

§§ 10.12–10.19 [Reserved]

PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE CODE
OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

§ 10.20 Canons and Disciplinary Rules.

(a) Canons are set out in §§ 10.21, 10.30, 10.46, 10.56, 10.61, 10.76, 10.83, 10.100, and 10.110. Canons are statements of axiomatic norms, expressing in general terms the standards of professional conduct expected of practitioners in their relationships with the public, with the legal system, and with the legal profession.

(b) Disciplinary Rules are set out in §§ 10.22–10.24, 10.31–10.40, 10.47–10.57, 10.62–10.68, 10.77, 10.78, 10.84, 10.85, 10.87–10.89, 10.92, 10.93, 10.101–10.103, 10.111, and 10.112. Disciplinary Rules are mandatory in character and state the minimum level of conduct below which no practitioner can fall without being subjected to disciplinary action.

§ 10.21 Canon 1.

A practitioner should assist in maintaining the integrity and competence of the legal profession.

§ 10.22 Maintaining integrity and competence of the legal profession.

(a) A practitioner is subject to discipline if the practitioner has made a materially false statement in, or if the practitioner has deliberately failed to disclose a material fact requested in connection with, the practitioner’s application for registration or membership in the bar of any United States court or any State court or his or her authority to otherwise practice before the Office in trademark and other non-patent cases.

(b) A practitioner shall not further the application for registration or membership in the bar of any United States court, State court, or administrative agency of another person known by the practitioner to be unqualified in respect to character, education, or other relevant attribute.

§ 10.23 Misconduct.

(a) A practitioner shall not engage in disreputable or gross misconduct.

(b) A practitioner shall not:

(1) Violate a Disciplinary Rule.

(2) Circumvent a Disciplinary Rule through actions of another.

(3) Engage in illegal conduct involving moral turpitude.

(4) Engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

(5) Engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice.

(6) Engage in any other conduct that adversely reflects on the practitioner’s fitness to practice before the Office.

(c) Conduct which constitutes a violation of paragraphs (a) and (b) of this section includes, but is not limited to:

(1) Conviction of a criminal offense involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, or breach of trust.

(2) Knowingly giving false or misleading information or knowingly participating in a material way in giving false or misleading information, to:

(i) A client in connection with any immediate, prospective, or pending business before the Office.

(ii) The Office or any employee of the Office.

(3) Misappropriation of, or failure to properly or timely remit, funds received by a practitioner or the practitioner’s firm from a client to pay a fee which the client is required by law to pay to the Office.

(4) Directly or indirectly improperly influencing, attempting to improperly influence, offering or agreeing to improperly influence, or attempting to offer or agree to improperly influence an official action of any employee of the Office by:

(i) Use of threats, false accusations, duress, or coercion,

(ii) An offer of any special inducement or promise of advantage, or

(iii) Improperly bestowing of any gift, favor, or thing of value.

(5) Suspension or disbarment from practice as an attorney or agent on ethical grounds by any duly constituted authority of a State or the United States or, in the case of a practitioner who resides in a foreign country or is registered under § 11.6(c), by any duly constituted authority of:

(i) A State,

(ii) The United States, or

(iii) The country in which the practitioner resides.

(6) Knowingly aiding or abetting a practitioner suspended or excluded from practice before the Office in engaging in unauthorized practice before the Office under §11.58.

(7) Knowingly withholding from the Office information identifying a patent or patent application of another from which one or more claims have been copied. See §41.202(a)(1) of this title.

(8) Failing to inform a client or former client or failing to timely notify the Office of an inability to notify a client or former client of correspondence received from the Office or the client's or former client's opponent in an *inter partes* proceeding before the Office when the correspondence (i) could have a significant effect on a matter pending before the Office, (ii) is received by the practitioner on behalf of a client or former client and (iii) is correspondence of which a reasonable practitioner would believe under the circumstances the client or former client should be notified.

(9) Knowingly misusing a "Certificate of Mailing or Transmission" under §1.8 of this chapter.

(10) Knowingly violating or causing to be violated the requirements of §1.56 or §1.555 of this subchapter.

(11) Except as permitted by §1.52(c) of this chapter, knowingly filing or causing to be filed an application containing any material alteration made in the application papers after the signing of the accompanying oath or declaration without identifying the alteration at the time of filing the application papers.

(12) Knowingly filing, or causing to be filed, a frivolous complaint alleging a violation by a practitioner of the Patent and Trademark Office Code of Professional Responsibility.

(13) Knowingly preparing or prosecuting or providing assistance in the preparation or prosecution of a patent application in violation of an undertaking signed under §11.10(b).

(14) Knowingly failing to advise the Director in writing of any change which would preclude continued registration under §11.6.

(15) Signing a paper filed in the Office in violation of the provisions of §11.18 or making a scandalous or indecent statement in a paper filed in the Office.

(16) Willfully refusing to reveal or report knowledge or evidence to the Director contrary to §10.24 or §11.22(b).

