



Thomas M. Cooley Law Libraries' Research Guide Series

Professional Responsibility Research Guide for Federal/National Sources

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| I. Rules | II. Treatises |
| III. Guides/Hornbooks/Nutshells | IV. Case Law/Opinions |
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This guide is intended to introduce the reader to the variety of materials on legal ethics and professional responsibility available both in print in the Cooley Law Library collections, as well as online. This guide takes a general, national approach to the presentation of materials, rather than focusing on Michigan or any other particular state. (Direction to databases of individual state materials will be provided, however). Location holdings are noted: "L" represents Lansing, "AH" represents Auburn Hills, "GR" represents Grand Rapids, and "AA" represents Ann Arbor.

I. RULES

Annotated Model Rules of Professional Conduct, edited by Ellen J. Bennett, Elizabeth J. Cohen, Martin Whittaker

Location: [KF305 .A2 2011](#) (L, AH, GR, AA)

Annually updated compilation of the Model Rules promulgated by the American Bar Association (ABA). Contains the present rules, as well as short comments prepared by the ABA with regards to the purpose and problems that may arise under the rule in question, as well as references to other rules. Lacks full annotations to outside cases and legislation.

ABA Compendium of Professional Responsibility Rules and Standards by the American Bar Association Center for Professional Responsibility

Location: [KF305 .A16](#) (L, AH, GR, AA)

Contains both an extended, annotated version of the Model Rules mentioned above, but also similarly annotated collections of the Model Code of Professional Responsibility, the Canons of Professional Ethics, the Model Code of Judicial Conduct, Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions, and so forth.

Legal Ethics: the Lawyer's Deskbook on Professional Responsibility by Ronald D. Rotunda and John S. Dzienkowski

Location: [KF305 .A15 L43](#) (L, AH)

Contains all the Codes and Rules of the above title, with additional annotations, footnotes, and cross-references to caselaw. Highly practice-oriented, but still an excellent resource for law students.



Compendium of Client Protection Rules by the American Bar Association

Location: [KF314.C45 C65](#) (L, AH, GR, AA)

Contains model rules for more particular ethical issues, such as handling client trust accounts, fee arbitration, mediation of lawyer/client disputes, insurance disclosure, and provision of legal services following a major disaster.

II. TREATISES

The Lansing campus maintains an extensive ethics collection in print, far too large to mention here. Some key titles of interest will be mentioned, however, as well as strong titles carried by all three campuses.

Problems in Legal Ethics, 8th Ed. by Mortimer D. Schwartz, et.al.

Location: [KF 306 .A4 S38 2007](#) (L, AH, GR, AA)

Ethics and professional responsibility textbook, written in the problem method. Contains background and supplemental readings, as well as sections devoted to tangential but important issues, such as the organization of the bar or the law of legal malpractice.

Understanding Lawyer's Ethics by Monroe H. Freedman and Abbe Smith

Location: [KF306 .F748 2004](#) (L, AH, GR)

General breakdown of the law of professional responsibility. Still student-oriented, but focuses more on direct explanation of the law than a casebook. In particular, this book does an excellent job of explaining the conflicts and problems that arise under this area of law, and then offering common and acceptable practices and compromises to those conflicts.

A Century of Legal Ethics: Trial Lawyers and the ABA Canons of Professional Ethics, edited by Lawrence J. Fox, Susan R. Martyn, and Andrew S. Pollis

Location: [KF305.A3 C46](#) (2009) (L, AH, GR, AA)

This ABA-published collection of essays considers the effects of the MRPC at the 100th anniversary of their forerunner, the Canons of Professional Ethics. The essays deal primarily with balancing the duties of counsel to both client and court, and the negative perception of lawyers by the public generated by loose conception and enforcement of rules under the Canons.

Legal Ethics and Human Dignity by David Luban

Location: [K123 .L83 2007](#) (L (Ethics Collection))

This book does not deal with the Rules so much as it tackles the philosophical underpinnings of the law and the role of Ethics in support of them. Luban, a noted ethics scholar, proposes the theory that a lawyer is primarily a defender of human dignity and rights.

The Lawyer's Guide to Records Management and Retention by George C. Cunningham and John C. Montana

Location: [KF320 .R42 C86 2006](#) (L)

Though this book contains some commentary on the ethical requirements of due diligence, it is primarily a practical guide on how to meet those requirements in law firm record keeping. Since training in office management is not a given in the skill set of an attorney, this book can give guidance as to how to acquire those necessary skills.



