

As attorneys, we engage in a profession devoted to serving the interests of clients and the public. As officers of the court, counselors, and advocates, we aspire to professional standards of behavior. In addition to adhering to the letter and spirit of rules of professional conduct, we believe the following principles foster success in—and contribute to the enjoyment of—the practice of law:

- Treating other participants in the justice system with courtesy and respect;
- Upholding the integrity of the justice system; and
- Striving to eliminate prejudice and ensure fairness in the justice system.

*As a judge, I have observed firsthand the positive effects of the professional standards outlined by the Ethics and Civility Committee of the Alameda County Bar Association. The bench, the bar, and the community are fortunate to have people upholding respect, integrity, and fairness—principles that go hand-and-hand with the practice of law but sometimes fall by the wayside in our stressful day-to-day lives.*

Barbara Miller, 2005 Presiding Judge

Superior Court of California, County of Alameda

By adhering to these principles, we earn a reputation for integrity, fulfill our responsibility as officers of the court, and honor our commitment as counselors and advocates.

To further our commitment to civility and professionalism, the Alameda County Bar Association has adopted the following guidelines for attorneys who practice in our county.

While representing our clients and protecting their interests zealously within the bounds of the law and ethical standards established by the California Supreme Court and the State Bar of California, we shall:

- Be courteous, respectful, and honest with the court and all its personnel;
- Be prepared and punctual for all court appearances, hearings, and meetings;
- Advise clients against pursuing litigation that is without merit, and refrain from representing clients in such litigation;
- Resolve differences over substantive, procedural, and discovery matters by agreement, mediation, or arbitration whenever appropriate;
- Honor the client's right to opinions concerning opposing counsel only to the extent those opinions are relevant to the client's interests;
- Refrain from and discourage conduct reflecting prejudice on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status;
- In civil matters, stipulate to facts as to which there is no genuine dispute;
- Support activities that educate the public about the justice system and the legal process; and
- Participate in pro bono activities and encourage other attorneys to encourage other attorneys to help make legal services available to all.

Furthermore, we shall refrain from:

- Unjustly or improperly criticizing judges, attorneys, or any other party;
- Knowingly misstating facts or law, or causing someone to form a mistaken conclusion of law;

*Civility is the hallmark of good lawyering. Attorneys who adhere to professional standards of behavior earn the respect of their clients, colleagues, and the court. Attorneys who make the Alameda County Bar Association guidelines for professionalism and civility a part of their practice enhance public respect for the legal system and ultimately the quality of our professional lives.*

Robert Freedman, 2005 Assistant Presiding Judge  
Superior Court of California, County of Alameda

- Using tactics solely intended to delay, harass, or drain the financial resources and time of the opposing party and their counsel;
- Using discovery to harass the opposition or for any improper purpose, or refusing to produce information that the court can be expected ultimately to require be produced, and
- Seeking sanctions against or disqualifications of another attorney solely for the purpose of obtaining tactical advantage, or of any other improper purpose.

APPROVED BY THE  
ALAMEDA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
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DRAFTED AND APPROVED BY THE  
ALAMEDA COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION  
ETHICS AND CIVILITY COMMITTEE



*In our hectic lives, we sometimes forget the importance of treating others with respect. By its very nature, the practice of law can be adversarial. However, as attorneys, we have a responsibility to our clients, and that means not only upholding the highest standards of professional behavior to protect our clients' interests, but encouraging civility and cooperation at all stages of the legal process in order to help resolve conflicts.*

*Victor R. Ochoa, 2005 President  
Alameda County Bar Association*

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# *Statement of* Professionalism and Civility



PROMOTING JUSTICE SINCE 1877