

Legal Office Procedures (7th Edition)

By Joyce Morton Ed.D.

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This popular book, the only legal office procedure book to receive a 5-star rating on Amazon.com, introduces readers to the career of a legal office assistant. It presents basic legal concepts and the various fields of the law and outlines the preparation of documents commonly used in these fields. It provides the information needed to select documents appropriate for a particular situation, identify the information necessary to complete the documents, and prepare the documents correctly. Comprehensive coverage begins with an overview of the law office; then describes office duties; computers and office systems; legal correspondence; the history of law; the court structure; litigation procedures, including the preparation of legal documents, preparations for trial, and litigation and discovery procedures; family law; wills, trust, and probate; business organizations; real estate; criminal law; legal research; and careers in the law. For legal secretaries, legal assistants, paralegals, and law office managers and staff.

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap
Preface

The material in this book has been organized in a logical, step-by-step manner to provide you with the terminology, background, and knowledge of the legal procedures required to work in a law office. Overall, you will find the text is simple and concise, designed to assist students who have little or no background in the legal field. For practical applications, the Student Assignments at the end of the chapter provide you with relevant and interesting projects to complete that deal with the various areas of the law. ORGANIZATION OF EACH CHAPTER

The text follows a logical organization, with chapters building on each other and prior chapters. Each chapter provides an excellent learning experience and is organized as follows:

Objectives Chapter text Summary Vocabulary Student Assessment Student Assignments

Objectives are listed at the beginning of each chapter that identify the material to be covered in that chapter. The chapter text reflects this organization and presents the material in an orderly manner. The summary reviews the material presented in the chapter, and the vocabulary provides definitions for the words highlighted in the chapter. The student assessment provides questions that evaluate the learning process and reinforce the student's understanding of the topic covered. The student assignments provide relevant and interesting learning activities that have been taken from a sample law office. ORGANIZATION OF THE TEXT

The sixteen chapters are organized into six main parts:

Part 1: The Law Office
Chapter 1 provides a background of the law office and those persons involved in its operation. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the duties required of the legal support staff. Chapter 3 provides information on the dramatic changes that have occurred in the law office as a result of advances in technology, software, and telecommunications. Chapter 4 discusses the preparation and formatting of legal correspondence.

Part 2: General Information
This section focuses on the history of the law in Chapter 5, providing some background on our present legal system, and Chapter 6 discusses the court structure and its influence on the legal environment.

Part 3: Litigation Procedures
Chapters 7, 8, and 9 deal with preparing legal documents and the procedures involved in the litigation process. This section covers the preparation of pleadings and other court papers used in civil matters, from the initial filing of a lawsuit through discovery, trial, and the appellate procedures.

Part 4: Substantive Law
Part 4 (Chapters 10 through 14) describes the other areas of the law, such as family; wills, trusts, and probate; business organizations; real estate; and criminal law. These chapters focus on increasing your knowledge of the law while providing activities that improve document processing skills and understanding of the procedural sequence. Actual legal cases that have been adapted into practice sets provide realistic training in these areas of the law.

Part 5: Legal Research
Chapter 15 provides information on the U.S. legal system and the sources for doing legal research. Activities provided at the end of the chapter make use of Internet search procedures that relate to the legal field.

Part 6: Getting a Job
Chapter 16 helps you to assess your strengths and weaknesses and outlines a guide to prepare for employment and develop a job search plan to achieve that goal. This chapter discusses sources for employment, suggestions for preparing a resume, the letter of application, and follow-up procedures.
FEATURES OF THE BOOK

This book contains many features that will provide excellent information and training for the law office staff.

Disk
Documents have been recorded on the disk that is located in the pocket in the back of the book. This disk includes legal documents that you are not required to type, and that can be used in the completion of the various projects. Subdirectories have been created on the disk for Microsoft WORD 97 and WordPerfect for Windows. Files that have been created in Microsoft WORD are stored in the WORD subdirectory, and files that have been created in WordPerfect for Windows are stored in the WP directory. These documents can be easily converted to other software programs used by most schools.

As you complete the projects, you are instructed to keyboard changes to the documents saved on the student's disk or create a new document, print a hard copy for the instructor, and save a copy to your disk. Simulation activities are presented for most chapters, that enables you to prepare documents in a "real life" office scenario using the legal skills for the document preparation in the chapter.

If a student's disk is damaged, a copy can be made from the instructor's disk or disks can be downloaded from the Prentice Hall Web Site at prenhall.

