

## CHECKLIST FOR CLOSING YOUR OWN OFFICE

1. Finalize as many active files as possible.
2. Write to clients with active files, advising them that you are unable to continue representing them and that they need to retain new counsel. Your letter should inform them about time limitations and time frames important to their cases. The letter should explain how and where they can pick up copies of their files and should give a time deadline for doing this
3. For cases that have pending court dates, depositions, or hearings, discuss with the clients how to proceed. Where appropriate, request extensions, continuances, and resetting of hearing dates. Send written confirmations of these extensions, continuances, and resets to opposing counsel and to your client.
4. For cases before administrative bodies and courts, obtain the clients' permission to submit a motion and order to withdraw as attorney of record.
5. In cases where the client is obtaining a new attorney, be certain that a Substitution of Attorney is filed.
6. Pick an appropriate date and check to see if all cases either have a Motion and Order allowing your withdrawal as attorney of record or have a Substitution of Attorney filed with the court.
7. All clients should either pick up their files (and sign a receipt acknowledging that they received them) or sign an authorization for you to release the files to their new attorneys.
8. If you are a sole practitioner, ask the telephone company for a new phone number to be given out when your old phone number is called. This eliminates the problem created when clients call your phone number, get a recording stating that the number is disconnected, and do not know where else to turn for information.

[Editor's Note: These materials are based upon a booklet published by the Oregon State Bar Professional Liability Fund and entitled, *Planning Ahead: A Guide to Protecting Your Clients' Interests in the Event of Your Death or Disability*, which have been edited for Washington lawyers.]