



ATTORNEY CONSULTATION PREP KIT

15 Documents • 12 Questions • Attorney Vetting Guide

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NEVER SIGN ANYTHING AT THE CONSULTATION

Do not sign a retainer, fee agreement, or any document at the consultation itself. Ask for 24-48 hours to review. A reputable attorney always allows this. An attorney who pressures immediate signing is a red flag. Your right to review is protected under ABA Model Rule 1.5(b), americanbar.org.

<i>Section</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>When to Use</i>
Exec Brief	Contingency fees, rights, what attorneys evaluate	Before your first consultation
Section 1	15-Document Bring List — full analysis per document	Use to prepare your document file
Section 2	12 Questions with green/red flag answers	Bring and check off during consultation
Section 3	Attorney Vetting System + comparison worksheet	After 1-2 consultations to compare
Section 4	Fee calculation with 4 worked examples	Before signing any fee agreement
Section 5	Your 10 rights as a legal client + ABA citations	Know before and during representation
Section 6	Case valuation + pre-consultation summary template	Fill out before you go in
Section 7	6 special scenarios guide	Read if any scenario applies to you
Section 8	Post-consultation action system + tracker	Complete within 1 hour after
Section 9	Free legal help + 50-state bar reference table	For finding and vetting attorneys

Executive Intelligence Brief

What Is a Personal Injury Attorney Consultation?

A personal injury attorney consultation is a meeting — almost always free — in which an injured person presents the facts of their case to a licensed personal injury attorney for evaluation. The consultation serves two purposes simultaneously: the attorney evaluates whether the case is viable and worth taking, and the client evaluates whether the attorney is competent, trustworthy, and appropriate. Most accident victims do not realize the second evaluation is as important as the first.

No attorney-client relationship is formed during a free consultation. That relationship begins only when both parties

sign a formal retainer (fee) agreement. Until that agreement is signed, you are free to consult as many attorneys as you wish without obligation or cost. [Source: ABA Model Rule 1.18 — Duties to Prospective Clients, americanbar.org]

Why Most Consultations Are Free — The Contingency Model

Personal injury attorneys typically work on a contingency fee basis. This means the attorney receives no payment unless they win your case. Their fee is a percentage — typically 33% to 40% — of the final settlement or verdict. Because the attorney bears the financial risk, they evaluate cases carefully and only take those they believe they can win. This system makes legal representation financially accessible regardless of your income level.

[Source: ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 1.5, americanbar.org; FTC Consumer Information on Attorneys, consumer.ftc.gov]

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The free consultation is not a favor — it is a business evaluation. The attorney is determining whether your case represents a profitable opportunity for their firm. A case with clear liability, documented injuries, and adequate insurance coverage is one they will pursue aggressively. Understanding this dynamic and presenting your case strategically dramatically increases the quality of representation you attract.

What the Attorney Is Evaluating During Your Consultation

Factor	What Attorney Looks For	How to Strengthen It
Liability Clarity	Clear fault with supporting evidence	Police report confirming fault; witness statements; photos
Damages Value	Medical bills + suffering = meaningful recovery	Complete medical records; ongoing treatment documented
Insurance Coverage	Adequate coverage to justify the case	Know the at-fault party's policy type; your own UM/UIM
SOL Status	Enough time to properly handle the case	Bring the accident date; know your state SOL deadline
Comparative Fault	Could you be found partly at fault?	Be honest; let the attorney assess the risk
Client Credibility	Are you believable, consistent, cooperative?	Organized documents; clear timeline; calm presentation

Evidence Strength	Enough to prove the case without excessiveP hcotsots, reports, records, witness info — bring everything
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The Attorney-Client Relationship — Your Rights From Day One

- **Confidentiality:** Everything you tell your attorney is protected by attorney-client privilege from the moment a relationship forms. [Source: ABA Model Rule 1.6, americanbar.org]
- **Final Settlement Authority:** You — not your attorney — make the final decision on whether to accept any settlement offer. [Source: ABA Model Rule 1.2(a), americanbar.org]
- **Right to Fire:** You can terminate the attorney-client relationship at any time, for any reason. [Source: ABA Model Rule 1.16, americanbar.org]
- **Written Fee Agreement:** For contingency cases, the fee agreement must be in writing. [Source: ABA Model Rule 1.5(c), americanbar.org]
- **Full Accounting:** Your attorney must provide a complete accounting of all funds received and disbursed. [Source: ABA Model Rule 1.15, americanbar.org]

[Source: ABA Model Rules 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 1.15, 1.16, americanbar.org]

SECTION 1 The 15-Document Master Bring List

What to Bring · Why It Matters · How to Get It · Attorney Impact

Why This Matters: An attorney can only evaluate what you put in front of them. The quality and completeness of your document file directly determines the quality of the legal assessment you receive — and whether the attorney takes your case at all.

Document 1 — Police Accident Report

	☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	The official law enforcement report documenting the accident — includes officer observations, citations, fa		
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	determin Establishes the factual foundation of your case. Attorneys use it to assess liability, verify fac		
<i>If you don't have it</i>	identify witnesses, and c The attorney cannot verify your account of the accident independently. Case appea		
<i>How to obtain it</i>	weaker without objective law enfo Contact the responding agency directly or your state DMV's online rep		

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: A police report showing the other driver was cited elevates case strength immediately. It can save hours of investigation and significantly increases case viability score in attorney assessment.

Document 2 — All Medical Records (Complete)

	☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	Every medical record from the accident date forward — ER records, follow-up visits, specialist notes, f		
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	diagnostic im Establishes the causal link between accident and injuries, documents treatment progressi		
<i>If you don't have it</i>	and forms the basis of your Attorney must request records themselves — adding weeks and cost. Case may		
<i>How to obtain it</i>	declined for insufficient medical doc Request from each provider's medical records department. HIP		

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ATTORNEY IMPACT: A complete medical trail from accident date to present with consistent diagnoses and no treatment gaps commands the highest multipliers. Treatment gaps are the #1 case value reducer.

