



# SUPREME COURT OF GUAM

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HON. KATHERINE A. MARAMAN  
CHIEF JUSTICE

HANNAH G. ARROYO  
CLERK OF COURT

March 7, 2018

To: All Guam Bar Association Members

**Re: Notice and Opportunity to Comment on Proposed Guam Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement and Disability Proceedings**

The Supreme Court of Guam Subcommittee on Attorney Discipline (“Subcommittee”) has been actively working to draft the Guam Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement and Disability Proceedings over the course of two years. The Subcommittee has recommended the adoption of the proposed Rules.

The proposed Rules are attached to this notice. Written comments on the proposed Rules may be sent no later than **April 6, 2018**, by email to Hannah G. Arroyo, Clerk of Court for the Supreme Court of Guam, at [hgutierrezarroyo@guamsupremecourt.com](mailto:hgutierrezarroyo@guamsupremecourt.com) or to the following address:

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**GUAM RULES FOR LAWYER DISCIPLINARY  
ENFORCEMENT AND DISABILITY PROCEEDINGS**

(Draft Rules (Jan. 10, 2018))

**GUAM RULES FOR LAWYER DISCIPLINARY  
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**Note:** The primary source for these rules was the American Bar Association’s (ABA) Model Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement (MRLDE) as they existed in mid-2015. The MRLDE’s numbering scheme has largely been preserved. Unless there was a sound reason to alter a model rule, it was not changed. Where modifications or additions have been made based on other sources, information about those sources is provided. The ABA’s commentary to its MRLDE is not included here; however, it will be highly instructive and persuasive authority. The sources referenced include Court Rules and Committee Rules. These references are to procedural rules in place in mid-2015, including the Supreme Court of Guam’s Rules for the Discipline of Attorneys adopted through Promulgation Order 98-001 and amended by Promulgation Order 99-003 (“Court Rules”), and the Bar of Guam Ethics Committee Rules of Procedure – Disciplinary Proceedings, amended by Promulgation Orders 99-004 and 08-003-01 (“Committee Rules”).

## **PREAMBLE**

The Supreme Court of Guam hereby declares that, under the Organic Act of Guam, it has exclusive responsibility within Guam for the structure and administration of the lawyer discipline and disability system. As such, the Court has the power and authority to maintain appropriate standards of professional conduct and to dispose of individual cases of lawyer discipline and disability in an appropriate manner that does not discriminate by race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, or any other protected classification under federal or Guam law.

The license to practice law in this territory is a continuing proclamation by the Supreme Court that the holder is fit to be entrusted with professional and judicial matters, and to aid in the administration of justice as an attorney and as an officer of the court. It is the duty of every recipient of the conditional privilege to practice law to conduct himself or herself at all times, both professionally and personally, in conformity with the standards imposed upon members of the bar as conditions of that privilege.

In the exercise of the Supreme Court's authority to disbar, suspend, or otherwise discipline members of the Bar of Guam for misconduct, the Supreme Court adopts and promulgates the following rules, which shall govern disciplinary and disability proceedings against members of the Bar of Guam and all attorneys within this Court's jurisdiction. All gender-specific pronouns in the following rules are to be construed as applying to all attorneys, regardless of gender.

**SOURCE:** Preamble to MRLDE; Preamble to Court Rules

## **I. STRUCTURE AND SCOPE**

### **Rule 1. Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System.**

The Supreme Court of Guam (“Court”) hereby establishes a comprehensive system of regulation of the legal profession in Guam and adopts these Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement and Disability Proceedings (“Rules”) in furtherance of the Court’s duty and responsibility to ensure proper administration of lawyer discipline and disability matters. The purpose of these Rules is to maintain appropriate standards of professional conduct in order to protect the public and the administration of justice from lawyers who have demonstrated by their conduct that they are unable or are likely to be unable to properly discharge their professional duties. Proceedings under these Rules are *sui generis*. The system shall be comprised of the following component entities, together with others that may from time to time be approved by the Court: the Commission on Lawyer Regulation, the Investigative Committee, the Hearing Panel, and Disciplinary Counsel.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 1; Committee Rules 1 & 2; Court Rule 1.

### **Rule 2. Commission on Lawyer Regulation.**

#### (a) Commission.

There is hereby established a body charged with administering the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System to be known as the Commission on Lawyer Regulation (“Commission”). The Commission shall oversee the administrative processes of the remaining components of the system without substantive involvement in any particular matters concerning lawyer misconduct or disability.

#### (b) Appointment.

The Commission shall consist of seven members appointed by the Court and shall be empowered with the requisite authority and responsibility to administer the lawyer discipline and disability system as described in these Rules. The Commission shall consist of five active members of the bar of Guam in good standing and two public members who shall serve for fixed, staggered terms. Three lawyer members and one public member shall be appointed to initial terms of two years while two lawyer members and one public member shall be appointed to initial terms of four years. Subsequent terms of all members shall be for four years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive full four-year terms; however, after serving two consecutive four-year terms, a member may be reappointed to the Commission after having been off the Commission for one year. A member of the Commission may be removed by the Court during their term of office upon a showing of good cause. Alternate and *pro tempore* members may be appointed by the Court as deemed appropriate. Former Commission members may serve as members of the Commission *pro tempore*, as needed, upon order of the Court.

#### (c) Appointment of Officers.

The Court shall appoint lawyer members of the Commission to serve as chair and vice-chair for the remainder of their appointed term. No term limits apply to the chair and vice-chair positions.

#### (d) Quorum.

Four members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum. The Commission may act with the concurrence of a majority of the quorum participating and voting.

#### (e) Powers and Duties.

The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- (1) To periodically review the functioning of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System

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and submit reports to the Court which may include proposed amendments to these Rules, the Guam Rules of Professional Conduct, or other Court rules;

(2) To conduct an annual performance evaluation of Disciplinary Counsel upon inviting input from the Investigative Committee and Hearing Panel and utilizing the Judiciary of Guam's standard evaluation form(s) with the resulting evaluation to be submitted to the Court for consideration;

(3) To coordinate appointments to the Investigative Committee and Hearing Panel as needed by contacting eligible members of the Guam bar to determine their willingness and availability to serve, and submitting proposed names to the Court for consideration in making such appointments;

(4) To receive and consider complaints that may from time to time be lodged regarding the conduct of Disciplinary Counsel, the Investigative Committee or its members, or the Hearing Panel or its members, and to conduct such investigations as deemed appropriate by the Commission regarding any such complaints. Upon completing review of a complaint, the Commission is authorized to dismiss the matter if it is found to be unsubstantiated or to involve conduct that, while of concern, is minor and isolated, and such decision shall be final with notice of such decision to be provided by the Commission chair to the complainant and the subject individuals or body. Otherwise, the Commission shall submit in letter form to the Court its report and recommended action other than closure through the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court as a confidential matter, a copy of which shall be provided by the Commission chair to the subject individuals or body, noting that members of the Investigative Committee or Hearing Panel or Disciplinary Counsel may only be removed for good cause shown. The Court shall thereafter determine the matter's final disposition and shall provide written notice of its determination to the complainant and the subject individuals or body;

(5) To appoint and supervise necessary staff to assist the Commission, recognizing that employed staff of the Commission may be hired by the Judiciary of Guam and assigned to the Commission, whether as classified or unclassified employees or other status as the case may be;

(6) To inform the public about the existence and operation of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System and its components including information on how to file a complaint, the disposition of each matter in which public discipline has been imposed or a lawyer has been transferred to or from disability inactive status, and when a lawyer who left the practice of law in Guam relative to discipline or disability has been reinstated or readmitted;

The Commission shall inform the public no less than four (4) times a year in a newspaper of general circulation in Guam, and by such other means as the Commission may deem appropriate, of the existence and operation of the lawyer discipline system and the means by which the public may make a complaint against a lawyer;

The Commission shall regularly inform the public in such manner as it may determine appropriate of any disciplinary action taken against a lawyer that results in public discipline;

(7) To delegate, in its discretion, to the chair or vice-chair the power to act for the Commission on administrative and procedural matters; and

(8) To issue public or private advisory opinions respecting matters within the scope of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System.

(f) Expenses.

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Members of the Commission shall receive no compensation for their services but may be reimbursed for travel and other expenses incidental to the performance of their duties. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted to the office of the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court for consideration.

The Commission shall prepare an annual budget for submission to the Court, which shall consist of the Commission's own budget as well as the budgets for the Investigative Committee, the Hearing Panel, and Disciplinary Counsel's office. The Commission shall make reasonable and necessary expenditures pursuant to its approved budget to perform the duties of the Commission.

(g) Abstention of Members.

A member of the Commission, including *pro tempore* members, shall not personally represent a lawyer in any proceeding as provided in these Rules during the member's service. A former member of the Commission, including *pro tempore* members, shall not personally represent a lawyer in any proceeding as provided in these Rules for a period of one year following completion of the former member's service.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 2; Committee Rule 6 (subsection (e)(6))

**Rule 3. Investigative Committee.**

(a) Committee.

There is hereby established a body known as the Investigative Committee ("Investigative Committee") charged with overseeing the substantive investigative component of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System. Within the Investigative Committee, there is hereby established a central intake office, which shall:

(1) receive information and complaints regarding the conduct of lawyers over whom the Court has jurisdiction, provided this rule shall not be construed to limit the authority of any authorized agency to institute proceedings or actions regarding such conduct;

(2) provide assistance to complainants in stating their complaints;

(3) provide information to complainants about the remedies available under the rules of the Court, the operations and procedures of agencies designated by the Court under Rule 1, and the status of their complaints; and

(4) determine whether the facts stated in a complaint or other information regarding the conduct of a lawyer provide grounds for further action by any committee designated by the Court under Rule 1 or any other component of the Judiciary of Guam, including but not limited to the Board of Law Examiners, and/or any outside agency or body including but not limited to the Guam Police Department and the Office of the Attorney General and:

(A) dismiss the complaint; or

(B) forward the complaint to the appropriate committee or component of the Judiciary of Guam and/or outside agency or body.

(b) Appointment.

The Investigative Committee shall consist of seven active members of the bar of Guam in good standing appointed by the Court. Investigative Committee members shall serve for fixed, staggered

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terms. Three members shall be appointed to initial terms of two years, and four members shall be appointed to initial terms of four years. Subsequent terms of all members shall be for four years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive full four-year terms; however, after serving two four-year terms, a member may be reappointed to the Investigative Committee after having been off the Investigative Committee for one year. Alternate and *pro tempore* members may be appointed by the Court as deemed appropriate. Former Investigative Committee members may serve as members of the Investigative Committee *pro tempore*, as needed, upon order of the Court. Upon adoption of these Rules, current members of the Guam Bar Ethics Committee's Investigative Panel shall be eligible for initial appointments under this rule.

