. If preemptive rights are to be limited, the limitations may be noted in the Articles of Incorporation.
 - f. The Articles of Incorporation (or the Bylaws) may indicate the number of directors (one or more), and each director's term of service.
- b. **Annual registration requirement**--a corporation must file an annual report, each year. It is due in the month of incorporation, except as provided in Section 351.122. Section 351.120. Failure to timely file an annual report will result in administrative dissolution of the corporation. Section 351.484(4)
- c. **Bylaws**--are adopted initially by the Board of Directors, and are subject to amendment by a vote of the shareholders (unless Articles of Incorporation provide for amendment by directors) and may "contain any provisions for the regulation and management of the affairs of the corporation not inconsistent with law or the articles of incorporation." Section 351.290.1

Bylaws are intended to deal with the relative relationship between the officers, directors and shareholders. Though Bylaws can address any subject, good bylaws will contain provisions relating to procedures for shareholders' and directors' meetings; any committees; the titles, terms and powers of officers and the means for election and removal of same; the number of directors; the terms and powers of the directors and the means for election and removal of same; provisions for amendment of the bylaws; and provisions for custody and inspection of corporate records. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bylaws are not filed with the Missouri Secretary of State.

- d. **Piercing the corporate veil**--validly formed de jure corporation can be ignored, and personal liability can be imposed on shareholders. The leading cases in Missouri discussing the elements to be proven to pierce the corporate veil are: *Collet v. American National Stores, Inc.*, 708 S.W.2d 273 (Mo. App. 1986); *Real Estate Investors Four, Inc. v. American Design Group Inc.*, 46 S.W.3d 51, 56 (Mo. App. E.D. 2001).

2. Corporate Operation

a. Shareholder Meetings

- (1) **Annual**--must be held, as primary purpose is to elect directors. Section 351.225(2)
- (2) **Special**--may be held to conduct business requiring shareholder approval if duly noticed by the Board of Directors or any other person authorized by the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws. Section 351.225(3). Notice of special meetings must include time, place and purpose for which the meeting is being called. Section 351.230
- (3) **Notice**--generally must be sent no less than 10 days or more than 70 days before meeting. Section 351.230
- (4) **Quorum**--unless otherwise provided in the Articles of Incorporation or by laws, a quorum is a majority of the outstanding shares entitled to vote. Section 351.265
- (5) **Unanimous Written Consent**--shareholders may act without a formal meeting by written consent of all shareholders entitled to vote on the matter. Section 351.273

b. Board of Director Meetings

- (1) **Initial**--an initial meeting is required for organizational purposes as soon as possible after the corporation is formed.
- (2) **Annual**--though not required, annual meetings are common to conduct the election of officers and such other routine business as may be appropriate. Section 351.225
- (3) **Special**--may be called in accordance with the provisions of the bylaws subject to due notice. Section 351.225(3) and 351.230
- (4) **Notice**--notice requirements for annual and/or special meetings are set by the bylaws. Section 351.225(3) and 351.230

- (5) **Quorum**-a majority of the full board of directors constitutes a quorum, though a higher number can be set by the Articles of Incorporation or the bylaws generally, or as to particular matters to be determined. Section 351.325
- (6) **Unanimous Written Consent**-any action required to be taken by the directors at a formal meeting may be taken by unanimous consent in writing without a meeting. Section 351.273; section 351.340

c. **Officers and Agents**

- (1) **Required Officers**-Missouri corporations must have a President and a secretary, and any other officers required by the Bylaws. Unless prohibited by the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws, the same person may hold two or more offices. Section 351.360
- (2) **Registered Agent**-Missouri corporations must have a designated registered agent. The registered agent can be an individual who resides in the state, or a corporation authorized to do business in the state with a business office that is the same as the registered office. Section 351.370; section 351.375. Failure to have a viable registered agent for more than thirty days is a basis for administrative dissolution of the corporation by the Missouri Secretary of State. Section 351.484(5)

3. **Major differences between Missouri Corporation law and Delaware Corporation law**--these are some, but not all, of the significant differences between the Delaware Code and the Missouri Code.

- a. **Director and Officer indemnity**-a shareholder approved indemnity provision can expand the scope of indemnity beyond that authorized by statute with the only limit being the inability to indemnify for fraud, deliberate dishonesty or willful misconduct. Indemnity provisions can cover amounts paid in settlement and incurred expenses. In Missouri, unless the shareholder approved indemnity provision provides otherwise, expenses advanced for an indemnified officer or director must be repaid unless the officer, director, agent, or employee is ultimately determined to have been entitled to indemnity pursuant to the requirements set forth in section 351.355. Under the Delaware code, such payments need only be returned if the officer or director is ultimately found to be liable. Section 351.355.5; section 351.355.7; DEL. CODE ANN. tit. 8, section 145(e).
- b. **Shareholder action without board approval**-Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation can be submitted directly to shareholders in Missouri without being

first authorized by the board of Directors as is required in Delaware. Section 351.090.2(1); DEL. CODE ANN. tit. 8, section 242(b)(1).

- c. **Shareholder action by written consent**-all shareholders entitled to vote must sign unanimous written consents in lieu of a meeting, where in Delaware only the minimum number of shareholders necessary to take action at an actual meeting need to sign such a consent. Section 351.273; DEL. CODE ANN. tit. 8, section 228.
- d. **Major corporate events requiring a vote**-in Missouri, a two thirds majority of the outstanding shares entitled to vote must approve mergers, consolidations, the sale of all or substantially all assets, dissolutions, or reductions in capital, where only a simple majority is required in Delaware. Sections 351.425, 351.400(3), 351.464.5, 351.195.1(3); DEL. CODE ANN. tit 8, sections 251(c), 271(a), 275(b), 244.
- e. **Appraisal rights**-Delaware only requires appraisals for certain mergers. Missouri requires appraisals for mergers or consolidation, upon the sale of all or substantially all assets, not in the regular course of business, and for certain share acquisitions involving control of the corporation. Sections 351.405, 351.407.6 and 351.455; DEL. CODE ANN. tit. 8, section 262(b).

4. **Dissolution**

a. **Voluntary dissolution-statutory procedure**

- (1) The incorporator can dissolve the corporation if no stock has been issued, and no business has been commenced by filing Articles of Dissolution, with certain requirements, with the secretary of state. Section 351.462.
- (2) The shareholders can agree to dissolve the corporation if all shareholders consent in writing. Section 351.466; section 351.468.
- (3) The Board of Directors can adopt a resolution and submit and recommend the same to the shareholders for a vote by a two-thirds majority (or higher as required by the Articles of Incorporation). Section 351.464.
- (4) Any dissolution requires the filing of Articles of Dissolution with the Secretary of State, and a wind up of corporate affairs.

b. **Involuntary dissolution**

- (1) By administrative action of the Secretary of State for failing to comply with various statutory requirements. Section 351.484.

- (2) By action of the Attorney General as permitted by Section 351.494.
- (3) By shareholder action via application to the court for liquidation in the event of deadlock. Section 351.494(2), section 351.467--for two shareholder corporations.
- (4) By a creditor via judicial proceedings to dissolve if the creditor's claim has been reduced to a judgment or the corporation has admitted in writing that a debt is owed and the corporation is insolvent. Section 351.494(3).

5. **Special Business Forms**

- a. **LLC's**--Sections 347.010 - .187. Owners are called members. Entity is taxed like a partnership unless request is made to be taxed as a corporation. Members enjoy limited liability for "corporate" obligations, much like shareholders in a traditional corporation. Members adopt an Operating Agreement to address governance issues. Formation requires the filing of Articles of Organization with the Secretary of State, though no annual reports are thereafter required. An LLC may have one or more members.
- b. **Professional Corporations**--Section 356.031. This is the form of a general corporation that may be formed by licensed professionals.
- c. **Foreign Corporations**--Section 351.572, section 351.576; section 351.574. A corporation formed in another state that registers to do business in the State of Missouri. A foreign corporation may not transact business in the state until it obtains a certificate of authority from the secretary of state.
- d. **Statutory Close Corporations**--Section 351.750, et. seq. A corporation whose stock is held by a small number of shareholders may elect to run the corporation like a partnership by eliminating the board of directors.
- e. **Not for Profit Corporations**--Chapter 355. Corporate entities created and operated under this chapter of the Missouri statutes have a near exclusive purpose to be nonprofit, and may not have shareholders or pay dividends. Formation, management and operation of not for profit corporations can be very different from general corporations, and the separate statutory provisions addressing not for profits should be carefully studied.
- f. **General Partnerships**--Uniform Partnership Law, Chapter 358.
- g. **Limited Partnerships**--Uniform Limited Partnership Law, Chapter 359.

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS
CIVIL PROCEDURE

I. JURISDICTION OVER THE PERSON AND OVER THINGS

A. Personal Service on Individuals

1. Transient Jurisdiction – Personal jurisdiction may be secured by serving a defendant with a summons within the territorial limits of Missouri.
2. Domicile – A state may assert personal jurisdiction over a defendant if the defendant is domiciled in the state. Thus, Missouri can assert personal jurisdiction over a domiciliary defendant even if that defendant is outside the state at the time served.
3. Consent – Alternatively, jurisdiction could be executed pursuant to a party’s consent, or by the making of a general appearance.
4. Implied or Inferred Consent – Because limitations on territorial presence, states have attempted to infer consent to jurisdiction from certain acts of the defendant within the state that have created a cause of action. For example, under the Nonresidence Motorist Statute [Mo. Ann. Stat. §506.210], use of the state’s highways is deemed consent to personal jurisdiction over the defendant in actions arising out of such use and to the appointment of the secretary of state as a nonresident’s agent for accepting process in lawsuits that arise out of her use of the highways.

Note: These statutes have been upheld as consistent with due process, but it is now recognized that the true basis of jurisdiction is not consent in these cases but fundamental fairness.

B. Service on Corporations

1. Missouri Corporations and Registered Foreign Corporations – Personal jurisdiction over domestic corporations and foreign corporations registered to do business in Missouri is obtained by serving a copy of the summons and petition on the registered agent or any other agent authorized or required by law to receive service of process, or any officer or managing or general agent of the corporation found anywhere in the state: or by leaving the copies at any of the defendant’s business offices with the person in charge there. [Rule 54.13].

a. Examples of “Agents”

The manager of a branch office and a general sales agent have been held to be managing or general agents of corporations, so that

leaving a copy of the summons with them constituted service on a corporation. The duties of these individuals indicate an appreciation of the necessity of transmitting important papers to responsible officers.

b. Those Not Considered Agents

The following have been held not to be managing or general agents: a watchman of mining property, a clerk-typist or receptionist, and an insurance salesperson who maintained an office in her residence but lacked authority to issue or sign policies for the insurer and was paid on a commission basis.