(17) Representing before the Office in a patent case either a joint venture comprising an inventor and an invention developer or an inventor referred to the registered practitioner by an invention developer when (i) the registered practitioner knows, or has been advised by the Office, that a formal complaint filed by a Federal or State agency, based on any violation of any law relating to securities, unfair methods of competition, unfair or deceptive acts or practices, mail fraud, or other civil or criminal conduct, is pending before a Federal or State court or Federal or State agency, or has been resolved unfavorably by such court or agency, against the invention developer in connection with invention development services and (ii) the registered practitioner fails to fully advise the inventor of the existence of the pending complaint or unfavorable resolution thereof prior to undertaking or continuing representation of the joint venture or inventor. "Invention developer" means any person, and any agent, employee, officer, partner, or independent contractor thereof, who is not a registered practitioner and who advertises invention development services in media of general circulation or who enters into contracts for invention development services with customers as a result of such advertisement. "Invention development services" means acts of invention development required or promised to be performed, or actually performed, or both, by an invention developer for a customer. "Invention development" means the evaluation, perfection, marketing, brokering, or promotion of an invention on behalf of a customer by an invention developer, including a patent search, preparation of a patent application, or any other act done by an invention developer for consideration toward the end of procuring or attempting to procure a license, buyer, or patent for an invention. "Customer" means any individual who has made an invention and who enters into a contract for invention development services with an invention developer with respect to the invention

§ 10.24

by which the inventor becomes obligated to pay the invention developer less than \$5,000 (not to include any additional sums which the invention developer is to receive as a result of successful development of the invention). “Contract for invention development services” means a contract for invention development services with an invention developer with respect to an invention made by a customer by which the inventor becomes obligated to pay the invention developer less than \$5,000 (not to include any additional sums which the invention developer is to receive as a result of successful development of the invention).

(18) In the absence of information sufficient to establish a reasonable belief that fraud or inequitable conduct has occurred, alleging before a tribunal that anyone has committed a fraud on the Office or engaged in inequitable conduct in a proceeding before the Office.

(19) Action by an employee of the Office contrary to the provisions set forth in §11.10(d).

(20) Knowing practice by a Government employee contrary to applicable Federal conflict of interest laws, or regulations of the Department, agency or commission employing said individual.

(d) A practitioner who acts with reckless indifference to whether a representation is true or false is chargeable with knowledge of its falsity. Deceitful statements of half-truths or concealment of material facts shall be deemed actual fraud within the meaning of this part.

[50 FR 5172, Feb. 6, 1985; 50 FR 25073, June 17, 1985; 50 FR 25980, June 24, 1985, as amended at 53 FR 38950, Oct. 4, 1988; 53 FR 41278, Oct. 20, 1988; 57 FR 2036, Jan. 17, 1992; 58 FR 54504, Oct. 22, 1993; 61 FR 56448, Nov. 1, 1996; 62 FR 53206, Oct. 10, 1997; 65 FR 54683, Sept. 8, 2000; 69 FR 50003, Aug. 12, 2004; 73 FR 59514, Oct. 9, 2008]

§ 10.24 Disclosure of information to authorities.

(a) A practitioner possessing unprivileged knowledge of a violation of a Disciplinary Rule shall report such knowledge to the Director.

(b) A practitioner possessing unprivileged knowledge or evidence concerning another practitioner, em-

37 CFR Ch. I (7-1-11 Edition)

ployee of the Office, or a judge shall reveal fully such knowledge or evidence upon proper request of a tribunal or other authority empowered to investigate or act upon the conduct of practitioners, employees of the Office, or judges.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 0651-0017)

§§ 10.25-10.29 [Reserved]

§ 10.30 Canon 2.

A practitioner should assist the legal profession in fulfilling its duty to make legal counsel available.

§ 10.31 Communications concerning a practitioner’s services.

(a) No practitioner shall with respect to any prospective business before the Office, by word, circular, letter, or advertising, with intent to defraud in any manner, deceive, mislead, or threaten any prospective applicant or other person having immediate or prospective business before the Office.

(b) A practitioner may not use the name of a Member of either House of Congress or of an individual in the service of the United States in advertising the practitioner’s practice before the Office.

(c) Unless authorized under §11.14(b), a non-lawyer practitioner shall not hold himself or herself out as authorized to practice before the Office in trademark cases.

(d) Unless a practitioner is an attorney, the practitioner shall not hold himself or herself out:

(1) To be an attorney or lawyer or

(2) As authorized to practice before the Office in non-patent and trademark cases.

[50 FR 5172, Feb. 6, 1985, as amended at 73 FR 59514, Oct. 9, 2008]

§ 10.32 Advertising.

(a) Subject to §10.31, a practitioner may advertise services through public media, including a telephone directory, legal directory, newspaper, or other periodical, radio, or television, or through written communications not involving solicitation as defined by §10.33.