Document 3 — All Medical Bills (Itemized)

	☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	Every bill, invoice, and statement from every medical provider — ER, ambulance, physicians, surgeons, PT, cl		

<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	Bills establish the economic damages foundation. Total medical expenses is the baseline from which non-economic damages are calculated.
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Attorney cannot calculate damages without knowing the medical specials total. This delays or prevents a full recovery.
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Request itemized bills (not summary statements) from each provider's billing department. [Source: CFPB medical bills]

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ATTORNEY IMPACT: *An organized, itemized bill package demonstrates thoroughness. Attorneys note the difference between a victim who hands them organized bills vs. a vague 'I think it was around \$15,000.'*

Document 4 — Health Insurance Card + EOBs

☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	Your health insurance card and Explanation of Benefits statements showing what your insurer paid for accident-related medical expenses.	
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	The attorney needs to know what your health insurer paid because they have a subrogation lien on your settlement. This Attorney cannot calculate your true net recovery without knowing the lien amount.	
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Undisclosed liens discovered after settlement can significantly reduce your net recovery.	
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Request EOBs from your health insurer's member portal or by calling member services. [Source: CMS.gov, cms.gov]	

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: *Attorneys experienced with medical liens can often negotiate health insurer liens down by 30-50%, significantly increasing net recovery. Negotiation cannot begin until lien amount is known.*

Document 5 — Pay Stubs (3 Months Prior)

☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	Pay stubs or income statements for at least 3 months before the accident showing your regular income, hours worked, and wages.	
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	Lost wages are a recoverable economic damage. Pay stubs establish your pre-accident income baseline from which non-economic damages are calculated.	
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Lost wage claims without documentation are frequently disputed or denied. Attorney cannot calculate this damage accurately.	
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Request from your employer's HR or payroll department. If electronic, print from your payroll portal. [Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics]	

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: *Pay stubs covering 3 full months establish a stable income baseline. Self-employed individuals who bring tax returns showing consistent income command stronger lost wage claims.*

Document 6 — Employer Confirmation Letter

☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	A letter from your employer on company letterhead confirming your employment, title, pay rate, and dates of absence.	
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	Converts pay stub numbers into a verified, third-party-confirmed lost wages calculation that adjusters and attorneys treat as more credible than self-reported numbers.	
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Without employer confirmation, lost wage claims rely on self-reported numbers — which insurers discount heavily and attorneys may struggle to prove.	

<i>How to obtain it</i>	Request from your HR department or direct supervisor. Provide them with the accident date and specific mis
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INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: An employer letter on company letterhead is treated by adjusters as near-irrefutable income documentation. It eliminates the 'unverified' objection that reduces lost wage claims by 30-50%.

Document 7 — Tax Returns (2 Years — Self-Employed)

☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	Federal tax returns (Form 1040 with Schedule C or Schedule SE) for the 2 years prior to the accident — required	
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	For self-employed individuals, tax returns are the only universally accepted proof of income. Employers do not	
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Without tax returns, self-employed lost income claims are nearly impossible to verify. Adjusters may deny the	
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Obtain from IRS.gov transcript portal (free) or your tax preparer. [Source: IRS Get Transcript, irs.gov/individuals]	

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: Two years of consistent Schedule C income is the gold standard for self-employed lost income claims. Consistent earnings across two years creates an undeniable baseline.

Document 8 — All Insurer Correspondence

☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	Every letter, email, or written communication received from or sent to any insurance company related to this	
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	The attorney needs to know what has been said, what claims are open, what positions have been taken, and	
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Prior statements to adjusters may have weakened your claim. Attorney cannot assess the damage — or develop	
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Gather all physical mail, emails, and texts. Create a folder in chronological order. Note specifically if you gave	

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: Adjusters use claimants' own words against them. An attorney who sees a prior recorded statement can assess the damage and develop a counter-strategy — but only if they know it exists.

Document 9 — Denial Letter (If Applicable)

☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	If any insurer has denied your claim in whole or in part — the written denial letter specifying the cited reasons	
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	for denial The attorney uses the denial letter to assess whether the denial was legally proper and whether	
<i>If you don't have it</i>	can be challenged. The Without the denial letter, the attorney cannot assess the denial's legal basis. Generic	
<i>How to obtain it</i>	was denied' statements do not pro	

If you received a verbal denial without writing, send certified mail requesting written denial with the specific policy exclusion

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: Many denials cite policy language that is legally ambiguous — and ambiguous exclusions are interpreted against the insurer (contra proferentem doctrine). An attorney spots this immediately.

Document 10 — App Screenshot / Trip Receipt (Rideshare)

☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	If accident involved Uber or Lyft: the in-app screenshot showing driver's app status at the time of the crash and the trip. In rideshare accidents, the driver's app status at the moment of impact determines which insurance policy applies — ran Without app evidence, the TNC company will assert the coverage period most favorable to them. Disputing their characterization. Screenshot the app immediately at the accident scene. Trip receipt	
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>		
<i>If you don't have it</i>		
<i>How to obtain it</i>		

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: A single app screenshot can mean the difference between a \$50,000 Period 1 case and a \$1,000,000 Period 2/3 case. Attorneys immediately understand this document's significance.

Document 11 — Photographs (Scene, Vehicles, Injuries)

☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	All photographs of the accident scene, all vehicles involved, and your injuries — from the scene and at 24-hour	
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	Photographs provide independent, timestamped visual evidence of impact severity, vehicle damage, road conditions	
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Without photographs, the attorney relies entirely on your verbal description and the police report. Visual evidence	
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Take photographs at the scene immediately. Continue photographing injuries daily for 2 weeks. Ensure photographs	

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: Attorneys see the difference between a victim with 40+ timestamped photographs and one with 3 blurry photos. Photo quality directly correlates with initial settlement offer levels.

Document 12 — Witness Information and Statements

☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	Names, phone numbers, emails, and addresses of anyone who witnessed the accident. Any written statements	
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	Independent witness corroboration converts a 'my word vs. their word' dispute into documented third-party	
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Witnesses' memories fade within days. Witness contact information not obtained at the scene is often impossible	
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Collect witness information at the scene before leaving. Ask witnesses for a brief written statement on the spot	

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: A signed witness statement obtained within 24-72 hours is treated as contemporaneous and highly reliable. Witnesses contacted weeks later face more skepticism.

Document 13 — Daily Symptom Journal (If Maintained)

	☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	A handwritten or typed journal documenting your pain, symptoms, limitations, and quality of life impact — m		
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	Creates a contemporaneous record of ongoing harm supporting non-economic damages calculations and co		
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Without a symptom journal, non-economic damages rely entirely on medical records — which often understa		
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Start immediately if you have not already. Even beginning now provides value. Date every entry. Be specific:		

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: A thick, hand-dated symptom journal on the attorney's desk tells a story that medical records cannot. It demonstrates the victim was serious about documenting harm from day one.

Document 14 — Treating Physician Causation Letter

	☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	A letter from your primary treating physician — on their letterhead, signed — explicitly linking your diagnoses		
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	Transforms your self-reported injury narrative into a medical professional's documented clinical finding. The		
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Without a causation letter, insurers freely argue injuries were pre-existing or unrelated to the accident. The a		
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Request this letter in writing from your treating physician. Specify: diagnosis, causation, pre-existing conditio		

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: An attorney who sees a well-written causation letter from a respected physician can often resolve cases at significantly higher settlement levels. It eliminates the single biggest insurer defense argument.