(c) Appointment of Officers.

The Court shall appoint members of the Investigative Committee to serve as chair and vice-chair for the remainder of their appointed term. No term limits apply to the chair and vice-chair positions.

(d) Quorum.

Four members of the Investigative Committee shall constitute a quorum. The Investigative Committee may act with the concurrence of a majority of the quorum participating and voting, except that no action imposing discipline or approving the filing of formal charges may be taken without the concurrence of four members.

(e) Powers and Duties.

The Investigative Committee shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) To authorize and oversee Disciplinary Counsel's full investigations of complaints brought by any source against lawyers pursuant to these Rules, including matters initially opened on the Investigative Committee's own motion based on information coming to the Investigative Committee's attention from any source including reports from Disciplinary Counsel;

(2) To dismiss a matter at the screening stage or following a full investigation approved by the Investigative Committee;

(3) To issue a letter of caution to a respondent upon dismissal of a matter at the Investigative Committee's discretion;

(4) To dismiss a matter with or without prejudice at the Investigative Committee's discretion; however, if a dismissal is silent as to prejudice, it shall be presumed dismissed without prejudice;

(5) To issue a private admonition for minor and isolated misconduct when stipulated or consented to by a subject lawyer, prior to the filing of formal charges;

(6) Upon a determination by the Investigative Committee that a matter should be dismissed, or that a matter should be disposed pursuant to a stipulation reached with a respondent or with the consent of a respondent, before the disposition becomes final before the Investigative Committee, the preliminary disposition determination shall be submitted to the appropriate member of the Hearing Panel pursuant to Rule 4(e)(1) for confidential review. The Rule 4(e)(1) member may approve, modify, or disapprove the recommendations of the Investigative Committee, or direct that the matter be investigated further. Any Rule 4(e)(1) member who reviews a preliminary disposition determination of the Investigative Committee is disqualified from participating in further consideration of the matter at any stage of the proceedings. If the Rule 4(e)(1) member modifies or

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disapproves the recommendation, or directs that the matter be investigated further, the Investigative Committee may appeal that action to the Hearing Panel in a confidential proceeding, and the Hearing Panel shall approve either the Investigative Committee's recommendation or the action of the Rule 4(e)(1) member. The decision of the Hearing Panel shall be final;

(7) To direct Disciplinary Counsel to prosecute lawyer discipline matters on its behalf through the filing of formal charges with the Hearing Panel as deemed appropriate by the Investigative Committee;

(8) To report and make recommendations to the Commission regarding the general functioning of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System, which may include proposed amendments to these Rules, the Guam Rules of Professional Conduct, or other Court rules; and

(9) To regularly meet to conduct the business of the Investigative Committee and to maintain proper records of Investigative Committee meetings as well as all Investigative Committee decisions, to include preparation of meeting minutes, which task may be delegated to Disciplinary Counsel subject to the Investigative Committee's final approval.

(f) Expenses.

Members of the Investigative Committee shall receive no compensation for their services but may be reimbursed for travel and other expenses incidental to the performance of their duties. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted to the office of the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court for consideration.

The Investigative Committee shall prepare an annual budget for submission to the Commission. The Investigative Committee shall make reasonable and necessary expenditures pursuant to its approved budget to perform the duties of the Investigative Committee.

(g) Abstention and Disqualification of Members.

A member of the Investigative Committee, including a *pro tempore* member, shall not personally represent a lawyer in any proceeding as provided in these Rules during the member's service. A former member of the Investigative Committee, including a *pro tempore* member, shall not personally represent a lawyer in any proceeding as provided in these Rules for a period of one year following completion of the member's service. Members of the Committee shall not participate on the Committee with regard to a particular matter if an actual bias exists between the member and a respondent lawyer. At the discretion of each Investigative Committee member, they may recuse themselves from participating on the Investigative Committee for any particular matter in their personal discretion with the general understanding that they are expected to sit on matters unless their recusal or disqualification is necessary.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 2; Committee Rules 3 & 4

**Rule 4. Hearing Panel.**

(a) Panel.

There is hereby established a body known as the Hearing Panel charged with overseeing the substantive adjudicative component of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System.

(b) Appointment.

The Hearing Panel shall consist of seven members appointed by the Court, including five lawyers

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who are active members of the bar of Guam in good standing and two public members who shall serve for fixed, staggered terms. Two lawyer members and one public member shall be appointed to initial terms of two years, and three lawyer members and one public member shall be appointed to initial terms of four years. Subsequent terms of all members shall be for four years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive full four-year terms; however, after serving two four-year terms, a member may be reappointed to the Hearing Panel after having been off the Hearing Panel for one year. Alternate and *pro tempore* members may be appointed by the Court as deemed appropriate. Former Hearing Panel members may serve as members of the Hearing Panel *pro tempore*, as needed, upon order of the Court. Upon adoption of these Rules, current members of the Guam Bar Ethics Committee's Adjudication Panel shall be eligible for initial appointments under this rule.

(c) Appointment of Officers.

The Court shall appoint lawyer members of the Hearing Panel to serve as chair and vice-chair for the remainder of their appointed term. No term limits apply to the chair and vice-chair positions.

(d) Quorum.

Four members of the Hearing Panel shall constitute a quorum. The Hearing Panel may act with the concurrence of a majority of the quorum participating and voting.

(e) Powers and Duties.

The Hearing Panel shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) To review confidential preliminary disposition determinations of the Investigative Committee prior to such determinations becoming final, with such review to be individually undertaken on an alternating basis by the chair or vice-chair or their lawyer-member designee ("Rule 4(e)(1) member"). The Rule 4(e)(1) member may approve, modify, or disapprove the recommendations of the Investigative Committee, or direct that the matter be investigated further. Any Rule 4(e)(1) member who reviews a preliminary disposition determination of the Investigative Committee is disqualified from participating in further consideration of the matter at any stage of the proceedings. If the Rule 4(e)(1) member modifies or disapproves the recommendation, or directs that the matter be investigated further, the Investigative Committee may appeal that action to the full Hearing Panel, which shall approve either the Investigative Committee's recommendation or the action of the Rule 4(e)(1) member. The decision of the Hearing Panel shall be final;

(2) To consider and decide prehearing motions and other prehearing matters with such duty to be handled by the chair unless the chair determines in their discretion that the full Hearing Panel should consider a particular prehearing motion or matter;

(3) To conduct hearings into formal charges of misconduct or other hearings as ordered by the Court; and

(4) To submit to the Court written findings of fact, conclusions of law, and recommendations as directed by these Rules.

(f) Expenses.

Members of the Hearing Panel shall receive no compensation for their services but may be reimbursed for travel and other expenses incidental to the performance of their duties. Requests for reimbursement may be submitted to the office of the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court for

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consideration.

The Hearing Panel shall prepare an annual budget for submission to the Commission. The Hearing Panel shall make reasonable and necessary expenditures pursuant to its approved budget to perform the duties of the Hearing Panel.

(g) Abstention and Disqualification of Members.

A member of the Hearing Panel, including a *pro tempore* member, shall not personally represent a lawyer in any proceeding as provided in these Rules during the member's service. A former lawyer member of the Hearing Panel, including *pro tempore* members, shall not personally represent a lawyer in any proceeding as provided in these Rules for a period of one year following completion of the member's service. A Hearing Panel member shall not take part in any proceeding if an actual bias exists between the member and a respondent lawyer. At the discretion of each Hearing Panel member, they may recuse themselves from participating on the Hearing Panel for any particular matter in their personal discretion with the general understanding that they are expected to sit on matters unless their recusal is necessary.

Upon a *timely* suggestion in writing filed with the Chair of the Hearing Panel by a respondent seeking disqualification of a Hearing Panel member from a matter, the challenged member shall file their answer to the suggestion of disqualification within five (5) business days. If the challenged member fails to timely file their answer on the suggestion of their disqualification, the challenged member shall be deemed to have consented to their disqualification. If the challenged member's answer states that they will not recuse themselves, the challenged member's possible disqualification shall be immediately considered by the remaining members of the Hearing Panel and a written decision shall be filed within ten (10) business days. If the Hearing Panel fails to timely file a decision on the matter, the challenged member shall be disqualified from the matter. If the Hearing Panel timely determines that the challenged member's disqualification is not required, the decision shall not be subject to immediate review.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 3; Committee Rule 3.1 & 4

**Rule 5. Disciplinary Counsel.**

(a) Appointment.

The Court shall appoint a lawyer admitted to practice law in Guam to serve as Disciplinary Counsel. No full-time Disciplinary Counsel or staff on salary with the Judiciary of Guam shall engage in the private practice of law or serve as Disciplinary Counsel under the Judicial Discipline System for the discipline of judges in Guam.

(b) Powers and Duties.

Disciplinary Counsel shall perform all prosecutorial functions and shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) To evaluate all information coming to the attention of the Investigative Committee to determine whether it concerns a lawyer subject to the jurisdiction of the Court because it relates to misconduct by the lawyer or to the incapacity of the lawyer;

(2) To investigate all information coming to the attention of the Investigative Committee which, if true, would be grounds for discipline or transfer to disability inactive status, and to investigate all facts pertaining to petitions for reinstatement or readmission;

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(3) To recommend dismissal, informal admonition, a stay, the filing of formal charges, or the petitioning for transfer to disability inactive status with respect to each matter brought to the attention of a component entity as appropriate;

(4) To prosecute before the Hearing Panel and the Court disciplinary proceedings and proceedings for transfer to or from disability inactive status;

(5) To supervise staff and investigators needed for the performance of prosecutorial functions;

(6) To notify promptly the complainant and the respondent of the status and the disposition of each matter, notwithstanding the general confidentiality provision, including but not limited to providing to the complainant notice of the date, time, and location of the hearing;

(7) [Reserved]

(8) To notify each jurisdiction in which a lawyer is admitted of a transfer to or from disability inactive status, reinstatement, readmission, or any public discipline imposed in Guam;

(9) To seek reciprocal discipline when informed of any public discipline imposed in any other jurisdiction;

(10) To forward a certified copy of the judgment of conviction to the disciplinary agency in each jurisdiction in which a lawyer is admitted when the lawyer is convicted of a serious crime (as hereafter defined) in Guam;

(11) To maintain permanent records of discipline and disability matters, subject to the expunction requirements of Rule 5(B)(12), and compile statistics to aid in the administration of the system, including but not limited to a single log of all complaints received, investigative files, statistical summaries of docket processing and case dispositions, transcripts of all formal proceedings (or the reporter's notes if not transcribed), and other records as the Commission or Court requires to be maintained. Statistical summaries shall contain, at a minimum:

(A) time records for all counsel and investigators, tracked by case or other task including time spent on non-disciplinary functions;

(B) the number of pending cases at each stage in the disciplinary process for each counsel and for the Investigative Committee and Hearing Panel;

(C) the number of new cases assigned to each counsel during the year and the total for the Investigative Committee;

(D) the number of cases carried over from the prior year for each counsel and the total for the Investigative Committee;

(E) the number of cases closed by each counsel during the year and the total for the Investigative Committee;

(F) the number of cases of special difficulty or complexity at each stage in the proceedings;  
and

(G) the ratio of staff turnover.

