

CHECKLIST FOR CLOSING YOUR LAW OFFICE (PLANNED TERMINATION OF PRACTICE)*

1. Calculate accounts receivable. Ensure sufficient cash is on hand or a sufficient amount will be coming in to sustain you through the announcement and closure of your practice.
2. Stop taking new matters.
3. Consult with potential successor attorneys (see ORPC 1.17 if the plan is to sell your law practice).
4. Inform your staff, in person and in writing. Provide them a “script” as to the closure so that 1) they will know the true reasons and 2) they will accurately inform others.
5. Inform your clients in person if able, but certainly in writing. Be prepared to make recommendations as to successor attorneys.
6. Inform judges, court personnel, court reporters and expert witnesses.
7. Inform other key professionals or service providers used by you and your office (e.g. CPAs, office supplier, computer and electronics vendors)
8. Give notice and terminate leases and rental agreements.
9. Conclude active cases and other legal matters, or position them for a smooth transition.
10. Transfer client files to lawyers as clients instruct, and keep copies as prudent.
11. If litigation is still pending, be certain you have withdrawn or a substitution of counsel has been filed.
12. Return closed files and original documents to clients as they direct. Get receipts for all files returned to clients. Again, keep copies for yourself as prudent.
13. If not previously done, notify clients of files that are eligible to be immediately destroyed pursuant to your document retention policy. Give them sufficient notice (e.g. 60 days) before destruction. Use a service that will shred the documents, and ensure confidentiality.
14. Prepare retained files for storage and later disposition or destruction pursuant to your document retention policy. See ORPC 1.15 and other law that may apply.
15. Prepare and keep a master log of all files and their disposition, destruction or storage.

16. Prepare last time records and last work in progress.
17. Send out final bills.
18. Send out a closing letter to present and former clients with thanks and final instructions. Provide them your new contact information.
19. Collect final payments from clients.
20. Settle, reimburse and distribute trust account proceeds.
21. Close trust account and notify the Oklahoma Bar Association and Oklahoma Bar Foundation (within 30 days).
22. Notify the Oklahoma Bar Association of new contact information (within 30 days) and professional organizations (within 30 days).
23. Notify insurance carriers (e.g., professional liability, premises liability, etc.) and consider “tail” (insurance coverage that continues to cover you for claims that arise after you terminate your practice).
24. Consult with agents regarding health, life and disability policies.
25. Cancel other memberships and office subscriptions.
26. Prepare computer and data for long term storage (be consistent with your document retention policy) and possible retrieval.
27. Determine disposition of furniture and other office property.
28. Notify the postal service and provide forwarding address.
29. For a reasonable time, put a message on your telephone system, website and email reply indicating the office has been closed and that former clients may reach you at a particular number or email address.
30. Prepare instructions in the event of death, disability or disappearance and provide to family member and Emergency Attorney.

*This is simply a proposed checklist for consideration and to help you get started with your planning. Every practice is different and you should tailor this checklist to meet your individual needs.