



# IN BRIEF

MALPRACTICE AVOIDANCE NEWSLETTER FOR OREGON LAWYERS

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## WHERE TO GO FOR ANSWERS

Need legal advice? Have an ethics question? Looking for forms or checklists? The help you are seeking may just be a phone call or web link away. The list below highlights both tried and true resources and others that may be new to you.

### LEGAL ADVICE

The Oregon State Bar operates a program called Lawyer-to-Lawyer which connects Oregon attorneys working in unfamiliar practice areas with experienced attorneys willing to offer informal advice *at no charge*. Resource lawyers with experience to share are listed according to areas of expertise and geographic location. These lawyers are available to help in 19 practice areas encompassing more than 250 sub-specialties, ranging from civil procedure/litigation issues to prenuptial agreements, wrongful discharge, aviation law and pro bono housing development questions. Call the Oregon State Bar at 800-452-8260 or 503-620-0222, extension 408 for more information.

Don't forget about colleagues and your own peer network as resources, too – not just for questions, but also to associate as co-counsel. Calling a lawyer friend can give you valuable insight into case strategy and valuation. If you are new to the practice of law, or new to Oregon, consider joining sections of the state bar pertinent to your practice areas. Get involved in your local bar association. Join Oregon Women Lawyers or other groups to begin building your network. A list of organizations available to Oregon attorneys is published in the Oregon State Bar *2000 Membership Directory* beginning on page 287.

If you haven't visited the Oregon State Bar web site lately, do so. Not only can you get the latest information on CLE materials, but there are links to

free sites for case law, administrative rules, and the Oregon Revised Statutes. Go to [www.osbar.org](http://www.osbar.org), click on OSB Reference Desk, then Internet Resources for Oregon Lawyers.

### ETHICS ADVICE

Oregon attorneys can contact the Oregon State Bar General Counsel's ethics hotline by telephone, letter, or e-mail to obtain free, confidential ethics advice. The General Counsel's office can help identify applicable disciplinary rules, point out relevant ethics opinions, and answer questions. Contact George Riemer, General Counsel, at [griemer@osbar.org](mailto:griemer@osbar.org) 800-452-8260 or 503-431-6405 or Sylvia Stevens, Assistant General Counsel, at [sstevens@osbar.org](mailto:sstevens@osbar.org) or 800-452-8260 or 503-431-6359.

The bar has also posted all current and past formal ethics opinions online at its web site [www.osbar.org](http://www.osbar.org). Click on OSB Reference Desk, follow the link to Ethics Advice for Lawyers, then click on the OSB Formal Ethics Opinion Library.

### TAX OR ACCOUNTING QUESTIONS

If you have a tax or accounting question, you can speak with a CPA by calling the Oregon State Bar/Oregon Society of Certified Public Accountants referral service at 800-255-1470 or 503-641-7200. Identify yourself as a member of the Oregon State Bar and specify the area your question involves. The service is free. Taxation questions can also be directed to the OSB Lawyer-to-Lawyer program described earlier in this article.

### FORMS AND CHECKLISTS

The Professional Liability Fund has a collection of over 100 forms, checklists, and sample letters in

#### DISCLAIMER

This newsletter includes claim prevention techniques that are designed to minimize the likelihood of being sued for legal malpractice. The material presented does not establish, report, or create the standard of care for attorneys. The articles do not represent a complete analysis of the topics presented and readers should conduct their own appropriate legal research.

10 practice areas. Forms are available via e-mail, computer disk, or hard copy at no charge to Oregon lawyers. The PLF collection also includes resource materials and forms relating to client relations, entity formation, financial management, office systems, partnership and office sharing arrangements, and staffing issues. Order forms are regularly inserted into the PLF newsletter, *In Brief*. For more information, or to obtain a current order form, call the PLF at 800-452-1639 or 503-639-6911.

The Oregon State Bar also has an extensive collection of CLE materials, many of which include forms. For more information, visit the Bar's web site at [www.osbar.org](http://www.osbar.org) or call the OSB Order Desk at 800-452-8260 ext. 413 or 503-684-7413.

### **PRACTICE MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

Administrative errors account for the majority of legal malpractice claims. Improving the administrative areas of a law practice reduces the risk of a claim and enhances the enjoyment of practicing law. The Professional Liability Fund practice management advisors are available to assist any law office in Oregon by phone or in person. Call Carol Wilson, Dee Crocker or Beverly Michaelis at 800-452-1639 or 503-639-6911. The practice management program is a free, confidential service of the Professional Liability Fund.

### **PERSONAL ASSISTANCE**

The Oregon Attorney Assistance Program is a completely confidential resource for Oregon lawyers who need assistance with personal issues that may be interfering with the practice of law. The OAAP offers help for alcoholism, drug addiction, gambling addiction, stress management, career change, relationship issues, depression, anxiety, and procrastination. If you or someone you know is struggling, the Oregon Attorney Assistance Program can help. To reach Meloney Crawford Chadwick, Mike Long, Shari Pearlman, or Michael Sweeney, call 503-226-1057. To page, call 800-321-OAAP.

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