

CONSOLIDATED PATENT RULES

Separate from other parts of application.....1.71(f)
 Substitute.....1.125
 Summary of the invention.....1.73
 Title of the invention.....1.72
 To be rewritten, if necessary.....1.125
 Specimens. (See Models and exhibits.)
 Specimens of composition of matter to be furnished when
 required.....1.93
 Specimens of plants.....1.166
 Statement of status as small entity.....1.27
 Status information.....1.14
 Statutory disclaimer fee.....1.20
 Statutory invention registrations.....1.293
 Examination.....1.294
 Publication of.....1.297
 Review of decision finally refusing to
 publish.....1.295
 Withdrawal of request for publication of.....1.296
 Submission of international publication or English
 translation thereof pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 154(d)(4)
1.417
 Sufficient funds in deposit account.....1.25
 Suit in equity. (See Civil action.)
 Summary of invention.....1.73
 Sunday, when last day falls on.....1.7
 Supervisory authority, petition to Director to
 exercise.....1.181
 Supplemental oath /declaration1.67
 Surcharge for oath or basic filing fee filed after filing
 date.....1.16, 1.53
 Suspension of action.....1.103
 Suspension of rules.....1.183
 Symbols for drawings.....1.84
 Symbols for nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence
 data.....1.822

T

Tables in patent applications.....1.58
 Terminal disclaimer.....1.321
 Testimony by Office employees.....15 CFR Part 15a
 Testimony in contested cases before the
 Board.....41.156, 41.158
 Compelling testimony and production.....41.156
 Expert testimony.....41.158
 Taking testimony.....41.157
 Third party submission in published application1.99
 Time expiring on Saturday, Sunday, or holiday.....1.7
 Time for claiming benefit of prior (domestic) application
1.78
 Time for claiming foreign priority1.55
 Time for filing preliminary amendment to ensure entry
 thereof1.115
 Time for payment of issue fee.....1.311
 Time for payment of publication fee.....1.311
 Time for reply by applicant.....1.134, 1.135, 1.136
 Time for reply to Office action.....1.134, 1.136

Time for requesting a refund.....1.26
 Time, periods of.....1.7
 Timely filing of correspondence.....1.8, 1.10
 Title of invention.....1.72
 Title reports, fee for.....1.19
 Transitional procedures.....1.129

U

Unavoidable abandonment.....1.137
 Unintentional abandonment.....1.137
 United States as
 Designated Office.....1.414
 Elected Office.....1.414
 International Preliminary Examining
 Authority.....1.416
 International Searching Authority.....1.413
 Receiving Office.....1.412
 Unlocatable files.....1.251
 Unsigned continuation or divisional
 application.....1.53, 1.63
 Use of file of parent application.....1.53

W

Waiver of confidentiality.....1.53
 Withdrawal from issue.....1.313
 Withdrawal of attorney or agent.....1.36(b)
 Withdrawal of request for statutory invention
 registration.....1.296

PRACTICE BEFORE THE PATENT AND TRADEMARK
 OFFICE

PART 10 — [Reserved]

PART 11 — REPRESENTATION OF
 OTHERS BEFORE THE UNITED STATES
 PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

General Provisions

GENERAL INFORMATION

Sec.
 11.1 Definitions.
 11.2 Director of the Office of Enrollment and
 Discipline.
 11.3 Suspension of rules.

Recognition To Practice Before the USPTO

PATENTS, TRADEMARKS, AND OTHER
 NON-PATENT LAW

Sec.
 11.4 [Reserved]

MANUAL OF PATENT EXAMINING PROCEDURE

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>11.5 Register of attorneys and agents in patent matters; practice before the office.</p> <p>11.6 Registration of attorneys and agents.</p> <p>11.7 Requirements for registration.</p> <p>11.8 Oath and registration fee.</p> <p>11.9 Limited recognition in patent matters.</p> <p>11.10 Restrictions on practice in patent matters.</p> <p>11.11 Administrative suspension, inactivation, resignation, and readmission.</p> <p>11.12 - 11.13 [Reserved]</p> <p>11.14 Individuals who may practice before the Office in trademarks and other non-patent matters.</p> <p>11.15 Refusal to recognize a practitioner.</p> <p>11.16 - 11.17 [Reserved]</p> <p>11.18 Signature and certificate for correspondence filed in the Office.</p> | <p>11.52 Discovery.</p> <p>11.53 Proposed findings and conclusions; post-hearing memorandum.</p> <p>11.54 Initial decision of hearing officer.</p> <p>11.55 Appeal to the USPTO Director.</p> <p>11.56 Decision of the USPTO Director.</p> <p>11.57 Review of final decision of the USPTO Director.</p> <p>11.58 Duties of disciplined or resigned practitioner, or practitioner on disability inactive status.</p> <p>11.59 Dissemination of disciplinary and other information.</p> <p>11.60 Petition for reinstatement.</p> <p>11.61 [Reserved]</p> <p>11.62 -11.99 [Reserved]</p> |
|--|---|

USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct

Investigations and Disciplinary Proceedings; Jurisdiction, Sanctions, Investigations, and Proceedings

- 11.19 Disciplinary jurisdiction; Jurisdiction to transfer to disability inactive status.
- 11.20 Disciplinary sanctions; Transfer to disability inactive status.
- 11.21 Warnings.
- 11.22 Disciplinary Investigations.
- 11.23 Committee on Discipline.
- 11.24 Reciprocal discipline.
- 11.25 Interim suspension and discipline based upon conviction of committing a serious crime.
- 11.26 Settlement.
- 11.27 Exclusion on consent.
- 11.28 Incapacitated practitioners in a disciplinary proceeding.
- 11.29 Reciprocal transfer or initial transfer to disability inactive status.
- 11.30 - 11.31 [Reserved]
- 11.32 Instituting a disciplinary proceeding.
- 11.33 [Reserved]
- 11.34 Complaint.
- 11.35 Service of complaint.
- 11.36 Answer to complaint.
- 11.37 [Reserved]
- 11.38 Contested case.
- 11.39 Hearing officer; appointment; responsibilities; review of interlocutory orders; stays.
- 11.40 Representative for OED Director or respondent.
- 11.41 Filing of papers.
- 11.42 Service of papers.
- 11.43 Motions.
- 11.44 Hearings.
- 11.45 Amendment of pleadings.
- 11.46 - 11.48 [Reserved]
- 11.49 Burden of proof.
- 11.50 Evidence.
- 11.51 Depositions.

Sec.

- 11.100 [Reserved]

CLIENT-PRACTITIONER RELATIONSHIP

- 11.101 Competence.
- 11.102 Scope of representation and allocation of authority between client and practitioner.
- 11.103 Diligence.
- 11.104 Communication.
- 11.105 Fees.
- 11.106 Confidentiality of information.
- 11.107 Conflict of interest; Current clients.
- 11.108 Conflict of interest; Current clients; Specific rules.
- 11.109 Duties to former clients.
- 11.110 Imputation of conflicts of interest; General rule.
- 11.111 Former or current Federal Government employees.
- 11.112 Former judge, arbitrator, mediator or other third-party neutral.
- 11.113 Organization as client.
- 11.114 Client with diminished capacity.
- 11.115 Safekeeping property.
- 11.116 Declining or terminating representation.
- 11.117 Sale of law practice.
- 11.118 Duties to prospective client.
- 11.119 - 11.200 [Reserved]

COUNSELOR

- 11.201 Advisor.
- 11.202 [Reserved]
- 11.203 Evaluation for use by third persons.
- 11.204 Practitioner serving as third-party neutral.
- 11.205 - 11.300 [Reserved]

ADVOCATE

- 11.301 Meritorious claims and contentions.
- 11.302 Expediting proceedings.
- 11.303 Candor toward the tribunal.
- 11.304 Fairness to opposing party and counsel.
- 11.305 Impartiality and decorum of the tribunal.
- 11.306 Trial publicity.
- 11.307 Practitioner as witness.
- 11.308 [Reserved]
- 11.309 Advocate in nonadjudicative proceedings.
- 11.310 - 11.400 [Reserved]

TRANSACTIONS WITH PERSONS OTHER THAN CLIENTS

- 11.401 Truthfulness in statements to others.
- 11.402 Communication with person represented by a practitioner.
- 11.403 Dealing with unrepresented person.
- 11.404 Respect for rights of third persons.
- 11.405 - 11.500 [Reserved]