C. Service on Partnerships – Personal service on a general partnership requires individual service on each partner.

D. Service on Municipal, Governmental or Quasi-Public Bodies – Personal jurisdiction over a public or quasi-public corporation or body is obtained by serving: (i) the clerk of the county court (in the case of a county); (ii) the mayor, city clerk, or city attorney (in the case of a city); or (iii) the chief executive officer (in the case of any other public body). [Rule 54.13].

II. OUT-OF-STATE SERVICE (Long Arm Jurisdiction)

A. Procedure for Service

1. Manner of Service – Service of summons in long arm cases is to be made in the same manner as service within the state. [Rule 54.14(b)].
2. Who May Serve – Service may be made by a person or that person’s deputy authorized to serve legal process in the foreign state, or by a person appointed by the court in which the action is pending. [Rule 54.14(a)].
3. Returns – Whether service is made by a private person or by an officer of a foreign state who is legally authorized to serve summons, return must be by affidavit and it must state the time, manner, and place of service. [Rule 54.20(b)].

B. Out-of-State Service on Domiciliaries and Residents

1. Requirements for Domicile or Residency

Out of state service on any person, or her executor, administrator, or other legal representative, has the same effect as service within the state as long as the person was domiciled in or a resident of Missouri: (i) at the time the cause of action accrued in Missouri; (ii) at the time the action was

commenced; or (iii) at the time process was served. If any of these conditions is met, the court acquires personal jurisdiction of the defendant. [Rule 54.07].

2. Personal Representative Stands in Decedent's Shoes

A personal representative stands in the litigational shoes of a decedent who is subject to the jurisdiction of Missouri courts.

3. Domicile Distinguished from Residence

Domicile must be distinguished from residence; residence is the place where a person happens to be living, whether or not she intends to make it her permanent home.

4. Questionable Constitutionality

Missouri's long arm statute authorizing in personam jurisdiction by service out of state on persons who are or were merely residents of Missouri may not be constitutional.

C. Long Arm Statute – Missouri authorizes out of state personal service on defendants for the purpose of subjecting them to the personal jurisdiction of the court, where the defendant:

1. Is a domiciliary or a resident of Missouri;
2. Does certain acts in the state in person or through an agent;
3. Has lived in a lawful marriage within Missouri, if the other party to the lawful marriage continues to live in Missouri, or if the third party has provided support of the spouse or to the children of the marriage and is a resident of Missouri; and
4. Has engaged in sexual intercourse in the state at or about the time a child was conceived.

Note: The mere fact that Missouri rules allow service outside the state for in personam jurisdiction does not mean that Missouri's assertion of in personam jurisdiction in a particular case is constitutional. That determination requires a second analysis that embraces the requirements of *International Shoe*.

D. Acts By Which Persons Submit to Jurisdiction of Missouri Courts Through the Long Arm Statute

1. Transaction of any business within Missouri;
2. Making or acceptance of any contract in Missouri;
3. Commission of tortuous act in Missouri;
4. Ownership, use, or possession of Missouri real estate;
5. Contracting to insure any person, property or risk located in Missouri at time of contracting; and
6. Maintenance of marital domicile in Missouri.

III. SUBJECT MATTER JURISDICTION

- A. Subject matter jurisdiction, in contrast to personal jurisdiction, is not a matter of the state court's power over the person, but the court's authority to render judgment in a particular case. Subject matter jurisdiction of the state's court is governed directly by the State Constitution.
- B. In general, subject matter jurisdiction is not subject to waiver and be raised at any time, even on appeal.
- C. If a matter is not jurisdictional but rather a procedural matter required by a statute or rule or an affirmative defense of the sort listed in the affirmative defense rule, it generally may be waived if not raised timely. For example, under *McCraken v. Wal-Mart Stores, East, LP*, 298 S.W.3d 473 (MO 2009) the issue of whether a statutory employee under the Workers' Compensation Act is not a matter of subject matter jurisdiction subject to a motion to dismiss, and a failure to raise the Workers' Compensation Act applicability as an affirmative defense may constitute a waiver of that defense, just as it the with other affirmative defenses.

IV. VENUE

- A. Procedure for Challenging Improper Venue
 1. Motions to Transfer – Challenges to venue may not be asserted by a pre-answer motion under Rule 55.27 or as an affirmative defense in defendant's answer. Instead, they must be asserted by a motion to transfer venue pursuant to Rule 51.045. Such a motion must be filed within 60 days after service on the party seeking transfer. Failure to file a timely motion waives objections to venue. If a timely motion to transfer venue is filed, the venue issue is not waived by any other action in the case.
 2. Decisions on Motions to Transfer

- a. Grant of Motion – IF the issue is determined in favor of transfer (or if no reply is filed), the court will transfer the entire case to a county of proper venue, unless separate trials have been ordered for separate claims. If separate trials have been ordered, the court will transfer only that part of the civil action in which the movant is involved.
 - b. Automatic Grant of Motion If Court Fails to Rule – A motion to transfer based on claim of improper venue will automatically be granted if the court fails to rule on the motion within 90 days after the motion’s filing. However, this time period can be waived in writing by all parties.
3. Relationship Between Motion to Transfer Venue and Motion for Change of Venue Based on Population – A motion to transfer venue does not deprive a party of any right the party may have to move to change venue under Rule 51.03 if the case is transferred to a county having 75,000 or fewer inhabitants. In that situation, a motion to change may be filed within the later of the time permitted by Rule 51.03 or 10 days after being served with notice that the case has been docketed in the transferee court. The right to change venue due to population may have been eliminated with respect to tort claims.
 4. Effect of Motion to Transfer on Time for Filing an Answer – Unlike a pre-answer motion under Rule 55.27, a motion to transfer venue does not extend the time for filing an answer.

B. General Rules for Proper Venue

1. Non-Tort Cases – The following rules apply only if there is no count alleging tort. They apply whether the defendants are individuals, not-for-profit corporations, or for-profit corporations. The former “corporate defendants only” venue statute and the former special venue statute for not-for-profit corporations have been repealed. These non-tort rules also apply to limited liability partnerships, and they probably also apply to limited liability companies.
 - a. All Defendants Residing in the Same County in Missouri
 1. One Defendant – If there is only one defendant and that defendant resides in Missouri, venue is proper in the county in which (i) that defendant resides; and (ii) the plaintiff resides and the defendant may be found and served with process.

2. Multiple Defendants – If there are multiple defendants, and all reside in the same Missouri county, venue is proper in that county. In that situation, venue is probably also proper in the county in which the plaintiff resides if all the defendants are found and served with process therein.
 - b. Several Defendants Residing in Different Counties – If there are several defendants and they reside in different counties, venue is proper in any county in which any of the defendants reside.
 - c. Several Defendants – Mixed residents and nonresidents – If there are several defendants and they reside in different counties, venue is proper in any county in which any of the defendants reside.
 - d. All Defendants Nonresidents of Missouri – If all defendants are nonresidents of Missouri, venue is proper in any Missouri county.
2. Tort Cases – See Outline Significant Missouri Law Distinctions, Torts.
- C. Special Venue Rules for Particular Types of Defendants or Plaintiffs
1. Defendant LLPs – The statute creating LLPs in Missouri provided that suits against LLPs would be governed by the general venue rules. However, in non-tort cases, venue of a suit against an LLP is broader, given that LLPs may have multiple residences (every county in which the LLP has an agent or office for doing its customary business, as well as the counties in which its registered agent and registered office are located.)
 2. Plaintiff or Defendant Counties – If any of the plaintiffs is a county, the following venue rules apply:
 - a. If there is no count alleging a tort, the case may be commenced and prosecuted to final judgment in the county in which the defendant or defendants reside or in the county in which the plaintiff county is located, if at least one defendant can be found and served in that county. If the suit is based on contract, the suit can also be brought in the county in which the plaintiff county is located or in the county in which any party to the contract resides.
 - b. If there is any count alleging a tort, venue in suits by counties is probably governed by general tort venue rules.
- D. Change of Venue
1. By Agreement – In any civil action, if all parties agree in writing to a change of venue, the court must transfer venue to the county within the

state unanimously chosen by the parties. If any parties who are added to the cause of action after the date of the transfer do not consent to transfer, the case must be transferred to such county in which venue is appropriate under the general rules based on the amended pleadings.

2. For Cause – A change of venue for cause may be ordered in any civil action triable by a jury if: (i) the opposite party has an undue influence over the inhabitants of the county; or (ii) the inhabitants of the county are prejudiced against the applicants.

The application must be filed at least 30 days before the trial date or within 10 days after a trial date is fixed, whichever date is later. IF granted, venue will be changed to some other county convenient to the parties where the cause does not exist. [Rule 51.04].

3. As a Matter of Right in Counties of 75,000 or Fewer Inhabitants
 - a. General “Small County Change of Venue” Rule - Pursuant to Rule 51.03, a change of venue as a matter of right to some other county convenient to the parties will be ordered in a civil action triable by jury pending in a county having 75,000 or fewer inhabitants. The application must be filed not later than 10 days after his answer is due to be filed, or 10 days after the return date of the summons if an answer is not required, and he need not allege any cause for the change.

V. CHANGE OF JUDGE

If the trial judge is interested or prejudiced, is related to either party, or has been counsel in the cause, an application is not required. The judge is considered disqualified to preside over the action and is under a duty to disqualify herself. [Rule 51.07]. However, a motion to disqualify will usually be made. The motion will state the reason the judge ought to disqualify herself, e.g. bias, prejudice, etc. If the judge refuses to disqualify herself, relief may be sought by way of extraordinary writ praying for the appellate court to direct the judge to disqualify herself.

VI. STATUTES OF LIMITATIONS

A. One-Year Savings Statute

If a plaintiff files suit within the statute of limitations, and the suit is dismissed without prejudice, the Missouri “savings statute” permits the plaintiff to re-file within one year after the dismissal. The savings statute extends, but does not shorten, the applicable statute of limitations – if a dismissal occurs before the expiration of the statute of limitations, the plaintiff has either one year under the savings statute or the remainder of the statute of limitations period, whichever

period is longer, in which to refile. The savings statute applies to voluntary and involuntary dismissals without prejudice. The savings statute can only be used once.

