

P R E F A C E

INTRODUCTION

The paralegal field continues its rapid growth, with the Department of Labor predicting that the profession is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through 2016. Moreover, the value of paralegals to the legal profession is universally recognized. Consider the following statement by the American Bar Association: “The utilization of paralegals improves the efficiency, economy, and availability of legal services.” Not only the American Bar Association but also a number of court decisions have endorsed the use of paralegals to make legal services more affordable and accessible.

With that growth and recognition come additional responsibilities. Today’s paralegals are expected to perform a wide variety of tasks, including legal research, legal writing, interviewing, and investigating. In addition, paralegals are expected to know substantive areas of law, such as civil procedure, litigation, and corporate law.

Graduates of paralegal programs are expected “to hit the ground running” when they get a job, yet there is a significant gap between what is learned in the classroom and the way to apply this knowledge in the real world of a law office environment. This second edition of *A Practical Introduction to Paralegal Studies: Strategies for Success* is meant to bridge this gap by combining a thorough grounding in the paralegal profession with a pragmatic overview of what paralegals are expected to know and do in the workplace.

The text is divided into three main sections: The first section begins with a review of study skills and then discusses the paralegal profession and the U.S. legal system; the second section covers the paralegal skills of research, analysis, writing, interviewing, and investigating; and the final section discusses the workplace, covering what paralegals do in “real life,” the various types of law practice, law office environments, career strategies, and techniques for success in the workplace.

Each chapter and section builds on the previous one. For example, once you read Chapter Four and understand the differences between trial and appellate courts, you will be ready for the discussion in Chapter Five about how to locate appellate court cases. Similarly, once you read Chapter Six’s information about writing, you will understand how to prepare a memorandum or an executive summary setting forth the results of a client interview, which is discussed in Chapter Seven. Chapters Eight and Nine discuss the practice areas in which paralegals work. The text concludes with the most pragmatic information of all: how to get a job, keep a job, quit a job, and how to be successful in a law office environment.

A REAL-WORLD APPROACH

The text provides pragmatic and realistic information covering situations that occur in the real world of a law office. For example, the following topics are covered:

- Effective ways to improve note taking and to study for exams;
- What to do if you observe ethical misconduct in the workplace;
- Using the Internet to impress clients;
- Common blunders when using e-mail;
- Cultivating listening skills;
- Best practices for timekeeping and billing;
- Advocating for yourself in salary negotiations;
- How and when to quit a job;
- What to do when you receive an assignment at work;
- How to present a professional appearance on the job; and
- Time-management techniques to improve job performance.

FEATURES OF THE TEXT

The text includes a number of features to enhance learning. Each chapter includes the following features:

- **Chapter overview.** Each chapter begins with a preview of the material that will be presented in the chapter.
- **Key terms.** The key terms and concepts used in the chapter are presented in boldface type and are defined in the margin near where the material is discussed. All of the key terms are listed at the end of each chapter so you can test your comprehension of these terms.
- **Tips.** Each chapter includes a pragmatic and practical tip applying the substantive information in the chapter to “real life” job situations.
- **Net results.** Each chapter provides references to websites where you can locate additional information on the topics covered in the chapter.
- **Case illustration.** A case that illustrates one of the core concepts discussed in the chapter is presented at the end of each chapter.
- **Chapter summary.** Each chapter’s substantive discussion concludes with a review of the key presented in the Cornell Note-Taking System (as described in Chapter One).
- **Trivia.** The Trivia section provides fun and interesting facts about some of the topics covered in the chapter.
- **Discussion questions.** Questions to challenge comprehension of the text material and stimulate class or study group discussion are presented.
- **Closing arguments.** Each chapter includes a series of practical questions that require readers to locate information pertinent to the chapter by accessing well-known legal or general interest Internet sites that practicing paralegals will be expected to know and navigate on the job.

Each chapter also includes charts, graphs, sample forms, and other instructional aids, as needed. For example, Chapter Six includes a tip box on avoiding plagiarism in legal writing, and Chapter Ten includes a sample resignation letter.

This second edition of the text introduces several new features, including the following

- A discussion of the new trend of offshoring legal services to other countries and whether such a practice constitutes the unauthorized practice of law is included in Chapter Three.
- An overview of the 2006 amendments to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure relating to the production of electronically stored information is included in Chapter Eight.
- Chapter Eight includes a discussion of class actions and multidistrict litigation.
- New electronic tools used in the workplace are reviewed (for example, Westlaw's Legal Calendaring and virtual deal rooms).
- "Hot topics" such as electronically existing metadata and its implications for attorney-client privilege and whether legal blawgs constitute advertising are discussed.
- Chapter Twelve's discussion of success in the workplace includes all new material on professional appearance and demeanor in the workplace as well as office etiquette do's and don'ts.
- All new Case Illustrations, Discussion Questions, and Internet Closing Argument Assignments have been included.
- New forms (for example, a conflict check form) have been included.

Although every effort has been made to refer to useful websites, those sites can change both their content and addresses without notice. References to websites are not endorsements of those sites.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Paralegals play a critical role in helping clients. Be excited about the challenges and opportunities that your new profession provides. Commit yourself to excellence both as a student and as a practicing paralegal. You will be rewarded not only monetarily but also by knowing that you have performed your job to the best of your abilities. Welcome!

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