LAW FIRMS AND ASSOCIATIONS

- 11.501 Responsibilities of partners, managers, and supervisory practitioners.
- 11.502 Responsibilities of a subordinate practitioner.
- 11.503 Responsibilities regarding non-practitioner assistance.
- 11.504 Professional independence of a practitioner.
- 11.505 Unauthorized practice of law.
- 11.506 Restrictions on right to practice.
- 11.507 Responsibilities regarding law-related services.
- 11.508 - 11.700 [Reserved]

INFORMATION ABOUT LEGAL SERVICES

- 11.701 Communications concerning a practitioner's services.
- 11.702 Advertising.
- 11.703 Direct contact with prospective clients.
- 11.704 Communication of fields of practice and specialization.
- 11.705 Firm names and letterheads.
- 11.706 - 11.800 [Reserved]

MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROFESSION

- 11.801 Registration, recognition and disciplinary matters.
- 11.802 Judicial and legal officials.
- 11.803 Reporting professional misconduct.
- 11.804 Misconduct.
- 11.805 - 11.900 [Reserved]
- 11.901 Savings clause.

Subpart A — General Provisions

GENERAL INFORMATION

§ 11.1 Definitions.

This part governs solely the practice of patent, trademark, and other law before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Nothing in this part shall be construed to preempt the authority of each State to regulate the practice of law, except to the extent necessary for the United States Patent and Trademark Office to accomplish its Federal objectives. Unless otherwise clear from the context, the following definitions apply to this part:

Attorney or *lawyer* means an individual who is a member in good standing of the highest court of any State, including an individual who is in good standing of the highest court of one State and not under an order of any court or Federal agency suspending, enjoining, restraining, disbaring or otherwise restricting the attorney from practice before the bar of another State or Federal agency. A *non-lawyer* means a person who is not an attorney or lawyer.

Belief or *believes* means that the person involved actually supposed the fact in question to be true. A person's belief may be inferred from circumstances.

Confirmed in writing, when used in reference to the informed consent of a person, means informed consent that is given in writing by the person or a writing that a practitioner promptly transmits to the person confirming an oral informed consent. If it is not feasible to obtain or transmit the writing at the time the person gives informed consent, then the practitioner must obtain or transmit it within a reasonable time thereafter.

Conviction or *convicted* means any confession to a crime; a verdict or judgment finding a person guilty of a crime; any entered plea, including *nolo contendere* or Alford plea, to a crime; or receipt of deferred adjudication (whether judgment or sentence has been entered or not) for an accused or pled crime.

Crime means any offense declared to be a felony or misdemeanor by Federal or State law in the jurisdiction where the act occurs.

Data sheet means a form used to collect the name, address, and telephone information from individuals recognized to practice before the Office in patent matters.

the requirements of § 11.7, to take and pass an examination under § 11.7(b), ethics courses, and/or the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination. The OED Director shall provide findings, together with the record. The findings shall include on the first page, immediately beneath the caption of the case, a separate section entitled "Prior Proceedings" which shall state the docket number of the original disciplinary proceeding in which the exclusion or suspension was ordered.

(f) *Resubmission of petitions for reinstatement.* If a petition for reinstatement is denied, no further petition for reinstatement may be filed until the expiration of at least one year following the denial unless the order of denial provides otherwise.

(g) *Reinstatement proceedings open to public.* Proceedings on any petition for reinstatement shall be open to the public. Before reinstating any excluded or suspended practitioner, the OED Director shall publish a notice of the excluded or suspended practitioner's petition for reinstatement and shall permit the public a reasonable opportunity to comment or submit evidence with respect to the petition for reinstatement.

[Added, 73 FR 47650, Aug. 14, 2008, effective Sept. 15, 2008]

§ 11.61 [Reserved]

[Removed and reserved, 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.62 -11.99 [Reserved]

Subpart D — USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct

§ 11.100 [Reserved]

CLIENT-PRACTITIONER RELATIONSHIP

§ 11.101 Competence.

A practitioner shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal, scientific, and technical knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.102 Scope of representation and allocation of authority between client and practitioner.

(a) Subject to paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section, a practitioner shall abide by a client's decisions concerning the objectives of representation and, as required by § 11.104, shall consult with the client as to the means by which they are to be pursued. A practitioner may take such action on behalf of the client as is

impliedly authorized to carry out the representation. A practitioner shall abide by a client's decision whether to settle a matter.

(b) [Reserved]

(c) A practitioner may limit the scope of the representation if the limitation is reasonable under the circumstances and the client gives informed consent.

