

OFFICE MANUAL: SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction

Firm mission statement, purpose and use of manual, and disclaimer. Firm history, management committee, or Board of Directors information.

II. Personnel Policies

a. Administration and Employment

Nature of employment and probationary period. Selection, classification, and evaluation of employees. Leaves of absence, chronic or life-threatening illnesses. Resignation and termination of employment. Personnel records and references.

b. General Policies

Firm policies on equal opportunity employment, disability, harassment, nepotism and employee relationships, discipline, family and medical leave, and military leave. Work schedules, office hours, and attendance and time off. Policies regarding attorney publicity and charitable or political contributions.

c. Personal Conduct

Firm standards for employee conduct, including dress code and confidentiality. Policies on employee conduct and confidentiality, including use of email, internet, and social media. Policies on cellphone use, and any restrictions on placing and receiving calls while driving. Policies on smoking and substance use.

d. Discipline

Discipline policies for substance abuse, harassment, etc., as well as steps the firm may take (i.e., training, warning, discipline, or termination) when employees fail to meet standards.

e. Compensation

Levels of responsibility or classification and corresponding compensation schedule. Performance evaluations, salary increases, and any applicable skills premiums. Overtime and flexible time. Expense reimbursements. Paychecks.

f. Benefits

Insurance plans, disability benefits, employee assistance programs, and retirement plans. Vacation, sick time, and paid holidays. Professional dues, memberships, or education.

III. Firm Procedures

a. Financial Management

Firm procedures and recordkeeping policies for accounting and bookkeeping, trust and business accounting, and timekeeping, billing, and invoicing. Procedures for accepting payment, retainers, and credit cards from clients. Procedures and recordkeeping for reimbursements of expenses, use of firm credit cards or petty cash, and cash advances.

b. File Handling & Retention

Procedures for maintaining electronic or paper files for client matters, guidance on maintaining original documents. Procedures for transferring, releasing, or returning files, including authorization needed and consideration of financial obligations. Firm file retention and destruction guidelines.

c. Calendaring and Docketing

Procedures on calendaring hearings and other deadlines, as well as reminders. Information regarding a master calendar, if applicable.

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d. Information Systems

Removal of files from the file room, conflict of interest information system, master calendar.

e. Word Processing Services

Work applicable for word processing center, submitting work to the word processing center, proofreading, standard office formats.

f. Duplicating Services

Types and uses of available equipment, charges for and recording of copies made, out-of-office document reproduction services.

g. Communication Systems

Phone system, facsimile machines, email, mail services, air freight and express services, messenger service.

h. Office Equipment, Maintenance, and Supplies

Furniture and equipment, maintenance requests, requests for new types of supplies or new products. Responsibility to exercise reasonable care to safeguard office-issued mobile devices.

i. Support Personnel and Their Functions

Paralegals, legal assistants, receptionists, relief personnel, notaries public, litigation services.

j. Travel

Cars, travel agency, reimbursement of travel expenses, vouchers.

k. Office Security and Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures, medical emergencies, work injuries or accidents, data protection, disaster recovery.

l. Emergency Procedures

Information regarding firm emergency and disaster preparedness and response.

m. Miscellaneous Guidelines

Office newsletter, memos, charitable services and pro bono work, community and professional activities.

IV. Index

IMPORTANT NOTICES

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