

"THE DOS AND DONT'S OF CONTACTING A LAWYER."

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Contacting a lawyer regarding a legal issue can be scary. Especially if you are not sure you even if you need a lawyer. Sometimes getting a lawyer to address your real question is difficult because the issue is often complicated.

When calling a lawyer's office, there are a few things you can do to obtain the most effective and efficient answers to your questions. There are also a few things you should not do.

THINGS TO DO WHEN CALLING A LAWYER:

1. Identify yourself and state you are not currently a client, but you have a possible legal issue you would like to speak with someone about.
2. Give a brief, and I emphasize *brief*, summary of your issue so that the receptionist may determine who could best serve you.
3. Expect that you may not talk with a lawyer at all during that call, depending on the issue and the office.
4. If a lawyer is unavailable, be willing to leave your name and number.
5. If a lawyer is available, answer the questions they ask as clearly as you can, so that they may best decide how to help you.
6. Try to state the actual facts of your issue; it is hard to leave out your feelings, but particularly initially, they tend to cloud the actual issue.

THINGS NOT TO DO WHEN CALLING A LAWYER:

1. Do not become irritated with the receptionist if a lawyer is unavailable.
2. Do not become offended if the receptionist asks you questions. They are trying to determine where to direct your call.
3. When talking to the lawyer, try not to let your frustration or irritated feelings tell your story. You will get a quicker, and probably better answer if you are factual.

GENERAL TIPS:

1. Unless your issue is very time-sensitive, be prepared that typically appointments are set within a week or two, depending on the issue.
2. Do not expect that the lawyer will be able to remedy the situation or the law office to make you feel better about your situation after one phone call.

Unless you already know the specific lawyer you want to contact regarding your particular issue, it is often a good idea to seek several legal opinions. One lawyer may have more specialized knowledge in one area of law than another. In the event several lawyers are unable to help you after hearing about your situation, you may have to rethink your strategy. Perhaps your real issue does not call for a legal answer, but some other kind of professional may be better able to assist you. Hopefully, by following these tips, you will be more successful in getting the advice you need to deal with any possible issue.