B. Tolling the Statute

1. Absence of a Resident Defendant – If a defendant is a resident of the state, his absence from the state will toll the statute of limitations in two situations:
 - a. He is absent at the time the cause of action accrues in which case the statute of limitations does not begin to run until he returns to the state; or
 - b. He is a resident of the state at the time the cause of action accrues, and he subsequently leaves the state and establishes a residence in another state.
 - c. Wrongful Death Actions – A different tolling provision applies in wrongful death actions: If the defendant is absent from the state, the statute of limitations is suspended during the period the defendant is absent. This special wrongful death tolling rule applies even if the defendant was never a resident of Missouri. However, this tolling provision does not apply if the defendant can be served – even outside of the state – by use of the long arm statute, or if the defendant can be served within the state.
2. Injunction – The statutory period does not run while the action is stayed by injunction or statutory prohibition.
3. Concealment – The statutory period does not run while the defendant absconds or conceals himself, or while he, by any other improper act, prevents the commencement of the action.

VII. PLEADINGS

Fact pleading v. Federal Notice Pleading – Fact pleading requires that the pleader state his cause of action with greater specificity than that required under the federal “notice” pleading. IF the allegations are too general, a pleading is “conclusionary”; if too specific, it is “evidentiary.” The pleader should state ultimate facts that logically support, on application of a rule of law, the liability of the defendant. Each averment of a pleading must be simple, concise, and direct. No technical forms of pleadings are required.

VIII. DEPOSITIONS

Depositions May Be Used at Trial for Any Purpose.

Any part of a deposition that is admissible under the rules of evidence applied as though the deponent were testifying in court may be used against any party who was present or represented at the taking of the deposition or who had proper notice thereof. Depositions may be used in court for any purpose.

IX. JURY PRACTICE

A. Instructions

1. Given to Jury Before Closing Argument

In Missouri, unlike most states and the federal system, instructions are given to the jury before the closing argument.

2. Approved Instructions Are Mandatory

If there is an approved MAI instruction applicable to the case that the appropriate party requests or the court decides to submit, the approved instruction must be given to the exclusion of any other on the same subject.

- a. Deviation from MAI – If there is a deviation from an applicable MAI instruction that does not need modification under the facts of a particular case, the deviation is error and is presumptively prejudicial error.

X. APPEALS

A. Points Relied Upon

1. The brief must contain the points relied on, each of which must:

- a. Identify the trial court ruling or action that the appellant challenges;
- b. State concisely the legal reasons for the appellant's claim of reversible error; and
- c. Explain in summary fashion why, in the context of the case, those legal reasons support the claim of reversible error.

2. Supporting Authorities

The petitioner must, immediately, following each point relied on, include a list of cases, not to exceed four, and the constitutional, statutory, and regulatory provisions or other authority on which the petitioner principally relies. It is no longer necessary to list all authorities or permissible to list more than four cases. Failure to cite authorities in support of a point will be deemed to be an abandonment of the issue. Similarly, failure to develop the point in the appellant's brief will be deemed an abandonment of the issue. If an issue one of first impression and no authorities exist, the appellant should state that fact.

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS

ESTATES

An individual has no right, constitutionally or otherwise, to transfer his or her estate at death. Accordingly, all such “rights” are statutory, and there are probably no laws more unique to each state than the laws governing wills and the transmission of property at an individual’s death. Since 1975, however, state lawmakers have more frequently looked to the Uniform Probate Code for guidance when revising statutes pertaining to wills and estates, including Missouri when the probate code was entirely rewritten in 1980.

The Missouri probate code is set forth in Chapters 472, 473, 474 and 475 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri. In addition, §461.300, RSMo, allowing recovery of nonprobate assets for payment of claims and allowances, is deemed to be a part of the probate code.

I. WILLS

A. Execution of Will

1. Missouri law differs from most other states by not requiring the following:
 - a. No requirement will be signed by testator at end, or at any other particular place. Just “signed by the testator”. (§474.320) Witnesses, on the other hand, must “subscribe” their names to the will.
 - b. No requirement testator sign will in the presence of witnesses, nor that witnesses sign in each other’s presence. Each witness must, however, sign in presence of testator and testator must advise/verify to witness that testator did sign.
 - c. No requirement will be dated.
 - d. No requirement will have an attestation clause.
2. Missouri does have some variations with respect to execution of a will:
 - a. Testator must request witnesses to witness will. This request may be inferred from facts and circumstances.
 - b. Witnesses must be aware document is a will (“publication”). This, too, may be inferred.

B. Presentment (§473.050)

1. If a will is “presented” within the time limits set forth in §473.050.3, then the will may be admitted and an administration of the estate had at any time thereafter. (§473.050.4)
2. The term “presented” means delivery of the will to the appropriate probate division together with an appropriate document seeking admission of the will within the time limits set forth in §473.050.3. (§473.050.2)

II. INTESTATE SUCCESSION (§474.010)

The primary distinction between Missouri and most other states is the length to which the statute goes to avoid an escheat. If the decedent has no spouse or descendants, then estate to ancestors (without limit) or their descendants if related in the ninth degree. If that does not work, then to heirs of predeceased spouse(s), in the same manner.

III. PROBATE PROCEDURAL RULES

A. Civil Rules Not Applicable – Mostly

1. Only 11 of the Rules of Civil Procedure are specifically applicable to proceedings in the probate division. (Rule 41.01(b))
2. In addition, the civil rules do not apply in an “adversary probate proceeding,” unless:
 - a. The probate code does *not* contain a “provision prescribing practice, procedure or pleading applicable” (§472.141.1(1)); or
 - b. The court on its own motion or motion of an interested party orders the civil rules to apply. If such an order is made, it must specify the applicable rules (§472.141.1(2)); or
 - c. A probate code provision specifically makes the civil rules applicable (§472.141.1(1)).

B. Adversary Probate Proceeding

1. This is a defined term. §472.140.2.
2. In addition, the probate division judge may determine a probate proceeding is an adversary proceeding. *Id.*

IV. NONPROBATE TRANSFERS – RECOVERY

Missouri “invented” the nonprobate transfer law and still has the most comprehensive statutory provisions on the matter. One of the unique Missouri law provision is the recovery statute, §461.300, which is treated as a part of the probate code.

A. When Recovery Available

1. The purpose of the recovery statute is to provide funds for payment of specified debts and obligations of a decedent when the probate estate is insufficient.
2. The debts and obligations for payment of which recovery may be had are:
 - a. Statutory allowances (§§474.250, 474.260 and 474.290);
 - b. Claims remaining unpaid; and
 - c. Expenses of administration, although recovery is not allowed if the deficiency is solely attributable to such expenses. (§461.300.1)

B. Recoverable Transfers

1. Transfers made pursuant to the provisions of the nonprobate transfer law (§§461.003-461.081) may be recovered.
2. Also recoverable are “any other transfer of a decedent’s property other than from the administration of the decedent’s probate estate”:
 - a. If the property would have been available to satisfy a debt of the decedent immediately prior to decedent’s death; and
 - b. Only to the extent of the decedent’s contribution to the value of the property. (§461.300.10(4))

C. Procedure

1. The personal representative has the first right to initiate a recovery action (“accounting”). (§461.300.2)
2. A “qualified claimant” (§461.300.10(3)) may force initiation of the action by making a “written demand” upon the personal representative to initiate recovery proceedings. If the personal representative does not do so within 30 days after *receipt* of the written demand, then any qualified claimant may begin proceeding. (§461.300.2)

3. A recovery action must be commenced within 18 months after the decedent's date of death. *Id.* This period may be shortened, however, to 16 months, e.g., if written demand is not received by personal representative until the last day of the 16th month, the next month is a 30 day month, and the personal representative does not commence action, then time will expire before a qualified claimant can initiate proceedings.

D. Parties, Contribution

1. It is not necessary to name all nonprobate transferees as parties – one is sufficient. Filing of the accounting petition “freezes” all recoverable transfers, and later discovered transferees can be joined. (§461.300.4)
2. Each transferee joined as a party is liable for a prorata share of the value of the property received by that transferee to provide for payment of the shortfall of estate assets. (§461.300.1) **NOTE:** Recovery of the transferred asset itself is not necessary, nor contemplated, as the transferee is liable for “value” of transferred property. *Id.*

E. Personal Representative – Extended Liability

1. If demand is made upon the personal representative to initiate recovery proceeding and he or she does not, then the personal representative must provide full information on all recoverable transfers known to him or her. (§461.300.2)
2. If the personal representative does not provide full information, then the 18 month period for bringing an action is tolled with respect to transfers made to the personal representative. (§461.300.4)

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS
EVIDENCE

I. MISSOURI EVIDENCE

Missouri is one of only twelve states that have not adopted a variation of the Uniform Rules of Evidence. Many of the fundamental precepts of evidence in Missouri, such as Missouri's hearsay rule and most of the hearsay exceptions, are matters of common law. In addition, constitutional provisions, statutes, and Supreme Court Rules address, either expressly or indirectly, evidence issues. Rules promulgated in accordance with the Supreme Court of Missouri's authority to prescribe practice and procedure in the courts supersede statutory provisions inconsistent with the rules. Mo. Const. Art., § 5; Rule 41.02

II. AUTHENTICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR WRITTEN RECORDS

Admission of Business Record Based on Custodian of Records Affidavit.

Any record or copies of records reproduced in the ordinary course of business shall be admissible as a business record, subject to procedural and substantive objections, in any court in Missouri upon an affidavit of a qualified custodian stating that the records were kept in the ordinary course of business as explained in R.S.Mo. § 490.680.

III. EVIDENCE REGARDING THE VALUE OF MEDICAL TREATMENT

R.S.Mo. 490.715

With respect to evidence regarding the "value of medical treatment," §490.715(2) creates "a rebuttable presumption that the dollar amount necessary to satisfy the financial obligation to the health care provider represents the value of the medical treatment rendered." However, because the presumption is rebuttable, a plaintiff may offer substantial evidence that the value of medical treatment should be based on the amount billed and not the amount necessary to satisfy the financial obligation. If such substantial evidence is presented by the plaintiff, the value of medical treatment will be determined on the basis that no presumption existed. *Deck v. Teasley*, 322 S.W.3d 526 (Mo. 2010).

