

STATE OF MINNESOTA

IN SUPREME COURT

ADM07-8001

**ORDER PROMULGATING AMENDMENTS TO THE  
RULES ON LAWYERS PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The Supreme Court Advisory Committee to Review the Lawyer Discipline System and the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board have each recommended certain amendments to the Rules on Lawyers Professional Responsibility.

The court has reviewed the proposals and is advised in the premises.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. The attached amendments to the Rules on Lawyers Professional Responsibility be, and the same are, prescribed and promulgated to be effective July 1, 2009.
2. These amendments shall apply to all actions or proceedings pending on or commenced on or after the effective date.

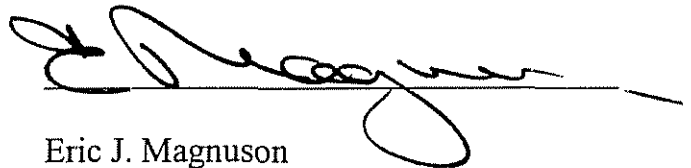
Dated: 3/24/09

BY THE COURT:

OFFICE OF  
APPELLATE COURTS

MAR 25 2009

FILED



Eric J. Magnuson  
Chief Justice

**AMENDMENTS TO  
THE RULES ON LAWYERS PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY  
EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2009**

*Note to publishers: Deletions are indicated by a line drawn through the words to be deleted; additions are underlined.*

**RULE 9. PANEL PROCEEDINGS**

(a) ~~Charges; Setting Pre-Hearing Meeting.~~ If the matter is to be submitted to a Panel, the matter shall proceed as follows:

(1) ~~The~~ Director shall prepare charges of unprofessional conduct, assign them to a Panel by rotation, and notify the lawyer of the Charges, the name, address, and telephone number of the Panel Chair and Vice Chair, and the provisions of this Rule. schedule a pre-hearing meeting, and notify the lawyer of: Within 14 days after the lawyer is notified of the Charges, the lawyer shall submit an answer to the Charges to the Panel Chair and the Director and may submit a request that the Panel conduct a hearing. Within ten days after the lawyer submits an answer, the Director and the lawyer may submit affidavits and other documents in support of their positions.

~~(1) The charges;~~

~~(2) The name, address, and telephone number of the Panel Chair and Vice Chair;~~ The Panel shall make a determination in accordance with paragraph (j) within 40 days after the lawyer is notified of the Charges based on the documents submitted by the Director and the lawyer, except in its discretion, the Panel may hear oral argument or conduct a hearing. If the Panel orders a hearing, the matter shall proceed in accordance with subdivisions (b) through (i). If the Panel does not order a hearing, subdivisions (b) through (i) do not apply.

(3) The Panel Chair may extend the time periods provided in this subdivision for good cause.

(b) Setting Pre-Hearing Meeting. If the Panel orders a hearing, the Director shall notify the lawyer of:

~~(13)~~ The time and place of the pre-hearing meeting; and

~~(24)~~ The lawyer's obligation to appear at the time set unless the meeting is rescheduled by agreement of the parties or by order of the Panel Chair or Vice-Chair.

~~(b) **Answer to Charges.** Not less than seven days before the pre hearing meeting, the lawyer shall serve on the Director an answer to the charges. The answer may deny or admit any accusations or state any defense or privilege.~~

(e) **Pre-Hearing Meeting.** The Director and the lawyer shall attend a pre-hearing meeting. At the meeting:

(1) The parties shall endeavor to formulate stipulations of fact and to narrow and simplify the issues in order to expedite the Panel hearing; and

(2) Each party shall mark and provide the other party with a copy of each affidavit or other exhibit to be introduced at the Panel hearing. The genuineness of each exhibit is admitted unless objection is served within ten days after the pre-hearing meeting. If a party objects, the Panel may award expenses of proof as permitted by the Rules of Civil Procedure for the District Courts. No additional exhibit shall be received at the Panel hearing without the opposing party's consent or the Panel's permission; ~~and~~