(d) A practitioner shall not counsel a client to engage, or assist a client, in conduct that the practitioner knows is criminal or fraudulent, but a practitioner may discuss the legal consequences of any proposed course of conduct with a client and may counsel or assist a client to make a good-faith effort to determine the validity, scope, meaning or application of the law.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.103 Diligence.

A practitioner shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.104 Communication.

(a) A practitioner shall:

(1) Promptly inform the client of any decision or circumstance with respect to which the client's informed consent is required by the USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct;

(2) Reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished;

(3) Keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter;

(4) Promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from the client; and

(5) Consult with the client about any relevant limitation on the practitioner's conduct when the practitioner knows that the client expects assistance not permitted by the USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct or other law.

(b) A practitioner shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.105 Fees.

(a) A practitioner shall not make an agreement for, charge, or collect an unreasonable fee or an unreasonable amount for expenses. The factors to be considered in determining the reasonableness of a fee include the following:

(1) The time and labor required, the novelty and difficulty of the questions involved, and the skill requisite to perform the legal service properly;

(2) The likelihood, if apparent to the client, that the acceptance of the particular employment will preclude other employment by the practitioner;

(3) The fee customarily charged in the locality for similar legal services;

(4) The amount involved and the results obtained;

(5) The time limitations imposed by the client or by the circumstances;

(6) The nature and length of the professional relationship with the client;

(7) The experience, reputation, and ability of the practitioner or practitioners performing the services; and

(8) Whether the fee is fixed or contingent.

(b) The scope of the representation and the basis or rate of the fee and expenses for which the client will be responsible shall be communicated to the client, preferably in writing, before or within a reasonable time after commencing the representation, except when the practitioner will charge a regularly represented client on the same basis or rate. Any changes in the basis or rate of the fee or expenses shall also be communicated to the client.

(c) A fee may be contingent on the outcome of the matter for which the service is rendered, except in a matter in which a contingent fee is prohibited by law. A contingent fee agreement shall be in a writing signed by the client and shall state the method by which the fee is to be determined, including the percentage or percentages that shall accrue to the practitioner in the event of settlement, trial or appeal; litigation and other expenses to be deducted from the recovery; and whether such expenses are to be deducted before or after the contingent fee is calculated. The agreement must clearly notify the client of any expenses for which the client will be liable whether or not the client is the prevailing party. Upon conclusion of a contingent fee matter, the practitioner shall provide the client with a written statement stating the outcome of the matter and, if there is a recovery, showing the remittance to the client and the method of its determination.

(d) [Reserved]

(e) A division of a fee between practitioners who are not in the same firm may be made only if:

(1) The division is in proportion to the services performed by each practitioner or each practitioner assumes joint responsibility for the representation;

(2) The client agrees to the arrangement, including the share each practitioner will receive, and the agreement is confirmed in writing; and

(3) The total fee is reasonable.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.106 Confidentiality of information.

(a) A practitioner shall not reveal information relating to the representation of a client unless the client gives informed consent, the disclosure is impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation, the disclosure is permitted by paragraph (b) of this section, or the disclosure is required by paragraph (c) of this section.

(b) A practitioner may reveal information relating to the representation of a client to the extent the practitioner reasonably believes necessary:

(1) To prevent reasonably certain death or substantial bodily harm;

(2) To prevent the client from engaging in inequitable conduct before the Office or from committing a crime or fraud that is reasonably certain to result in substantial injury to the financial interests or property of another and in furtherance of which the client has used or is using the practitioner's services;

(3) To prevent, mitigate or rectify substantial injury to the financial interests or property of another that is reasonably certain to result or has resulted from the client's commission of a crime, fraud, or inequitable conduct before the Office in furtherance of which the client has used the practitioner's services;

(4) To secure legal advice about the practitioner's compliance with the USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct;

(5) To establish a claim or defense on behalf of the practitioner in a controversy between the practitioner and the client, to establish a defense to a criminal charge or civil claim against the practitioner based upon conduct in which the client was involved, or to respond to allegations in any proceeding concerning the practitioner's representation of the client; or

(6) To comply with other law or a court order.

(c) A practitioner shall disclose to the Office information necessary to comply with applicable duty of disclosure provisions.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.107 Conflict of interest; Current clients.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, a practitioner shall not represent a client if the representation involves a concurrent conflict of interest. A concurrent conflict of interest exists if:

(1) The representation of one client will be directly adverse to another client; or

(2) There is a significant risk that the representation of one or more clients will be materially limited by the practitioner's responsibilities to another client, a former client or a third person or by a personal interest of the practitioner.

