

## § 1.6

## Working Remotely

### *Considerations*

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#### FILE MAINTENANCE AT A DISTANCE

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If you are working from home, or from another “off-campus” environment, there are a few things to keep in mind.

**How do I maintain a client file from a distance?**

The good news is that law firms, corporations, and courts have been moving to digital, online file maintenance and eFiling systems for quite some time. You will likely be given access to your firm’s file directory for those cases in which you are involved. Instead of maintaining a physical folder, you will need to keep copies of those items in a computer file. You will also likely be given access to the firm’s digital eFiling account so you can file documents with the court online instead of physically delivering them to a clerk.

**Are there some things that will still need to be maintained physically?**

Yes. Exhibits, instruments (such as original contracts), and other forms of evidence will likely need to be submitted physically to the court during trials. The court itself will establish appropriate guidelines, and your law firm will need to determine how to best collect and distribute such items.

**What is the biggest danger of working at a distance for a paralegal?**

For both paralegals and attorneys, the number one concern about working from a distance is client confidentiality. It is easy to get lazy when talking on the phone at home or conducting a *Zoom* conference call. Such communications must be conducted in a setting that is private. No family, friends, or anyone else should be able to see or hear those sessions. Video sessions (such as using *Skype*, *Zoom*, or *Google Meet*) should never be recorded (unless your supervising attorney requires it) because such recordings are not very secure.

In addition, make sure you log off all filing programs and turn off your computer when you are done. Leaving a computer on while unattended makes it quite easy for privileged information to be stolen or your computer to be hacked. Remember, your attorney is still liable for any damaging disclosure of privileged communication or work product.

Ask questions of bosses and administrators. Make it a point to know the correct security protocols in and out. Your attention to security details will be appreciated.

## CHAPTER 1

## Wrap-Up

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

After reading this chapter you should know the following:

- Your client
- The basic structure of a client file
- The panels that make up a client file
- How a client file can be created digitally using folders instead of panels
- The definition and purpose of billable hours
- How to keep track of billable hours
- Be aware of remote working issues related to client file maintenance
- Not to discuss cases in which your firm is involved on social media

## ASSIGNMENTS

- Assignment § 1.2** Due Date: / /  
Choose or be assigned a client upon whom your research assignments and written assignments will be based
- Assignment § 1.3(A)** Due Date: / /  
Select or create a client number
- Assignment § 1.3(B)** Due Date: / /  
You should maintain your client's file throughout the program keeping all written assignments in appropriate panels
- Assignment § 1.4** Due Date: / /  
Keep track of your billable hours when working on research or writing assignments related to your client

## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

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One more thing.

As you start your paralegal education it may be interesting to try an experiment. One that will not be concluded until the end of the program.

As an instructor, it is fascinating to see the change in students as the program progresses. Even after the first month, students often start presenting arguments or points of view differently. But students usually are not aware of this change. By the end of the program the amount that you learn will be surprising. But even then, you likely will not realize it.

Review the list in the right column. The list represents *just a fraction* of the subject matter you will learn in this program. We are not talking about being able to simply define those items, but to having the ability to discuss those topics in depth. Which of the items do you really know? How many are you able to discuss at this point? Likely, not many. But that is why you are in this program. To learn.

Being honest with yourself, **check the boxes** for the legal concepts of which you are confident and think you know well. Again, not just a definition, but a thorough understanding of that topic. You may even want to write out your best guesses on sheets of paper or on your computer.

*Keep that paper.* At the end of the course, we will revisit this list. At that point you can review the notes you take now and compare them to what you know at the conclusion of the course.

It will help you realize just how much you have learned and appreciate what you have accomplished.

- Jurisdiction*
- In personam jurisdiction*
- In rem jurisdiction*
- Venue*
- Authority*
- Persuasive authority*
- Mandatory authority*
- Primary authority*
- Secondary authority*
- Pleadings*
- Discovery*
- Interrogatories*
- Deposition summary*
- Direct examination*
- Cross examination*
- Citation*
- Parallel cite*
- Notice*
- Court rules*
- IRAC*
- Prima facie case*
- Motion*
- Trial brief*
- Legal advice*
- Voir dire*
- Process*
- Hearsay*
- Privileged communications*
- Attorney-Client privilege*
- Circumstantial evidence*
- Direct Evidence*
- Admissibility*
- Civil law*
- Criminal law*
- Proof of Facts*
- A.L.R.*
- Filters*

# CHAPTER 2

## DEFINING THE PROFESSION

### Chapter Outline

#### VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 2

- § 2.1 What is a Paralegal?
- § 2.2 Discussion Points
- § 2.3 Education and Regulation
- § 2.4 Career Options

### Chapter 2 Introduction

#### ALL SIGNS POINT UP!

Over the past thirty years the paralegal profession has consistently grown in job opportunities and salary expansion according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. While not quite at the 20-percent growth of the early 2000s, paralegal growth rate has still consistently been in the high single to mid-double-digit range. In addition, the paralegal profession has the strongest anticipated growth rate of any legal occupation, including attorneys.

While most law firms will likely choose to use the fully-staffed, face-to-face law office as an office strategy, it appears that a significant number of firms may include remote work as part of an updated office environment.

This may include home/work environments, even post-pandemic, working from home 2 or 3 days per week and venturing to the office for the remaining days. It's possible that staff will work in the office on alternate days to limit exposure risk.

A *platoon system* is also gaining popularity, reshuffling staff and duties to ensure that necessary support staff  *platoons* as a "team." Any of these, and more, are possible new work situations. Be helpful, positive, and supportive of the firm's decisions. In many ways such a scenario would be advantageous to employees, but make sure to work as hard from home as you would in the office.

IN THIS CHAPTER . . .

**DEFINING THE PROFESSION**

**OPTIONS FOR PARALEGAL EDUCATION**

**POSSIBLE CAREER PATHS**