(12) To expunge (i.e. destroy) after three years all records or other evidence of the existence of complaints terminated by dismissals or referrals to other component entities pursuant to these Rules,

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except that upon Disciplinary Counsel's application, notice to respondent, and a showing of good cause, the Investigative Committee may permit Disciplinary Counsel to retain such records for one additional period of time not to exceed three years.

(A) Notice to Respondent. If the respondent was contacted by the Investigative Committee concerning the complaint, or the Investigative Committee otherwise knows that the respondent is aware of the existence of the complaint, the respondent shall be given prompt written notice of the expunction.

(B) Effect of Expunction. After a file has been expunged, any Investigative Committee response to an inquiry requiring a reference to the matter shall state that there is no record of such matter. The respondent may answer any inquiry requiring a reference to an expunged matter by stating that no complaint was made.

(c) Advisory Opinions Prohibited. Disciplinary Counsel shall not render advisory opinions, either orally or in writing.

(d) Ex Parte Communication with Disciplinary Counsel.

(1) Members of the Hearing Panel, the Commission, or the Court shall not communicate ex parte with Disciplinary Counsel regarding a pending or impending disciplinary matter except as explicitly provided for by law or for scheduling, administrative purposes, or emergencies that do not deal with substantive matters or issues on the merits, provided that:

(a) it is reasonable to believe that no party will gain a procedural or tactical advantage as a result of the ex parte communication; and

(b) provision is promptly made to notify all other parties of the substance of the ex parte communication and an opportunity to respond is allowed.

(2) A violation of this rule shall be a ground for lawyer or judicial discipline, as appropriate, and cause for removal from the Hearing Panel or the Commission.

(e) Disqualification.

In addition to complying with the Rules of Professional Conduct regarding successive government and private employment (Guam Rule of Professional Conduct 1.11), a former Disciplinary Counsel shall not personally represent a lawyer in any proceeding as provided in these Rules for a period of one year following completion of the Disciplinary Counsel's service.

(f) Budget.

Disciplinary Counsel shall prepare an annual budget for submission to the Commission. Disciplinary Counsel shall make reasonable and necessary expenditures pursuant to the approved budget to perform the duties of Disciplinary Counsel.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 4; Committee Rule 18 (subsection (b)(6))

**Rule 6. Expenses.**

The salaries of any employees within the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System and reasonable costs and expenses incurred by the office of Disciplinary Counsel or members of the Commission, Investigative Committee, or Hearing Panel shall be paid or reimbursed by the Court

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pursuant to an approved budget.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 5

**Rule 7. Jurisdiction.**

(a) Lawyers Admitted to Practice.

Any lawyer admitted by the Court to practice law in Guam, including any formerly admitted lawyer with respect to acts committed while admitted or with respect to acts subsequent thereto which amount to the practice of law or constitute a violation of these Rules or of the Guam Rules of Professional Conduct or any rules or code subsequently adopted by the Court, and any lawyer specially admitted by a court of this jurisdiction for a particular proceeding, and any lawyer not admitted in this jurisdiction who practices law or renders or offers to render any legal services in this jurisdiction, including lawyers licensed elsewhere who practice exclusively before the District Court of Guam or a federal body or agency, is subject to the disciplinary jurisdiction of this Court and its Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System.

(b) Incumbent Judges.

Incumbent judges shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Committee on Judicial Discipline within this Court's Judicial Discipline System with regard to any allegations of misconduct whether prior to or during their tenure as a judge. If an incumbent judge is to be removed from office in the course of a judicial discipline or disability proceeding, the Court shall first afford the Investigative Committee and the judge an opportunity to submit a recommendation whether lawyer discipline should be imposed, and if so, the extent thereof.

(c) Former Judges.

A former judge who has resumed the status of an active lawyer is subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System for conduct as a lawyer. The Committee on Judicial Discipline shall have continuing and exclusive jurisdiction over former judges regarding allegations that misconduct occurred during service as a judge if a complaint is made within one year following service as a judge.

(d) Powers Not Assumed.

These Rules shall not be construed to deny to any court the powers necessary to maintain control over its proceedings.

**SOURCE:** MRDLE 6

**Rule 8. Periodic Assessment of Lawyers; Registration; Roster of Lawyers.**

(a) Requirement. Every member of the Guam bar shall pay an annual fee for each calendar year to be set by the Court from time to time. The fee shall be used to defray the costs of disciplinary administration and enforcement under these Rules, other components of the system of lawyer regulation under other rules established by the Court, and for other purposes the Court shall from time to time designate. A late fee to be set by the Court from time to time shall immediately accrue if the annual fee is not timely paid.

(b) Exemption of Judges. Full-time judges shall be exempt from the payment of active membership fees during the time they serve in office; however, the inactive fee shall be paid.

(c) Suspension for Nonpayment. Unless excused by the Court, any lawyer who fails to timely pay

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the fee required under paragraph (a) or (g) shall be summarily administratively suspended by order of the Court, provided that a notice of delinquency is served on the lawyer by the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court at least thirty (30) days prior to such suspension.

(d) Reinstatement after Payment. Any lawyer suspended under paragraph (c) shall be reinstated without further order if, within five years of the effective date of the suspension for nonpayment, the lawyer requests reinstatement in writing and makes payment of all arrears at the active annual rate plus all annual late fees and a penalty of 20% of the total amount due from the date of the last payment to the date of the request for reinstatement, all payable to the Guam bar, as well as a penalty of \$300 payable to the Court. Any lawyer who fails to make these complete payments within five years of the effective date of the suspension for nonpayment may, in the discretion of the Court, be required to formally petition for reinstatement pursuant to Rule 25.

(e) Registration Statement. To facilitate the collection of the annual fee provided for in paragraph (a) and the general regulation of lawyers, each lawyer required by this rule to pay an annual fee shall, immediately upon first being sworn in and prior to commencing the practice of law in Guam and then on or before January 1 of every year thereafter, file with the clerk of this Court a registration statement, on a form prescribed by this Court, setting forth the information described in Rule 8(j), and such other information as this Court may from time to time direct. The filing of such registration statement and payment of the annual fee shall automatically register the lawyer as a member of the fully integrated Guam Bar Association. Each lawyer shall file with the clerk of this Court a supplemental statement noting any change in the information previously submitted within thirty days of the change.

(f) Suspension for Failure to File Registration Statement. Any lawyer who fails to file the statement or supplement in accordance with paragraph (e) of this rule shall be summarily administratively suspended by order of the Court, provided that a notice of delinquency is served on the lawyer by the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court at least thirty (30) days prior to such suspension. The lawyer shall remain suspended until complete compliance with this Rule is demonstrated and payment of a penalty of \$300 to the Court has been made, whereupon the lawyer shall be reinstated without further order.

(g) Notice of Transfer to Inactive Status. A lawyer who has retired or is not engaged in the active practice of law in Guam but who does not wish to resign from the bar of Guam shall advise the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court in writing that the lawyer desires to assume inactive status and discontinue the practice of law. Upon the filing of the notice, the lawyer shall no longer be eligible to practice law. A lawyer who is on inactive status shall not be obligated to pay the annual fee imposed by this rule upon active practitioners; however, they must continue to submit an annual registration statement and any supplemental statement in accordance with paragraph (e) of this rule and must pay an annual fee for each calendar year to be set by the Court from time to time for their inactive status in accordance with paragraph (a) of this rule. If the lawyer has reached the age of 65 as of January 1, the inactive fee shall be waived. A lawyer on inactive status shall be removed from the roll of those classified as active until, and only if, the lawyer is reinstated to active status. A lawyer on inactive status shall be subject to paragraphs (c), (d), and (f) of this rule herein relative to suspension for non-payment or failure to file a registration statement.

(h) Reinstatement from Inactive Status. Any lawyer on inactive status under paragraph (g) shall be reinstated without further order if the lawyer makes an application within five years of the effective date of transfer to inactive status, so long as they are not under an order of discipline in any jurisdiction at the time. Any lawyer who fails to make an application for reinstatement within five years of the effective

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date of transfer to inactive status may, in the discretion of the Court, be required to petition for reinstatement pursuant to Rule 25. Any lawyer who is under an order of discipline in any other jurisdiction at the time they seek transfer from inactive to active status in Guam shall be required to petition for reinstatement pursuant to Rule 25.

(i) Resignation While in Good Standing.

(1) A lawyer who is not the subject of any pending disciplinary investigation, proceeding, or order in any jurisdiction, including Guam; who is not the subject of a disciplinary order issued by the Investigative Committee, the Hearing Panel, or the Court; and who is otherwise in good standing, may petition the Court for leave to resign and surrender his or her license to practice law. Temporary lawyers who choose to cease practicing law in Guam prior to the expiration of their temporary licensure must resign and surrender their license to practice law; however, their 5-year period of temporary licensure eligibility shall continue to run uninterrupted pursuant to Rule 3.01(e) of the Guam Rules Governing Admission to the Practice of Law notwithstanding their resignation.

(2) A petition to resign and surrender license shall be filed with the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court and payment of a fee of \$100.00 shall be made.

(3) The petition shall be supported by the petitioner's affidavit attesting to the fact that petitioner is not the subject of any pending disciplinary investigation, proceeding, or order in any jurisdiction, including Guam.

(4) The petition shall be served by the lawyer in person or by email and regular mail upon Disciplinary Counsel at or before the time it is filed with the clerk.

(5) Within thirty (30) days after the petition is filed, upon consultation with the Investigative Committee, Disciplinary Counsel may file objections thereto, under seal if deemed appropriate by Disciplinary Counsel and the Investigative Committee.

(6) The Court shall consider the petition and any objections thereto and shall issue an appropriate order.

(7) Lawyers who have been allowed to resign remain subject to the jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System and shall promptly inform the Court of any change in their contact information for a period of six (6) years in order that they can be located in the event complaints are made about their conduct while they were engaged in the practice of law in Guam. No annual dues shall be required.

