**Checklist for Opening Files**

Your File Opening Checklist should be readily accessible so you can quickly retrieve basic file information. It should contain the following:

Client Contact Info:

* Client name and spouse’s name
* Business and home addresses
* Business, home and cell phone numbers
* Work and personal email addresses

Client Number and Client Matter Number: Consider a file numbering convention. For example, the matter *Allen Johnson v. ABC Trucking, Inc*. might have the following file number: 12-045, indicating Mr. Johnson’s client number is 12, and indicating that this is the 45th matter that you have handled for him.

How was the matter obtained? Indicate who referred the matter to you. Date file opened:

Attorney assigned to the matter:

Is the file for a new client, a new matter for a current client, or a new matter for a former client?

Are there any partners, affiliates, subsidiaries, parent corporation or other related persons or entities? Was file placed on the Master File List/Client List and the Bookkeeping/Accounting List?

Was written resolution of the Conflicts Search Results Memo placed in the file? Did the client sign an informed consent or waiver, if conflict found?

What is the basis for the fee and the method for paying the fees and expenses? Was an Advance Deposit collected?

Was the Deposit made into the Client Trust Account?

Was an Engagement Letter or other written fee agreement sent to the client? Did the client sign or acknowledge the engagement letter?

Were all critical dates, including prescription periods and closing dates, marked on the appropriate calendars?

Who are the attorneys for the other parties, and/or the judge and arbitrator or mediator? (Obtain necessary information to communicate with each.)

Were all necessary Client Authorizations and Consents obtained (including medical, financial, educational, etc.)? Is an expert or consultant needed for the matter?

If so, name them and all necessary information to contact them.

Has a copy of the fee agreement been given to the client at the time of execution?

Has a copy of Rule 1.8(e) been given to the client in every instance where the client has been provided financial assistance?

**PRACTICE AID GUIDE:** The Essentials of Law Office Management **CHAPTER 5** File Management

Page 93