IV. OPINION TESTIMONY BY EXPERT WITNESS

R.S.Mo. 490.065

The statute governs the admissibility of expert testimony in civil cases. If scientific, technical or other specialized knowledge will assist the trier of fact to understand the evidence or to determine a fact in issue, a witness qualified by knowledge, skill, experience, training or education may testify thereto in the form of an opinion or otherwise.

V. SPECIAL RULES FOR CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF WITNESSES PURSUANT TO CHAPTER 491

A. Rape Shield Statute – R.S.Mo. § 491.015

In prosecutions related to sexual conduct, opinion and reputation evidence of the complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is inadmissible except where such specific instances are:

- (1) Evidence of the sexual conduct of the complaining witness with the defendant to prove consent where consent is a defense to the alleged crime and the evidence is reasonably contemporaneous with the date of the alleged crime; or
- (2) Evidence of specific instances of sexual activity showing alternative source or origin of semen, pregnancy or disease;
- (3) Evidence of immediate surrounding circumstances of the alleged crime; or
- (4) Evidence relating to the previous chastity of the complaining witness in cases, where, by statute, previously chaste character is required to be proved by the prosecution.

B. Child Victim Witness Protection – R.S.Mo. § 491.680

1. In any criminal prosecution under Chapters 565, 566 or 568 involving an alleged child victim, upon motion of the prosecuting attorney, the Court may order that an in-camera videotaped deposition of the testimony of the alleged child victim be made for use as substantive evidence at preliminary hearings and at trial.
2. The court may also exclude the defendant from the videotape deposition proceedings in which the child is to testify. Where any such order of exclusion is entered, the child shall not be excused as a witness until the defendant has had a reasonable opportunity to review the videotape deposition in private with his counsel and to consult with his counsel; and until his counsel has been afforded the opportunity to cross-examine the child following such review and consultation.
3. The attorney for the defendant shall have at least two opportunities to cross-examine the deposed alleged child victim: once prior to the preliminary hearing and at least one additional time prior to the trial.

C. Admissibility of Criminal Convictions for Impeachment Purposes – R.S.Mo. 491.050

Any person who has been convicted of a crime is, notwithstanding, a competent witness; however, any prior criminal convictions may be proved to affect his credibility in a civil or criminal case and, further, any prior pleas of guilty, pleas of nolo contendere, and findings of guilty may be proved to affect his credibility in a criminal case. Such proof may be either by the record or by his own cross-examination, upon which he must answer any question relevant to that inquiry, and the party cross-examining shall not be concluded by his answer.

VI. DEPOSITION TESTIMONY AS EVIDENCE

Depositions May Be Used at Trial for Any Purpose.

Any part of a deposition that is admissible under the rules of evidence applied as though the deponent were testifying in court may be used against any party who was present or represented at the taking of the deposition or who had proper notice thereof. Depositions may be used in court for any purpose.

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS
FAMILY LAW

Missouri family law is an area primarily established by statutes contained in Chapters 451-455 of the revised statutes. This covers requirements for marriage, dissolution of marriage, adoption, enforcement of child support orders and adult abuse. There are also court decisions interpreting these statutes, mostly regarding issues of property division and maintenance in a dissolution action.

I. Marriage - Chapter 451 RSMo.

A. Prohibited marriages

1. Marriages between (1) ascendants and descendants; (2) brothers and sisters; (3) nieces, nephews, aunts, and uncles; (4) first cousins are prohibited. Section 451.020.
2. Marriages involving a person who lacks mental capacity to enter into a marriage contract is prohibited. Section 451.020.
3. Same sex marriages are prohibited and are not recognized even if lawfully contracted in another state. Section 451.022.
4. A person under the age of 18 must have parental consent and under 15 must have court approval. Section 451.090.

B. Void/Voidable distinction

A void marriage is one prohibited by statute and cannot be ratified. A voidable marriage can be ratified. A voidable marriage is one that is valid until one of the parties establishes grounds for annulment in a proceeding for declaration of invalidity of marriage.

II. Dissolution of Marriages - Chapter 452 RSMo.

A. LOCAL RULES

Many judicial circuits have adopted local rules governing dissolution of marriage cases. These local rules vary from circuit to circuit and cover a wide range of topics. Many circuits require the filing of financial and property statements and other documents before a decree can be entered, even if both parties are represented by attorneys and have signed a separation agreement. Other local rules cover approved discovery requests, mandatory mediation, judgment by affidavit and child support withholding. Many circuits also have online forms for pro se litigants.

B. Institution of Action

1. Section 452.310 sets forth what must be contained in a petition for dissolution of marriage. The petition must be verified.
2. The petition is not “filed” unless summons is issued or respondent files a notarized entry of appearance or an attorney files an entry of appearance. Thus, do not send the clerk the petition and ask to “hold” summons. Section 452.311.
3. The standard for granting a dissolution is that the marriage is irretrievably broken and there is no likelihood the marriage can be preserved. Section 452.305. Grounds need not be proven unless the spouse denies the marriage is irretrievably broken, then the petitioner must prove statutory grounds. Section 452.320.
4. Venue is proper where either the petitioner or the respondent resides. Section 452.300.
5. There is a jurisdictional residency requirement that either spouse be a Missouri resident for more than 90 days preceding the filing of the petition. Section 452.305.
6. There is a waiting period of 30 days after the filing of the petition before a dissolution can be granted. Section 452.305.

C. Property Issues

1. Separation agreements are authorized if the Court finds the agreement is not unconscionable and the terms are binding on the Court except for child custody, support, and visitation issues. Section 452.325.
2. Property is classified as marital property or non-marital property. The statute defines non-marital property, which is generally property acquired before marriage or acquired during marriage as a gift or inheritance. Section 452.330.
3. Marital property is divided based upon statutory factors set forth in Section 452.330, including the conduct of the parties during the marriage. Non-marital property can be transmuted to marital property.
4. The Court is required to divide all property and all debts of the marriage. Case law gives the trial judge fairly broad discretion in dividing the property.

D. Maintenance

A party may be granted maintenance provided they lack sufficient property, including marital property, to provide for their reasonable needs and are unable to support themselves through proper employment. The statute, § 452.335 RSMo., sets for the factors which the Court may consider in determining the amount and duration of maintenance. A maintenance order may be modifiable or non-modifiable. Case law gives the trial judge broad discretion in awarding maintenance.

E. Child Custody

1. Missouri has adopted the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act (UCCJEA) to resolve jurisdiction issues.
2. Custody of children is determined upon the best interests of the child. Custody under § 452.375 RSMo. means “joint legal custody,” “sole legal custody,” “joint physical custody” or “sole physical custody.” It is public policy of the state as set forth in the statute to see that both parents get frequent, continuing, and meaningful contact with the children.
3. The statute sets forth the factors the Court can consider in custody awards.
4. Each parent, individually or jointly, must submit a parenting plan covering a variety of custody and visitation issues specified in § 452.310.
5. Child custody orders may be modified on a showing of a substantial and continuing change of circumstances such that the arrangements are no longer in the child’s best interest.
6. Either parent seeking to relocate outside of the state must have the consent of the other spouse or seek prior approval of the Court.
§ 452.377 RSMo.
7. Several counties have standard visitation plans that the Court usually follows where the parties do not agree.

F. Child Support

The factors the Court can consider in ordering child support are set forth in Section 452.340. The presumed amount of child support is determined by Supreme Court Rule 88.01.

1. The amount of child support is determined using “Form 14,” which is based on the parties’ gross income and a chart per Supreme Court Rule 88. The parties must submit a Form 14. The Court is required to follow the Form 14 amount unless the Court specifically finds after consideration of all relevant factors, the amount is unjust or inappropriate.

2. In determining the child support amount under Form 14, a Court can impute income to a spouse who is voluntarily under-employed.
3. The Court is required to make an order as to which parent provides health insurance for the child and the amount of that health insurance is considered in Form 14.
4. Under Form 14, the amount of child support can be reduced by a small percentage based on the amount of visitation.
5. Child support ends when the child reaches 18, unless the child is a full-time student and then support continues to age 21. There are specific requirements that must be followed for the child support to continue while the child is in college. Section 452.340.

III. Enforcement of Child Support - Chapter 454

By statute, the Missouri Division of Family Services is authorized to enforce child support actions. The division may file an action against a putative father to establish paternity and set a child support amount. In addition to the usual mechanisms to enforce money judgments, the agency has added powers to lien certain property, lawsuits, and workers' compensation claims. Section 454.514-454, 519. The agency also has the power to suspend the obligor's driver's license.

IV. Adult Abuse - Chapter 455

- A. Chapter 455 may order a protection to prevent harassment and abuse. An ex parte order of protection may be obtained by filing of a petition meeting the statutory requirements.
 1. Abuse involves more than physical contact or the threat of it. It includes forms of harassment and stalking. Section 455.010.
 2. The Court is required to hold a hearing 15 days after the petition is filed and may continue the order of protection from 180 days to 1 year. Section 455.040.

Orders of protection may include temporary orders of child custody. Section 455.045.

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS
MISSOURI ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

- I. Missouri Administrative Procedure Act – Chapter 536
 - A. Applicability to state agencies (exclusions)
 - 1. MAPA is generally applicable to Missouri state agencies (eg. Department of Social Services, Gaming Commission, etc.).
 - 2. A few specialized agencies, such as the Workers’ Compensation Board, are exempt from MAPA because they are already covered by detailed procedures.
 - B. Applicability to local government agencies
 - 1. MAPA may also apply to local government agencies, including those that get their authority from a city, county, or other local government (eg. city police department, school board, etc.).
 - C. “Agency”
 - 1. MAPA defines an agency as any administrative office or body [with the authority to] make rules or adjudicate contested cases (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 536.010(1)).
 - 2. MAPA Excludes any traditional branch of government (eg. courts, legislature, governor).
 - 3. Under MAPA, an agency shall not include an institution of higher education, supported in whole or in part from state funds, if such institution has established written procedures to assure that constitutionally required due process safeguards exist and apply to a proceeding that would otherwise constitute a "contested case" as defined in section 536.010.
- II. Obtaining Information
 - A. Discovery Rules (Mo. Rev. Stat. §§ 536.073(1), 536.077)
 - 1. Agency subpoena power
 - (a) Board subpoena power for investigatory purposes is generally authorized by the agency’s enabling statute.
 - 2. Power to issue discovery rules (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 536.073.2)

- (a) MAPA gives agencies created by the constitution or state statute power to issue rules permitting any form of discovery allowed in a civil action.
- (b) An agency discovery order that: (i) requires a physical or mental examination; (ii) authorizes examination of real estate without consent of the owner; or (iii) imposes contempt sanctions may not be enforced except by order of the circuit court after notice and hearing.