(j) Roster of Lawyers. Disciplinary Counsel shall have access to current information relating to all lawyers subject to the jurisdiction of the Court which shall be maintained as a roll of attorneys by the Clerk of Court of the Supreme Court, including:

(1) full name and all names under which the lawyer is or has been admitted or practiced;

(2) date of birth;

(3) current employer's name, address, and telephone number;

(4) current business address and email address;

(5) current residential address;

(6) date of admission in Guam;

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- (7) Guam bar number;
  - (8) date of any transfer to or from inactive status;
  - (9) other jurisdictions in which the lawyer is or has been admitted and date of admission;
  - (10) location and account numbers in which clients' funds are or have been held by the lawyer;
  - (11) nature, date, and place of any public discipline imposed and any reinstatements in any other jurisdiction; and
  - (12) date of death, if deceased.
- (k) Temporary Bar Members.

A temporary lawyer in Guam whose membership has ended for whatever reason shall remain subject to the jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System and shall promptly inform the Court of any change in their contact information for a period of six (6) years in order that they can be located in the event complaints are made about their conduct while they were engaged in the practice of law in Guam. No annual dues shall be required.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 8; Hawaii Rule 1.10 (subsection (i)); Court Rule 5(c) (subsection (k))

**COMMENT:** Annual registration is mandatory for all GBA members, active or inactive. It consists of both submitting the required registration statement and paying the proper dues. If a member fails to do either step by the deadline, a late fee is immediately due. If the default is not cured, the Court could eventually administratively suspend the member. If that occurs, reinstatement requires submission of the proper registration statement and/or payment to the bar of active dues (regardless whether the person is an inactive member) as well as the active late fee. A \$300 penalty must also be paid to the Court if any order of administrative suspension is issued.

**Rule 9. Grounds for Discipline.**

(a) It shall be a ground for discipline for a lawyer to:

- (1) violate or attempt to violate the Guam Rules of Professional Conduct, or any other rules or laws of this jurisdiction regarding professional conduct of lawyers;
- (2) engage in conduct violating applicable rules or laws of another jurisdiction regarding professional conduct of lawyers; or
- (3) willfully violate a valid order imposing discipline, willfully fail to comply with a subpoena validly issued under Rule 14, or knowingly fail to respond to a lawful demand from a disciplinary authority, except that this rule does not require disclosure of information otherwise protected by applicable rules relating to confidentiality.

(b) [Reserved]

SOURCE: MRLDE 9

**Rule 10. Sanctions.**

(a) Types of Sanctions.

Misconduct shall be grounds for one or more of the following sanctions:

- (1) Disbarment by the Court.
- (2) Suspension by the Court for an appropriate fixed period of time not in excess of three years. While suspended a respondent shall hold the status "suspended active member" and must register annually; however, they are not required to pay annual dues or complete CLE hours.

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(3) Probation imposed by the Court not in excess of two years; provided, however, that probation may be renewed for an additional two year period by order of the Court upon recommendation by the Investigative Committee. The conditions of probation shall be stated in writing. Probation shall be used only in cases where there is little likelihood that the respondent will harm the public during the period of rehabilitation and the conditions of probation can be adequately supervised. Probation may be terminated by order of the Court upon the filing of an affidavit by respondent showing compliance with the conditions, and an affidavit by the probation monitor stating that probation is no longer necessary and summarizing the basis for that statement.

(4) Public Reprimand by the Court. A reprimand shall be in writing and either imposed in person or served upon the respondent by certified mail. A reprimand shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation and on the Court and Guam Bar Association websites to inform the public and for the guidance of other lawyers. Any costs associated with such publication shall be assessed against the respondent.

(5) Private Admonition by Investigative Committee or Hearing Panel imposed with the consent of the respondent. An admonition cannot be imposed after formal charges have been filed unless imposed by stipulation approved by the Hearing Panel within ninety (90) days of the filing of formal charges while the matter remains confidential, which disposition shall be final and need not be submitted to the Court. Admonitions shall be in writing, served upon the respondent, and shall constitute private discipline. Only in cases of minor misconduct, when there is little or no injury to a client, the public, the legal system, or the profession, and when there is little likelihood of repetition by the lawyer, should an admonition be imposed. A summary of the conduct for which an admonition was imposed may be published on the Guam Bar Association website for the education of the profession and the public, but the lawyer shall not be identified. An admonition may be used in subsequent proceedings in which the respondent has been found guilty of misconduct as evidence of prior misconduct bearing upon the issue of the sanction to be imposed in the subsequent proceeding.

(6) Upon order of the Court, or upon consent, restitution to persons financially injured and disgorgement of all or part of the lawyer's or law firm's fee.

(7) Upon order of the Court, or upon consent, imposition of a fine or assessment of the costs of the proceedings, including but not limited to the costs of investigations, reasonable attorney fees, service of process, witness fees, and court reporter's services, in any case where discipline is imposed or there is a transfer to disability inactive status.

(8) Limitation by the Court on the nature or extent of the respondent's future practice.

(b) Conditions.

Written conditions may be attached to a private admonition or a public reprimand. Failure to comply with such conditions shall be grounds for reconsideration of the matter and prosecution of formal charges against the respondent.

(c) Factors to be Considered in Imposing Sanctions.

In imposing a sanction after a finding of lawyer misconduct, the following factors, as enumerated in the *ABA Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions*, shall be considered:

(1) whether the lawyer has violated a duty owed to a client, to the public, to the legal system,

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or to the profession;

- (2) whether the lawyer acted intentionally, knowingly, or negligently;
- (3) the amount of the actual or potential injury caused by the lawyer's misconduct; and
- (4) the existence of any aggravating or mitigating factors.

(d) Public Nature of Sanctions.

Disposition of lawyer discipline by the Court shall be public in cases of disbarment, suspension, probation, and reprimand. In all cases of public discipline by the Court, the Court shall issue a written opinion or order setting forth its justification for imposing the sanction in that particular case.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 10; Court Rule 12(a) (subsection (a)(8))

## **II. PROCEDURE FOR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS**

### **Rule 11. Generally.**

(a) Evaluation.

Disciplinary Counsel shall evaluate all information coming to his or her attention by complaint or from other sources alleging lawyer misconduct or incapacity. Complaints and information about lawyers need not be verified, written, or in any particular form. If the lawyer is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Court, with the approval of the Investigative Committee and the Rule 4(e)(1) member, the matter shall be referred to the appropriate entity in any jurisdiction in which the lawyer is admitted. If the information, if true, would not constitute misconduct or incapacity, with the approval of the Investigative Committee and the Rule 4(e)(1) member, the matter may be referred to any of the component entities of the comprehensive system of lawyer regulation established by Rule 1, or dismissed. If the lawyer is subject to the jurisdiction of the Court and the information alleges facts which, if true, would constitute misconduct or incapacity, with the approval of the Investigative Committee, Disciplinary Counsel shall conduct an investigation.

(b) Investigation.

(1) All investigations shall be conducted by Disciplinary Counsel. Upon the conclusion of an investigation, Disciplinary Counsel may recommend to the Investigative Committee:

(A) dismissal; or

(B) a private admonition, the filing of formal charges, the petitioning for transfer to disability inactive status, or a stay.

(2) Notice to Respondent. Disciplinary Counsel shall not recommend a disposition other than dismissal or stay without first notifying the respondent in writing of the substance of the matter and affording him or her an opportunity to be heard in writing within thirty (30) days. Notice to the respondent at his or her last known address is sufficient.

(3) Disciplinary Counsel's recommended disposition of a matter shall be reviewed by the Investigative Committee, which may approve, modify, or disapprove the recommendation or direct that Disciplinary Counsel investigate the matter further. If the matter is to be disposed, the Investigative Committee's proposed disposition shall be confidentially reviewed by a member of the Hearing Panel as directed by Rule 4(e)(1). A dismissal may be accompanied by an informal letter of caution to the respondent from the Investigative Committee if doing so is approved by the

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Rule 4(e)(1) member.

(c) Private Admonition -- Imposition.

(1) If the Investigative Committee determines that it is appropriate for a matter to be concluded by private admonition and no stipulation has been reached, after securing the approval of the Rule 4(e)(1) member, Disciplinary Counsel shall notify the respondent in writing of the proposed disposition and of the right to demand in writing within fourteen (14) days that the matter be disposed of by a formal proceeding. Failure of the respondent to so demand within fourteen (14) days after written notice of the proposed admonition constitutes consent to the admonition.

(2) If the respondent within fourteen (14) days demands a formal hearing, formal charges shall be instituted within ninety (90) days.

(d) Formal Charges.

If a matter is to be resolved by a formal proceeding, Disciplinary Counsel shall prepare formal charges in writing, subject to the approval of the Investigative Committee, which give fair and adequate notice of the nature of the alleged misconduct.

(1) Disciplinary Counsel shall file the charges with the chair of the Hearing Panel.

(2) Disciplinary Counsel shall cause a copy of the formal charges to be served upon the respondent and proof of service shall be filed with the chair of the Hearing Panel.

(3) The respondent shall file a written answer with the chair of the Hearing Panel and serve a copy on Disciplinary Counsel within twenty (20) days after service of the formal charges, unless the time is extended by the chair of the Hearing Panel. In the event the respondent fails to answer within the prescribed time, or the time as extended, the factual allegations shall be deemed admitted as provided in Rule 33(a).

(4) If there are any material issues of fact raised by the pleadings or if the respondent requests the opportunity to be heard in mitigation, the Hearing Panel shall serve a notice of hearing upon Disciplinary Counsel and the respondent, stating the date and place of hearing at least twenty-five (25) days in advance thereof. The notice of hearing shall advise the respondent of the right to be represented by a lawyer, to cross-examine witnesses and to present evidence. The complainant, if any, shall have the right to make a statement to the Hearing Panel concerning the respondent's alleged misconduct and the effect of the alleged misconduct on the complainant. The hearing shall be recorded. Within fourteen (14) days after the conclusion of any such hearing, both parties shall have the right to submit proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law to the Hearing Panel. The Hearing Panel shall submit its report containing its findings and recommendation on dismissal or sanction to the Court within sixty (60) days thereafter and shall serve the report on Disciplinary Counsel and respondent.

(5) Information concerning prior discipline of the respondent shall not be divulged to the Hearing Panel until after the Hearing Panel has made a finding of misconduct, unless said information is probative of issues pending in the present matter.

(e) Stipulations and Admissions.

Whenever it may be done without prejudice to the interests of the respondent and/or the Bar of Guam, stipulations and admissions dispensing with formal proof shall be encouraged; provided,

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however, that any recommendation or action as to discipline or the determination of any other issue shall not be influenced in any way by the fact that some or all of the material facts have been established by admission or stipulation instead of other methods of proof. It shall be the duty of Disciplinary Counsel, whenever practicable, to confer prior to trial with respondent's counsel, or with respondent if he or she appears without counsel, to explore the possibility of simplifying the issues of fact and attempt to arrive at stipulations covering facts not in dispute. The stipulations of fact shall be admissible in the discretion of the Hearing Panel; provided, however, that in the interests of justice, the Hearing Panel may relieve either party of the effect of a stipulation.