Document 15 — Prior Medical Records (Pre-Existing Conditions)

	☐ Have it	☐ Need to get it	☐ Does not apply
<i>What it is</i>	Medical records predating the accident — specifically relating to any body part or condition also affected by t		
<i>Why attorney needs it</i>	Establishes the baseline condition before the accident, enabling the attorney to demonstrate exactly what w		
<i>If you don't have it</i>	Without prior records, the insurer's 'pre-existing condition' defense is very difficult to rebut. The attorney can		
<i>How to obtain it</i>	Request from prior treating physicians using HIPAA right of access. Providers must release records within 30		

INSIDER INSIGHT

ATTORNEY IMPACT: Attorneys with both pre- and post-accident records can present a clear before/after narrative that is often more persuasive than any single piece of evidence.

SECTION 2 The 12 Questions You Must Ask Every Attorney

Exact Wording · Green Flag Answers · Red Flag Answers · What Each Reveals

Why This Matters: The questions you ask determine the quality of information you receive. Most accident victims ask no strategic questions and leave without knowing whether the attorney is excellent or mediocre. These 12 questions extract the information you need to make a fully informed decision.

Question 1

"Have you handled personal injury cases specifically involving [my accident type]?"

<i>Why ask it</i>	General PI experience is insufficient for complex cases. Rideshare cases require TNC insurance knowledge. T
■ <i>Green Flag</i>	'Yes — I have handled [X] cases involving [type]. The most recent was [timeframe]. Key issues in those cases s
■ <i>Red Flag</i>	'Yes, I handle all personal injury cases.' No specifics. No examples. This tells you nothing about actual competence
<i>What it reveals</i>	Specificity of experience. An attorney who names specific issues in your case type without prompting has gen

Question 2

"What is your contingency fee percentage — and does it change if we go to trial?"

<i>Why ask it</i>	Fee structures directly determine your net recovery. A 3% difference between pre-trial (33%) and trial (40%)
■ <i>Green Flag</i>	'Our fee is 33% pre-suit, 37% after filing, 40% at trial. These are in the fee agreement you will review before s
■ <i>Red Flag</i>	'It's about a third.' Vague. No distinction between pre-trial and trial rates. No mention of a written agreement.
<i>What it reveals</i>	Fee transparency. An attorney who states exact percentages for each stage without hesitation has nothing to

Question 3

"Who pays case expenses — and are they deducted before or after your fee is calculated?"

<i>Why ask it</i>	Whether expenses are deducted before or after the fee is calculated can cost you thousands. On \$100K settle
■ <i>Green Flag</i>	'We advance expenses on your behalf. They are deducted from the settlement after our fee. Here is the exact
■ <i>Red Flag</i>	'We cover all expenses — don't worry about that.' This avoids the deduction method question, which is the cri
<i>What it reveals</i>	Financial transparency. An attorney who gives a precise answer demonstrates both honesty and technical cor

Question 4

"How do you calculate the value of a case like mine?"

Why ask it	This question reveals whether the attorney uses systematic, documented methodology or estimates by feel.
■ Green Flag	'We start with documented medical specials, apply a multiplier of 1.5-4x based on injury severity, add lost wages.'
■ Red Flag	'It depends on a lot of factors.' Or: 'Cases like yours usually settle for around \$X.' Without methodology explained.
What it reveals	Analytical rigor. An attorney who walks you through the calculation methodology in plain English understands

Question 5

"What is your honest assessment of my case's strengths and weaknesses?"

Why ask it	You need to know what you are working with before signing a retainer. An attorney who only tells you positive
■ Green Flag	'The liability is strong based on the police report. The main challenge will be the pre-existing condition issue -
■ Red Flag	'This looks like a great case — I think we can get you a lot of money.' Pure enthusiasm with no honest risk ass
What it reveals	Professional honesty. ABA Model Rule 2.1 requires attorneys to provide honest candid advice including difficu

Question 6

"Will you personally handle my case — or will it go to a junior associate?"

Why ask it	Many large PI firms advertise senior partners but assign cases to junior associates or paralegals. The experien
■ Green Flag	'I will personally handle all significant aspects — strategy, negotiations, and trial. [Associate] will handle day-t
■ Red Flag	'Our team will handle your case.' Which specific person? 'Team' answers often mean your case goes to the lea
What it reveals	Staffing honesty. Who actually handles your case directly affects the outcome. [Source: ABA Model Rule 5.1,]

Question 7

"How often will you proactively update me on case status?"

Why ask it	Communication failures are the #1 complaint filed against PI attorneys with state bars. Knowing
■ Green Flag	communication poli
■ Red Flag	'I commit to updating you at minimum every 30 days — by phone or email, your preference. You can re
What it reveals	[name] direc 'We will call you when there is news.' Passive policy. No frequency. No response time. This is

Question 8

model that leads to sta Communication professionalism. ABA Model Rule 1.4 requires attorneys to keep client reasonably informed. [Source: A

"What is the statute of limitations for my claim — and when exactly does it expire?"

Why ask it	The SOL is the most critical deadline in your case. An attorney who cannot immediately tell you the exact deadline for your claim is a red flag.
■ Green Flag	Attorney provides the exact deadline for your claim.
■ Red Flag	'In [your state], the PI SOL is [X] years from accident date. Your accident was [date], which means your deadline is [date].'
What it reveals	Attorney's knowledge of the SOL. Hesitation. Looking it up. 'I'll need to check.' An attorney practicing PI in your state should know the SOL.

Question 9

Uncertainty here is a serious war.

"What should I stop doing or sharing publicly while the case is active?"

Why ask it	Social media, recorded statements, and casual conversations can significantly damage your case. An attorney who does not advise you to be careful is a red flag.
■ Green Flag	Attorney sets all social media to private immediately. Post nothing about the accident, recovery, or activities during the case.
■ Red Flag	Refer all insurer calls to attorney. No guidance on this topic, or: 'Just be careful.' Vague guidance without specific instructions leaves you exposed to insurer's protective instinct.
What it reveals	Attorney's understanding of the risks before you ask is thinking strategically about you.

Question 10

"Have you litigated against [insurer name] before?"

Why ask it	Different insurers have different litigation tendencies, defense strategies, and settlement patterns. Prior experience is a measurable advantage in negotiation.
■ Green Flag	'Yes — we have handled multiple cases against [insurer]. They tend to [specific behavior — e.g., make lowball offers].'
■ Red Flag	'We've handled cases against all the major insurers.' Non-specific. Does not indicate actual knowledge of this insurer's patterns.
What it reveals	Insurer-specific intelligence. Knowledge of the opposing insurer's patterns is a measurable advantage in negotiation.

Question 11

"What is the realistic settlement range for a case like mine?"

Why ask it	You deserve a professional estimate of case value — not a promise, but an informed range based on the attorney's experience and knowledge of the case.
■ Green Flag	'Based on what you've described, I would estimate a settlement range of \$[X] to \$[Y]. The lower end assumes [specific conditions].'
■ Red Flag	'I can't give you a number without reviewing everything.' While technically true, an experienced attorney should be able to provide a range.
What it reveals	Attorney's estimation confidence. An attorney with experience in similar cases can provide a defensible range. [Source: Settlement Range]

Question 12

"Can I see your state bar record and any disciplinary history?"

