



be published in both the local newspaper where the lawyer practices and The Alabama Lawyer (a publication that is distributed to all members of the Alabama State Bar). The other type of public reprimand is published only in The Alabama Lawyer. These reprimands are also placed in the lawyer's permanent file.

**Suspension** - The lawyer is suspended from practicing law for a specific amount of time, ranging from 45 days to five years. Depending on the length of suspension, lawyers may be reinstated to practice law without a hearing. In some cases a lawyer may not resume the practice of law until reinstated after public notice and a hearing.

**Disbarment** - The lawyer is disbarred. A disbarment is for a period of five years. The lawyer must petition the Bar for reinstatement in order to be allowed to resume the practice of law.

### **Fee Disputes**

Fee disputes are not handled by the Alabama State Bar's grievance system because fee disputes generally do not involve questions of ethics or professional conduct.

### **Client Security Funds**

The Client Security Fund was established by the Alabama State Bar to provide reimbursement to individuals who have lost money or property due to the dishonesty of an Alabama lawyer. All claims are investigated by the Client Security Fund Committee. Reimbursement is made at the discretion of the Client Security Fund Committee in appropriate cases. There is no right to reimbursement and reimbursement is limited. The Fund is a remedy of last resort for those who cannot obtain reimbursement from other sources. If you wish to make application to this fund please contact the Alabama State Bar for additional information.

### **Who Will Know About Your Complaint and the Information Provided to the Bar**

In most instances, the lawyer will be sent a copy of your complaint and copies of the information you provide. The rules of the Supreme Court of Alabama require that the Alabama State Bar treat all inquiries and complaints filed with the Office of General Counsel as confidential, unless discipline has been imposed. However, during the course of the investigation, the investigator may need to contact witnesses for additional information.

You, as the complainant, have absolute immunity from suit for filing your complaint. Witnesses who may be required to testify at a hearing also have immunity from suit resulting from their participation in the grievance process.

Your complaint will receive the Alabama State Bar's prompt attention and every attempt will be made to resolve your complaint in a manner which is fair to both you and the lawyer.

Alabama State Bar  
Center for Professional Responsibility  
415 Dexter Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
334-269-1515  
[www.alabar.org](http://www.alabar.org)

*Single copies of this brochure and others are free upon request by contacting the Alabama State Bar at the above listed number or Web site.*

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# Complaints Against Alabama Lawyers



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