B. Administrative Searches

- 1. Investigation must be authorized by law, which requires not only statutory authority, but also compliance with constitutional protections. All criminal law warrant exceptions are recognized as exceptions for administrative searches. A warrant is not required to search intensively regulated businesses.

C. Sunshine Law (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 610.011.2)

- 1. Public governmental body
 - (a) This applies to all legislative or administrative bodies of the state and its political subdivisions, along with all departments, divisions, and functional units of those governments, the governing boards of all state-funded colleges and universities, and committees under the direction of such entities.
 - (b) It also includes quasi-public governmental bodies whose primary purpose is to carry out activities for governmental bodies or to perform certain public functions.
- 2. Open meetings (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 610.022.3)
 - (a) Unless closure is specifically authorized, all meetings are required to be open to the public.
- 3. Notice of meetings (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 610.020)
 - (a) Any meeting at which any public business is discussed or decided must be subject to reasonable advance notice of the time, date, place, and tentative agenda.
- 4. Open records (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 610.024(1))
 - (a) Any public records retained by a public governmental body are to be open to the public for inspection, unless the record is specifically exempted from disclosure.

5. Closed meetings and records (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 610.021)
 - (a) The Sunshine Law contains a number of subject matter-based discretionary exceptions to its general rule of broad public access, which permit closure of applicable records and meetings.

III. Administrative Hearing

A. Right to hearing

1. Contested case (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 536.010(4))
 - (a) A contested case is one in which a proceeding before an agency in which legal rights, duties, or privileges of specific parties is required by law to be determined after a trial-type hearing. The law mandating the hearing may be a statute, procedural due process, or the agency's own rules.
 - (b) Procedural due process—a party is entitled to a hearing as a matter of constitutional due process when:
 - The agency action will be based on disputed, material adjudicative facts, not legislative facts;
 - The action may adversely affect an individual's liberty or property interests (*Goldberg v. Kelly*, 397 U.S. 254 (1970)). Examples include:
 - Driver's license revocation (*Bell v. Burson*, 402 U.S. 535 (1971)).
 - Parole revocation (*Morrissey v. Brewer*, 408 U.S. 471 (1972)).
 - Loss of teacher tenure (*Perry v. Sindermann*, 408 U.S. 593 (1972)).
 - Suspension from public school (*Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565 (1975)).
 - Social security disability payment termination (*Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976)).
 - (c) Trial-type hearing
 - The maximum hearing that due process may require. Much like a judicial trial without a jury, usually with notice, some discovery, right of counsel, oral hearing, confrontation,

cross-examination, right to present evidence and make argument, impartial tribunal, decision on the record, written findings of fact and conclusions of law, and judicial review.

(d) Balancing test

- In determining the constitutional requirements as to the nature and timing of a hearing, the courts generally balance three factors: (i) the private interest that will be affected by the official action; (ii) the risk of an erroneous deprivation of such interest through the procedures used; and (iii) the government's interest, including the fiscal and administrative burdens that a particular procedural requirement would entail.

(e) Timing

- When immediate adverse affects may result from the governmental action, the issue is whether the parties affected are entitled to a hearing before the government can act or whether a hearing after the action is sufficient.

B. Hearing Procedures

1. Commencing the contested case (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 536.063(1))

- (a) Any individual or agency seeking agency action or an agency decision may institute a proceeding.

2. Notice (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 536.067)

- (a) Parties and other interested persons are entitled to notice that a contested case has been commenced and notice of the hearing.

3. Presentation of evidence (Mo. Rev. Stat. §§ 536.070(2), (3))

- (a) Parties to administrative hearings have a right to present evidence orally, to cross-examine opposing witnesses, and to rebut evidence against them.

IV. Judicial Review

A. Review of Contested Case

1. To file in court for direct review of an agency's decision, the aggrieved party must file a petition in circuit court within 30 days after delivery of notice of the agency's final decision.
2. Aggrieved party
 - (a) A party is aggrieved when an administrative decision prejudicially affects his personal or property rights or interests.
3. Petition for review in circuit court
 - (a) AHC Tax Decisions
 - A plaintiff must file a petition in the court of appeals or the supreme court within 30 days after mailing or delivery of a final decision.
 - (b) Enforcement review
 - A party (most often the agency) may seek judicial review to enforce an agency order against a non-complying party.
4. Contest Case
 - (a) A reviewing court must look to the whole record in reviewing an agency's decision, not merely at that evidence that supports its decision. A Court does not view the evidence in the light most favorable to the agency's decision.

B. Review of Non-contested case (Mo. Rev. Stat. § 536.150)

1. When an agency decision determining the legal rights, duties, or privileges of any person is not subject to agency review, the MAPA provides that the decision is reviewable by means of suit for injunction, certiorari, mandamus, prohibition, or any other appropriate action.

C. Rulemaking

1. Judicial review of rules is available exclusively in the circuit court via an action for declaratory judgment on the validity of any rule or threatened application thereof.

D. Standing issues

1. Missouri taxpayer standing

- (a) A Missouri taxpayer has standing to challenge allegedly illegal action when the agency action: (i) involves a direct expenditure of funds generated through taxation; (ii) results in an increased levy of taxes; or (iii) results in a pecuniary loss.

E. Exhaustion of administrative remedies

No one is entitled to judicial relief for a supposed or threatened injury until the prescribed administrative remedy has been exhausted. *Farm Bureau Town & Country Ins. Co. v. Angoff*, 909 S.W.2d 348 (Mo. Banc 1995); Mo. Rev. Stat. § 536.100.

F. Scope of review

1. Constitutional review

- (a) For constitutional claims, the court will make its own independent determination of whether a constitutional right was affected, and will give no deference to the administrative agency.

2. Jurisdictional review

- (a) For jurisdictional challenges, the court will make its own independent determination regarding the statutory interpretation issue of agency power, and will give some deference to the administrative agency decision.

3. Procedural review

- (a) For procedural challenges, the court will make its own independent determination as to whether an agency has followed proper procedure in its decision making, and will give little or no deference to the agency decision.

4. Merits review

(a) Contested case

- Findings of fact – When reviewing agency findings of fact, the court will use the substantial evidence test.
- Discretionary decisions – Other discretionary decisions are subject to the abuse of discretion test.

(b) Non-contested case

- The court uses a substituted judgment or de novo scope of review in reviewing all non-contested cases. The court will make its own determination and give the agency no deference.

(c) Rulemaking

- When reviewing agency rulemaking, the court will use an abuse of discretion scope of review, which affords significant deference to the agency.

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS
MISSOURI COURTS

Missouri Court System

1. Supreme Court

a. **Composition**--seven judges. Judges elect one member to serve as chief justice every two years. Generally sits en banc.

b. **Jurisdiction**--

i. Original--Supreme Court has original jurisdiction to determine remedial writs, quo warrant, writs of prohibition and mandamus. Has original jurisdiction over matters involving the discipline of attorneys, and contested statewide elections. Is permitted by its supervisory authority over all Missouri courts to establish rules of practice.

ii. Appellate

a. The Supreme Court has exclusive appellate jurisdiction over cases involving: (i) the validity of a treaty or statute of the United States; (ii) the validity of a Missouri statute or provision of the Missouri constitution; (iii) the construction of the revenue laws of the State; (iv) the title to any state office; and (v) punishments imposing death.

b. The Supreme Court will hear appeals of cases first heard by the court of appeals if an application for transfer to the Supreme Court filed by a party is sustained by either the court of appeals or the Supreme Court.

c. The Supreme Court must hear appeals of cases transferred to it by the court of appeals where a dissenting judge certifies the opinion contrary to a previous opinion of the supreme court or the court of appeals.

2. **Appellate Courts**

a. **Composition**--there are three districts of the Missouri Court of Appeals--the Western, Eastern and Southern Districts. The Western District has 11 judges. The Eastern District has 14 judges. The Southern District has 7 judges. Districts may sit en banc, but typically sit in division panels of three judges.

b. **Jurisdiction**--the court of appeals may issue and determine original remedial writs. General appellate jurisdiction extends to all appeals from the inferior courts within the counties in each district, unless a matter is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

3. **Circuit Courts**

a. **Composition**--the State of Missouri is divided into 45 judicial circuits, with each circuit comprised of one county, or in some cases more than one contiguous county.

b. **Jurisdiction**--circuit courts have jurisdiction over all cases and matters, civil and criminal.

i. **Associate Circuit Judges**--hear civil cases involving claims of less than \$25,000, and other cases as set by statute, such as unlawful detainer actions. May also hear any case if so assigned by the presiding judge of the Circuit.

ii. **Circuit Judges**--may hear all types of cases. Though some circuit courts may be designated as "family court" or a "probate court," these are not separate courts, but are merely recognized divisions of the Circuit Court.

iii. **Commissioners**--

4. **Selection of Judges**

a. **Merit Selection--the "Non-Partisan Court Plan."** During the 1930s, the public became increasingly dissatisfied with the increasing role of politics in judicial selection and judicial decision-making. Judges were plagued by outside influences due to the political aspects of the election process, and dockets were congested due to time the judges spent campaigning.

In November 1940, voters amended the Missouri constitution by adopting the "Nonpartisan Selection of Judges Court Plan," which was placed on the ballot by initiative petition. The adoption of the plan by initiative referendum resulted from a public backlash against the widespread abuses of the judicial system by the "Boss Tom" Pendergast political machine in Kansas City and by the political control exhibited by ward bosses in St. Louis.

The Missouri nonpartisan court plan, commonly called the Missouri Plan, since has served as a national model for the selection of judges and has been adopted in more than 30 other states.

The nonpartisan plan provides for the selection of judges based on merit rather than on political affiliation. Initially, the nonpartisan plan applied to judges of the Supreme Court; the court of appeals; the circuit, criminal corrections and probate courts of St. Louis city; and the circuit and probate courts of Jackson County. In 1970, voters extended the nonpartisan plan to judges in St. Louis County, and three years later, voters extended the nonpartisan plan to judges in Clay and Platte counties. These changes are reflected in the Missouri Constitution, as amended in 1976. (Sections 25(a)-(g) of Article V of the Missouri Constitution).

