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NFPA News



NATIONAL
FEDERATION
of
PARALEGAL
ASSOCIATIONS Inc.

CALENDAR



NFPA's Joint Conference will be held on March 21-23, 2014 at Bunker Hill Community College in Boston, Mass.

REMINDER



Credential Renewal Fees are Changing Effective January 1, 2014. [Details here](#)

2014 NFPA Annual Convention Exhibit Reservation Form is now available on [NFPA Website](#).

Seasons Greetings

Celebrating 2014 – It's a Big Year for NFPA!

NFPA's 40th anniversary is in 2014! A committee made up of former NFPA presidents was formed in October of 2013 to develop plans to commemorate that anniversary. Committee members include Tracey Young, RP, Georgette Pecoraro, RP, Anita Haworth, RP, S. Kristine Farmer, RP, Dianna Noyes, RP, and Robin Solomon. As a first step, committee members are drafting articles about NFPA and the paralegal profession to appear in the four 2014 issues of The National Paralegal Reporter. The committee is discussing other ways to commemorate NFPA's 40th anniversary, including plans for a celebration during the 2014 annual convention in Dallas.

Contributed by Georgette Pecoraro, RP

5 Things All Attorneys Expect from Paralegals

By Elaine Prappas, J.D., Admissions Advisor at Center for Advanced Legal Studies

When I became a paralegal in 1984, it was very common for paralegals to sit at their desks all day with their headphones on and type a variety of documents such as motions, pleadings, and correspondence, dictated by an attorney via the Dictaphone. The role of the paralegal has since evolved from secretarial typists or transcribers to highly qualified staff members who perform a variety of tasks to support lawyers, including maintaining and organizing files, conducting legal research, and drafting documents.

Since the paralegal profession has evolved to include more substantive legal work, those wishing to become a paralegal usually seek formal training to gain the legal knowledge necessary to work alongside an attorney. But in order to really excel in the paralegal profession, there are several characteristics and skills that are important to possess and develop in addition to legal knowledge. Here are 5 things that every attorney expects from his or her paralegal:

1. Punctuality & Attendance

Attorneys' expectations are often very simple - be present and on time. Should any extreme circumstances arise that cause one to be absent or late, you must call and let your attorney know. Punctual paralegals with outstanding attendance are indispensable to an attorney.

2. Communication Skills

Paralegals need to be good communicators, constantly developing both their written and verbal skills. Writing skills are vital to a paralegal's success. Excellent verbal skills will also help a paralegal communicate effectively, and will cut down on misunderstandings and increase a paralegal's productivity.



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Article Suggestions? New Ideas?



Please send information to Suzanne Sitter, NFPA Editorial Coordinator

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5 Things All Attorney's Expect from Paralegals...(continued)

Not only is it important for paralegals to communicate well with their attorneys, but let's not forget about the clients. Paralegals can assist their attorneys by mastering the kind of communication that clients appreciate, answering and making phone calls, sending copies of documents, and answering emails.

3. Language Skills

Attorneys expect paralegals to know general legal terms that are commonly used, such as depositions, interrogatories, and requests for admissions in all areas of law. The legal profession is full of written materials which require paralegals to continuously expand their vocabulary.

4. Organizational Skills

Organizational skills are paramount to being an effective paralegal. They facilitate a paralegal's ability to create and manage calendar systems, track court dates, and meet filing deadlines. Additionally, legal research materials, such as case law, must be organized in a method that they can be easily navigated and retrieved.

5. Technology Skills

Today's most sought-after paralegal skills are technology skills. Employers do not want to teach you how to use a computer. It is expected that a paralegal will know how to operate and navigate a computer and legal software proficiently. In addition, litigation support and e-filing are becoming commonplace in the legal field.

Note: This article was edited. To read the entire article, visit the Center for Advanced Legal Studies website at www.paralegal.edu.

Pleased to Meet You!

The world of "firsts" are as many today, if not more, then the year before for me. I graduated this spring from Concord Law School with an Executive Juris Doctorate Degree. This is my first year as a paralegal in a newly created paralegal position at the City of Durango, where I am employed. As of this year, I am also a new member of NFPA and Rocky Mountain Paralegal Association. As such, I have been reading about all your successes, professional tips and expertise. Thank you.

As the new Editorial Coordinator, our committee will be enterprising and trying to think of new story ideas for the E-Newsletter and contributing to articles for the National Paralegal Reporter. As noted in the sidebar, most of the E-Newsletters, ask for your ideas. These are welcome and appreciated. I hope in the upcoming issues to learn and hear more about your professional stories. So please don't hesitate to contact me, even if it's just to introduce yourself.

Have a safe and wonderful holiday season.

Suzanne Sitter, NFPA Editorial Coordinator

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