~~(3) The parties shall prepare a pre-hearing statement.~~

(i) **Procedure at Panel Hearing.** Unless the Panel for cause otherwise permits, the Panel hearing shall proceed as follows:

(1) The Chair shall explain ~~that the hearing's purpose~~ the purpose of the hearing, which shall explain that the hearing's purpose is to determine:

(i) to determine whether there is probable cause to believe that public discipline is warranted ~~on each charge~~, and ~~that~~ the Panel will terminate the hearing on any charge whenever it is satisfied that there is or is not such probable cause;

(ii) if an admonition has been issued under Rule 8(d)(2) or 8(e), ~~that the hearing's purpose is to determine~~ whether the Panel should affirm the admonition on the ground that it is supported by clear and convincing evidence, should reverse the admonition, or, if there is probable cause to believe that public discipline is warranted, should instruct the Director to file a petition for disciplinary action in this Court; or

(iii) to determine whether there is probable cause to believe that a conditional admission agreement has been violated, thereby warranting revocation of the conditional admission to practice law, and that the Panel will terminate the hearing whenever it is satisfied there is or is not such probable cause.

(2) The Director shall briefly summarize the matters admitted by the parties, the matters remaining for resolution, and the proof which the Director proposes to offer thereon;

(3) The lawyer may respond to the Director's remarks;

(4) The parties shall introduce their evidence in conformity with the Rules of Evidence except that affidavits and depositions are admissible in lieu of testimony;

(5) The parties may present oral arguments;

(6) The complainant may be present for all parts of the hearing related to the complainant's complaint except when excluded for good cause; and

(7) The Panel shall either recess to deliberate or take the matter under advisement.

**(j) Disposition.** ~~After the hearing,~~ The Panel shall make one of the following determinations:

(1) ~~In~~ If ~~the case of hearing was held on~~ charges of unprofessional conduct, the Panel shall:

(i) determine that there is not probable cause to believe that public discipline is warranted, or that there is not probable cause to believe that revocation of a conditional admission is warranted;

(ii) if it finds probable cause to believe that public discipline is warranted, instruct the Director to file in this Court a petition for disciplinary action. The Panel shall not make a recommendation as to the matter's ultimate disposition;

(iii) if it concludes that the attorney engaged in conduct that was unprofessional but of an isolated and nonserious nature, the Panel shall state the facts and conclusions constituting unprofessional conduct and issue an admonition; If the Panel issues an admonition based on the parties' submissions without a hearing, the lawyer shall have the right to a hearing de novo before a different Panel. If the Panel issues an admonition following a hearing, the lawyer shall have the right to appeal in accordance with Rule 9(m); or

(iv) if it finds probable cause to revoke a conditional admission agreement, instruct the Director to file in this Court a petition for revocation of conditional admission.

(2) If the Panel held a hearing ~~was~~ on a lawyer's appeal of an admonition that was issued under Rule 8(d)(2), or issued by another panel without a hearing, the Panel shall affirm or reverse the admonition, or, if there is probable cause to believe that public discipline is warranted, instruct the Director to file a petition for disciplinary action in this Court.

**(l) Complainant's Petition for Review.** If not satisfied with the Panel's disposition, the complainant may within 14 days file with the Clerk of the Appellate Courts a petition for review. The complainant shall, prior to or at the time of filing, serve a copy of the petition for review upon the respondent and the Director and shall file an affidavit of service with the Clerk of the Appellate Courts. ~~The clerk shall notify the respondent and the Board Chair of the petition.~~ The respondent shall be denominated by number or randomly selected initials in the proceeding. This Court will grant review only if the petition shows that the Panel acted arbitrarily, capriciously, or unreasonably. If the Court grants review, it may order such proceedings as it deems appropriate. Upon conclusion of such proceedings, the Court may dismiss the petition or, if it finds that the Panel acted arbitrarily, capriciously, or unreasonably, remand the matter to the same or a different Panel, direct the filing of a petition for disciplinary action or a petition for revocation of conditional admission, or take any other action as the interest of justice may require.