<i>Why ask it</i>	Every licensed attorney has a publicly searchable bar record. Disciplinary history is publicly available. You have the right to know.
■ <i>Green Flag</i>	'Absolutely — my bar number is [number]. You can look it up at [state bar website]. I have no disciplinary history. I encourage transparency and ethics records. An attorney with nothing to hide welcomes this question. Resistance for any reason should be a red flag.'
■ <i>Red Flag</i>	Defensiveness. Irritation. 'Why would you need that?' Resistance to a complete and legally protected request for transparency and ethics record. An attorney with nothing to hide welcomes this question. Resistance for any reason should be a red flag.'
<i>What it reveals</i>	standard and legally protected request for transparency and ethics record. An attorney with nothing to hide welcomes this question. Resistance for any reason should be a red flag.'

SECTION 3

The Attorney Vetting System

BarVerification · Redvs.GreenFlags · ComparisonWorksheet · Fee Agreement Checklist

Why This Matters: Hiring the wrong attorney can cost you tens of thousands of dollars in under-negotiated settlements and years of unnecessary stress. This system gives you a structured process to verify, compare, and select the right attorney with confidence.

Part A — State Bar Verification: 3 Steps

1. Go to your state bar's attorney search tool (see the 50-state table in Section 9).
2. Enter the attorney's full name or bar number. Results show license status, admission date, and any public disciplinary actions.
3. If disciplinary history appears, read the full order. Minor administrative issues (late CLE credits) differ from client funds misappropriation or misrepresentation findings.

[Source: ABA National Lawyer Regulatory Data Bank, americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/resources/lawyer_ethics_regulation/data_bank]

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Disciplinary history does not automatically disqualify an attorney. Minor administrative actions differ fundamentally from discipline involving client funds, misrepresentation to a court or client, case neglect, or failure to communicate. Always read the full disciplinary order before accepting or dismissing a record. The nature of the violation matters more than the existence of a record.

Part B — Red Flag vs. Green Flag Comparison

Area	■ GREEN FLAG	■ RED FLAG
Fee Structure	Exact percentages for pre-trial, post-filing, and trial fee.	Vague percentages or "negotiable" without specifics.
Communication	Specific frequency promised (monthly minimum).	No response or inconsistent communication.
Case Honesty	Identifies strengths AND weaknesses. Proposes strategy.	Only lists strengths or makes unrealistic promises.
Case Handling	Names specific attorney and support staff. Explains role.	No named individuals. No role clarification.
SOL Knowledge	States your exact SOL deadline without hesitation.	Doesn't know or gives incorrect deadline.
Realistic Estimates	Provides reasoned range with stated assumptions.	Only gives a single number or "we'll see".
Bar Record	Clean or minor administrative issues.	Disciplinary history involving client funds, misrepresentation, or resistance.
Trial Experience	Can cite specific trial experience in PI cases.	No trial experience or only as a witness.

Part C — Attorney Comparison Worksheet (Fillable — 3 Attorneys)

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Attorney 1</i>	<i>Attorney 2</i>	<i>Attorney 3</i>
<i>Name & Firm</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Years PI Experience</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>My Case Type Experience</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Pre-Trial Fee %</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Post-Filing Fee %</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Trial Fee %</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Expenses: Before/After Fee?</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Who handles case day-to-day?</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>Communication frequency</i>	_____	_____	_____
<i>SOL stated correctly?</i>	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
<i>Settlement range estimate</i>	\$_____	\$_____	\$_____
<i>Weaknesses identified?</i>	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
<i>Bar record verified?</i>	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
<i>Rating (1-10)</i>	____/10	____/10	____/10
<i>Decision</i>	Hire/No/Other	Hire/No/Other	Hire/No/Other

Part D — Fee Agreement Review Checklist

- Fee percentage stated clearly — separate rates for pre-trial, post-filing, and trial phases
- Expense handling method specified — states whether deducted before or after fee calculation
- Scope of representation defined — exactly what matters the attorney will handle
- Termination clause present — your explicit right to end the representation
- Communication standards stated — frequency of updates and response time
- No non-refundable retainer on a contingency fee case
- Lien handling provisions included — how medical liens will be addressed
- Settlement authority confirmed — your right to make the final settlement decision
- Attorney identified by name — not just 'the firm'
- You have been given at least 24 hours to review before signing

[Source: ABA Model Rule 1.5(b) and 1.5(c), americanbar.org]

SECTION 4 Understanding Attorney Fees In Depth

4 Worked Examples · Expense Deduction Logic · Net Recovery Calculation

Why This Matters: The difference between 'before fee' and 'after fee' expense deduction can cost you thousands. Understanding the math before you sign protects your net recovery.

The Four Fee Calculation Examples

[Source: ABAModelRule1.5, americanbar.org; FTC Consumer Guide to Attorney Fees, consumer.ftc.gov]

Example 1 — Pre-Trial Settlement

Item	Amount
Gross Settlement	\$50,000
Attorney Fee (33% of gross)	- \$16,500
Case Expenses	- \$5,000
NET TO CLIENT	= \$28,500

Example 2 — Post-Filing Settlement

Item	Amount
Gross Settlement	\$80,000
Attorney Fee (37% of gross)	- \$29,600
Case Expenses	- \$8,000
NET TO CLIENT	= \$42,400

Example 3 — Trial Verdict

Item	Amount
Gross Verdict	\$150,000
Attorney Fee (40% of gross)	- \$60,000
Case Expenses (litigation)	- \$25,000
NET TO CLIENT	= \$65,000

Example 4 — Settlement With Medical Lien

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
Gross Settlement	\$60,000
Medical Lien (health insurer)	- \$18,000
Attorney Fee (33% of gross)	- \$19,800
Case Expenses	- \$10,000
NET TO CLIENT	= \$12,200

The Expense Deduction Method — Critical Math

Whether expenses are deducted BEFORE or AFTER the attorney's fee changes your net recovery meaningfully:

<i>Method</i>	<i>Formula</i>	<i>Example (\$100K, 33% fee, \$15K expenses)</i>	<i>Net</i>
Expenses BEFORE fee (better for client)	(Gross - Expenses) x Fee = Attorney Fee Gross - Expenses - Attorney Fee = Net	\$85K x 33% = \$28,050 fee \$85K - \$28,050 = \$56,950	\$56,950
Expenses AFTER fee (standard method)	Gross x Fee = Attorney Fee Gross - Attorney Fee - Expenses = Net	\$100K x 33% = \$33,000 fee \$100K - \$33K - \$15K = \$52,000	\$52,000

KEY TAKEAWAY

The difference between these two methods on this example is \$4,950 — purely from the order of deduction. Always ask which method your fee agreement uses and request it be stated explicitly. [Source: ABA Model Rule 1.5, americanbar.org]

Net Recovery Calculation Worksheet (Fillable)

GROSS SETTLEMENT (\$)

