

3-6.1 | EMPLOYMENT OF CERTAIN ATTORNEYS OR FORMER ATTORNEYS - GENERALLY

(a) Authorization and Application. Except as limited in this rule, persons or entities providing legal services may employ suspended lawyers and former lawyers who have been disbarred or whose disciplinary resignations or disciplinary revocations have been granted by the Florida Supreme Court [for purposes of this rule these lawyers and former lawyers are referred to as "individual(s) subject to this rule"] to perform those services that may ethically be performed by nonlawyers employed by authorized business entities.

An individual subject to this rule is considered employed by an entity providing legal services if the individual is a salaried or hourly employee, volunteer worker, or an independent contractor.

(b) Employment by Former Subordinates Prohibited for a Period of 3 Years. An individual subject to this rule may not be employed or supervised by a lawyer whom the individual subject to this rule employed or supervised before the date of the suspension, disbarment, disciplinary resignation, or disciplinary revocation order.

(c) Notice of Employment Required. The lawyer or entity employing any individual who will be subject to this rule must provide The Florida Bar with a notice of employment and a detailed description of the intended services to be provided by the individual subject to this rule before employment starts.

(d) Prohibited Conduct.

(1) *Client Contact.* Individuals subject to this rule must not have contact (including engaging in communication in any manner) with any client.

(2) *Trust Funds or Property.* Individuals subject to this rule must not receive, disburse, or otherwise handle trust funds or property as defined in chapter 5 of these rules. Individuals subject to this rule must not act as fiduciaries for any funds or property of their clients or former clients, their employers' clients or former clients, or the clients or former clients of any entity in which their employer is a beneficial owner.

(3) *Practice of Law.* Individuals subject to this rule must not engage in conduct that constitutes the practice of law and must not hold themselves out as being eligible to do so.

(e) Quarterly Reports by Individual and Employer Required.

The individual subject to this rule and employer must submit sworn information reports to The Florida Bar. These reports must be filed quarterly, based on the calendar year, and include statements that no aspect of the work of the individual subject to this rule has involved the unlicensed practice of law, that the individual subject to this rule has had no client contact, that the individual subject to this rule did not receive, disburse, or otherwise handle trust funds or property, and that the individual subject to this rule is not being supervised by a lawyer whom the individual subject to this rule supervised before the date of the suspension, disbarment, disciplinary resignation, or disciplinary revocation order.

(f) Supervising Lawyer. An individual subject to this rule must be supervised by a member of The Florida Bar in good standing and eligible to practice law in Florida who is employed full-time by the entity that employs the individual subject to this rule and is actively engaged in the supervision of the individual subject to this rule in all aspects of the individual's employment.

(Amended March 16, 1990, effective March 17, 1990 (558 So.2d 1008); July 23, 1992, effective Jan. 1, 1993 (605 So.2d 252); Sept. 24, 1998, effective Oct. 1, 1998 (718 So.2d 1179); May 20, 2004 (SC03-705), (875 So.2d 448), corrected opinion issued July 7, 2004; October 6, 2005, effective Jan. 1 2006 (SC05-206), (916 So.2d 655); December 20, 2007, effective March 1, 2008 (SC06-736) (978 So.2d 91); November 19, 2009, effective February 1, 2010, (SC08-1890), (34 Fla.L.Weekly S628a). Amended April 12, 2012, effective July 1, 2012 (SC10-1967); amended May 29, 2014, effective June 1, 2014 (140 So.3d 541); amended May 28, 2020, effective July 27, 2020.)



Comments

Trust funds are defined in chapter 5 of these rules and include, but are not limited to, funds held in trust for clients or third parties in connection with legal representation in escrow, estate, probate, trustee, and guardianship accounts. The Supreme Court of Florida has held that lawyers acting as escrow agents have a fiduciary duty to protect the interests of all parties with an interest in the escrowed funds whether held in the lawyer's trust account or a separate escrow or fiduciary account. See *Fla. Bar v. Marrero*, 157 So. 3d 1020 (Fla. 2015); *Fla. Bar v. Hines*, 39 So. 3d 1196 (Fla. 2010). Individuals subject to this rule are prohibited from receiving, disbursing, or handling trust funds or property or acting as a fiduciary regarding funds or property of the current or former clients of these individuals, the entities employing them, or any other entity in which the employer is a beneficial owner.