**(m) Respondent's Appeal to Supreme Court.** The lawyer may appeal a Panel's affirmance of the Director's admonition or an admonition issued by a Panel by filing a notice of appeal and seven copies thereof with the Clerk of Appellate Courts and by serving a copy on the Director within 30 days after being notified of the Panel's action. The respondent shall be denominated by number or randomly selected initials in the proceeding. The Director shall notify the complainant, if any, of the respondent's appeal. This Court may review the matter on the record or order such further proceedings as it deems appropriate. Upon conclusion of such proceedings, the Court may either affirm the decision or make such other disposition as it deems appropriate.

## **RULE 10. DISPENSING WITH PANEL PROCEEDINGS**

**(d) Other Serious Matters.** In matters in which there are an attorney's admissions, civil findings, or apparently clear and convincing documentary evidence of an offense of a type for which the Court has suspended or disbarred lawyers in the past, such as misappropriation of funds, repeated non-filing of personal income tax returns, flagrant non-cooperation including failure to submit an answer or failure to attend a pre-hearing meeting as required by Rule 9, fraud and the like, the Director may either submit the matter to a Panel or upon a motion made with notice to the attorney and approved by the Panel Chair, file the petition under Rule 12.

**(e) Additional Charges.** If a petition under Rule 12 is pending before this Court, the Director must present the matter to the Panel Chair, or if the matter was not

heard by a Panel or the Panel Chair is unavailable, to the Board Chair, or Vice-Chair, for approval before amending the petition to include additional charges based upon conduct committed before or after the petition was filed.

#### **RULE 14. HEARING ON PETITION FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

(g) **Hearing Before Court.** This Court within ~~ten~~thirty days of the referee's findings, conclusions and recommendations, shall set a time for hearing before this Court. The order shall specify times for briefs and oral arguments. In all matters in which the Director seeks discipline, the cover of the main brief of the Director shall be blue; the main brief of the respondent, red; and any reply brief shall be gray. In a matter in which reinstatement is sought pursuant to Rule 18 of these Rules, the cover of the respondent's main brief shall be blue; that of the main brief of the Director, red; and that of any reply brief, gray. The matter shall be heard upon the record, briefs, and arguments.

#### **RULE 15. DISPOSITION; PROTECTION OF CLIENTS**

(a) **Disposition.** Upon conclusion of the proceedings, this Court may:

- (1) Disbar the lawyer;
- (2) Suspend the lawyer indefinitely or for a stated period of time;
- (3) Order the lawyer to pay costs;
- (4) Place the lawyer on a probationary status for a stated period, or until further order of this Court, with such conditions as this Court may specify and to be supervised by the Director;
- (5) Reprimand the lawyer;
- (6) Order the lawyer to successfully complete within a specified period such written examination as may be required of applicants for admission to the practice of law by the State Board of Law Examiners on the subject of professional responsibility;
- (7) Make such other disposition as this Court deems appropriate;
- (8) Require the lawyer to pay costs and disbursements; in addition, in those contested cases where the lawyer has acted in the proceedings in bad faith, vexatiously, or for oppressive reasons, order the lawyer to pay reasonable attorney fees;
- (9) Dismiss the petition for disciplinary action or petition for revocation of conditional admission, in which case the Court's order may denominate the

lawyer by number or randomly selected initials and may direct that the remainder of the record be sealed; or

- (10) Revoke, modify or extend a conditional admission agreement.

## **RULE 18. REINSTATEMENT**

(a) **Petition for Reinstatement.** A petition for reinstatement to practice law shall be served upon the Director ~~and the President of the State Bar Association~~. The original petition, with proof of service, and seven copies, shall then be filed with this Court. Together with the petition served upon the Director's Office, a petitioner seeking reinstatement shall pay to the Director a fee ~~of \$300~~ in the same amount as that required by Rule 12(B), Rules for Admission to the Bar, for timely filings. Applications for admission to the bar following a revocation of conditional admission shall be filed with the Board of Law Examiners pursuant to Rule 16, Rules for Admission to the Bar.

