



Client Notifications / Active Files

All clients with active files need to be advised that their lawyer or paralegal has passed away or is incapacitated and unable to practise law or provide legal services. Here are some steps that may assist you in this regard:

- ☐ Change the voicemail greeting on the business phone line and add an autoreply to the business email addresses. The following wording may assist:

Please be advised that this law practice has closed. If you are a client seeking your client file, please provide your full name, the nature of your matter, and your contact information so that we may get back to you regarding the return of your client file.

If other licensees have taken over the active client files, you can instead direct clients to contact them to inquire after their files.

This measure will aid in spreading the message to clients that the law practice has closed, but other notification measures must also be taken.

- ☐ Locate the active client file list. If the licensee used PC Law (or other similar accounting software), you may be able to generate this list electronically. Office staff or the bookkeeper should be able to help you with this. They may also assist you by contacting all the clients and assisting in the file pick-up / delivery process.
- ☐ If you transfer any of the active files to other licensees, ask them to contact the client to notify them that they have their file.
- ☐ Locate the licensee's calendar. Often lawyers and paralegals note pending court dates and due dates on a paper or electronic calendar. This may assist you in identifying active matters – and, usually, the most pressing ones. Notify these clients first.
- ☐ Locate active client matters. Paper files are typically housed in filing cabinets in alphabetical order. Closed files are generally moved to another cabinet or are boxed and placed in a storage area. If the licensee maintained electronic files only (or both), active matters may be obvious from the folder system and many programs will show the last active date which may also assist.



- If you have identified the names of active client matters but have not found contact information for the clients, you may find this information on the file jacket of paper files or in a client information sheet for electronic files. **As client files contain confidential and privileged information, limit your viewing of the files to this information.**
- As an added measure to protect clients, you may also contact the tribunals that the lawyer or paralegal appeared before to advise them of the licensee's passing and to ask if they can provide you with a listing of active matters and/or assist in notifying these clients.
- If the lawyer or paralegal provided services through Legal Aid, you may also contact Legal Aid Ontario to advise them of the licensee's passing and to ask if they can provide you with a list of active matters and/or assist in notifying these clients. Legal Aid Ontario can be contacted at 416-979-1446 or found online at <https://www.legalaid.on.ca/>.