(f) Review by the Court.

The Court may, within its discretion, review a matter if the respondent or Disciplinary Counsel files objections to the report of the Hearing Panel or if a majority of the Court, within the time for filing objections, votes to review the matter. If the Court does not review the matter, the Court shall impose the sanction.

(1) The respondent and Disciplinary Counsel may file objections to the report of the Hearing Panel within twenty (20) days from the date of service. After the Court grants review, the respondent and Disciplinary Counsel may file briefs and present oral arguments pursuant to the rules governing civil appeals. Upon conclusion of the proceedings, the Court shall promptly enter an appropriate order. The decision of the Court shall be in writing and shall state the reasons for the decision. Upon final disposition at any stage of the proceedings, the written findings shall be published on the Court's website and on the website of the Guam Bar Association and a copy shall be mailed to the respondent and the complainant and to the ABA National Lawyer Regulatory Data Bank pursuant to Rule 16(i).

(2) During its review, the Court shall not receive or consider any evidence that was not presented to the Hearing Panel, except upon notice to the respondent and Disciplinary Counsel and opportunity to respond.

(3) If new evidence warranting a reopening of the proceeding is discovered, the case may be remanded to the Hearing Panel.

(g) [Reserved]

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 11; Committee Rule 11 (subsection (a)); Committee Rule 17 (subsection (b)(3)); Committee Rule 29 (subsection (d)(4)); Committee Rule 26 (subsection (e)).

**Rule 12. Immunity; Laws Inapplicable.**

(a) From Civil Suits.

Communications to the Commission, Investigative Committee, Hearing Panel, or Disciplinary Counsel relating to lawyer misconduct or disability, and testimony given in the proceedings shall be absolutely privileged, and no lawsuit predicated thereon may be instituted against any complainant or witness. Members of the Commission, members of the Investigative Committee, members of the Hearing Panel, Disciplinary Counsel, monitors, or any person acting on their behalf, and staff shall be immune from suit for any conduct in the course of their official duties.

(b) Laws Inapplicable.

The Administrative Adjudication Law and the Open Government Law shall not be applicable to proceedings, deliberations, or activities covered by these rules.

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**SOURCE:** MRLDE 12; 7 GCA 9A213

**Rule 13. Service.**

(a) Service of Formal Charges or Petition.

Service upon the respondent or respondent's counsel of formal charges in any disciplinary proceeding or a petition in any disability proceeding shall be made by personal service by any person authorized by the chair of the Investigative Committee or by registered or certified mail at the respondent's or respondent's counsel's last known business address and may also be emailed to the respondent's or respondent's counsel's email address on record pursuant to Rule 8.

(b) Service of Other Papers.

Service of any other papers or notices required by these rules may be made upon respondent or respondent's counsel by personal service, by regular mail at respondent or respondent's counsel's last known business address, or through their court service box maintained at the Judiciary of Guam consistent with Guam Rules of Civil Procedure 5(g) and Guam Rules of Appellate Procedure 10(c), and may also be emailed to respondent or respondent's counsel's email address on record pursuant to Rule 8.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 13

**Rule 14. Subpoena Power.**

(a) Oaths.

Any member of the Investigative Committee or the Hearing Panel in matters before it, Disciplinary Counsel in matters under investigation by him or her, and any person authorized by law may administer oaths and affirmations.

(b) Investigatory Subpoenas.

Before formal charges have been filed, Disciplinary Counsel may, with the approval of the Investigative Committee, compel by subpoena the attendance of witnesses, and the production of pertinent books, papers, and documents, in accordance with the Guam Rules of Civil Procedure. A person subject to an investigatory subpoena under this rule must respond to such subpoena in accordance with the Guam Rules of Civil Procedure, except where otherwise provided in these rules.

(c) Subpoenas for Deposition or Hearing.

After formal charges are filed, Disciplinary Counsel or respondent may, in accordance with the Guam Rules of Civil Procedure, compel by subpoena issued by the Hearing Panel the attendance of witnesses and the production of pertinent books, papers, and documents at a deposition or hearing under these rules. Respondent shall have notice of any subpoena issued after the filing of formal charges and shall have the right to be present to cross-examine witnesses.

(d) Enforcement of Subpoenas.

The Court may, upon proper application, enforce the attendance and testimony of any witnesses and the production of any documents subpoenaed. Any application filed with the Court by Disciplinary Counsel prior to the filing of formal charges seeking an order compelling compliance with a subpoena shall be filed under seal.

(e) Quashing Subpoena.

Any attack on the validity of a subpoena so issued shall be heard and determined by the Court. Any

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application filed with the Court prior to the filing of formal charges seeking an order quashing a subpoena shall be filed under seal.

(f) Witnesses and Fees.

Witness fees and mileage shall be the same as those provided for in civil cases.

(g) Subpoena Pursuant to Law of Another Jurisdiction.

Whenever a subpoena is sought in Guam pursuant to the law of another jurisdiction for use in lawyer discipline or disability proceedings, and where the issuance of the subpoena has been duly approved under the law of the other jurisdiction, the Investigative Committee, upon petition for good cause, may issue a subpoena as provided in this section to compel the attendance of witnesses and production of documents in Guam. Service, enforcement, or challenges to this subpoena shall be as elsewhere provided in these rules.

SOURCE: MRLDE 14

**Rule 15. Discovery.**

(a) Scope.

Within twenty (20) days following the filing of an answer, Disciplinary Counsel and respondent shall exchange the names and addresses of all persons having knowledge of relevant facts. Within sixty (60) days following the filing of an answer, Disciplinary Counsel and the respondent may take depositions in accordance with Rule 14(c) and shall comply with reasonable requests for

- (1) non-privileged information and evidence relevant to the charges or the respondent, and
- (2) other material upon good cause shown to the chair of the Hearing Panel.

(b) Resolution of Disputes.

Disputes concerning discovery shall be determined by the chair of the Hearing Panel. All discovery orders by the chair are interlocutory and may not be appealed prior to the entry of the final order.

(c) Civil Rules Not Applicable.

Proceedings under these rules are not subject to the Guam Rules of Civil Procedure regarding discovery except those relating to depositions and subpoenas or as otherwise provided in these rules.

SOURCE: MRLDE 15

**Rule 16. Access to Disciplinary Information.**

(a) Availability of Information.

Ninety (90) days after the filing and service of formal charges, unless a protective order is obtained for specific testimony, documents, or records or the matter has been dismissed or disposed by stipulation, all filings with the hearing panel shall be available to the public.

(b) Confidentiality.

Prior to the filing and service of formal charges in a discipline matter, the proceeding is confidential, except that the pendency, subject matter, and status of an investigation may be disclosed by Disciplinary Counsel, with approval of the Investigative Committee, if:

- (1) the respondent has waived confidentiality;

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(2) the proceeding is based upon allegations that include either the conviction of a crime or public reciprocal discipline;

(3) the proceeding is based upon allegations that have become generally known to the public;  
or

(4) there is a need to notify another person or organization in order to protect the public, the administration of justice, or the legal profession.

(c) [Reserved]

(d) Proceedings Alleging Disability.

Proceedings for transfer to or from disability inactive status are confidential. All orders transferring a lawyer to or from disability inactive status are public.

(e) Protective Orders.

In order to protect the interests of a complainant, witness, third party, or respondent, the Hearing Panel may, upon application of any person and for good cause shown, issue a protective order prohibiting the disclosure of specific information otherwise privileged or confidential and direct that the proceedings be conducted so as to implement the order, including requiring that the hearing be conducted in such a way as to preserve the confidentiality of the information that is the subject of the application.

(f) Request for Nonpublic Information.

A request for nonpublic information other than that authorized for disclosure under paragraph (b) above shall be denied unless the request is from one of the following agencies:

- (1) the Court's Board of Law Examiners or the National Conference of Bar Examiners;
- (2) lawyer disciplinary enforcement agencies;
- (3) other entities, if any, designated by the Court.

(g) Notice to Lawyer.

Except as provided in paragraph (h), if the Investigative Committee decides to provide nonpublic information requested, and if the lawyer has not signed a waiver permitting the requesting entity to obtain nonpublic information, the lawyer shall be notified in writing by personal service or mail at his or her last known business address on record of that information that has been requested and by whom, together with a copy of the information proposed to be released to the requesting entity. The notice shall advise the lawyer that the information shall be released at the end of thirty (30) days following service or mailing of the notice unless the lawyer objects to the disclosure. If the lawyer timely objects to the disclosure, the information shall remain confidential unless the requesting entity obtains an order from the Court requiring its release.

(h) Release Without Notice.

If an otherwise authorized requesting entity has not obtained a waiver from the lawyer to obtain nonpublic information, and requests that the information be released without giving notice to the lawyer, such release shall be at the Investigative Committee's discretion and the requesting entity shall certify that:

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(1) the request is made in furtherance of an ongoing investigation into misconduct by the lawyer;

(2) the information is essential to that investigation; and

(3) disclosure of the existence of the investigation to the lawyer would seriously prejudice that investigation.

(i) Notice to National Lawyer Regulatory Data Bank.

The Commission shall transmit notice of all public discipline imposed against a lawyer, transfers to or from disability inactive status, and reinstatements to the National Lawyer Regulatory Data Bank maintained by the ABA

(j) Duty of Officials and Employees.

All officials and employees of component entities of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System in a proceeding under these rules shall conduct themselves so as to maintain the confidentiality mandated by this rule.

SOURCE: MRLDE 16

**Rule 17. Dissemination of Disciplinary Information.**

(a) Notice to Disciplinary Agencies.

The Commission shall transmit notice of public discipline, transfers to or from disability inactive status, reinstatements, readmissions, and certified copies of judgments of conviction to the disciplinary enforcement agency of every other jurisdiction in which the respondent is admitted.

(b) Public Notice of Discipline Imposed.

The Commission shall cause notices of public reprimand, suspension, disbarment, reinstatement, readmission, and transfers to or from disability inactive status to be published on the Guam Bar Association's website and in a newspaper of general circulation in Guam. The costs of publication shall be the responsibility of the lawyer.

(c) Notice to the Courts.

The Commission shall promptly transmit a certified copy of the order of public reprimand, suspension, disbarment, reinstatement, and transfer to disability inactive status to where the lawyer is admitted or is seeking admission to practice.