(b) Notwithstanding the existence of a concurrent conflict of interest under paragraph (a) of this section, a practitioner may represent a client if:

(1) The practitioner reasonably believes that the practitioner will be able to provide competent and diligent representation to each affected client;

(2) The representation is not prohibited by law;

(3) The representation does not involve the assertion of a claim by one client against another client represented by the practitioner in the same litigation or other proceeding before a tribunal; and

(4) Each affected client gives informed consent, confirmed in writing.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.108 Conflict of interest; Current clients; Specific rules.

(a) A practitioner shall not enter into a business transaction with a client or knowingly acquire an ownership, possessory, security or other pecuniary interest adverse to a client unless:

(1) The transaction and terms on which the practitioner acquires the interest are fair and reasonable to the client and are fully disclosed and transmitted in writing in a manner that can be reasonably understood by the client;

(2) The client is advised in writing of the desirability of seeking and is given a reasonable opportunity to seek the advice of independent legal counsel in the transaction; and

(3) The client gives informed consent, in a writing signed by the client, to the essential terms of the transaction and the practitioner's role in the transaction, including whether the practitioner is representing the client in the transaction.

(b) A practitioner shall not use information relating to representation of a client to the disadvantage of the client unless the client gives informed consent, except as permitted or required by the USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct.

(c) A practitioner shall not solicit any substantial gift from a client, including a testamentary gift, or prepare on behalf of a client an instrument giving the practitioner or a person related to the practitioner any substantial gift

unless the practitioner or other recipient of the gift is related to the client. For purposes of this paragraph, related persons include a spouse, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent or other relative or individual with whom the practitioner or the client maintains a close, familial relationship.

(d) Prior to the conclusion of representation of a client, a practitioner shall not make or negotiate an agreement giving the practitioner literary or media rights to a portrayal or account based in substantial part on information relating to the representation.

(e) A practitioner shall not provide financial assistance to a client in connection with pending or contemplated litigation or a proceeding before the Office, except that:

(1) A practitioner may advance court costs and expenses of litigation, the repayment of which may be contingent on the outcome of the matter;

(2) A practitioner representing an indigent client may pay court costs and expenses of litigation or a proceeding before the Office on behalf of the client;

(3) A practitioner may advance costs and expenses in connection with a proceeding before the Office provided the client remains ultimately liable for such costs and expenses; and

(4) A practitioner may also advance any fee required to prevent or remedy an abandonment of a client's application by reason of an act or omission attributable to the practitioner and not to the client, whether or not the client is ultimately liable for such fee.

(f) A practitioner shall not accept compensation for representing a client from one other than the client unless:

(1) The client gives informed consent;

(2) There is no interference with the practitioner's independence of professional judgment or with the client-practitioner relationship; and

(3) Information relating to representation of a client is protected as required by § 11.106.

(g) A practitioner who represents two or more clients shall not participate in making an aggregate settlement of the claims of or against the clients, unless each client gives informed consent, in a writing signed by the client. The practitioner's disclosure shall include the existence and nature of all the claims involved and of the participation of each person in the settlement.

(h) A practitioner shall not:

(1) Make an agreement prospectively limiting the practitioner's liability to a client for malpractice unless the client is independently represented in making the agreement; or

(2) Settle a claim or potential claim for such liability with an unrepresented client or former client unless that person is advised in writing of the desirability of seeking and is given a reasonable opportunity to seek the advice of independent legal counsel in connection therewith.

(i) A practitioner shall not acquire a proprietary interest in the cause of action, subject matter of litigation, or a proceeding before the Office which the practitioner is conducting for a client, except that the practitioner may, subject to the other provisions in this section:

(1) Acquire a lien authorized by law to secure the practitioner's fee or expenses;

(2) Contract with a client for a reasonable contingent fee in a civil case; and

(3) In a patent case or a proceeding before the Office, take an interest in the patent or patent application as part or all of his or her fee.

(j) [Reserved]

(k) While practitioners are associated in a firm, a prohibition in paragraphs (a) through (i) of this section that applies to any one of them shall apply to all of them.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.109 Duties to former clients.