Use the search feature on the homepage to find the listing by title, Legal Office Procedures, Fifth Edition, or by author Joyce Morton, to find the link to download the information for the student data disk.

Practice Sets
The practice sets at the end of selected chapters are prepared in conjunction with the text and provide you with practical experience in performing the actual work involved in preparing a client's case. These projects provide you with information relating to various areas of the law, as well as the manner and sequence in which these papers are prepared.

Personal Injury Adoption (Independent) Probate (Testate) Corporation Unlawful Detainer (Eviction of a Tenant) Criminal Law

The practice sets are actual court cases in which the names, dates, and circumstances of the cases have been changed somewhat to make them suitable for student use. Cases have been selected from areas of the law that would most frequently occur in the law office and with which the legal office support staff would most often come into contact.

Internet Legal Research
The legal research chapter contains end-of-chapter projects that require you to use the search engines of the Internet to find information relating to the law. With the many advances taking place in technology, you will find this to be an interesting and relevant exercise.

Illustrations

The book contains illustrations of legal forms relating to each section of the law. They are presented in the sequence in which they would be used in the preparation of the case. While it is impossible to include all the forms, a good sample has been selected to represent the various areas of the law and the procedures covered by each chapter.

Photographs
Many of the law office pictures included in this book were taken at the Graham & James law firm in Costa Mesa, California. The models in the pictures are attorneys, legal office administrators, and the legal support staff. Some of the staff members are former students of the author who have made careers in the legal field. Special acknowledgment should be to given to this staff for allowing us to provide the text with pictures of actual law office situations.

Instructor's Manual
This manual provides teaching suggestions as well as the answers to the Student Assessments (Chapter Tests) and a final exam. Hard copy samples of the hands-on Student Assignments (Projects) are also included. RELEVANT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The materials presented in this book have been designed to provide you with relevant and interesting learning experiences on the most current materials available. You must understand, however, that legal procedures, filing fees, and the format of documents and their captions and headings will vary from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction. You should be able to adapt to the procedures used and preferred by your particular office. Also, legal procedures and laws change regularly, and it is important that you and your attorney stay abreast of these constant changes.

While this book will give you the necessary background to work as a law office support trainee, each area of the law is vast and complex. It is impossible to cover every case or procedure that you may encounter in a law office, and it is this variety that makes legal work so interesting. After completing this book, you may find that certain areas of the law are particularly attractive to you, and these may be the areas in which you will want to specialize. You may obtain this specialization through employment and experience, or you may want to obtain additional training and education. SUMMARY

This book introduces you to the career of a legal office assistant. It presents basic legal concepts and the various fields of law and outlines the preparation of documents commonly used in these fields. After completing this book, you should be able to select documents appropriate for a particular situation, identify the information necessary to complete the documents, and prepare the documents correctly.
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I wish to thank Caterina Tuminello, Legal Secretary with Gibson, Dunn, and Crutcher, Irvine, California. Her knowledge,

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secretaries, legal assistants, paralegals, and law office managers and staff.

About the Author

Joyce Morton is a dedicated teacher, leader, and author in the field of education. She has taught for many years at Fullerton College and served as Assistant Dean of Students and was the Department Coordinator for the Office Technology Area. She is presently teaching a computer classes at Saddleback College and has developed the Office Skills Program which features self-paced Distance Education computer applications classes. This program enrolls over 400 students each year.

She has presently revised the 7th edition of the book she has authored entitled ***Legal Office Procedures,*** published by Pearson Prentice Hall. ***Legal Office Procedures*** has been widely adopted throughout the United States and has received a 5-star rating from reviewers on Amazon.com. This book is used in colleges and legal professional training courses throughout the United States, and seven foreign English-speaking countries.

She is the recipient of the following honors and awards:

Listed in **Outstanding Educators in America**
Recipient of the **USC Education Alumni Award**
Recipient of the **Fullerton College Emeritus Teacher's Award**
Cited for teaching excellence by the **Fullerton College Staff of Distinction Award**
Attended USC on the **Trojan Junior Auxiliary Scholarship**

She was the recipient of the **Staff of Distinction Award** at Fullerton College and was cited for teaching excellence, campus leadership, and contribution to one's field. She has also received the Fullerton College Emeritus Teacher's Award.

She has served a president of many professional organizations and presented workshops and given speeches at community and educational organizations. She has consulted and provided computer training for various businesses and industries. She is involved in various volunteer organizations and recently served as Vice President of Trojan League of Orange County.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cheryl Stone:

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