



Using Artificial Intelligence Responsibly in Your Law Practice

1. Competence: Know What You're Using (ORPC 1.1 Comment 6)

Before using any AI tool, take time to understand what it does and how it works. Not all AI tools are built for legal tasks, and many can make confident but incorrect statements (“hallucinations”). Lawyers must know these limitations before relying on AI. Testing a tool in non-client matters, reading its terms of use, and following bar or court guidance will help ensure competent use.

Practical Tip: Treat AI like a junior assistant — helpful, but never right without supervision.

2. Confidentiality: Protect Client Information (ORPC 1.6)

Confidentiality remains one of the lawyer's most sacred duties. Public AI tools may store, review, or reuse data shared in prompts. Do not include client names, documents, or facts in a system unless you are certain it is secure and compliant with your firm's data policies. Consider using closed, enterprise-grade AI or disabling data sharing in professional accounts. When in doubt, sanitize the information. Regularly train all staff regarding this duty.

Practical Tip: If you wouldn't email it to a stranger, don't paste it into an AI chat.

3. Candor and Accuracy (ORPC 3.3 & 8.4(c))

Accuracy and honesty are central to a lawyer's credibility. If an AI tool provides a case citation, rule, or legal argument, you must verify it by consulting primary sources. AI can be a research aid, but lawyers remain responsible for all content they submit to courts or clients. Submitting false or unverifiable material can constitute misconduct under multiple rules.

Practical Tip: Every AI-assisted draft needs a human fact check before submission.

4. Billing and Fees (ORPC 1.5)

AI may reduce the time required for certain legal tasks. While this can improve efficiency, it may also require adjusting how time is billed. Lawyers should not charge for hours that were not worked or for time saved by automation. Transparency about AI-assisted efficiencies helps maintain trust and complies with the rule requiring reasonable fees.

Practical Tip: Bill fairly for your expertise — not for the tool's speed.

5. Communication with Clients (ORPC 1.4)

Clients deserve to know how their matters are being handled. If AI is used in a way that affects strategy, confidentiality, or cost, it's good practice to disclose it. Discussing AI use builds transparency and may help manage client expectations about accuracy and privacy.

Practical Tip: A short conversation about AI use can prevent big misunderstandings later.

6. Supervision (ORPC 5.1 & 5.3)

Law firm leaders and supervising attorneys must set clear policies for how AI is used in the firm. Establish training, review protocols, and security standards. Nonlawyer staff using AI under supervision must understand that they cannot rely solely on AI outputs. Supervisors should review all work that involves AI assistance before it reaches clients or courts.

Practical Tip: Make AI supervision part of your firm's standard workflow — not an afterthought.

7. Marketing and Chatbots (ORPC 7.1 & 7.3)

AI chatbots or website assistants can help law firms communicate with the public, but they also pose risks. Any statements the bot makes must be truthful and not create unrealistic expectations. If a chatbot interacts with potential clients, include clear disclaimers that it is not a lawyer and cannot provide legal advice. Lawyers are responsible for all content generated under their firm's name.

Practical Tip: Test your chatbot regularly — you're still responsible for what it says.

8. Bottom Line (All Rules Apply)

Artificial intelligence is changing the legal profession, but the core duties remain unchanged. Competence, confidentiality, honesty, and fairness are the cornerstones of legal ethics, whether a lawyer uses paper files or AI tools. Used thoughtfully, AI can enhance the quality of legal services and expand access to justice — but only when guided by human judgment and professional responsibility.

Practical Tip: AI is a tool; your judgment is the practice.