

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE CLIENT/LAWYER RELATIONSHIP



**ATLANTA BAR
ASSOCIATION**
LAWYERS WHO SERVE

REPUTATION
& the
PUBLIC TRUST
COMMITTEE

PREPARED BY THE REPUTATION AND THE PUBLIC TRUST COMMITTEE OF THE ATLANTA BAR (2014)

Dealing with a legal problem can be difficult and emotional. Here is some information to help you make the most of the client/lawyer relationship.

YOU MAY EXPECT:

- That your lawyer is competent to handle your legal matter.
- That your lawyer is free of conflicts of interest and can be loyal to you.
- That your lawyer will keep your information confidential, disclosing information only when it is necessary to pursue your legal matter.
- A clear description of fees, expenses and billing schedules.
- An explanation of your available legal options.
- An estimate of the length of time the lawyer will take to complete your matter and the variables that might affect that estimate.
- A summary of what the lawyer will do next and what you must do next.
- A description of how and when your lawyer will communicate with you and directions about when you should contact your lawyer.
- Periodic updates on the status of your case and sufficient information to help you make informed decisions regarding the representation.
- An explanation of the decisions your lawyer will make without your input and those your lawyer will make only after consulting with you.
- Courteous conduct from the lawyer and the lawyer's staff.
- Confirmation when the lawyer's work on the specific legal matter has been completed.

YOUR LAWYER MAY EXPECT:

- That you are prepared for your first meeting.
- That you deliver a comprehensive and honest description of the facts of your legal matter.
- That you will ask questions if there is something you do not understand.
- That you will follow through as the lawyer directs.
- That you will keep scheduled appointments (or reschedule them with as much advance notice as possible) and respond promptly to requests for information.
- That you will not speak to other individuals involved in your legal matter without first consulting your lawyer.
- That you will update your lawyer if your contact information changes.
- That you understand the lawyer has other clients and on certain occasions may be assisting those clients before responding to your inquiries.
- Prompt payment of bills and notice if you have questions or concerns about the bill.
- Courteous conduct when dealing with the lawyer and the lawyer's staff.

IF YOUR LAWYER DOES NOT MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS:

- Communicate your concerns to your lawyer and give the lawyer a reasonable amount of time to respond to those concerns.
- Consult the State Bar of Georgia website at <http://www.gabar.org/committeesprogramssections/programs/consumerassistanceprogram/index.cfm> if you remain dissatisfied with your lawyer.