

Frequently Asked Questions: Disciplinary Action Information

How can I find attorneys who have been recently disciplined?

To learn if an attorney has been disciplined, visit the [Recent Supreme Court Actions listing](#). You can search disciplinary actions from the last 60 days, or by year, respondent, attorney ID, county or action taken. Those actions prior to 2005 can be found by looking up the individual attorney.

How long does it take for disciplinary actions to be posted on the Web site?

Within 24 business hours after a Supreme Court Order is entered, the action is posted in the [Recent Discipline table](#). The individual attorney information is automatically updated as well.

If an attorney is under investigation, may I obtain any information about why he or she is being investigated or what the status is?

No. If an attorney is under investigation, the information is confidential as stated in the [PA Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement \(Rule 402\)](#). The Right to Know does not apply to the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

Where can I find information about attorneys if disciplined more than 5 years ago?

If the attorney was disciplined more than 5 years ago, [look up the attorney](#) by name. If there is a report posted, the link to that report is listed under the discipline. If the report you are seeking is not available online, full information as to any public discipline case is available from the address below. You must provide the date of the Supreme Court Order, and there is a per page charge of \$1.00 for copies of documents.

Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Western District Office
801 City-County Building
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219
(412) 565-2816

How can I obtain copies of disciplinary documents?

Contact the Office of the Secretary by calling 717-231-3380.

What happens when an attorney is disciplined?

If an attorney has been disbarred, suspended, or transferred to disability status, the orders take effect 30 days after the date of the Court's order, unless a suspension or disbarment is made retroactive to a date of temporary suspension. In this case, the order will clearly state that the discipline is retroactive and will also include the effective date.

After the entry of the order, an attorney shall not accept any new retainer or engage as attorney for another in any new case or legal matter of any nature. However, during the period from the entry of the order and its effective date the formerly admitted attorney may wind up and complete, on behalf of any client, all matters which were pending on the entry date.

What types of discipline are instituted?

There are a number of disciplinary actions that will be taken depending on the extent of the violation. See the Glossary of Terms [link to] for definitions of the types of discipline.

Disciplinary actions range through the following:

- Informal Admonition
- Private Reprimand
- Public Censure
- Administrative Suspension
- Suspension
- Disbarment
- Probation

What happens when an attorney is disbarred? May he or she practice again?

In Pennsylvania when an attorney is disbarred, he or she may not practice law for a minimum of 5 years. After 5 years, he or she may apply for reinstatement, but the Board does not guarantee the right to practice again.

At what point does the Disciplinary Board become involved when criminal charges are made against an attorney?

The Disciplinary Board does not get involved until after the attorney is sentenced.

If an active attorney is convicted of a crime, what is the process for the Disciplinary Board?

When must the attorney convicted of a serious crime have to notify the Board?

As stated in Rule 214 of the [Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement](#) an attorney convicted of a serious crime shall report the fact of such conviction to the Secretary of the Board within 20 days after the date of sentencing. The responsibility of the attorney to make such report shall not be abated because the conviction is under appeal or the clerk of the court has transmitted a certificate to Disciplinary Counsel pursuant to subdivision. *See Rule 214 for the entire rule explanation.*