

**Rule 5.5. Unauthorized Practice of Law; Multijurisdictional Practice of Law.**

**Colorado Court Rules**

**Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct**

**Law Firms and Associations**

*As amended through Rule Change 2018(6), effective April 12, 2018*

**Rule 5.5. Unauthorized Practice of Law; Multijurisdictional Practice of Law**

- (a) A lawyer shall not:
  - (1) practice law in this jurisdiction without a license to practice law issued by the Colorado Supreme Court unless specifically authorized by C.R.C.P. 204 or C.R.C.P. 205 or federal or tribal law;
  - (2) practice law in a jurisdiction where doing so violates the regulations of the legal profession in that jurisdiction;
  - (3) assist a person who is not authorized to practice law pursuant to subpart (a) of this Rule in the performance of any activity that constitutes the unauthorized practice of law; or
  - (4) allow the name of a disbarred lawyer or a suspended lawyer who must petition for reinstatement to remain in the firm name.
- (b) A lawyer shall not employ, associate professionally with, allow or aid a person the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is a disbarred, suspended, or on disability inactive status to perform the following on behalf of the lawyer's client:
  - (1) render legal consultation or advice to the client;
  - (2) appear on behalf of a client in any hearing or proceeding or before any judicial officer, arbitrator, mediator, court, public agency, referee, magistrate, commissioner, or hearing officer;
  - (3) appear on behalf of a client at a deposition or other discovery matter;
  - (4) negotiate or transact any matter for or on behalf of the client with third parties;
  - (5) otherwise engage in activities that constitute the practice of law; or
  - (6) receive, disburse or otherwise handle client funds.
- (c) Subject to the limitation set forth below in paragraph (d), a lawyer may employ, associate professionally with, allow or aid a lawyer who is disbarred, suspended (whose suspension

is partially or fully served), or on disability inactive status to perform research, drafting or clerical activities, including but not limited to:

- (1) legal work of a preparatory nature, such as legal research, the assemblage of data and other necessary information, drafting of pleadings, briefs, and other similar documents;
  - (2) direct communication with the client or third parties regarding matters such as scheduling, billing, updates, confirmation of receipt or sending of correspondence and messages; and
  - (3) accompanying an active member in attending a deposition or other discovery matter for the limited purpose of providing assistance to the lawyer who will appear as the representative of the client.
- (d) A lawyer shall not allow a person the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is disbarred, suspended, or on disability inactive status to have any professional contact with clients of the lawyer or of the lawyer's firm unless the lawyer:
- (1) prior to the commencement of the work, gives written notice to the client for whom the work will be performed that the disbarred or suspended lawyer, or the lawyer on disability inactive status, may not practice law; and
  - (2) retains written notification for no less than two years following completion of the work.
- (e) Once notice is given pursuant to C.R.C.P. 251.28 or this Rule, then no additional notice is required.

**Cite as RPC 5.5**

**History.** Entire Appendix repealed and readopted April 12, 2007, effective January 1, 2008; Rule 5.5(a) amended effective April 6, 2016..

**Note:**

**COMMENT**

[1] The definition of the practice of law is established by law and varies from one jurisdiction to another. In order to protect the public, persons not admitted to practice law in Colorado cannot hold themselves out as lawyers in Colorado or as authorized to practice law in Colorado. Rule 5.5(a)(1) recognizes that C.R.C.P. 204 and C.R.C.P. 205 permit lawyers to practice law in accordance with their terms in Colorado without a license from the Colorado Supreme Court. Lawyers may also be permitted to practice law within the physical boundaries of the State, without such a license, where they do so pursuant to Federal or tribal law. Such practice does not constitute a violation of the general proscription of Rule 5.5(a)(1).

[2] Paragraph (a)(3) does not prohibit a lawyer from employing the services of paraprofessionals and delegating functions to them, so long as the lawyer supervises the delegated work and retains responsibility for their work. See Rule 5.3. Likewise, it does not prohibit lawyers from providing professional advice and instruction to nonlawyers whose employment requires knowledge of law; for example, claims adjusters, employees of financial or commercial institutions, social workers, accountants and persons employed in governmental agencies. In addition, a lawyer may counsel nonlawyers who wish to proceed pro se.

[3] A lawyer may employ or contract with a disbarred, suspended lawyer or a lawyer on disability inactive status, to perform services that a law clerk, paralegal or other administrative staff may perform so long as the lawyer directly supervises the work. Lawyers who are suspended but whose entire suspension has been stayed may engage in the practice of law, and the portion of the Rule limiting what suspended lawyers may do does not apply.

[4] The name of a disbarred lawyer or a suspended lawyer who must petition for reinstatement must be removed from the firm name. A lawyer will be assisting in the unauthorized practice of law if the lawyer fails to remove such name.

[5] Disbarred, suspended lawyers or lawyers on disability inactive status may have contact with clients of the licensed lawyer so long as such lawyer and the licensed lawyer provide written notice to the client that the lawyer may not practice law. Written notice to the client shall include an advisement that the person may not give advice or engage in any other conduct considered the practice of law. Proof of service shall be maintained in the licensed lawyer's file for a minimum of two years.

[6] Separate and apart from the disbarred, suspended or disabled lawyer's obligation not to practice law, the licensed lawyer who employs or hires such person has an obligation to directly supervise that individual.