SOURCE: MRLDE 17

**Rule 18. Additional Rules of Procedure.**

(a) Nature of Proceedings.

Disciplinary proceedings are neither civil nor criminal but are *sui generis*.

(b) Proceedings Governed by Rules of Civil Procedure and Evidence.

Except as otherwise provided in these rules, the Guam Rules of Civil Procedure and the Guam Rules of Evidence regarding civil nonjury matters shall generally apply in discipline and disability cases; however, the Hearing Panel may receive and consider any reasonably competent, cogent, and credible evidence.

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(c) Standard of Proof.

Formal charges of misconduct, petitions for reinstatement and readmission, and petitions for transfer to and from disability inactive status shall be established by clear and convincing evidence.

(d) Burden of Proof.

The burden of proof in proceedings seeking discipline or transfer to disability inactive status is on Disciplinary Counsel. The burden of proof in proceedings seeking reinstatement, readmission, or transfer from disability inactive status is on the respondent.

(e) Prehearing Conference.

At the discretion of the Hearing Panel or upon request of a party, a conference may be ordered for the purpose of obtaining admissions or otherwise narrowing the issues presented by the pleadings. The conference shall be held before the chair of the Hearing Panel or another member or members of the Hearing Panel designated by the chair.

(f) Hearings Recorded.

The hearing shall be recorded. Upon request, the Hearing Panel shall make the record of a hearing available.

(g) Related Pending Litigation.

Upon a finding of good cause, the processing of a disciplinary matter may be stayed because of substantial similarity to the material allegations of pending criminal or civil litigation or disciplinary action.

(h) Amendments.

The Hearing Panel at any time may allow or require amendments to the formal charges or may allow amendments to the answer. The formal charges may be amended to conform to proof or to set forth additional facts whether occurring before or after commencement of the hearing. In the event such an amendment is made, the respondent shall be given reasonable time to answer the amendment and to prepare his defense against the misconduct charged thereby.

(i) Delay Caused by Complainant.

Neither unwillingness nor neglect of the complainant to sign a complaint or prosecute a charge or settlement or compromise between the complainant and the respondent, or restitution by the respondent, shall, in itself, justify abatement of the processing of any complaint.

(j) Effect of Time Limitations.

Except as otherwise provided in these rules, time is directory and not jurisdictional. Failure to observe prescribed time intervals may result in sanctions against the violator but does not justify abatement of any discipline or disability investigation or proceeding.

(k) Complaints Against Disciplinary Agency Members.

If a complaint is filed against Disciplinary Counsel or Disciplinary Counsel's staff, a member of the Investigative Committee, or a member of the Hearing Panel, the matter shall proceed in accordance with these rules except that:

- (1) If the respondent is Disciplinary Counsel or a member of Disciplinary Counsel's staff,

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upon request from the chair of the Investigative Committee, the Commission shall appoint special counsel to act as Disciplinary Counsel; or

(2) If the respondent is a member of the Investigative Committee or the Hearing Panel, he or she shall be disqualified from the matter.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 18; Committee Rule 22 (subsection (h))

**Rule 19. Lawyers Found Guilty of a Crime.**

(a) Transmittal of Proof of Determination of Guilt.

A lawyer subject to the disciplinary jurisdiction of this Court who is found guilty of a crime shall within thirty (30) days after the finding of guilt obtain and transmit certified copies of proof of the finding of guilt to the Commission, Disciplinary Counsel, and counsel for the lawyer disciplinary agency of every jurisdiction in which the lawyer is admitted to practice.

(b) Determination of “Serious Crime.”

Upon being advised that a lawyer subject to the disciplinary jurisdiction of this Court has been found guilty of a crime, the Investigative Committee shall determine whether the crime constitutes a “serious crime” warranting immediate interim suspension. If the crime is a “serious crime,” the Investigative Committee shall prepare notice regarding interim suspension and forward it to the Court and the respondent with proof of the finding of guilt. Prior to the Court entering any order of interim suspension, the lawyer may assert any jurisdictional deficiency that establishes that the suspension may not properly be ordered, such as that the crime did not constitute a “serious crime” or that the lawyer is not the individual found guilty. If the crime is not a “serious crime,” Disciplinary Counsel shall process the matter in the same manner as any other information coming to the Investigative Committee’s attention.

(c) Definition of “Serious Crime.”

A “serious crime” is any felony or any lesser crime that reflects adversely on the lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects, or any crime a necessary element of which, as determined by the statutory or common law definition of the crime, involves interference with the administration of justice, false swearing, misrepresentation, fraud, deceit, bribery, extortion, misappropriation, theft, or an attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation of another to commit a “serious crime.”

(d) Immediate Interim Suspension.

The Court has exclusive power to place a lawyer on interim suspension.

(1) Imposition. The Court shall place a lawyer on interim suspension immediately upon proof that the lawyer has been found guilty of a serious crime regardless of the pendency of any appeal.

(2) Termination. The Court has exclusive power to terminate an interim suspension. In the interest of justice, the Court may terminate an interim suspension at any time upon a showing of extraordinary circumstances, after affording Disciplinary Counsel notice and an opportunity to be heard.

(e) Conviction as Conclusive Evidence.

For purposes of a hearing on formal charges filed as a result of a finding of guilt, a certified copy of a judgment of conviction constitutes conclusive evidence that the lawyer committed the crime, and the

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sole issue in any such hearing shall be the nature and extent of the discipline to be imposed.

(f) Automatic Reinstatement from Interim Suspension upon Reversal of Finding of Guilt or Conviction.

If a lawyer suspended solely under the provisions of paragraph D demonstrates that the underlying finding of guilt or conviction has been reversed or vacated, the order for interim suspension shall be vacated and the lawyer placed on active status. The vacating of the interim suspension will not automatically terminate any formal proceeding then pending against the lawyer, the disposition of which shall be determined by the Investigative Committee or Hearing Panel on the basis of the available evidence other than the finding of guilt or conviction.

(g) Notice to Clients and Others on Interim Suspension.

An interim suspension under this rule shall constitute a suspension of the lawyer for the purpose of Rule 27.

SOURCE: MRLDE 19

**Rule 20. Interim Suspension for Threat of Harm.**

(a) Transmittal of Evidence.

Upon receipt of sufficient evidence demonstrating that a lawyer subject to the disciplinary jurisdiction of this Court has committed a violation of the Guam Rules of Professional Conduct or is under a disability as herein defined and poses a substantial threat of serious harm to the public, upon approval of the Investigative Committee, Disciplinary Counsel shall:

(1) transmit the evidence to the Court, under seal, together with a recommendation for immediate interim suspension; and

(2) contemporaneously make a reasonable attempt to provide the lawyer with notice, which may include notice by telephone, that a recommendation for immediate interim suspension has been transmitted to the Court.

(b) Immediate Interim Suspension.

Upon examination of the evidence transmitted to the Court by Disciplinary Counsel and of rebuttal evidence, if any, which the lawyer has transmitted to the Court prior to the Court's ruling, the Court may enter an order immediately suspending the lawyer, pending final disposition of a disciplinary proceeding predicated upon the conduct causing the harm, or may order such other action as it deems appropriate. In the event the order is entered, the Court may appoint a trustee pursuant to Rule 28 to protect clients' interests.

(c) Notice to Clients.

A lawyer suspended pursuant to paragraph (b) shall comply with the notice requirements in Rule 27.

(d) Motion for Dissolution of Interim Suspension.

On notice to Disciplinary Counsel, a lawyer suspended pursuant to paragraph (b) may move for dissolution or modification of the order of suspension, and in that event the motion shall be heard and determined as expeditiously as the ends of justice require.

SOURCE: MRLDE 20

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**Rule 21. Discipline by Consent.**

(a) Approval of Tendered Admission.

A lawyer against whom formal charges have been filed may tender to Disciplinary Counsel and the Hearing Panel a conditional admission to the formal charges or to a particular count thereof in exchange for a stated form and extent of discipline. The tendered conditional admission shall be approved or rejected by the Hearing Panel considering the recommendation of Disciplinary Counsel with the Investigative Committee's approval, subject to final approval or rejection by the Court except in the case of private admonitions prior to formal charges becoming public which are final upon approval by the Hearing Panel. If the stated discipline is rejected by the Hearing Panel or the Court, the admission may be withdrawn and cannot be used against the respondent in any subsequent proceedings.

(b) [Reserved]

(c) Discontinuance of Jurisdiction.

Approval by the Hearing Panel and the Court of the discipline proposed shall divest the Hearing Panel of further jurisdiction and no report need be prepared in such cases. The Court's final order of discipline shall be predicated upon the formal charges and the conditional admission tendered.

(d) Affidavit of Consent.

A lawyer who consents to a stated form of discipline shall present to the Hearing Panel an affidavit stating that he or she consents to the discipline and that:

- (1) The consent is freely and voluntarily rendered; the lawyer is not being subjected to coercion or duress; the lawyer is fully aware of the implications of submitting the consent;
- (2) The lawyer is aware that there is presently pending a proceeding involving allegations that there exist grounds for discipline, the nature of which shall be specifically set forth;
- (3) The lawyer acknowledges that the material facts so alleged are true; and
- (4) The lawyer consents because the lawyer knows that if the charges included in the pending proceeding are prosecuted the lawyer could not successfully defend against them.

(e) Order of Discipline.

The Hearing Panel shall file the affidavit with the Court upon its approval of the discipline. In all instances in which proposed discipline is approved by the Court, the Court shall enter an order disciplining the lawyer by consent. Whether the sanction is made public shall be governed by Rule 10(d).

SOURCE: MRLDE 21

**Rule 22. Reciprocal Discipline and Reciprocal Disability Inactive Status.**

(a) Disciplinary Counsel's Duty to Obtain Order of Discipline or Disability Inactive Status from Other Jurisdiction.

Upon being disciplined or transferred to disability inactive status in another jurisdiction, a lawyer admitted to practice in Guam shall promptly inform Disciplinary Counsel of the discipline or transfer. Upon notification from any source that a lawyer admitted to practice in Guam has been publicly

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disciplined or transferred to disability inactive status in another jurisdiction, Disciplinary Counsel shall obtain a copy of the disciplinary order and file it with the Court. In the case of private discipline in another jurisdiction, Disciplinary Counsel shall inform the Investigative Panel, which shall address the matter as it deems appropriate under these Rules.

(b) Notice Served Upon Respondent.

