

Informal Ethics Opinions

The Committee on Professional Ethics issues Informal Opinions in response to specific inquiries by lawyers admitted to practice in New York State, and are not published on the Onondaga County Bar Association's website.

Before requesting a written informal opinion, please consider calling the Ethics Hotline at (315) 422-6154 for assistance in answering your question. If you still require a written opinion after speaking with a hotline volunteer, you may submit your request to: Onondaga County Bar Association, Attn: Committee on Professional Ethics, 431 E. Fayette Street, Syracuse, New York 13202; or by email at: info1@onbar.org.

If you wish a Formal Ethics Opinion, please contact the New York State Bar Association by mailing your inquiry to its Professional Ethics Committee at One Elk Street, Albany, New York 12207, or faxed to (518) 487-5694, or e-mail to ethics@nysba.org. Please include in all inquiries your name, mailing address, telephone and fax number. More information may be found at the [NYSBA website](#).

Please be aware of the following guidelines before requesting an Informal Opinion:

- To request an Informal Opinion, you must be admitted to practice law in New York state. You do not need to be a member of the Onondaga County Bar Association.
- The Committee provides guidance concerning the inquiring lawyer's own prospective conduct under the New York Rules. The Committee does not answer questions about past conduct or the conduct of other lawyers.
- The Committee does not provide responses to hypothetical inquiries or inquiries which have also been submitted to another bar association's ethics committee.
- The Committee does not provide legal advice or answer questions of law.
- The Committee does not answer questions about the unlicensed practice of law (UPL). UPL is governed by statutory law, not the New York Rules and is, therefore, outside the Committee's jurisdiction.
- The Committee does not answer questions that are the subject of a pending legal proceeding or are before a grievance committee.
- The Committee does not accept anonymous inquiries. Lawyers who request an Informal Opinion must provide their full name and telephone numbers.

- The Committee cannot provide a concrete deadline for issuing an Informal Opinion. If your matter is urgent, you may wish to retain ethics counsel.