(b) **Investigation; Report.**

(1) The Director shall publish an announcement of the petition for reinstatement in a publication of general statewide circulation to attorneys soliciting comments regarding the appropriateness of the petitioner's reinstatement. Any comments made in response to such a solicitation shall be absolutely privileged and may not serve as a basis for liability in any civil lawsuit brought against the person making the statement.

(2) The Director shall investigate and report the Director's conclusions to a Panel.

(e) **General Requirements for Reinstatement.**

(1) Unless such examination is specifically waived by this Court, no lawyer, ~~ordered reinstated to the practice of law after having been disbarred by this Court, may petition for reinstatement shall be effectively reinstated~~ until the lawyer shall have successfully completed such written examinations as may be required of applicants for admission to the practice of law by the State Board of Law Examiners.

(2) No lawyer ordered reinstated to the practice of law after having been suspended or transferred to disability inactive status by this Court, and after petitioning for reinstatement under subdivision (a), shall be effectively reinstated until the lawyer shall have successfully completed such written examination as may be required for admission to the practice of law by the State Board of Law Examiners on the subject of professional responsibility.

(3) Unless specifically waived by this Court, any lawyer suspended for a fixed period of ninety (90) days or less, and any suspended lawyer for whom the Court waives the requirements of subdivisions (a) through (d), must, within one year from the date of the suspension order, successfully complete such written examination as may be required for admission to the practice of law by the State Board of Law Examiners on the subject of professional responsibility. Except upon motion and for good cause shown, failure to successfully complete this examination shall result in automatic suspension of the lawyer effective one year after the date of the original suspension order.

(4) Unless specifically waived by this Court, no lawyer shall be reinstated to the practice of law following the lawyer's resignation, suspension, disbarment, or transfer to disability inactive status by this Court until the lawyer shall have satisfied (1) the requirements imposed under the rules for Continuing Legal Education on members of the bar as a condition to a change from a restricted to an active status and (2) any subrogation claim against the lawyer by the Client Security Board.

## **RULE 20. CONFIDENTIALITY; EXPUNCTION**

**(a) General Rule.** The files, records, and proceedings of the District Committees, the Board, and the Director, as they may relate to or arise out of any complaint or charge of unprofessional conduct against or investigation of a lawyer, shall be deemed confidential and shall not be disclosed, except:

(1) As between the Committees, Board and Director in furtherance of their duties;

(2) After probable cause has been determined under Rule 9(j)(1)(ii) or (iv) or proceedings before a referee or this Court have been commenced under these Rules;

(3) As between the Director and a lawyer admission or disciplinary authority of another jurisdiction in which the lawyer affected is admitted to practice or seeks to practice;

(4) Upon request of the lawyer affected, the file maintained by the Director shall be produced including any district committee report; however, the Director's work product shall not be required to be produced, nor shall a member of the District Ethics Committee or the Board, the Director, or the Director's staff be subject to deposition or compelled testimony, except upon a showing to the court issuing the subpoena of extraordinary circumstance and compelling need. In any event, the mental impressions, conclusions, opinions and legal theories of the Director and Director's staff shall remain protected.

(5) If the complainant is, or at the time of the actions complained of was, the lawyer's client, the lawyer shall furnish to the complainant copies of the lawyer's written responses to investigation requests by the Director and District Ethics Committee, except that, insofar as a response does not relate to the client's complaint or involves information as to which another client has a privilege, portions may be deleted;

(6) Where permitted by this Court; or

(7) Where required or permitted by these Rules.

(8) Nothing in this rule shall be construed to require the disclosure of the mental processes or communications of the Committee or Board members made in furtherance of their duties.

(9) As between the Director and the Client Security Board in furtherance of their duties to investigate and consider claims of client loss allegedly caused by the intentional dishonesty of a lawyer.

(10) As between the Director and the Board on Judicial Standards or its executive secretary in furtherance of their duties to investigate and consider conduct of a judge that occurred prior to the judge assuming judicial office.

(11) As between the Director and the Board of Law Examiners in furtherance of their duties under these rules.