Upon receipt of a copy of an order demonstrating that a lawyer admitted to practice in Guam has been publicly disciplined or transferred to disability inactive status in another jurisdiction, the Court shall forthwith issue a notice directed to the lawyer and to Disciplinary Counsel containing

(1) A copy of the order from the other jurisdiction; and

(2) An order directing that the lawyer or Disciplinary Counsel inform the Court, within thirty (30) days from service of the notice, of any claim by the lawyer or Disciplinary Counsel predicated upon the grounds set forth in paragraph (d) of this rule, that the imposition of the identical discipline or disability inactive status in this jurisdiction would be unwarranted and the reasons for that claim.

(c) Effect of Stay in Other Jurisdiction.

In the event the public discipline or transfer imposed in the other jurisdiction has been stayed there, any reciprocal discipline or transfer imposed in this jurisdiction shall be deferred until the stay expires.

(d) Discipline to be Imposed.

Upon the expiration of thirty (30) days from service of the notice pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (b) of this rule, this Court shall impose the identical public discipline or disability inactive status unless Disciplinary Counsel or the lawyer demonstrates, or this Court finds that it clearly appears upon the face of the record from which the discipline is predicated, that:

(1) The procedure was so lacking in notice or opportunity to be heard as to constitute a deprivation of due process; or

(2) There was such infirmity of proof establishing the misconduct as to give rise to the clear conviction that the Court could not, consistent with its duty, accept as final the conclusion on that subject; or

(3) The discipline imposed would result in grave injustice or be offensive to the public policy of the jurisdiction; or

(4) The reason for the original transfer to disability inactive status no longer exists. If this Court determines that any of those elements exists, this Court shall enter such other order as it deems appropriate. The burden is on the party seeking different discipline in this jurisdiction to demonstrate that the imposition of the same discipline is not appropriate.

(e) Conclusiveness of Adjudication in Other Jurisdictions.

In all other aspects, a final adjudication in another jurisdiction that a lawyer, whether or not admitted in that jurisdiction, has been guilty of misconduct or should be transferred to disability inactive status shall establish conclusively the misconduct or the disability for purposes of a disciplinary or disability proceeding in this jurisdiction.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 22

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**Rule 23. Proceeding in which Lawyer is Declared to be Incompetent or Alleged to be Incapacitated.**

(a) Involuntary Commitment or Adjudication of Incompetency.

If a lawyer has been judicially declared incompetent or is involuntarily committed on the grounds of incompetency or disability, the Court, upon proper proof of the fact, shall enter an order immediately transferring the lawyer to disability inactive status for an indefinite period until further order of the Court. A copy of the order shall be served, in the manner the Court may direct, upon the lawyer, his or her guardian, or the director of the institution to which the lawyer has been committed.

(b) Inability to Properly Defend.

If a respondent alleges in the course of a disciplinary proceeding an inability to assist in the defense due to mental or physical incapacity, the Court shall immediately transfer the lawyer to disability inactive status pending determination of the incapacity.

(1) If the Court determines the claim of inability to defend is valid, the disciplinary proceeding shall be deferred and the respondent retained on disability inactive status until the Court subsequently considers a petition for transfer of the respondent to active status. If the Court considering the petition for transfer to active status determines the petition shall be granted, the Court shall also determine the disposition of the interrupted disciplinary proceedings.

(2) If the Court determines the claim of incapacity to defend to be invalid, the disciplinary proceeding shall resume and the respondent shall immediately be placed on interim suspension pending the final disposition of the matter.

(c) Proceedings to Determine Incapacity.

Information relating to a lawyer's physical or mental condition that adversely affects the lawyer's ability to practice law shall be investigated, and where warranted, shall be the subject of formal proceedings to determine whether the lawyer shall be transferred to disability inactive status. The hearings shall be conducted in the same manner as disciplinary proceedings, except that the matter shall be filed by Disciplinary Counsel directly with the Court at the Investigative Panel's direction, and all of the proceedings shall be confidential. The Court shall provide for such notice to the respondent of proceedings in the matter as it deems proper and advisable and may appoint a lawyer to represent the respondent if the respondent is without adequate representation. The Court may take or direct whatever action it deems necessary or proper to determine whether the respondent is so incapacitated, including the examination of the respondent by qualified medical experts designated by the Court. If, upon due consideration of the matter, the Court concludes that the respondent is incapacitated from continuing to practice law, it shall enter an order transferring the respondent to disability inactive status for an indefinite period and until further order of the Court. Any pending disciplinary proceedings against the respondent shall be held in abeyance.

(d) Public Notice of Transfer to Disability Inactive Status.

The Commission shall cause a notice of transfer to disability inactive status to be published in a newspaper of general circulation in Guam.

(e) Reinstatement from Disability Inactive Status.

(1) Generally. No respondent transferred to disability inactive status may resume active status

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except by order of this Court.

(2) Petition. Any respondent transferred to disability inactive status shall be entitled to petition for transfer to active status once a year, or at whatever shorter intervals the Court may direct in the order transferring the respondent to disability inactive status or any modifications thereof.

(3) Examination. Upon the filing of a petition for transfer to active status, the Court may take or direct whatever action it deems necessary or proper to determine whether the disability has been removed, including a direction for an examination of the respondent by qualified medical experts designated by the Court. In its discretion, the Court may direct that the expense of the examination be paid by the respondent.

(4) Waiver of Doctor-Patient Privilege. With the filing of a petition for reinstatement to active status, the respondent shall be required to disclose the name of each psychiatrist, psychologist, physician, and hospital or other institution by whom or at which the respondent has been examined or treated since the transfer to disability inactive status. The respondent shall furnish to this Court written consent to the release of information and records relating to the disability if requested by the Court or court-appointed medical experts.

(5) Learning in Law; Bar Examination. The Court may also direct that the respondent establish proof of competence and learning in law, which proof may include certification by the Board of Law Examiners of successful completion of an examination for admission to practice.

(6) Granting Petition for Transfer to Active Status. The Court shall grant the petition for transfer to active status upon a showing by clear and convincing evidence that the disability has been removed.

(7) Judicial Declaration of Competence. If a respondent transferred to disability inactive status on the basis of a judicial determination of incompetence has been judicially declared to be competent, the Court may dispense with further evidence that the disability has been removed and may immediately direct reinstatement to active status upon terms as are deemed proper and advisable.

SOURCE: MRLDE 23

**Rule 24. Resignation by Lawyers Under Investigation or Subject to Formal Charges.**

(a) Protection of Public.

A lawyer who is the subject of an investigation into allegations of misconduct may resign from the practice of law in Guam only with consent of the Court and upon terms the Court imposes for the protection of the public.

(b) Sworn Statement.

A lawyer wishing to resign under the provisions of this rule shall submit a sworn written statement admitting to the truth of the charges against them, or if no charges have been served by the Investigative Committee, admitting to the truth of the allegations lodged against them and stating that they consent that the Court may require reasonable conditions for protection of the public, including making a permanent record of the fact of their resignation under this rule with all jurisdictions where they are admitted and all other appropriate authorities.

(c) Procedure.

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The Court shall notify the Investigative Committee of any application to resign, and the Committee may submit such matter of fact or argument, within fifteen (15) days, as it may desire. The Court shall then enter its order accepting or rejecting the tendered resignation upon terms as may be appropriate.

(d) Public Record.

If the pending disciplinary matter is not yet public, a request by the respondent to resign shall remain confidential until such time as the Court issues an order accepting the request. If the pending disciplinary matter is public, a request by the respondent to resign shall be public.

(e) A lawyer who has been allowed to resign under this rule remains subject to the jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Lawyer Regulatory System and shall promptly inform the Court of any change in their contact information for a period of six (6) years in order that they can be located in the event complaints are made about their conduct while they were engaged in the practice of law in Guam. No annual dues shall be required.

(f) Reinstatement.

A lawyer whose resignation has been accepted may petition for reinstatement under the procedures set forth in Rule 25 regarding a disbarred lawyer.

**SOURCE:** Court Rule 15.

**Rule 25. Reinstatement After Serving Suspension and Readmission.**

(a) Generally.

A lawyer who has served a period of suspension or a disbarred lawyer shall be reinstated or readmitted only upon order of the Court. No lawyer may petition for reinstatement until one hundred twenty (120) days prior to the expiration of the period of suspension. No lawyer may petition for readmission until three years after the effective date of disbarment. A lawyer who has been placed on interim suspension and is then disbarred for the same misconduct that was the ground for the interim suspension may petition for readmission at the expiration of three years from the time of the effective date of the interim suspension.

(b) Petition.

Unless the order imposing discipline provides for automatic reinstatement or readmission without petition, a petition for reinstatement or readmission shall be filed with the Court, must be under oath or affirmation under penalty of perjury, and shall specify with particularity the manner in which the lawyer meets each of the criteria specified in paragraph (e) of this rule or, if not, why there is good and sufficient reason for reinstatement or readmission. Unless abated under Rule 26 the petition must be accompanied by an advance cost deposit in the amount set from time to time by the Court to cover anticipated costs of the proceeding.

(c) Service of Petition.

The lawyer shall serve a copy of the petition upon Disciplinary Counsel and Disciplinary Counsel shall provide a copy of the petition to each complainant in the disciplinary proceeding that led to the suspension or disbarment, and shall inform each complainant that he or she has sixty (60) days to file a statement with the Court objecting to or supporting the lawyer's petition.

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(d) Publication of Notice of Petition.

When a lawyer files a petition for reinstatement or readmission, the Clerk of the Supreme Court shall publish a notice of the petition in a newspaper of general circulation in Guam, at the expense of the petitioning lawyer, and serve a copy of the notice upon the Guam Bar. The notice shall inform members of the bar and the public about the application for reinstatement or readmission, and shall request that any individuals file with the Court notice of their opposition or concurrence.

(e) Criteria for Reinstatement and Readmission.

A lawyer may be reinstated or readmitted only if the lawyer meets each of the following criteria, or, if not, presents good and sufficient reason why the lawyer should nevertheless be reinstated or readmitted:

(1) The lawyer has fully complied with the terms and conditions of all prior disciplinary orders except to the extent that they are abated under Rule 26.

(2) The lawyer has not engaged nor attempted to engage in the unauthorized practice of law during the period of suspension or disbarment.

(3) If the lawyer was suffering under a physical or mental disability or infirmity at the time of suspension or disbarment, including alcohol or other drug abuse, the disability or infirmity has been removed. Where alcohol or other drug abuse was a causative factor in the lawyer's misconduct, the lawyer shall not be reinstated or readmitted unless the lawyer has pursued appropriate rehabilitative treatment.

(4) The lawyer recognizes the wrongfulness and seriousness of the misconduct for which the lawyer was suspended or disbarred.

(5) The lawyer has not engaged in any other professional misconduct since suspension or disbarment.

(6) Notwithstanding the conduct for which the lawyer was disciplined, the lawyer has the requisite honesty and integrity to practice law.

(7) The lawyer has kept informed about recent developments in the law and is competent to practice.

