Media Contact: Tozier - Int. 4306 | Information Service
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The Department of the Interior today announced the revocation of a provision in Federal regulations which for many years has limited the appearance of professional attorneys before courts of Indian offenses on Indian reservations.

Courts of Indian offenses are organized and staffed by Indian tribal groups under regulations promulgated by the Secretary of the Interior. Fifteen such courts are now in operation.

The provision being revoked is found in Section 11.9 of Title 25 of the Code of Federal Regulations. It states that professional attorneys shall not appear in any proceedings before the courts of Indian offenses unless rules of court have been adopted by the court and approved by the tribal council and Indian Bureau superintendent governing the admission and practice of such attorneys before the court. Defendants, 11owever, were given the right to be represented by tribal members. The regulation was originally designed to meet the special needs of Indian courts whose judges are not formally trained in law, and who are concerned to a considerable degree with tribal customs which do not follow non-Indian laws.

The Department's revocation also applies to Section 11.9CA in Title 25 of the CFR which completely prohibited the appearance of professional attorneys before the court of Indian offenses on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation in Idaho.

In addition to the courts of Indian offenses, 50 tribal groups have tribal courts established under their own enactments. These courts are not subject to the same constitutional limitations as courts established by Departmental regulations and are not affected by the revocation action. Many of them have regulations similar to the revoked provisions.

The revocation order is being published in the Federal Register.