(a) A practitioner who has formerly represented a client in a matter shall not thereafter represent another person in the same or a substantially related matter in which that person's interests are materially adverse to the interests of the former client unless the former client gives informed consent, confirmed in writing.

(b) A practitioner shall not knowingly represent a person in the same or a substantially related matter in which a firm with which the practitioner formerly was associated had previously represented a client:

(1) Whose interests are materially adverse to that person; and

(2) About whom the practitioner had acquired information protected by §§ 11.106 and 11.109(c) that is material to the matter; unless the former client gives informed consent, confirmed in writing.

(c) A practitioner who has formerly represented a client in a matter or whose present or former firm has formerly represented a client in a matter shall not thereafter:

(1) Use information relating to the representation to the disadvantage of the former client except as the USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct would permit or require with respect to a client, or when the information has become generally known; or

(2) Reveal information relating to the representation except as the USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct would permit or require with respect to a client.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.110 Imputation of conflicts of interest; General rule.

(a) While practitioners are associated in a firm, none of them shall knowingly represent a client when any one of them practicing alone would be prohibited from doing so by §§ 11.107 or 11.109, unless:

(1) The prohibition is based on a personal interest of the disqualified practitioner and does not present a significant risk of materially limiting the representation of the client by the remaining practitioners in the firm; or

(2) The prohibition is based upon § 11.109(a) or (b), and arises out of the disqualified practitioner's association with a prior firm, and

(i) The disqualified practitioner is timely screened from any participation in the matter and is apportioned no part of the fee therefrom; and

(ii) Written notice is promptly given to any affected former client to enable the former client to ascertain compliance with the provisions of this section, which shall include a description of the screening procedures employed; a statement of the firm's and of the screened practitioner's compliance with the USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct; a statement that review may be available before a tribunal; and an agreement by the firm to respond promptly to any written inquiries or objections by the former client about the screening procedures.

(b) When a practitioner has terminated an association with a firm, the firm is not prohibited from thereafter representing a person with interests materially adverse to those of a client represented by the formerly associated practitioner and not currently represented by the firm, unless:

(1) The matter is the same or substantially related to that in which the formerly associated practitioner represented the client; and

(2) Any practitioner remaining in the firm has information protected by §§ 11.106 and 11.109(c) that is material to the matter.

(c) A disqualification prescribed by this section may be waived by the affected client under the conditions stated in § 11.107.

(d) The disqualification of practitioners associated in a firm with former or current Federal Government lawyers is governed by § 11.111.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.111 Former or current Federal Government employees.

A practitioner who is a former or current Federal Government employee shall not engage in any conduct which is contrary to applicable Federal ethics law, including conflict of interest statutes and regulations of the department, agency or commission formerly or currently employing said practitioner.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.112 Former judge, arbitrator, mediator or other third-party neutral.

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (d) of this section, a practitioner shall not represent anyone in connection with a matter in which the practitioner participated personally and substantially as a judge or other adjudicative officer or law clerk to such a person or as an arbitrator, mediator or other third-party neutral, unless all parties to the proceeding give informed consent, confirmed in writing.

(b) A practitioner shall not negotiate for employment with any person who is involved as a party or as practitioner for a party in a matter in which the practitioner is participating personally and substantially as a judge or other adjudicative officer or as an arbitrator, mediator or other third-party neutral. A practitioner serving as a law clerk to a judge or other adjudicative officer may negotiate for employment with a party or practitioner involved in a matter in which the clerk is participating personally and substantially, but only after the practitioner has notified the judge, or other adjudicative officer.

(c) If a practitioner is disqualified by paragraph (a) of this section, no practitioner in a firm with which that practitioner is associated may knowingly undertake or continue representation in the matter unless:

(1) The disqualified practitioner is timely screened from any participation in the matter and is apportioned no part of the fee therefrom; and

(2) Written notice is promptly given to the parties and any appropriate tribunal to enable them to ascertain compliance with the provisions of this section.

(d) An arbitrator selected as a partisan of a party in a multimember arbitration panel is not prohibited from subsequently representing that party.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.113 Organization as client.

(a) A practitioner employed or retained by an organization represents the organization acting through its duly authorized constituents.

