

## EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS FOR DEPARTING LAWYERS

When an attorney leaves a law firm, advance notice of the departure to clients can help make the transition a smooth one. Unfortunately, advance notice is not always possible, and for various reasons, email and other communications may continue to come to the firm long after an attorney has departed the office. In those circumstances, the lawyer and the firm may be concerned about the ethical implications of exposing potential and existing client confidences.

One solution is to set up an automated reply message, which bounces back to the sender. The automated reply advises the sender to (1) resend the email message to the departing attorney, if the sender intended the message for the departing attorney; or (2) resend the email to the firm, if the firm is the intended recipient. This solution preserves client confidences. A sample automated reply appears below.

A filter or email rule should accompany an automated reply, deleting incoming email messages for the departing attorney after the auto reply has been sent. This filter will prevent incoming messages from being opened, saved, or forwarded. (If you are a Microsoft Outlook user, see “Setting Up Automated Email Replies in Outlook,” available online at [www.osbplf.org](http://www.osbplf.org). Select Practice Management, and then select Forms.)

### SAMPLE AUTOMATED REPLY

\*\*\*\*\* ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING [DEPARTING ATTORNEY] \*\*\*\*\*

Beginning [Date], [Departing Attorney] will no longer be practicing law at [Former Firm], and will be practicing law with [Name of New Firm].

[Departing Attorney's] new contact information is:

[Departing Attorney]  
[Name of New Firm]  
[Address]  
[Telephone]  
[Email Address]

\*\*\*\*\* IMPORTANT MESSAGE \*\*\*\*\*

TO PROTECT LEGALLY PRIVILEGED AND/OR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, YOUR EMAIL WILL NOT BE OPENED, READ, SAVED, OR FORWARDED. PLEASE FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS BELOW TO RESEND YOUR MESSAGE. YOUR EMAIL WILL BE DELETED FROM [Former Firm's] SYSTEM WITHOUT BEING READ, OPENED, OR REVIEWED.

**If you intend your message to be read by [Departing Attorney] personally**, please resend your message to [Departing Attorney] at [Departing Attorney's Email Address].

**If you intend your message to be read by an attorney at [Former Firm]**, please resend your message to [Designated Attorney] at [Former Firm Email Address]. If you would like to speak with an attorney at [Former Firm], please contact [Designated Attorney] at [Telephone Number].

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

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### **IMPORTANT NOTICES**

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