

Avoid Administrative or Financial Suspension of Your Bar License

By Rachel Edwards

Over the past year, the bar has seen a high number of suspensions of active bar licenses for failure to complete regulatory requirements, such as payment of bar membership fees, PLF assessments, and IOLTA and MCLE reporting. It is surmised that reasons include:

1. Attorneys feel inundated by email and may not read all emails received;
2. Many email programs have adjusted their cybersecurity protocol by changing their filtering parameters, resulting in the automatic sending of more emails to spam or junk folders; and
3. Transitions between jobs and changing email addresses can lead to problems, as attorneys may receive notices at their old email address but never see them.

Avoid the hassle that comes with late fees, suspension, additional discipline for unauthorized practice and other rule violations, and the process of seeking reinstatement by following a few suggestions:

- **Keep the Bar (@osbar.org) and PLF (@osbplf.org) domain names on your “safe senders” list.** Bar and PLF regulatory notices are only sent by email. To ensure these emails aren’t moved to your spam or junk email folder, add both domain names to your “safe

senders” list. The process differs depending on your email program. A quick Google search should provide the necessary information for each type of program. If your program doesn’t allow for “safe senders,” be sure to check your spam or junk folders regularly.

- **Calendar regulatory deadlines.** Annual regulatory notices are sent out beginning in November, and deadlines begin in January. Keep an eye out for the emails and calendar the due dates immediately, preferably as recurring events every year. And don’t wait until the last minute to complete the requirements.
- **Take extra precautions when transitioning between jobs or changing your email address.** Be sure to update your bar directory information immediately. That is the email address the bar and PLF will use for notices. This is especially important if you are making a change when a regulatory deadline is approaching.
- **Review your bar member dashboard and directory periodically.** The bar member dashboard —the home page you see when you log in with your bar number and password — lists your regulatory requirements. Check the dashboard periodically to be sure you are in compliance. Also check your bar member directory to verify that all contact information is accurate.

BAR AND PLF REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR 2020

- **Bar membership fees**
 - a. Deadline:** January 31
 - b. Late fees:** \$100 for active members and \$50 for inactive, retired, and pro bono members added to the membership fee on February 1 for members who don't pay before January 31.
 - c. Suspension:** If not paid by April 1, suspension begins April 2.
- **IOLTA annual reporting**
 - a. Deadline:** January 31
 - b. Suspension:** If not reported by April 1, suspension begins April 2.
- **MCLE reporting**
 - a. Deadline:** All credits must be completed by midnight, December 31, of the reporting period. Your completed compliance report must be electronically certified and submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. on January 31.
 - b. Suspension:** If you are sent a notice of noncompliance and the noncompliance is not cured by the deadline specified in the notice, the MCLE Program Manager shall recommend to the Supreme Court that you be suspended from membership in the Bar (see OSB MCLE Rules and Regulations, Rule 7).
- **PLF assessment or request for exemption**
 - a. Annual deadline:** January 10. If you fail to pay your PLF assessment or fail to file a proper exemption, you have 60 days before you are suspended (annual suspension date is March 16). Timing may vary depending on your payment schedule and other circumstances, such as resuming practice midyear.
 - b. Late fees:** \$100 per month late payment

charge if payment is not received at the PLF by the default date (annual default date is January 10). The default date may vary depending on your payment schedule and other circumstances.

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