ATTORNEY FEE DOLLAR AMOUNT (\$)

TOTAL MEDICAL LIENS (\$)

NET TO CLIENT (\$)

ATTORNEY FEE %

CASE EXPENSES ESTIMATED (\$)

OTHER DEDUCTIONS (\$)

ACCEPTABLE? ■ YES ■ NO

What Case Expenses Cover

<i>Expense Category</i>	<i>Typical Range</i>	<i>When Incurred</i>
Court filing fees	\$300-\$600	When lawsuit is filed
Process server fees	\$50-\$200	When serving defendants
Medical record retrieval	\$50-\$500	Investigation phase
Expert witness — medical	\$2,000-\$10,000+	Pre-trial and trial
Expert witness — accident reconstruction	\$3,000-\$15,000+	Complex liability cases
Deposition costs (court reporter)	\$500-\$3,000 per deposition	Discovery phase

Mediation fees	\$500-\$2,000	Pre-trial resolution attempt
Investigator fees	\$500-\$3,000	Evidence gathering phase
Trial exhibits and demonstratives	\$500-\$5,000+	Trial preparation

[Source: ABA Model Rule 1.5(a), americanbar.org; state court filing fee schedules at state court .gov sites]

SECTION 5 *Your Rights as a Legal Client*

10 ABA-Protected Rights · How to Assert Each · Disciplinary Process

Why This Matters: Most clients do not know they have legally protected rights governing every aspect of the attorney-client relationship. These rights are enforced by state bar disciplinary authorities. Knowing them prevents exploitation.

Right 1 — Confidentiality

<i>What this right is</i>	Everything you tell your attorney is protected by attorney-client privilege. Your attorney cannot disclose your information.
<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	ABA Model Rule 1.6, americanbar.org
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	Attorneys occasionally share client information with staff inappropriately or discuss cases in public settings.
<i>How to assert it</i>	Speak freely and fully with your attorney. Full disclosure enables better representation. If you discover a breach, report it to the state bar.

Right 2 — Conflict of Interest Disclosure

<i>What this right is</i>	Your attorney must disclose any conflict of interest before or during representation — including representing both sides in a case.
<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	ABA Model Rule 1.7, americanbar.org
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	Some firms represent both plaintiffs and insurers in different cases. If your attorney also represents the insurer, they may not be able to represent you fully.
<i>How to assert it</i>	Ask directly: 'Do you or your firm have any current or prior relationship with the insurer in my case?' A yes means you need to find another attorney.

Right 3 — Honest Communication

<i>What this right is</i>	Your attorney must provide honest, candid advice about your case — including information you may not want to hear.
<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	ABA Model Rule 2.1, americanbar.org
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	Attorneys who fear losing clients sometimes overstate case value to maintain the engagement. This leads to inflated fees.
<i>How to assert it</i>	Ask for a written case assessment. A professional written assessment creates accountability and prevents overstatement.

Right 4 — Final Settlement Authority

<i>What this right is</i>	You — not your attorney — have final authority to accept or reject any settlement offer. Your attorney advises, but you decide.
<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	ABA Model Rule 1.2(a), americanbar.org
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	Some attorneys pressure clients to accept settlements that serve the attorney's interests — quick fee, minimal work.
<i>How to assert it</i>	If your attorney recommends accepting a settlement you are uncomfortable with, say: 'I will need to review this with my family before we decide.'

Right 5 — Written Fee Agreement

<i>What this right is</i>	For contingency fee cases, the fee agreement must be in writing, signed by both parties, and must state the percentage of the recovery.
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<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	ABA Model Rule 1.5(c), americanbar.org
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	Verbal fee arrangements — even with trusted attorneys — are unenforceable and leave you vulnerable to fee disputes.
<i>How to assert it</i>	Never agree to verbal fee arrangements. If an attorney will not put fee terms in writing, do not hire them. Negotiate written fee terms.

Right 6 — Full Accounting of Funds

<i>What this right is</i>	Your attorney must maintain settlement funds in a separate client trust account and provide a full written accounting of all funds.
<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	ABA Model Rule 1.15, americanbar.org
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	Client fund mismanagement — from sloppy accounting to outright theft — is the most common reason attorneys lose their licenses.
<i>How to assert it</i>	Before signing a settlement disbursement, request a written settlement statement: gross settlement, all disbursements, and net settlement.

Right 7 — Your File Upon Request

<i>What this right is</i>	When representation ends, you have the right to receive your complete case file. Your attorney cannot withhold your file.
<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	ABA Model Rule 1.16(d), americanbar.org
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	Some attorneys withhold client files over fee disputes. Most states require file release even when fees are in dispute.
<i>How to assert it</i>	If your attorney refuses to release your file, file a state bar complaint immediately. Unlawful file retention is a serious offense.

Right 8 — Right to Fire

<i>What this right is</i>	You can terminate the attorney-client relationship at any time, for any reason, without cause. You may owe fees for work already done.
<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	ABA Model Rule 1.16, americanbar.org
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	Some attorneys respond to termination by threatening to withdraw from important filings at critical moments.
<i>How to assert it</i>	Send a written termination letter by certified mail stating: 'This terminates our attorney-client relationship effective immediately.'

Right 9 — Malpractice Insurance Disclosure

<i>What this right is</i>	In many states, attorneys are required to disclose whether they carry malpractice insurance. In states where not required, you can ask.
<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	State bar rules vary — verify at your state bar's .gov site
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	An attorney without malpractice insurance means a serious mistake may leave you with no practical recourse.
<i>How to assert it</i>	Ask directly: 'Do you carry professional malpractice insurance?' Note the answer in your comparison worksheet.

Right 10 — File a Disciplinary Complaint

<i>What this right is</i>	If your attorney violates any of the above rights, you have the right to file a complaint with your state bar. Complaints are confidential.
<i>ABA Rule / Authority</i>	State bar disciplinary rules — see 50-state table in Section 9
<i>How it is sometimes violated</i>	Many clients tolerate attorney misconduct because they believe complaints are futile. In reality, a well-documented complaint can lead to discipline.
<i>How to assert it</i>	Document every instance of misconduct with dates. File at your state bar's .gov website using the disciplinary complaint form.