The Kansas City Charter extends the nonpartisan selection plan to Kansas City municipal court judges as well. Under the constitution, other judicial circuits may adopt the plan upon

approval by a majority of voters in the circuit. Most recently, in November 2008, Greene County voted to extend the nonpartisan plan to its judges.

Under the Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan, a nonpartisan judicial commission reviews applications, interviews candidates and selects a judicial panel. For the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, the Appellate Judicial Commission makes the selection. It is composed of three lawyers elected by the lawyers of The Missouri Bar (the organization of all lawyers licensed in this state), three citizens selected by the governor, and the chief justice, who serves as chair. Each of the geographic districts of the Court of Appeals must be represented by one lawyer and one citizen member on the Appellate Judicial Commission.

Each of the circuit courts in Clay, Greene, Jackson, Platte and St. Louis counties and St. Louis city has its own circuit judicial commission. These commissions are composed of the chief judge of the court of appeals district in which the circuit is located, plus two lawyers elected by the bar and two citizens selected by the governor. All of the lawyers and citizens must live within the circuit for which they serve the judicial commission.

Regardless of the commission handling the applications, the constitutional process of filling a judicial vacancy is the same. With any vacancy, the appropriate commission reviews applications of lawyers who wish to join the court and interviews the applicants. It then submits the names of three qualified candidates – called the “panel” of candidates – to the Missouri governor.

Normally, the governor will interview the three candidates and review their backgrounds before selecting one for the vacancy. If the governor does not appoint one of the three panelists within 60 days of submission, the commission selects one of the three panelists to fill the vacancy.

The nonpartisan plan also gives the voters a chance to have a say in the retention of judges selected under the plan. Once a judge has served in office for at least one year, that judge must stand for a retention election at the next general election. The judge's name is placed on a separate judicial ballot, without political party designation, and voters decide whether to retain the judge based on his or her judicial record. A judge must receive a majority of votes to be retained for a full term of office. The purpose of this vote is to provide another accountability mechanism of the nonpartisan plan to ensure quality judges. If a judge retires or resigns during or at the end of his or her term, a vacancy is created, which will be filled under the Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan as described above.

To inform voters about the performance of nonpartisan judges, judicial performance evaluation committees, made up of both lawyers and non-lawyers, evaluate objective criteria including decisions written by judges on the retention ballot as well as surveys completed by lawyers and jurors who have direct and personal knowledge of the judges. The judges are rated according to judicial performance standards, including whether they: administer justice impartially and uniformly; make decisions based on competent legal analysis and proper application of the law; issue rulings and decisions that can be understood clearly; effectively and efficiently manage their courtrooms and the administrative duties of their office, including whether they issue decisions promptly; and act ethically and with dignity, integrity and patience. The results of these judicial performance evaluations then are distributed to the public via the media, the League of Women Voters and the Internet.

The success of the plan in selecting qualified judges is evident from the fact that, since its adoption, the public has not voted any appellate judge out of office, and only two circuit judges have been voted out of office. Judge Marion D. Waltner of Jackson County was voted out in

1942. The other, Judge John R. Hutcherson of Clay County, was voted out in 1992 after receiving failing reviews from lawyers in the judicial evaluation survey.

b. Elections In Circuits that have not adopted the Non-Partisan Court Plan, circuit judges are elected to fill available seats.

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS

REAL PROPERTY

Unlike many areas of the law, the laws governing real property, at least in common law jurisdictions, tend to be uniform to a great degree. This results from the common law states all having initially adopted the same provisions of English law as a starting point. Accordingly, there are only a few areas of real property law which are unique to Missouri.

The statutory provisions governing real property in Missouri are set forth in Chapters 441-448 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri.

I. TENANCY BY THE ENTIRETY (“T/E”)

A. Creation

1. There is currently no statutory provision defining a T/E or the method to create such a tenancy.

2. A true T/E can only exist between a husband and wife. Note, however, there is case law which states that multiple trustees of a trust hold title by the entirety.

3. A conveyance to a man and woman in fact married to each other creates a tenancy by the entirety, even if the deed fails to state the two are husband and wife. It is not necessary the deed recite “as tenants by the entirety,” nor to recite the tenancy includes a right of survivorship.

4. A conveyance of property owned by husband *or* wife, or by husband and wife other than as a T/E, made by husband and wife directly to themselves as husband and wife effectively creates a T/E. (§442.025, RSMo)

5. The four unities must be observed, that is:

a. Unity of title – the estate is created by one instrument;

b. Unity of interest – the interests of husband and wife must be of the same duration;

c. Unity of time – the interests of husband and wife must vest at the same time; and

d. Unity of possession.

6. Recitations in the deed that negate a T/E, e.g., to husband and wife, as tenants in common and not as tenants by the entirety, are effective.

7. Personal property may be held by husband and wife in a T/E.

B. Encumbrance

1. Neither spouse alone can convey any interest in entireties property. By parity of reasoning, no creditor of one spouse can reach T/E property to satisfy the separate debt of one spouse, with two limited exceptions: The IRS and the bankruptcy court in certain instances treat T/E as though it was a joint tenancy, thereby allowing, in limited circumstances, one-half to be taken for tax or creditor claims of one spouse.

2. Involuntary partition is not applicable to T/E property.

C. Severance

1. A T/E may be severed by joint action of husband and wife, e.g., a deed executed by husband and wife to themselves creating a tenancy in common.

2. A T/E is severed, or terminated:

a. Upon the death of one spouse;

b. Upon divorce, with a resulting tenancy in common; and

c. Upon execution by a creditor of both husband and wife.

II. DEED OF TRUST (“D/T”)

Although a mortgage is allowable under Missouri law, in almost every instance a D/T is utilized because it is simpler and, if there is a default, a less expensive procedure than foreclosure under a mortgage.

A. Form

1. There are three parties to a deed of trust:

a. Debtor – the person or persons borrowing funds, whose real property serves as security for payment of the loan.

b. Trustee – the person holding legal title to the real property on behalf of the lender.

c. Beneficiary – the lender of funds.

2. If the Beneficiary sells or otherwise transfers the note secured by the D/T, then in addition to assignment of the note, an assignment should be recorded to show, of record, the new holder of the D/T.

3. If the note is paid in full, a deed of release must be recorded to release the property from the lien of the debt. (§443.060, RSMo) Failure to file the release within 15 days after satisfaction of the debt can result in a penalty equal to 10% of the debt. (§443.130, RSMo)

B. Foreclosure

1. In the event of default, the “Beneficiary” instructs the “Trustee” to sell the real property to provide funds for payment of the debt balance plus the costs of foreclosure. Any excess funds derived from the sale are payable to the Debtor.

2. As with a mortgage, there are notice requirements, both personal and by publication, which must be observed. (§§443.310-.370)

C. Death of Debtor

1. If the Debtor dies before payment of the debt in full, foreclosure is not allowed until 6 months after the Debtor’s date of death. (§443.300, RSMo) This does *not* apply with respect to tenancy by the entirety property with respect to which both husband and wife are obligated, as the “Debtor,” now the surviving spouse, is the sole owner.

2. The Beneficiary creditor may also file a claim in the Debtor’s probate estate for the balance due.

III. THE RULE AGAINST PERPETUITIES AND RELATED RULES

The Rule Against Perpetuities and two related rules, the Rule Against Unreasonable Restraints on Alienation and the Rule Against Accumulations, historically have most often arisen in cases involving real property. These rules, however, apply to all types of property, both real and personal, and frequently are encountered in trust situations.

A. The Rule Against Perpetuities (“RAP”)

1. A recent Missouri case has stated the RAP as follows:

“The Rule Against Perpetuities prohibits the granting of an estate which will not necessarily vest within a time limited by a life or lives in being and 21 years thereafter, together with the period of gestation necessary to cover cases of posthumous birth.” *Cole v. Peters*, 3 S.W.3d 846, 851 (Mo.App. W.D. 1999).

2. Court decisions focus on the possibility factor, and disqualify a restricted property transfer if there is the remotest possibility the interest will not vest within the time constraints of the RAP.

3. **NOTE:** The RAP is concerned with *vesting* of title, not necessarily the actual transfer of the property title.

4. Missouri law (§442.555, RSMo) has slightly modified the RAP in regard to real property. The statute allows reformation by court action of a document otherwise violative of the RAP if “reformation would more closely approximate the primary purpose or scheme.” This allows changing the terms of the document to eliminate violation of the RAP.

B. The Rule Against Unreasonable Restraints of Alienation (“RARA”)

1. While the RAP is concerned with *vesting* of title, the RARA is concerned with suspension of the ability to *transfer* title, e.g., sell the real property.

2. The time limit for a restraint on alienation is the same as that for the RAP, as set forth above.

C. The Rule Against Accumulations (“RAA”)

1. The RAA is concerned with accumulations of income, or conversely with avoiding distribution of income to beneficiaries of the property.

2. The time limit on the ability to retain, or accumulate, income is the same as that for the RAP, set forth above.

NOTA BENE: The RAP, the RARA and the RAA apply to all non-trust situations. These Rules do not apply to employee pension plans (§§456.011-.014, RSMo) nor, more importantly, to trusts, which are governed by §456.025, RSMo. **See the Trust Law outline for a discussion of the statute applicable to trusts.**

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS
TORTS

I. Venue

A. Venue is determined as of the date that plaintiff is first injured.
[MO. REV. STAT. § 508.010.9]

1. First Injury – First Injury is defined as the location where the trauma or exposure occurred, rather than where the symptoms are first manifested.
[MO. REV. STAT. § 508.010.14]

2. For actions accruing in Missouri – proper venue is the county in which the action accrued. [MO. REV. STAT. § 508.010.4]

3. For actions accruing outside of Missouri:

a. Individual Defendant – venue is proper where the individual defendant resides, **or** if plaintiff was a Missouri resident at the time s/he was first injured, the county that was plaintiff’s principal resident. [MO. REV. STAT. § 508.010.5(2)]

b. Corporate Defendant – the county where the corporation’s registered agent is located **or** the county of plaintiff’s principal resident, if plaintiff resided in Missouri on the date of first injury.
[MO. REV. STAT. § 508.010.5(1)]

c. Multiple Defendants – in any county in which an individual defendant resides or a defendant corporation’s registered agent resides.

