



How to Write a Closing Your Practice Letter

Occasionally a lawyer will reach out to me wanting clarification on what should be covered in a letter notifying active clients, whose matters the lawyer will be unable to complete in time, that she is closing her practice. Here's my response.

Ordinarily these letters will inform each client of any relevant time limitations or time frames that are in play, provide instructions as to how and where they may obtain a copy of their file, and advise them to find a new attorney as quickly as possible. In addition, it's vitally important that you make sure every client is fully informed about the current status of their matter, to include setting forth what yet needs to be done and what the legal ramifications might be if they fail to follow through.

After having covered the risk management priorities, I'll go on to share that an offer to assist these clients in finding a new attorney by providing a few names or the phone number to a local lawyer referral service would be appropriate, that she shouldn't overlook the importance of setting forth her file retention policy, and that she might want to provide post closure contact information in the event anyone ever needs a copy of their file at some later point in time. Finally, I'll remind her of the importance of sending a second follow-up letter that provides a full accounting of client funds remaining in the trust account and/or a statement of fees owed by the client.

With the above in mind, here's some sample language that can serve as a place to start should you ever need to write your own closing the practice letter. Perhaps this will prove useful to you at some point.

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{Date}

Re: {Identify the specific matter}

Dear {Client name},

Due to **{Identify the reason, if appropriate}** I will be closing my law practice effective **{Date}**, which means my representation of you will conclude on that date. Since I will be unable to bring your matter to a conclusion prior to leaving the practice of law, I recommend that you immediately seek to hire another lawyer who can step in and see your matter through to completion. While you are free to select any lawyer of your choosing, if helpful, I would be happy to provide you with a few names of local lawyers who practice in the area of law your matter requires. Also, our State Bar Association operates a lawyer referral service. If you have any interest in checking with them, their number is **{Insert number}**.

In light of **{Insert the current status of the matter to include notification of any time limitations and any other critical information the client needs to be aware of.}**, it is imperative that you hire a new lawyer without delay. Given that **{Set forth what yet needs to be done.}**, a failure to do so could result in **{State what the legal ramifications might be if the client fails to follow through.}** Finally, once retained, you will need to provide me written authority to transfer a copy of your file to your new lawyer; or if you prefer, you may stop by my office to pick up your file, which will allow you to personally deliver it to your new lawyer.

I **{or insert the name of the lawyer or firm who will}** will continue to store my copy of your closed file for **{List period}** years. After that time, I **{or name of lawyer or firm who will}** will destroy my copy of your closed file unless you notify me in writing within the next 30 days that you do not wish to have your closed file destroyed. Once received, I will try to make alternative arrangements that will better meet your needs. If a copy of your closed file is ever needed prior to its being destroyed, you may reach me **{or name of lawyer or firm storing the file}** at **{Insert number}**.

Within the next **{Number}** weeks, I will be providing you with a full accounting of any trust account funds still in my possession as well as a statement of the amount of my fees that remain outstanding.

You will still be able to reach me at my regular office address and phone number until **{Date}**. After that time, my contact information will be **{List name, address, phone, and/or email}**.

It has been a pleasure to be of service to you and please don't hesitate to check back with me if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,