

Frequently Asked Questions: Details about the Disciplinary Board

Who makes up the Disciplinary Board?

The Disciplinary Board is comprised of 13 members, of whom 11 are attorneys and two are non-lawyers from across the state of Pennsylvania. These are voluntary, unpaid positions to which the members are appointed by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to three-year terms. Board members may be reappointed to a second three-year term, but no more. The Board meets regularly to decide Board administrative matters, cases and policies.

What is the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania's role?

The Constitution of Pennsylvania grants the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania exclusive jurisdiction over all matters of attorney discipline in Pennsylvania. The Supreme Court promulgates and, in its discretion, may amend the Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement and the Rules of Professional Conduct.

The Supreme Court also exercises ultimate authority over the Disciplinary Board, its members, and the staff housed in both the Office of Disciplinary Counsel and the Executive Director's office. The Supreme Court appoints all members of the Disciplinary Board and designates those who shall serve as Board Chair and Vice-Chair.

Only the Supreme Court can impose public discipline (i.e. public censure, probation under supervision provided by the Board, suspension for a period not exceeding five years and disbarment). All attorneys who practice law in Pennsylvania are licensed by the Supreme Court.

What are the Rules of Professional Conduct?

The Rules of Professional Conduct must be followed by all attorneys practicing law. The Rules of Professional Conduct mandate minimum ethical standards for the practice of law, and constitute a set of rules, which all lawyers must follow. A lawyer who violates these rules may be disciplined and given penalties ranging from private discipline, to being prohibited from practicing law in Pennsylvania, which can be either a suspension or disbarment. For more information, visit the [Rules of Professional Conduct](#).