



What to Expect From Your Lawyer-Client Relationship

There are many reasons you might need a lawyer. Many people expect that they'll only need the assistance of an attorney if they are accused of a crime or named as a defendant in a civil suit. This is far from the truth, there are in fact a myriad of reasons you may wish to consult an attorney including:

- Creating a strong **estate plan** that protects your assets and makes sure your loved ones will inherit your property after your death in accordance with your wishes.
- Protecting your interests when buying and selling **real estate or oil and gas properties**.
- Creating a new business and related business transactions.
- Navigating **probate** and administering your loved ones' estates.
- And so much more!

Different lawyers practice in different areas of law. For instance, if you need help launching a new business, you'd need a business law attorney. If you are getting a divorce, you would want to consult with a family law attorney. Of course, there can be overlap, especially between related subjects. At

Robertson & Williams, we have a team of nine attorneys, each with their own set of knowledge and skills. Our goal is to be the go-to legal team for providing personal attention and obtaining excellent results. The small size of our firm allows us to give each client meaningful, personalized attention. If a client's legal issue goes beyond our scope of practice, we have a wide network of professionals that we can consult with or refer you to in order to provide the legal expertise you need.

Practice areas aside, there are some general expectations in any attorney-client relationship.

Your Lawyer's Responsibilities

You can expect your attorney to do the following:

- Provide the information you need to navigate your legal matter fairly and efficiently.
- Avoid conflicts of interest (i.e. not representing a client whose interests go against yours, etc.)
- Confidentiality - From your finances to your admission of guilt, your lawyer will not disclose to other parties anything you tell them in confidence.
- Exercise legal judgement on your behalf.
- Respect your decisions regarding your legal matter, even if those decisions go against the lawyer's advice.
- Keep you up-to-date on the status of your case, as well as any delays.
- Inform you whenever there is paperwork you need to complete.
- Respond quickly to communications from you.
- Conduct him or herself ethically at all times.
- Be respectful of you.
- Provide a fair billing for services.

Your Responsibilities

- Tell your lawyer the truth. You must be honest and omit nothing, even if the truth would be detrimental to you. Your attorney needs your honesty, so that they may effectively serve you.
- Notify your lawyer in a timely manner of any changes that arise regarding your legal situation.
- Respond quickly to any communications from your lawyer.
- Attend scheduled meetings, appointments, and legal proceedings.
- Be respectful of your lawyer.

When does the lawyer-client relationship begin?

For the above responsibilities to become relevant, the attorney-client relationship must be formed, by making an agreement (i.e. you must “retain” the attorney). However, attorney-client privilege (such as confidentiality) protects your communication prior to the beginning of the lawyer-client relationship, even if the relationship is never formed (for example, if you choose to work with another attorney).

Payment

Another important part of the attorney-client relationship is payment. Your lawyer is responsible for clearly explaining how they bill. Will you have to pay a retainer fee? Do they work on contingency fees? Hourly? Are the fees regulated by law? Your lawyer should give you a clear idea of what to expect as far as when and what you will have to pay. You should pay all bills promptly. If, for any reason, you cannot do so, or if you have any questions or concerns about the bill, you need to communicate with your attorney about it as soon as you become aware of the issue.

Preparing for Meetings with Your Attorney

You should arrive prepared for any and all meetings with your attorney. Being prepared means having all relevant documentation with you. This is especially important in your first meeting with your attorney. Your attorney can be the most efficient if they have a complete understanding of the issues at hand and any steps you may have already taken.

How can I learn more about the lawyer-client relationship?

If you still have questions about the lawyer-client relationship and would like to learn more, the team at Robertson & Williams would love to talk to you. Our firm is dedicated to providing exceptional service efficiently and effectively for a reasonable cost. Whether you have questions or you think you're ready to become a client, please reach out to us via email or by calling (405) 848-1944. We can't wait to hear from you!