

**RULES OF SUPREME COURT OF VIRGINIA**  
**PART FIVE A**  
**THE COURT OF APPEALS**  
**F. PROCEDURE FOLLOWING PERFECTION OF APPEAL**

**Rule 5A:20. Requirements for Opening Brief of Appellant.**

The opening brief of appellant shall contain:

- (a) A table of contents and table of authorities with cases alphabetically arranged. Citations of all authorities shall include the year thereof.
- (b) A brief statement of the nature of the case and of the material proceedings in the trial court, which shall omit references to any paper filed or action taken that does not relate to the assignments of error.
- (c) A statement of the assignments of error with a clear and exact reference to the page(s) of the transcript, written statement, record, or appendix where each assignment of error was preserved in the trial court.
- (d) A clear and concise statement of the facts that relate to the assignments of error, with references to the pages of the transcript, written statement, record, or appendix. Any quotation from the record should be brief. When the facts are in dispute, the brief shall so state. The testimony of individual witnesses should not be summarized seriatim unless the facts are in dispute and such a summary is necessary to support the appellant's version of the facts.
- (e) The standard of review and the argument (including principles of law and authorities) relating to each assignment of error. When the assignment of error was not preserved in the trial court, counsel shall state why the good cause and/or ends of justice exceptions to Rule 5A:18 are applicable. With respect to each assignment of error, the standard of review and the argument – including principles of law and the authorities – shall be stated in one place and not scattered through the brief. At the option of counsel, the argument may be preceded by a short summary.
- (f) A short conclusion stating the precise relief sought.
- (g) The signature (which need not be in handwriting) of at least one counsel and counsel's Virginia State Bar number, address, telephone number, facsimile number (if any), and email address (if any).
- (h) A certificate (which need not be signed in handwriting) stating (1) that Rule 5A:19(f) has been complied with, and (2) whether counsel desires to waive oral argument. The certificate must also state the number of words (headings, footnotes, and quotations count towards the word limitation; the cover page, table of contents, table of authorities, and certificate do not count towards the word count). Additionally, any party may waive oral argument without leave of this Court by written notification to the clerk of this Court within 21 days after the date on which the appellee's brief is due to be filed or has been filed.

**Promulgated by Order dated Friday, April 30, 2010; effective July 1, 2010.**  
**Last amended by Order dated April 10, 2015; effective July 1, 2015.**