(b) If a practitioner for an organization knows that an officer, employee or other person associated with the organization is engaged in action, intends to act or refuses to act in a matter related to the representation that is a violation of a legal obligation to the organization, or a violation of law that reasonably might be imputed to the organization, and that is likely to result in substantial injury to the organization, then the practitioner shall proceed as is reasonably necessary in the best interest of the organization. Unless the practitioner reasonably believes that it is not necessary in the best interest of the organization to do so, the practitioner shall refer the matter to higher authority in the organization, including, if warranted by the circumstances, to the highest authority that can act on behalf of the organization as determined by applicable law.

(c) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, if

(1) Despite the practitioner's efforts in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section the highest authority that can act on behalf of the organization insists upon or fails to address in a timely and appropriate manner an action, or a refusal to act, that is clearly a violation of law, and

(2) The practitioner reasonably believes that the violation is reasonably certain to result in substantial injury to the organization, then the practitioner may reveal information relating to the representation whether or not § 11.106 permits such disclosure, but only if and to the extent the practitioner reasonably believes necessary to prevent substantial injury to the organization.

(d) Paragraph (c) of this section shall not apply with respect to information relating to a practitioner's representation of an organization to investigate an alleged violation of law, or to defend the organization or an officer, employee or other constituent associated with the organization against a claim arising out of an alleged violation of law.

(e) A practitioner who reasonably believes that he or she has been discharged because of the practitioner's actions taken pursuant to paragraphs (b) or (c) of this section, or who withdraws under circumstances that require or permit the practitioner to take action under either of those paragraphs, shall proceed as the practitioner reasonably believes necessary to assure that the organization's highest authority is informed of the practitioner's discharge or withdrawal.

(f) In dealing with an organization's directors, officers, employees, members, shareholders, or other constituents, a practitioner shall explain the identity of the client when the practitioner knows or reasonably should know that the organization's interests are adverse

to those of the constituents with whom the practitioner is dealing.

(g) A practitioner representing an organization may also represent any of its directors, officers, employees, members, shareholders or other constituents, subject to the provisions of § 11.107. If the organization's consent to the dual representation is required by § 11.107, the consent shall be given by an appropriate official of the organization other than the individual who is to be represented, or by the shareholders.

[Added 78 FR 20180, Apr. 3, 2013, effective May 3, 2013]

§ 11.114 Client with diminished capacity.

(a) When a client's capacity to make adequately considered decisions in connection with a representation is diminished, whether because of minority, mental impairment or for some other reason, the practitioner shall, as far as reasonably possible, maintain a normal client-practitioner relationship with the client.

(b) When the practitioner reasonably believes that the client has diminished capacity, is at risk of substantial physical, financial or other harm unless action is taken and cannot adequately act in the client's own interest, the practitioner may take reasonably necessary protective action, including consulting with individuals or entities that have the ability to take action to protect the client and, in appropriate cases, seeking the appointment of a guardian ad litem, conservator or guardian.

(c) Information relating to the representation of a client with diminished capacity is protected under § 11.106. When taking protective action pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section, the practitioner is impliedly authorized under § 11.106(a) to reveal information about the client, but only to the extent reasonably necessary to protect the client's interests.

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§ 11.115 Safekeeping property.

(a) A practitioner shall hold property of clients or third persons that is in a practitioner's possession in connection with a representation separate from the practitioner's own property. Funds shall be kept in a separate account maintained in the state where the practitioner's office is situated, or elsewhere with the consent of the client or third person. Where the practitioner's office is situated in a foreign country, funds shall be kept in a separate account maintained in that foreign country or elsewhere with the consent of the client or third person. Other property shall be identified as such and appropriately safeguarded. Complete records of such account funds and other property shall be kept by the practitioner and shall be preserved for a period of five years after termination of the representation.

(b) A practitioner may deposit the practitioner's own funds in a client trust account for the sole purpose of paying bank service charges on that account, but only in an amount necessary for that purpose.

(c) A practitioner shall deposit into a client trust account legal fees and expenses that have been paid in advance, to be withdrawn by the practitioner only as fees are earned or expenses incurred.

(d) Upon receiving funds or other property in which a client or third person has an interest, a practitioner shall promptly notify the client or third person. Except as stated in this section or otherwise permitted by law or by agreement with the client, a practitioner shall promptly deliver to the client or third person any funds or other property that the client or third person is entitled to receive and, upon request by the client or third person, shall promptly render a full accounting regarding such property.

(e) When in the course of representation a practitioner is in possession of property in which two or more persons (one of whom may be the practitioner) claim interests, the property shall be kept separate by the practitioner until the dispute is resolved. The practitioner shall promptly distribute all portions of the property as to which the interests are not in dispute.