II. Punitive Damages

A. Discovery – Discovery is only permitted after the trial court makes a finding that it is “more likely than not” that plaintiff can present a submissible punitive damages case. [MO. REV. STAT. § 510.263.8]

B. Limits or Caps – Punitive damages are limited to \$500,000 or five times the net amount of the judgment rendered against the defendant, whichever is greater.
[MO. REV. STAT. § 510.265.1(1)-(2)]

III. Vicarious Liability

A. Parental Liability for Children

1. Parents or guardians of any unemancipated minor (excluding foster parents), under the age of eighteen, are statutorily liable for up to \$2,000 in damages if the child:
 - a. Purposefully “marks upon, defaces or in any way damages property.” [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.045.1].
 - b. Purposefully causes personal injury to any individual. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.045.2]
2. A judge may order the parent, or guardian and/or minor to work for the owner of the property damaged or the person injured in lieu of payment, if all parties agree to the arrangement. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.045.3]

B. Bar Owner or Tavernkeeper Liability

1. Missouri’s dram-shop statute provides that a cause of action may be brought by or on behalf of any person who has suffered personal injury or death against a liquor licensee **only** when it can be proven by clear and convincing evidence that the seller knew or should have known either:
 - a. That intoxicating liquor was served to a person under 21 years old;
 - i. Proof that a seller or a seller’s agent asked for and was shown identification appearing to be genuine and showing that such person was at least 21 years of age shall be relevant in determining the relative fault of the seller or seller’s agent in the action. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.053.5]
 - ii. There is only a right of recovery against a liquor licensee for injury or death proximately caused by the injured party’s voluntary intoxication if the injured party is under age 21. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.053.5]
 - b. (or) That intoxicating liquor was served to a “visibly intoxicated” person. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.053.2]
 - i. “Visible intoxication” is defined as “significantly uncoordinated physical action or significant physical dysfunction.” [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.053.3]
 - ii. An individual’s blood alcohol content is not prima facie evidence of visible intoxication. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.053.3]

2. There is no social host liability in Missouri. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.053.1; Shelter Mut. Ins. Co. v. White 930 S.W.2d 1, 2 (Mo.Ct. App. 1996)]

- C. Automobile Owner Liability for Driver – Missouri does not apply the “family car” or “permissive use” doctrines to impose liability on an automobile owner for the tortious conduct of a driver, except where imposed by MO. REV. STAT. § 537.045.

IV. Joint and Several Liability

- A. 51% or Greater Liability – If a defendant is found to bear 51% or more of fault/liability, then the defendant is jointly and severally liable for the amount of the judgment rendered against all defendants. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.067.1]

- B. Less than 51% Liability – If a defendant is found to be less than 51% at fault, the defendant is responsible for the percentage of the judgment assessed against the defendant, unless:

1. The other defendant was acting as an employee of the defendant [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.067.1(1)]; or
2. The defendant’s liability arises out of a duty created by the Federal Employer’s Liability Act. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.067.1(2)]
3. Joint Liability does not apply to punitive damages. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.067.2]

- C. Governmental Tort Immunity – State Government & Public Entities

1. As a general rule, the State of Missouri and other public entities are immune from tort liability.
2. However, sovereign immunity from tort claims is statutorily waived in two instances:
 - a. In cases where injuries arise from the negligent operation of a motor vehicle by a public employee within the course of his/her employment. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.600.1(1)]
 - b. In cases where the injuries were caused by the dangerous condition of a public entity’s property. [[MO. REV. STAT. § 537.600.1(2)]
3. Liability of the State and/or public entities is capped and/or limited as follows:

- a. Liability is limited to \$300,000 for any one person in a single accident or occurrence. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.610.2]
 - b. Liability is limited to two million dollars for all claims arising out of a single accident or occurrence. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.610.2]
 - c. These statutory limits on awards for liability are calculated and can be increased or decreased on an annual basis, based on the Implicit Price Deflator for Personal Consumption Expenditures as published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.610.5]
4. No award for tort damages against a public entity can include punitive or exemplary damages. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.610.1(3)]

V. Negligence – Standard of Care

- A. Standard of Care for Medical Professionals – A national standard of care is applied to medical professionals. However, some allowances are made for the type of community (i.e. urban, rural, etc.) in which the medical professional maintains his/her practice, if a general practitioner. One holding himself out to be a “specialist” gets no such allowances. [Gridley v. Johnson, 476 S.W.2d 475 (Mo. 1972)]
- B. Standard of Care Owed by Owners/Occupiers of Land – The duty of care owed by the owners/occupiers of land is determined by whether the plaintiff is a trespasser, licensee or invitee. [Penberthy v. Penberthy, 505 S.W.2d 122 (Mo. Ct. App. 1973)]
- C. Violation of a Statute or Ordinance – Violation of an ordinance or statute is negligence per se where there is in fact a violation of the ordinance; the person injured is within the class of persons intended to be protected by the ordinance; the injury is of the type that the ordinance was designed to prevent; and the violation of the ordinance is the proximate cause of the injury. [McKinney v. H.M.K.G. & C., 123 S.W.3d 274 (Mo. Ct. App. 2003)]

VI. Comparative Fault

- A. Missouri is a pure comparative negligence or fault state. The fault of plaintiff will reduce plaintiff’s damages, but will not completely bar recovery. The last clear chance doctrine does not apply. [Gustafson v. Benda, 661 S.W.2d 11 (Mo. 1983); MO. REV. STAT. § 537.765]

VII. Medical Malpractice Claims

- A. Venue – In medical malpractice tort actions, the plaintiff is considered “injured”

only in the county where the plaintiff first received treatment by a defendant for the medical condition at issue. [MO. REV. STAT. § 538.232]

B. Affidavit of Merit [MO. REV. STAT. § 538.225]

1. The submission of an Affidavit of Merit is required in all medical malpractice action. The trial court is required to dismiss any medical malpractice claim wherein a claimant fails to file an affidavit stating that s/he has obtained a written opinion of a “legally qualified health care provider” stating that the defendant failed to use “reasonable care” and thereby caused plaintiff’s claimed damages. [MO. REV. STAT. § 538.225.1]
2. A “legally qualified health provider” is defined as a health care provider licensed in Missouri or any other state in the same profession as the defendant and either actively practicing or within five years of retirement from actively practicing substantially the same specialty as the defendant. [MO. REV. STAT. § 538.225.2]
3. A separate affidavit must be filed for each defendant named in the Petition. [MO. REV. STAT. § 538.225.4]
4. If plaintiff failed to timely file the Affidavit of Merit, upon motion of any party, the Court must dismiss the action against plaintiff without prejudice. [MO. REV. STAT. § 538.225.6]

C. Benevolent Gestures – Statements, writings or other benevolent gestures expressing sympathy made to either the person injured or that person’s family is prohibited from being admitted into evidence. Only statements of fault can be admitted. [MO. REV. STAT. § 538.229.1]

D. Statute of Limitations for Minors – Medical malpractice lawsuits filed on behalf of injured minors must be commenced within two (2) years of the minor’s 18th birthday. [MO. REV. STAT. § 516.105.3]

E. Hard Cap or Limit on Non-Economic Damages – Non-economic damages are capped at \$350,000, regardless of the number of defendants. The cap applies to individuals and entities that “provide, consult upon, refer, coordinate or arrange” for health care services. The cap applies to claims for contribution as well, and spousal claims for loss of consortium are considered the same as the plaintiff for purposes of applying the cap. Similarly, all persons and entities asserting a wrongful death claim are considered one plaintiff. [MO. REV. STAT. § 538.210]

VIII. Products Liability

A. Innocent “Seller in the Stream of Commerce” – Under Missouri’s “innocent seller” statute, a seller of a defective product “whose liability is based solely on

his status as a seller in the stream of commerce may be dismissed from a products liability” claim if another defendant, from whom total recovery may be had for plaintiff’s claim, is properly before the court. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.762]

IX. Wrongful Death Actions

A. Statute of Limitations

1. A wrongful death action accrues on the day of the death of the person for whose death suit can be instituted. [Gramlich v. Travlrs Ins. Co., 640 S.W.2d 180 (Mo. Ct. App. 1982)]
2. There is a three (3) year statute of limitations for all wrongful death claims. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.100]
 - i. § 537.100 applies to every wrongful death action. The statute of limitations statute for the underlying tort does not apply.

B. Who May Sue

1. MO. REV. STAT. § 537.080 specifies or delineates who may sue in a wrongful death action. The classes of plaintiffs are as follows:
 - a. Class One: The spouse or children, or the surviving lineal descendants of any deceased children, whether the child is natural or adopted, legitimate or illegitimate, or the father or mother of the deceased, whether natural or adoptive.
 - b. Class Two: If there are no persons in Class One entitled to bring the wrongful death action, then the brother or sister of the deceased, or their descendants, who can establish his or her right to those damages set forth in MO. REV. STAT. § 537.090 because of the death.
 - c. Class Three: If there are no persons in Class One or Two entitled to bring the wrongful death actions, then a plaintiff ad litem may file suit. The plaintiff ad litem shall be appointed by the court having jurisdiction over the action.
2. Only one wrongful death action may be brought against a defendant for the death of any one person. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.080.2]
3. A lower class member cannot file a wrongful death action if a higher class member survives and can file suit. [State ex rel Griffin v. Belt, 941 S.W.2d 570, 572 (Mo. Ct. App. 1997)]

4. Where two or more may assert a cause of action for wrongful death, it is not necessary for a plaintiff to join all other permissible plaintiffs as long as the plaintiff has made a diligent effort to notify all parties with a cause of action. [MO. REV. STAT. § 537.095.1]

X. Prejudgment Interest & Demand Letters [MO. REV. STAT. § 408.040]

- A. A plaintiff may receive prejudgment interest if s/he has made a demand for payment of the claim or an offer of settlement of a claim to the party(ies) or their representative(s) and to such party's liability insurer if known to claimant, if the amount of the judgment or order exceeds the demand for payment or offer of settlement.
- B. In order to qualify as a demand or offer, the demand must:
 1. Be written;
 2. Sent by certified mail;
 3. Be accompanied by an affidavit of the claimant describing the damages, including, the nature of the claim, the nature of any injuries claims and a general computation of any category of damages sought by the claimant with supporting documentation, if any is reasonable available;
 4. For wrongful death, personal injury and bodily injury claims, "be accompanied by a list of the names and addresses of medical providers who have provided treatment to claimant or decedent for such injuries, copies of all reasonably available damages for loss of wages or earnings, and written authorizations sufficient to allow the party, its representative and liability insurer if known to the claimant to obtain records from all employers and medical providers;"
 5. Reference §408.040; and
 6. Remain open for at least 90 days.
- C. If the demand or offer is not accepted, the claimant must file cause of action in the circuit court within 120 days of the date the demand or offer was received, unless the parties agree in writing to a longer period of time. [MO. REV. STAT. § 408.040.2]
- D. If the claimant fails to file a lawsuit within 120 days after the demand was received by the respondent, then s/he cannot receive prejudgment interest. [MO. REV. STAT. § 408.040.2]

SIGNIFICANT MISSOURI LAW DISTINCTIONS
TRUST LAW

The primary source of Missouri law governing express trusts is the Missouri Uniform Trust Code (“MUTC”), §§456.1-101 to 456.11-1106, RSMo. Although the MUTC only became effective on January 1, 2005, it nonetheless applies, with few exceptions, to all express trusts “created before, on, or after January 1, 2005.” §456.11-1106, RSMo. For the most part, the MUTC follows the Uniform Trust Code, but there are several significant variations and, in addition, several statutes in place prior to enactment of the MUTC were retained because they address specific matters not addressed by the MUTC.