Client Rights Verification Checklist (Fillable)

☒ Attorney explained the fee agreement in full before I signed

- Attorney disclosed any potential conflicts of interest
- Attorney confirmed I have final authority on all settlement decisions
- I received a copy of the signed fee agreement the day I signed
- I have the attorney's direct phone number and email address
- I know the name of the person handling my case day-to-day and their direct contact
- I understand how to reach the attorney if I have urgent questions
- I know my exact SOL deadline and the attorney has it calendared
- I have verified the attorney's state bar standing is current and clean
- I understand my right to terminate the representation at any time

How Attorneys Evaluate Cases · Pre-Consultation Summary · Self-Assessment

Factor	What Attorneys Look For	How to Strengthen Before Consultation
1. Liability Clarity	Clear, documented fault — ideally confirmed by police report; organize witness statements; prepare clear accident reconstruction	
2. Damages Value	Is the case worth the attorney's time? Know your medical bill total; bring all bills; have lost wage estimate ready	
3. Insurance Coverage	Is adequate coverage available to justify pursuing the claim? Know your insurer and policy type; your own UM/UIM coverage	
4. SOL Status	Is there enough time to properly handle the claim? Know your accident date and state SOL; calculate exact deadline before consultation	
5. Comparative Fault	Could you be found partly responsible? Be honest in the consultation; let the attorney assess — surprises discovered later are worse	
6. Client Credibility	Are you believable, consistent, and credible? Be honest, factual. Bring documents. Let evidence speak rather than your story alone	
7. Evidence Strength	Sufficient evidence to prove the case without your testimony? Photos, reports, records, witness info, app screenshots, etc.	

ACCIDENT DETAILS	
Date of Accident	_____
Time of Accident	____
Location (City / State)	_____
Accident Type	____
At-Fault Party Name	_____
At-Fault Party Insurer	____
Police Report Number	_____

MY INJURIES	_____
Diagnoses Received	_____ _____
Current Treatment Status	_____ _____
Treating Physician	_____ _____
At MMI?	_____ _____

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MY DAMAGES	
Total Medical Bills to Date	\$ _____
Total Lost Wages	_____
Future Medical Costs (if known)	\$ _____

KEY EVIDENCE I HAVE	\$ _____
Police report?	Yes /
Medical records?	No Yes
Photographs?	/ No
Witness information?	Yes /
Symptom journal?	No Yes
	/ No
SOL DEADLINE Prior	Yes /
adjuster contact?	No / No — Details:
My key question #1	_____
My key question #2	_____
My key question #3	_____

Case Strength Self-Assessment (Rate 1-5 Before Your Consultation)

Factor	1 (Weak)	3 (Moderate)	5 (Strong)	Your Score
Liability Clarity	Disputed fault No police report	Police report Partial fault	Clear fault Cited + witnessed	____/5
Medical Documentation	Minimal records Gaps in treatment	Consistent treatment Most records obtained	Complete records No gaps Causation letter	____/5
Evidence Strength	No photos No witnesses	Some photos One witness	Extensive photos Multiple witnesses	____/5
Damages Value	Under \$5,000 in medical bills	\$5K-\$25K	\$25,000+ in medical bills	____/5
SOL Status	Under 90 days remaining	6-12 months	1+ year remaining	____/5
			TOTAL (out of 25)	____/25

Score 20-25: Strong case. 15-19: Solid — experienced PI attorney recommended. 10-14: Moderate — specialized attorney most important. Under 10: Challenging — professional evaluation essential.

SECTION 7 Special Consultation Scenarios

6 Situations Requiring Different Strategies

Scenario 1 — You Have Already Been Contacted by the Adjuster

Most accident victims speak with an adjuster before consulting an attorney. What you said — and what was recorded — may already be on file. This does not necessarily damage your case, but the attorney must know about it immediately in order to assess and address it.

INSIDER INSIGHT

Adjusters are trained to gather statements in the first 24-72 hours while victims are still in shock. Insurance companies call this the 'golden period' and exploit it aggressively. An experienced PI attorney has navigated this situation hundreds of times and knows exactly how to work with prior adjuster contact.

YOUR ACTION

Tell the attorney everything — what was said, whether it was recorded, what claim numbers were assigned. Bring all correspondence. Do NOT hide prior adjuster contact — the attorney will discover it and hidden facts damage credibility far more than prior statements.

[Source: FTC Consumer Guidance on Insurance Claims, consumer.ftc.gov; NAIC MDL-900, naic.org]

Scenario 2 — The Statute of Limitations Is Within 90 Days

A SOL within 90 days is a legal emergency. Filing deadlines cannot be extended by insurance negotiations or settlement discussions. If the SOL expires before a lawsuit is filed, your legal rights are permanently extinguished regardless of case strength.

INSIDER INSIGHT

Attorneys decline more cases because the SOL has passed than for almost any other reason. When a SOL-expired case arrives, there is nothing an attorney can do. Courts are strict. There are no second chances. The importance of immediate action cannot be overstated.

YOUR ACTION

Contact multiple PI attorneys today — not next week. Explain SOL urgency in your first call. Use Legal Services Corporation (lsc.gov) to find emergency legal help if cost is a concern.

[Source: NAIC Consumer Guide, naic.org; LSC Emergency Legal Help, lsc.gov]

Scenario 3 — You Have Already Signed a Settlement

Generally, a signed settlement release is final and binding. Courts do not reopen settlements simply because you believe you should have received more. Narrow exceptions exist: fraud, duress, mutual mistake of material fact, or mental incapacity at signing.

INSIDER INSIGHT

Insurance companies sometimes present settlement documents under deliberate time pressure, creating urgency that prevents consultation with an attorney. If you signed under these circumstances, the duress argument may have merit — but it is an uphill legal battle requiring immediate attorney involvement.

YOUR ACTION

Consult a PI attorney immediately to review what you signed. Bring the exact release documents. Do not assume it is too late without an attorney's review. The exception may apply.

[Source: FTC Consumer Information on Settlement Releases, consumer.ftc.gov; ABA Consumer Guide, americanbar.org]

Scenario 4 — Workers' Comp AND a Personal Injury Claim

When an injury occurs at work but is caused by a third party's negligence (injured in a car accident while driving for work), you may have both a workers' compensation claim and a personal injury claim. These interact in complex ways requiring careful coordination.

INSIDER INSIGHT

Workers' comp insurers often assert a lien against personal injury settlements — claiming reimbursement for benefits paid. This reduces your net recovery. Attorneys inexperienced in dual-claim coordination sometimes accept settlements without accounting for the workers' comp lien, creating unexpected deductions for clients.

YOUR ACTION

You need an attorney experienced in both personal injury and workers' compensation, or one coordinating with a workers' comp specialist. Do not proceed without this dual expertise.

[Source: DOL Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, dol.gov/agencies/owcp; NAIC Consumer Guide, naic.org]

Scenario 5 — Your Attorney Recommends Settling Earlier Than You Expected

Your attorney recommends accepting an offer you believe is too low. Under ABA Model Rule 1.2(a), the final decision is yours — not your attorney's. Your attorney must present all offers and must comply with your instruction to reject them.

INSIDER INSIGHT

Attorneys who settle cases quickly and cheaply do more volume with less work. Early settlement pressure from your own attorney sometimes reflects the attorney's interests rather than yours. You have the right to say no — and to demand specific justification for the recommendation.

YOUR ACTION

Ask: 'What is the basis for your recommendation?' 'Have you accounted for all future medical costs?' 'What would we likely get at trial?' 'What are the risks of not accepting?' Then make your own informed decision.