(f) All separate accounts for clients or third persons kept by a practitioner must also comply with the following provisions:

(1) *Required records.* The records to be kept include:

(i) Receipt and disbursement journals containing a record of deposits to and withdrawals from client trust accounts, specifically identifying the date, source, and description of each item deposited, as well as the date, payee and purpose of each disbursement;

(ii) Ledger records for all client trust accounts showing, for each separate trust client or beneficiary, the source of all funds deposited, the names of all persons for whom the funds are or were held, the amount of such funds, the descriptions and amounts of charges or withdrawals, and the names of all persons or entities to whom such funds were disbursed;

(iii) Copies of retainer and compensation agreements with clients;

(iv) Copies of accountings to clients or third persons showing the disbursement of funds to them or on their behalf;

(v) Copies of bills for legal fees and expenses rendered to clients;

(vi) Copies of records showing disbursements on behalf of clients;

(vii) The physical or electronic equivalents of all checkbook registers, bank statements, records of deposit, prenumbered canceled checks, and substitute checks provided by a financial institution;

(viii) Records of all electronic transfers from client trust accounts, including the name of the person authorizing transfer, the date of transfer, the name of the recipient and confirmation from the financial institution of the trust account number from which money was withdrawn and the date and the time the transfer was completed;

(ix) Copies of monthly trial balances and quarterly reconciliations of the client trust accounts maintained by the practitioner; and

(x) Copies of those portions of client files that are reasonably related to client trust account transactions.

(2) *Client trust account safeguards.* With respect to client trust accounts required by paragraphs (a) through (e) of this section:

(i) Only a practitioner or a person under the direct supervision of the practitioner shall be an authorized signatory or authorize transfers from a client trust account;

(ii) Receipts shall be deposited intact and records of deposit should be sufficiently detailed to identify each item; and

(iii) Withdrawals shall be made only by check payable to a named payee and not to cash, or by authorized electronic transfer.

(3) *Availability of records.* Records required by paragraph (f)(1) of this section may be maintained by electronic, photographic, or other media provided that they otherwise comply with paragraphs (f)(1) and (f)(2) of this section and that printed copies can be produced. These records shall be readily accessible to the practitioner.

(4) *Lawyers.* The records kept by a lawyer are deemed to be in compliance with this section if the types of records that are maintained meet the recordkeeping requirements of a state in which the lawyer is licensed and in good standing, the recordkeeping requirements of the state where the lawyer's principal place of business is located, or the recordkeeping requirements of this section.

(5) *Patent agents and persons granted limited recognition who are employed in the United States by a law firm.* The records kept by a law firm employing one or more registered patent agents or persons granted limited recognition under § 11.9 are deemed to be in

compliance with this section if the types of records that are maintained meet the recordkeeping requirements of the state where at least one practitioner of the law firm is licensed and in good standing, the recordkeeping requirements of the state where the law firm's principal place of business is located, or the recordkeeping requirements of this section.

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§ 11.116 Declining or terminating representation.

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c) of this section, a practitioner shall not represent a client, or where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

(1) The representation will result in violation of the USPTO Rules of Professional Conduct or other law;

(2) The practitioner's physical or mental condition materially impairs the practitioner's ability to represent the client; or

(3) The practitioner is discharged.

(b) Except as stated in paragraph (c) of this section, a practitioner may withdraw from representing a client if:

(1) Withdrawal can be accomplished without material adverse effect on the interests of the client;

(2) The client persists in a course of action involving the practitioner's services that the practitioner reasonably believes is criminal or fraudulent;

(3) The client has used the practitioner's services to perpetrate a crime or fraud;

(4) A client insists upon taking action that the practitioner considers repugnant or with which the practitioner has a fundamental disagreement;

(5) The client fails substantially to fulfill an obligation to the practitioner regarding the practitioner's services and has been given reasonable warning that the practitioner will withdraw unless the obligation is fulfilled;

(6) The representation will result in an unreasonable financial burden on the practitioner or has been rendered unreasonably difficult by the client; or

(7) Other good cause for withdrawal exists.

(c) A practitioner must comply with applicable law requiring notice to or permission of a tribunal when terminating a representation. When ordered to do so by a tribunal, a practitioner shall continue representation notwithstanding good cause for terminating the representation.

