

The Attorney Disciplinary Process

To promote confidence in the legal system, the following offices address complaints against attorneys accused of ethical misconduct. Attorney registration fees fund the disciplinary process. No tax dollars or other public funds are used.



Office of Disciplinary Counsel

The Office of the Ohio Disciplinary Counsel (ODC) educates, investigates, and prosecutes attorneys and judicial officers accused of ethical misconduct. ODC also investigates and prosecutes allegations of the unauthorized practice of law.



“Ethical misconduct” means violations of:

For Attorneys:

- Rules of Professional Conduct.
- Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Bar of Ohio.

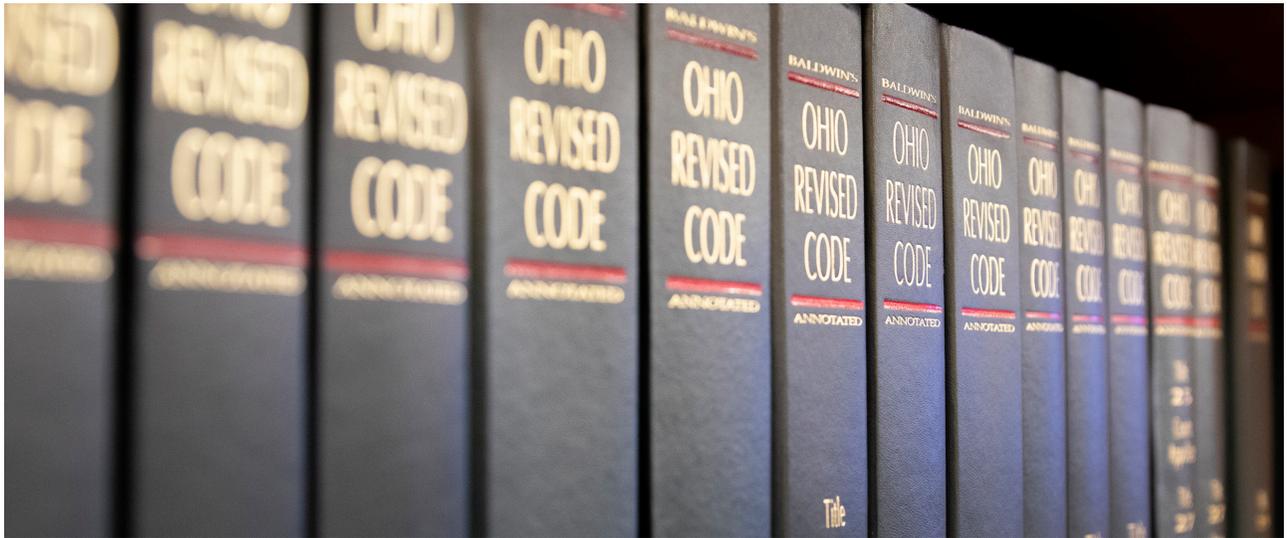
For Judicial Officers:

- Code of Judicial Conduct.
- Rules of Professional Conduct.

- Supreme Court Rules for the Government of the Judiciary.

If you have a question involving a potential violation or your obligations under these rules, please call our ethics hotline at 800.589.5256 (In Ohio) or 614.387.9700.

In Ohio, 31 local bar associations have certified grievance committees that may also investigate misconduct allegations against attorneys within their geographic area. The Grievance Committee of the Ohio State Bar Association primarily handles grievances against judicial officers. A grievant dissatisfied with the dismissal of a grievance by a bar association committee may appeal to ODC. For more information, visit our website at www.odc.ohio.gov or call us at the above numbers.



Board of Professional Conduct

The Board of Professional Conduct adjudicates allegations of professional misconduct on the part of lawyers and judges. The board makes recommendations to the Supreme Court regarding the appropriate sanction to be imposed when a lawyer or judge is found to have engaged in professional misconduct.



The board plays a significant role in educating members of the bar and promoting and enhancing compliance with the standards of professional conduct. To assist lawyers and judges in understanding their ethical obligations the board offers the following:

- Advisory Opinions regarding hypothetical or prospective application of the rules.
- Non-binding staff letters and emails addressing application of the rules.
- Ethics advice in response to telephone or email inquiries.
- Ethics Guides that address subjects about which the staff receives frequent inquiries.
- A FAQ section on the board's website to address brief frequent ethical questions.
- Continuing Legal Education programs.

If you have a question involving your obligations under these rules, please call us at 614.387.9370.

If you would like to request a formal advisory opinion, please direct a written request to Richard A. Dove, Esq., Director, Board of Professional Conduct, 65 South Front Street, 5th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215-3431 or Rick.Dove@bpc.ohio.gov. For more information, visit our website at www.bpc.ohio.gov or call us at the above number.

Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection

While the vast majority of attorneys observe the highest standards of ethics and professionalism, there are the few who do not. The legal profession is the only profession that provides assistance to those harmed by the dishonest conduct of its members. Every state has a fund for client protection, and the Supreme Court of Ohio established the LFCP in 1985 to promote public trust in the legal profession by reimbursing losses sustained by clients due to attorney theft or misappropriation.

For more information, visit our website at www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/courts/advisory/boards/client-protection or call us at 614.387.9390.