[Source: ABA Model Rule 1.2(a), americanbar.org]

Scenario 6 — Free vs. Paid Consultation

Virtually all personal injury consultations are free because attorneys work on contingency. A paid consultation typically applies in non-PI legal matters where no contingency model exists. If a PI attorney charges for a personal injury consultation, this is unusual and worth questioning.

INSIDER INSIGHT

No attorney-client relationship forms during a free consultation. The attorney owes no duty beyond the prospective client protections in ABA Model Rule 1.18. This means you can consult multiple attorneys — all for free — before signing with any one of them. There is no obligation created by attending a free consultation.

YOUR ACTION

Consult multiple attorneys — all for free — before signing with any one. Shop aggressively. There is no loyalty obligation created by attending a free consultation.

[Source: ABA Model Rule 1.18 — Duties to Prospective Clients, americanbar.org; FTC Consumer Information, consumer.ftc.gov]

SECTION 8 *Post-Consultation Action System*

10 Actions Within 1 Hour · Decision Tracker · Do-Not-Sign Checklist

Why This Matters: What you do in the hour after a consultation determines whether the information you gathered is used effectively. Memory fades, impressions blur, and details that seemed obvious in the room become uncertain the next day.

The 10 Post-Consultation Actions — Complete Within 1 Hour

1. **Write down everything the attorney said about your case value** — exact words if possible. The estimate given is a data point you will use to compare attorneys.
2. **Document every red flag and green flag observed** — reference the comparison system in Section 3. Write them down before memory softens your impressions.
3. **Note the attorney's exact fee structure** — pre-trial %, post-filing %, trial %. If they did not provide all three, that is a red flag to document.
4. **Calculate your net recovery using the worksheet in Section 4** — use the settlement estimate they gave you to calculate what you would actually take home.
5. **Verify bar standing before any further steps** — look up the attorney now while the consultation is fresh. The 50-state table in Section 9 gives you the URL.
6. **Compare against your other consultations** — update the comparison worksheet in Section 3 with this attorney's data while details are fresh.
7. **If you want to proceed — ask for 24-48 hours to review the fee agreement** . Do not sign in the consultation room. An attorney who does not allow this is a red flag.
If you received a fee agreement — read every line before signing
8. Section 3, Part D. . Use the Fee Agreement Review Checklist in
9. **If you decide to hire — send a confirmation email the same day:** 'I am confirming our agreement to retain your firm. Please confirm: [fee %, expense handling, who handles case, communication frequency].'
10. **Set a 30-day calendar reminder** for your first case status follow-up. If the attorney has not proactively contacted you in 30 days, send a written status request.

Post-Consultation Decision Tracker (Fillable — 3 Consultations)

CONSULTATION 1

DATE

ATTORNEY NAME & FIRM

<i>SETTLEMENT RANGE ESTIMATE (\$)</i>		<i>FEE STRUCTURE (%)</i>
<i>RED FLAGS NOTED</i>		<i>GREEN FLAGS NOTED</i>
<i>BAR RECORD VERIFIED? ■ YES ■ NO</i>	<i>RATING (1-10): ____/10</i>	<i>DECISION: ■ HIRE ■ NO ■ OTHER</i>

CONSULTATION 2

<i>DATE</i>	<i>ATTORNEY NAME & FIRM</i>
<i>SETTLEMENT RANGE ESTIMATE (\$)</i>	<i>FEE STRUCTURE (%)</i>
<i>RED FLAGS NOTED</i>	<i>GREEN FLAGS NOTED</i>
<i>BAR RECORD VERIFIED? ■ YES ■ NO</i>	<i>RATING (1-10): ____/10</i>
<i>DECISION: ■ HIRE ■ NO ■ OTHER</i>	

CONSULTATION 3

<i>DATE</i>	<i>ATTORNEY NAME & FIRM</i>
<i>SETTLEMENT RANGE ESTIMATE (\$)</i>	<i>FEE STRUCTURE (%)</i>
<i>RED FLAGS NOTED</i>	<i>GREEN FLAGS NOTED</i>
<i>BAR RECORD VERIFIED? ■ YES ■ NO</i>	<i>RATING (1-10): ____/10</i>
<i>DECISION: ■ HIRE ■ NO ■ OTHER</i>	

The 'Do Not Sign Yet' Pre-Signing Checklist

- I have consulted at least 2 attorneys and compared them using the worksheet in Section 3
- I have read the entire fee agreement — every line — not just skimmed it
- I understand exactly what percentage is charged and when (pre-trial vs. trial)
- I understand whether expenses are deducted before or after the fee calculation
- I know the full name of the person who will handle my case day-to-day
- I have verified this attorney's state bar standing at the official state bar website
- I understand my right to terminate the representation at any time
- I have been given at least 24 hours to review — I am not signing under pressure
- I will keep my signed copy of this agreement in a safe place permanently
- I have the attorney's direct email and phone number in my contacts

SECTION 9 Access to Legal Help + 50-State Bar Reference

FreeResources · EmergencyHelp · StateBarLookup · DisciplinaryPortals

When You Cannot Afford an Attorney

Personal injury attorneys work on contingency — no upfront cost and no fee unless they win. This makes PI representation financially accessible regardless of income. For other needs or emergency situations, these resources provide free or low-cost legal assistance:

Resource	Website	What They Provide
Legal Services Corporation (LSC)	lsc.gov	Federally funded — find free civil legal aid in your area by ZIP code. [Source: lsc.gov]
ABA Free Legal Answers	americanbar.org	Free online legal advice from volunteer attorneys for qualifying individuals.
DOJ Access to Justice	justice.gov/atj	Federal resources and state programs for legal access. [Source: justice.gov/atj]
State Court Self-Help Centers	Your state court .gov site	Free legal information and document assistance at courthouse locations.
Law School Legal Clinics	ABA-accredited law schools	Supervised free legal representation in select case types.
State Bar Lawyer Referral Service	Your state bar website	Referrals to PI attorneys — initial consultation often \$35-\$50.