**(f) Advisory Opinions, Overdraft Notification Program Files, and Probation Files.** The files, notes, and records maintained by the Director relating to advisory opinions, trust account overdraft notification, and monitoring of lawyers on probation shall be deemed confidential and shall not be disclosed except:

(1) in the course of disciplinary proceedings arising out of the facts or circumstances of the advisory opinion, overdraft notification, or probation; or

(2) upon consent of the lawyer who requested the advisory opinion or was the subject of the overdraft notification or probation.

## **RULE 26. DUTIES OF DISCIPLINED, DISABLED, CONDITIONALLY ADMITTED, OR RESIGNED LAWYER**

**(a) Notice to Clients in Nonlitigation Matters.** Unless this Court orders otherwise, a disbarred, suspended or resigned lawyer, a lawyer whose conditional admission has been revoked, or a lawyer transferred to disability inactive status, shall notify each client being represented as of the date of the resignation or the order imposing discipline or transferring the lawyer to disability inactive status in a pending matter other

than litigation or administrative proceedings of the lawyer's disbarment, suspension, resignation, revocation of conditional admission, or disability. The notification shall urge the client to seek legal advice of the client's own choice elsewhere, and shall include a copy of the Court's order.

**(b) Notice to Parties and Tribunal in Litigation.** Unless this Court orders otherwise, a disbarred, suspended or resigned lawyer, a lawyer whose conditional admission has been revoked, or a lawyer transferred to disability inactive status, shall notify each client, opposing counsel (or opposing party acting pro se) and the tribunal involved in pending litigation or administrative proceedings as of the date of the resignation or the order imposing discipline or transferring the lawyer to disability inactive status of the lawyer's disbarment, suspension, resignation, revocation of conditional admission, or disability. The notification to the client shall urge the prompt substitution of other counsel in place of the disbarred, suspended, or resigned, disabled lawyer, or a lawyer whose conditional admission has been revoked, and shall include a copy of the Court's order.

**(e) Proof of Compliance.** Within fifteen (15) days after the effective date of the Court's order, the disbarred, suspended, resigned or disabled lawyer, or a lawyer whose conditional admission has been revoked, shall file with the Director an affidavit showing:

(1) That the affiant has fully complied with the provisions of the order and with this Rule;

(2) All other State, Federal and administrative jurisdictions to which the affiant is admitted to practice; and

(3) The residence or other address where communications may thereafter be directed to the affiant.

Copies of all notices sent by the disbarred, suspended, resigned or disabled lawyer, or lawyer whose conditional admission has been revoked, shall be attached to the affidavit, along with proof of mailing by certified mail. The returned receipts from the certified mailing shall be provided to the Director within two months of the mailing of notices.

## **RULE 28. DISABILITY STATUS**

**(c) Asserting Disability in Disciplinary Proceeding.** A lawyer's assertion of disability in defense or mitigation in a disciplinary proceeding or a revocation of conditional admission proceeding shall be deemed a waiver of the doctor-patient privilege. The referee may order an examination or evaluation by such person or institution as the referee designates. If a lawyer alleges disability during a disciplinary

investigation or proceeding or a revocation of conditional admission proceeding, and therefore is unable to assist in the defense, the Director shall inform the Court of the allegation and of the Director's position regarding the allegation. The Court may:

- (1) Transfer the lawyer to disability inactive status;
- (2) Order the lawyer to submit to a medical examination by a designated professional;
- (3) Appoint counsel if the lawyer has not retained counsel and the lawyer is financially eligible for appointed counsel. Financial eligibility shall be determined by the referee appointed by the Court to hear the disciplinary or disability petition in the same manner as eligibility for appointment of a public defender in a criminal case;
- (4) Stay disciplinary proceedings or revocation of conditional admission proceedings until it appears the lawyer can assist in the defense;
- (5) Direct the Director to file a petition under Rule 12;
- (6) Appoint a referee with directions to make findings and recommendations to the Court regarding the disability allegation or to proceed under Rule 14;
- (7) Make such or further orders as the Court deems appropriate.