

Free Ethics Advice— Helping You Succeed

You open your mail and there's that bill again for off-site storage of your old client files.

The boxes pile up and costs grow. You wonder, "How long do I need to keep those files?" Lynda Shely, the State Bar's ethics counsel, can answer that question and many more.

Helping you succeed is at the core of our free Ethics Program. We're here to assist you with questions about conflict, clients and confidentiality. Our goal is to help you stay out of troubled waters and serve your clients in the most ethical and professional manner. We can give real life ethics advice on small everyday matters or big picture issues.

You're not the only one who has questions. Arizona lawyers place nearly 8,000 calls to the State Bar each year in search of ethics advice. That's a lot of calls, considering we have 11,000 active in-state attorneys. The calls range from young lawyers who need guidance navigating the complexities of their new job to senior lawyers seeking independent expertise.

Lynda Shely is the Bar's primary contact for free ethics advice. She is assisted by a committee of 40 attorneys whose expertise in different areas of law may be just what you need. While you don't establish an attorney-client relationship when you call, it's important to note that your conversations are strictly confidential. That's the Bar's policy. We have no caller I.D. and we don't record the calls. And all the advice is free.

Besides answering your calls, the ethics committee also issues about a dozen written formal opinions and several dozen informal opinions each year. In an effort to let you do your own research, we put all the formal ethics opinions from 1985 to the present on our Web site, www.azbar.org.

The Bar's Ethics Advice Program is yet another way that we're working to serve you and help you become an even better attorney. Think of us as your ethical voice, available when you need advice or a reassuring double-check.

As for the answer to the question about storing client files, you can look it up on our Web site, www.azbar.org, under ethics opinion #98-07, or call Lynda at (602) 340-7284. Did I mention her expert advice is free?