III. GUIDES/HORNBOOKS/NUTSHELLS

Avoiding Malpractice Pitfalls by Todd Selin [Videorecording]

Location: [KF313 .S44 2005](#) (L, AH, GR Career Development Offices)

Cooley graduate Selin describes common ethical pitfalls facing lawyers in practice, such as missed deadlines, substance abuse, insufficient research or discovery, improper screening of clients, and so forth.

Legal Ethics in a Nutshell by Ronald D. Rotunda

Location: [KF306 .Z9 R668 2007](#) (L, AH, GR, AA)

Professional responsibility entrée in West's "Nutshell" series. Contains a generalized, layman-friendly discussion of the law of professional responsibility. Great for establishing a baseline understanding of the area, but insufficient for deeper research.

Professional Responsibility: Examples & Explanations by W. Bradley Wendel

Location: [KF306 .W46 2007](#) (L, AH, GR)

Legal study aid on professional responsibility set up to illustrate points in the law through hypothetical examples. Not a hornbook per se, as it is not tied to a particular casebook, but set up in a similar fashion. Written in a style more accessible than a casebook, though not quite as much so as a Nutshell. Very highly regarded series by students.

IV. CASE LAW/OPINIONS

American Legal Ethics Library by the Cornell Legal Information Institute

Location: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/ethics/>

Database of a variety of information regarding legal ethics and professional responsibility in the U.S. Broken down by rule from the Model Rules, with links to opinions and releases from the ABA and various courts by state.

ABA/BNA Lawyer's Manual on Professional Conduct by the ABA Bureau of National Affairs

Location: [KF305 .A8 A23](#) (L, AH, GR, AA)

Looseleaf service focusing on new decisions and opinions regarding ethics rules and practices. Maintains manual with the current state of the Rules on various topics with a searchable index, but the real value is the cross references to various opinions, which will be included in the reports themselves.

West Federal Practice Digest 4th

Location: [KF127 .W48 1989](#) (L, AH, GR, AA)

Digest containing annotations and references to an exhaustive listing of cases on literally thousands of topics. Legal ethics are covered under "Attorney & Client".

V. JOURNALS

Ethics: An International Journal of Social, Legal, and Political Philosophy

Location: <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/et/current>



Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics

Location: [K7 .E644](#) (L) (Also available via HeinOnline)

The Professional Lawyer

Location: [KF300.A1 P76](#) (L)

VI. ONLINE SOURCES

ABA

Model Rules of Professional Conduct

http://www.americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/publications/model_rules_of_professional_conduct.html

Also available from commercial databases:

- Lexis: Legal > Area of Law – By Topic > Ethics > Find Statutes and Rules> ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct and Code of Judicial Conduct ([CODES](#))
- Westlaw: [ABA-MRPC](#) (unannotated)

ABA

Annotated Model Rules of Professional Responsibility

- Westlaw: [ABA-AMRPC](#) (annotated)

Center for Public Integrity

<http://www.publicintegrity.org/>

CPI is an organization specializing in investigative journalism to ferret out white-collar and government corruption. It offers a number of useful resources, including a guide to filing Freedom of Information requests, a database of political committees registered under section 527 of the Internal Revenue Code, a database of information about prosecutor misconduct, a database of outside interests reported by state legislators, among other features.

ABA Center for Professional Responsibility

<http://www.abanet.org/cpr/>

The ABA tracks recent ethics opinions, posts new drafts of the Model Rules, and offers analysis of common ethical issues. Furthermore, it offers a fee service, ETHICSearch, which answers ethics questions submitted to the ABA by attorneys.

American Legal Ethics Library

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/ethics/>

A subsection of Cornell University's famed Legal Information Institute (LII), this site compiles the standing ethics rules for all fifty states. In addition, it contains the current Model Rules, complete with tracked recent changes, ethics opinions from the states, codes of judicial conduct, and information on disciplinary procedures and bar admission. LII is one of the best free legal information resources on the web, and its ethics coverage is top-notch. Highly recommended.



LegalEthics.com

<http://www.legalethics.com/>

A blog maintained by Mercer Law School ethics professors David Hricik and Peter Krakaur. This site offers commentary and news on a variety of specific topics within the realm of legal ethics, and is usually direct and simple to follow.