I. Retained Statutes (§§456.001-456.590)

A. Life Insurance Trust (§456.005)

1. Designation of trust or trustee as beneficiary of life insurance creates valid express trust even though beneficiary designation is revocable.
2. The trust agreement must be in writing and in existence “on the date of death of the insured,” i.e., written trust agreement not required at time beneficiary designation is made.

B. Employee Trusts (§§456.011-456.017)

1. Trust created as part of a stock bonus plan, nonpublic pension plan, disability or death plan, profit-sharing plan or retirement plan is not subject to rule against perpetuities.
2. The assets and income are not subject to assignment (spendthrift) and are exempt from attachment or execution prior to payment to the employee. (§456.014)

C. Addition to Trusts (§456.021)

1. Allows transfer of property to the trust, by name. Common law required transfer be made to trustee.
2. Trust need not be in existence, i.e., transfer may be to trust “to be established.”

D. The Rule Against Perpetuities and Related Rules (§456.025)

1. **NOTE:** The rules discussed in this subsection apply to a “trust” as defined in §456.025.4. The statute also contains a listing of trusts specifically not included.

2. The Rule Against Perpetuities (“RAP”) (§456.025.1)
 - a. Defined: “The Rule Against Perpetuities prohibits the granting of an estate which will not necessarily vest within a time limited by a life or lives in being and 21 years thereafter, together with the period of gestation necessary to cover cases of posthumous birth.” *Cole v. Peteres*, 3 S.W.3d 846, 851 (Mo.App. W.D. 1999).
 - b. The RAP does not apply to a “trust” if the trustee, or another person delegated the power, has the power to sell the property, *and* the power to sell is effective no later than the date the RAP would have expired if it applied.
3. The Rule Against Unreasonable Restraints on Alienation (“RARA”) (§456.025.1)
 - a. The RARA applies the same time limitation as the RAP.
 - b. As with the RAP, the RARA does not apply to a “trust” if the trustee, or another person delegated the power, has the power to sell the property *and* the power to sell is effective no later than the date the RAP would have expired if it applied.
4. The Rule Against Accumulations (“RAA”) (§456.025.2)
 - a. The RAA applies the same time limit as the RAP.
 - b. The RAA does not apply to a “trust” unless the terms “require” income to be accumulated, i.e., no distributions to beneficiaries, beyond the RAP time limitation.
 - c. Further, if the “trust” does require accumulations beyond the RAP period, the “trust” is not void, but rather the trustee “shall” nonetheless have the discretionary power to make distributions in accordance with the settlor’s manifested intention for distribution.
5. The provisions of §456.025 apply to “trust” executed, amended or created after January 28, 2001.

NOTE BENE: The provisions of §456.025 apply only to trusts as defined in §456.025.4. **See the Real Property outline for a discussion of the RAP, the RARA and the RAA statute and rules applicable in non-trust situations and to trusts no governed by §456.025.**

- E. Registration of Trust (§§456.027-456.033)

1. Allows trust to be registered in probate division of county where principal place of administration is located. (§456.027) Such registration, if proper, confers jurisdiction upon the court where registered, and upon beneficiaries of the trust. (§456.033.1-.3)
 2. Allows court to conduct proceedings involving the administration of the trust; broad jurisdiction. (§456.033.4)
- F. Variation of Trust Terms (§456.590.2)
1. If all adult beneficiaries who are not disabled consent **and** the court finds a proposed variation will benefit “the disabled, minor, unborn and unascertained beneficiaries,” then the terms of the trust may be varied, including termination. (§456.590.2)
 2. Application to court for variance may be made by trustee or person beneficially interested. (§456.590.4)
 3. **NOTE: This statute must be utilized if trust became irrevocable prior to January 1, 2005, i.e., cannot proceed under provisions of MUTC for trust modifications.**

II. MUTC – VARIATIONS FROM UNIFORM TRUST CODE

A. General Provisions

1. Definitions (§456.1-103) – Adds several definitions not in Uniform Trust Code and alters other definitions to comport with other Missouri statutes.
2. Default and Mandatory Rules (§456.1-105)
 - a. Authority of court to modify or terminate a trust may be overridden by terms of the trust agreement. (§456.1-105.1(4))
 - b. Deletes “qualified beneficiary” as one to receive notice of irrevocable trust being established, and changes age of notice from 25 to 21. (§456.1-105.1(8)) Also adds provision allowing settlor to designate a person to receive notices on behalf of others. (§456.1-105.3)
 - c. Changes beneficiaries entitled to receive information upon request from all beneficiaries to “qualified beneficiaries.” (§456.1-105.1(9))

3. Allows principal place of administration to be changed, but requires the place selected be appropriate to trust purposes, administration and interest of beneficiaries. (§456.1-108.2)
 4. Allows intervention of Attorney General in administration of a charitable trust if the trust is not for the benefit of a specified charity or charities. (§456.1-110.2(1))
 5. Requires court approval of agreement by beneficiaries to modify or terminate trust; cannot be done by nonjudicial agreement. (§456.1-111.6)
 6. Provides trust provisions in favor of spouse are of no effect if marriage terminated or annulled. (§456.1-112)
- B. Judicial Proceedings
1. Restates provisions set forth in §456.033.4 regarding matters subject to jurisdiction of court via registration (See I. F., *supra*) and adds additional matters. (§456.2-202)
 2. Replaces venue rules with provisions similar to those set forth in repealed §456.450. (§456.2-204)
- C. Representation (§§456.3-301-456.3-305)
1. Allows certain persons to represent, and bind, others, e.g., parent for minor or unborn child, guardian for ward.
 2. Court may appoint representative if it determines interest is not represented or representation is inadequate.
- D. Creation, Validity, Modification and Termination
1. Requires trust involving “lands, tenements or hereditaments” be in writing. (§456.4-407) Deletes prior law provision requiring assignment of a beneficiary’s interest in trust be in writing.
 2. Replaces Uniform Trust Code provision for modifying or terminating irrevocable trusts with two sections:
 - a. Allows nonjudicial modification or termination if settlor and all beneficiaries consent, even if contrary to a material purpose of trust. (§456.4A-411)
 - b. Allows judicial modification or termination if all adult, competent beneficiaries consent and court determines non-consenting

beneficiary “will be adequately protected.” (§456.4B-411).

NOTE: This is successor to §456.590; see I.F. above.

E. Creditor’s Claims; Spendthrift and Discretionary Trusts (§456.5-501-456.5-507)

1. Throughout, the Uniform Trust Code provisions have been modified to carry forward various provisions of prior Missouri law established by and under repealed §456.080.
2. Provides a beneficiary’s interest in a trust subject to trustee discretion is not an interest in property or an enforceable right. (§456.5-504)
3. Allows publication of notice after settlor’s death to bar creditor claims after 6 months. (§456.5-505.4)

F. Revocable Trusts

1. Capacity required to create or amend trust, or add property to trust, is same as that required to make will. (§456.6-601)
2. Unless trust terms expressly provide trust is irrevocable, it is revocable. This reverses presumption under prior law, and is, therefore, only effective for trust executed on or after January 1, 2005. (§456.6-602)
3. If trust provides a method for amending or revoking, method must be “substantially” followed. If no method is provided, then any method, including a will, which manifests clear and convincing evidence of intent will suffice. (§456.6-602.3)
4. Trust contest is barred upon earlier of (i) 2 years after death, (ii) 6 months after person is provided copy of trust *and* notice identifying trustee and advising of 6 month limit, or (iii) upon expiration of will contest time, if the will is pourover *and* copy of trust is filed in probate division within 90 days after death. (§456.6-604)

G. Office of Trustee

1. If trustee ceases or fails to serve and no successor named, *majority in number* of qualified beneficiaries may appoint successor. (§456.7-704.3)
2. Allows removal of trustee if level of services by trustee “substantially and materially reduced.” (§456.7-706.2(4))

H. Duties and Powers of Trustee

1. Duty to protect trust property does not extend to tangible personal property not in possession and control of trustee. (§456.8-809)
2. Trustee is required:
 - a. To provide copy of trust instrument to beneficiary upon request. (§456.813.2(1))
 - b. To notify qualified beneficiaries of trustee's name, address and telephone number within 60 days after accepting trusteeship. (§456.813.2(2))
 - c. To notify qualified beneficiaries of the trust's existence (and provide other specified information) within 60 days after trust becomes irrevocable. (§456.813.2(3))

NOTE: §456.8-813 only applies to trusts which become irrevocable on or after January 1, 2005. (§456.8-813.8)

3. Beneficiary who receives asset subject to confidentiality restriction is bound by the restriction. (§456.8-813.7) See **NOTE** above.

I. Liability of Trustee and Rights

1. Breach of trust action is barred upon later of (i) 1 year after beneficiary sent report disclosing potential problem and (ii) written notice of 1 year time limit provided with respect to report.
2. If prior provision not applicable, then 5 years after earlier of (i) trustee ceasing to serve, (ii) termination of beneficiary's interest, or (iii) termination of trust.

NOTA BENE: With the exceptions set forth in §456.1-105.2, the provisions of the MUTC are default, i.e., only apply if not overridden by the trust instrument.