All 50 States + D.C. — State Bar Reference Table

[Source: [ABANationalLawyerRegulatoryDataBank](#), [americanbar.org](#); individual state bar association websites, 2024]

State	Bar Website	Member Lookup	Disciplinary Complaint URL
Alabama	alabar.org	alabar.org/find-attorney	alabar.org/file-a-complaint
Alaska	alaskabar.org	alaskabar.org/lawyer-search	alaskabar.org/client-assistance
Arizona	azbar.org	azbar.org/find-a-lawyer	azbar.org/file-a-complaint
Arkansas	arkbar.com	courts.arkansas.gov/attorney-search	arkbar.com/file-a-complaint
California	calbar.ca.gov	apps.calbar.ca.gov/attorney	calbar.ca.gov/file-complaint
Colorado	cobar.org	coloradosupremecourt.com	coloradosupremecourt.com/regulation
Connecticut	ctbar.org	jud.ct.gov/AttorneyPortal	jud.ct.gov/grievance
Delaware	dsba.org	courts.delaware.gov/attorneys	odc.delaware.gov/complaints
D.C.	dcbar.org	dcbar.org/find-lawyer	dcbar.org/discipline
Florida	floridabar.org	floridabar.org/attorney-profile	floridabar.org/discipline

Georgia	gabar.org	gabar.org/member-directory	gabar.org/file-a-complaint
Hawaii	hsba.org	hsba.org/find-attorney	odc.hawaii.gov/contact
Idaho	isb.idaho.gov	isb.idaho.gov/find-an-attorney	isb.idaho.gov/discipline
Illinois	illinoisattorneyregistration.coimardc.org/lawyersearch		iardc.org/complaints
Indiana	inbar.org	mycase.in.gov/attorney	inbar.org/complaints
Iowa	iowabar.org	iowacourts.gov/attorney-lookup	iacourtcommissions.org/grievance
Kansas	ksbar.org	ksbar.org/attorney-search	kscourts.org/discipline
Kentucky	kybar.org	kybar.org/find-an-attorney	kybar.org/ethics
Louisiana	lsba.org	lsba.org/findlawyer	lasc.org/disciplinary-board
Maine	mainebar.org	mainebar.org/find-a-lawyer	mainebar.org/grievance
Maryland	msba.org	courts.state.md.us/attyinfo	adb.maryland.gov/complaints
Massachusetts	massbar.org	massbbo.org/find-attorney	massbbo.org/file-complaint
Michigan	michbar.org	michbar.org/member	michbar.org/grievances
Minnesota	mnbar.org	lprb.mncourts.gov/attorney-search	lprb.mncourts.gov/file-complaint
Mississippi	msbar.org	msbar.org/find-a-lawyer	msbar.org/file-a-complaint
Missouri	mobar.org	mobar.org/find-a-lawyer	mobar.org/file-a-complaint
Montana	montanabar.org	search.montanabar.org	montanabar.org/complaints
Nebraska	nebar.com	court.state.ne.us/attorneys	nebar.com/grievances
Nevada	nvbar.org	nvbar.org/member-search	nbcourts.us/disciplinary
New Hampshire	nhbar.org	nhbar.org/find-a-lawyer	nhbar.org/complaints
New Jersey	njsba.com	njcourts.gov/attorneys/search	njcourts.gov/discipline
New Mexico	nmbar.org	nmbar.org/FindAnAttorney	nmbar.org/FilingaComplaint
New York	nysba.org	otcportal.courts.state.ny.us	nycourts.gov/attorneys/grievance
North Carolina	ncbar.gov	ncbar.gov/member-directory	ncbar.gov/discipline
North Dakota	sband.org	sband.org/find-an-attorney	sband.org/disciplinary-board
Ohio	ohiobar.org	supremecourt.ohio.gov/attorney	supremecourt.ohio.gov/discipline
Oklahoma	okbar.org	okbar.org/public/memberSearch	okbar.org/public-protection
Oregon	osbar.org	osbar.org/public/ris	osbar.org/public/discipline
Pennsylvania	pabar.org	padisciplinaryboard.org/search	padisciplinaryboard.org/complaint
Rhode Island	ribar.com	ribar.com/find-a-lawyer	ribar.com/disciplinary-board
South Carolina	sctbar.org	sctbar.org/attorney-lookup	sctbar.org/file-a-complaint

South Dakota	statebarofsd.com	ujs.sd.gov/Attorney	statebarofsd.com/disciplinary
Tennessee	tba.org	tba.org/find-a-lawyer	tnbpr.org/complaints
Texas	texasbar.com	texasbar.com/attorney-finder	texasbar.com/file-a-complaint
Utah	utahbar.org	utahbar.org/find-a-lawyer	utahbar.org/opc
Vermont	vtbar.org	vtbar.org/Find-a-Lawyer	vtbar.org/discipline
Virginia	vsb.org	vsb.org/attorney-search	vsb.org/complain
Washington	wsba.org	mywsba.org/attorney-search	wsba.org/odc
West Virginia	wvbar.org	wvbar.org/find-a-lawyer	lawyerdiscipline.wv.gov
Wisconsin	wisbar.org	wisbar.org/forpublic	oca.courts.wi.gov/complain
Wyoming	wyomingbar.org	wyomingbar.org/find-a-lawyer	wyomingbar.org/discipline

Official Resources & Government Links

Resource	Website	Use For
ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct	americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility	Locally attorney ethics standards cited in this kit
ABA National Lawyer Regulatory Data Bank	americanbar.org/groups/professional_responsibility/frye_saottuorrcneesy	Discipline history in any state
FTC — Legal Services Consumer Info	consumer.ftc.gov	Consumer rights when hiring attorneys
DOJ — Access to Justice	justice.gov/atj	Federal legal access resources
LSC — Legal Services Corporation	lsc.gov	Free civil legal aid — find local help
CFPB — Consumer Financial Protection	consumerfinance.gov	Medical debt, billing, collections rights
DOL — Workers' Compensation	dol.gov/agencies/owcp	Workers' comp + PI dual claim coordination
IRS — Standard Mileage Rates	irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates	Current medical travel mileage rate
NAIC — Insurance Consumer Guides	naic.org	Insurance interaction with legal claims
HHS — HIPAA Privacy Rule	hhs.gov/hipaa	Your right to obtain medical records

JusticeFinder.net — Free Tools Referenced in This Kit

Tool	URL	Use In This Kit
Pain & Suffering Calculator	justicefinder.net/tools/pain-and-suffering-calculator	Calculate non-economic damages for case summary (Section 3)
Lost Wages Calculator	justicefinder.net/tools/lost-wages-calculator	Document income losses before consultation
SOL Calculator	justicefinder.net/tools/personal-injury-statute-of-limitations-calculator	Determine SOL deadline (Sections 2, 7)
Medical Lien Calculator	justicefinder.net/tools/medical-lien-settlement-reduction-calculator	Determine net recovery after liens (Section 4)
Soft Tissue Calculator	justicefinder.net/tools/soft-tissue-injury-settlement-calculator	Estimate case value before consultation
Demand Letter Generator	justicefinder.net/tools/personal-injury-demand-letter-generator	Use with Product 7 if self-representing
Evidence Checklist	justicefinder.net/tools/personal-injury-evidence-checklist	Verify evidence before the consultation
Wrongful Death Calculator	justicefinder.net/tools/wrongful-death-compensation-calculator	Wrongful death case value estimation
Future Medical Expenses	justicefinder.net/tools/future-medical-expenses-calculator	Project long-term costs for case summary
Fault Estimator	justicefinder.net/tools/car-accident-fault-percentage-estimator	Assess comparative fault before consultation

ATTORNEY CONSULTATION PREP KIT

15 Documents · 12 Questions · Attorney Vetting Guide

Not a law firm. Not legal advice.
Your information. Your power. Your rights.

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