(8) In addition, a lawyer who has been disbarred must pass the Guam bar examination and the character and fitness examination.

(f) Review of Petition.

Upon receiving a lawyer's petition for reinstatement or readmission, Disciplinary Counsel shall promptly either:

(1) advise the lawyer and the Court that the Investigative Committee will stipulate to the lawyer's reinstatement or readmission, or

(2) advise the lawyer and the Court that the Investigative Committee opposes reinstatement or readmission and request the Court to set a hearing.

(g) Hearing; Report.

Upon receipt of Disciplinary Counsel's request for a hearing, or upon its own determination, the

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Court may conduct a hearing at which the lawyer shall have the burden of demonstrating by clear and convincing evidence that he or she has met each of the criteria in paragraph (e) of this rule or, if not, that there is good and sufficient reason why the lawyer should nevertheless be reinstated or readmitted.

(h) Decision as to Reinstatement or Readmission.

The Court shall consider the petition, any statement by Disciplinary Counsel, the evidence presented at any hearing, and any stipulation agreed to by the lawyer and Disciplinary Counsel. If the Court finds that the lawyer has complied with each of the criteria of paragraph (e) of this rule, or has presented good and sufficient reason for failure to comply, the Court shall reinstate or readmit the lawyer. If the Court reinstates or readmits the lawyer, the Court shall set forth the grounds for its decision in writing; if the Court denies reinstatement or readmission, the Court shall set forth the grounds for its decision in writing and shall identify the period after which the lawyer may reapply. Generally, no lawyer should be permitted to reapply for reinstatement or readmission within one year following an adverse judgment upon a petition for reinstatement or readmission.

(i) Conditions of Reinstatement or Readmission.

The Court may impose conditions on a lawyer's reinstatement or readmission. The conditions shall be imposed in cases where the lawyer has met the burden of proof justifying reinstatement or readmission, but the Court reasonably believes that further precautions should be taken to protect the public.

The Court may impose any conditions that are reasonably related to the grounds for the lawyer's original suspension or disbarment, or to evidence presented at the hearing regarding the lawyer's failure to meet the criteria for reinstatement or readmission. Passing the bar examination and the character and fitness examination shall be conditions to readmission following disbarment. The conditions may also include any of the following: limitation upon practice (to one area of law or through association with an experienced supervising lawyer); participation in continuing legal education courses; monitoring of the lawyer's practice (for compliance with trust account rules, accounting procedures, or office management procedures); abstention from the use of drugs or alcohol; active participation in Alcoholics Anonymous or other alcohol or drug rehabilitation program; or monitoring of the lawyer's compliance with any other orders (such as abstinence from alcohol or drugs, or participation in alcohol or drug rehabilitation programs). If the monitoring lawyer determines that the reinstated or readmitted lawyer's compliance with any condition of reinstatement or readmission is unsatisfactory and that there exists a potential for harm to the public, the monitoring lawyer shall notify the Court and, where necessary to protect the public, the lawyer may be suspended from practice under Rule 20(b).

(j) Reciprocal Reinstatement or Readmission.

Where the Court has imposed a suspension or disbarment solely on the basis of imposition of discipline in another jurisdiction, and where the lawyer gives notice to the Court that he or she has been reinstated or readmitted in the other jurisdiction, the Court shall determine whether the lawyer should be reinstated or readmitted in Guam. Unless Disciplinary Counsel presents evidence demonstrating procedural irregularities in the other jurisdiction's proceeding or presents other compelling reasons, the Court shall reinstate or readmit a lawyer who has been reinstated or readmitted in the jurisdiction where the misconduct occurred.

(k) Waiver of Psychotherapist-Patient Privilege.

The filing of a petition for reinstatement by a lawyer suspended for incompetency or incapacity

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shall constitute a waiver of any psychotherapist-patient privilege with respect to the treatment of the lawyer during the period of his/her disability. In the petition for reinstatement, the lawyer shall be required to disclose the name and address of every psychiatrist, psychologist, physician, hospital or other institution involved in the examination or treatment for the condition upon which he/she was determined disabled. The lawyer shall furnish the Investigative Committee with written consent for each psychiatrist, psychologist, physician, hospital, or other institution to divulge such information and records as requested by the Committee or Disciplinary Counsel.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 25; Court Rule 20(h) (subsection (k))

**Rule 26. Abatement or Modification of Conditions of Discipline, Reinstatement, or Readmission.**

Where the Court has imposed conditions in an order of discipline or in an order of reinstatement or readmission, the lawyer may request of the Court an order of abatement discharging the lawyer from the obligation to comply with the conditions, or an order modifying the conditions. The lawyer may so request either prior to or as part of lawyer's petition for reinstatement or readmission. The Court may grant the request if the lawyer shows by clear and convincing evidence that the lawyer has made a timely, good faith effort to meet the conditions but it is impossible to fulfill the conditions.

**SOURCE:** MRLDE 26

**Rule 27. Notice to Clients, Adverse Parties, and Other Counsel.**

(a) Recipients of Notice; Contents.

Within ten (10) days after the date of the Court order imposing discipline, transfer to disability inactive status, or allowing resignation pursuant to Rule 24, a respondent disbarred, transferred to disability inactive status, placed on interim suspension, allowed to resign pursuant to Rule 24, suspended for more than thirty (30) days, or who has been administratively suspended pursuant to Rule 8(c) for more than thirty (30) days shall notify or cause to be notified by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested,

(1) all clients being represented in pending matters;

(2) any co-counsel in pending matters; and

(3) any opposing counsel in pending matters, or in the absence of opposing counsel, the adverse parties, of the order of the Court and that the respondents therefore disqualified to act as a lawyer after the effective date of the order. The notice to be given to the lawyer(s) for an adverse party, or, in the absence of opposing counsel, the adverse parties, shall state the place of residence of the client of the respondent.

(b) Special Notice.

The Court may direct the issuance of notice to such financial institutions or others as may be necessary to protect the interests of clients or other members of the public.

(c) Duty to Maintain Records.

The respondent shall keep and maintain records of the steps taken to accomplish the requirements of paragraphs (a) and (b), and shall make those records available to Disciplinary Counsel on request.

(d) Return of Client Property.

The respondent shall deliver to all clients being represented in pending matters any papers or other

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property to which they are entitled and shall notify them and any counsel representing them of a suitable time and place where the papers and other property may be obtained, calling attention to any urgency for obtaining the papers or other property.

(e) Effective Date of Order; Refund of Fees.

Orders imposing disbarment, suspension, transfers to disability inactive status, or allowing resignation pursuant to Rule 24 are effective on a date fifteen (15) days after the date of the order, except where the Court orders a later effective date or finds that immediate disbarment, suspension, transfer to disability or inactive status, or resignation is necessary to protect the public. The respondent shall refund within ten (10) days after entry of the order any part of any fees paid in advance that has not been earned.

(f) Withdrawal from Representation.

In the event the client does not obtain another lawyer before the effective date of the disbarment, suspension, transfer to disability or inactive status, resignation pursuant to Rule 24, or administrative suspension, it shall be the responsibility of the respondent to move in the court or agency in which the proceeding is pending for leave to withdraw. The respondent shall in that event file with the court, agency, or tribunal before which the litigation is pending a copy of the notice to opposing counsel or adverse parties.

(g) New Representation Prohibited.

Prior to the effective date of the order, if not immediate, the respondent shall agree not to undertake any new legal matters between service of the order and the effective date of the discipline.

(h) Affidavit Filed with Court.

Within ten (10) days after the effective date of a disbarment or suspension order, or order of transfer to disability inactive status, the respondent shall file with this Court an affidavit showing:

- (1) Compliance with the provisions of the order and with these rules;
- (2) All other state, federal and administrative jurisdictions to which the lawyer is admitted to practice;
- (3) Residence or other addresses where communications may thereafter be directed; and
- (4) Service of a copy of the affidavit upon Disciplinary Counsel.

SOURCE: MRLDE 27

**Rule 27.1. Employment of Disbarred, Suspended, Resigned, or Involuntary Inactive Lawyer.**

(a) For purposes of this rule:

- (1) “Employ” means to engage the services of another, including employees, agents, independent contractors, and consultants, regardless of whether any compensation is paid;
- (2) “Involuntary inactive lawyer” means a lawyer who is ineligible to practice law as a result of action taken by the Court pursuant to these Rules; and
- (3) “Resigned lawyer” means a lawyer who resigned from the Guam Bar with a disciplinary matter pending.

(b) A lawyer shall not employ, associate professionally with, or aid a person the lawyer knows or

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reasonably should know is a disbarred, suspended, resigned, or involuntary inactive lawyer to perform the following on behalf of the lawyer's client:

- (1) Render legal consultation or advice to the client;
- (2) Appear on behalf of a client in any hearing or proceeding or before any judicial officer, arbitrator, mediator, court, public agency, referee, magistrate, commissioner, or hearing officer, unless authorized by the Court and performed on a pro bono basis;
- (3) Appear as a representative of the client at a deposition or other discovery matter;
- (4) Negotiate or transact any matter for or on behalf of the client with third parties;
- (5) Receive, disburse, or otherwise handle the client's funds; or
- (6) Engage in activities that constitute the practice of law.

(c) A lawyer may employ, associate professionally with, or aid a disbarred, suspended, resigned, or involuntary inactive lawyer to perform research, drafting, or other activities that do not constitute the practice of law, including but not limited to:

- (1) Legal work of a preparatory nature, such as legal research, the assemblage of data and other necessary information, drafting of pleadings, briefs, and other similar documents;
- (2) Direct communication with the client or third parties regarding matters such as scheduling, updates, confirmation of receipt or sending of correspondence and messages; or
- (3) accompanying an active lawyer in attending a deposition or other discovery matter for the limited purpose of providing assistance to the active lawyer who will appear as the representative of the client.

(d) When employing a person the lawyer knows or reasonably should know is a disbarred, suspended, resigned, or involuntary inactive lawyer, the lawyer shall serve upon the Clerk of the Supreme Court and Disciplinary Counsel written notice of the employment, including a full description of the person's current bar status. The written notice shall also list the activities prohibited in paragraph (b) of this rule and state that the disbarred, suspended, resigned, or involuntary inactive lawyer will not perform such activities. The lawyer shall serve similar written notice upon each client on whose specific matter such person will work, prior to or when employing or assigning such person to work on the client's specific matter. The lawyer shall obtain proof of service of the client's written notice and shall retain such proof and a true and correct copy of the client's written notice for two years following termination of the disbarred, suspended, resigned, or involuntary inactive lawyer's employment with the lawyer.

(e) Upon terminating the employment of the disbarred, suspended, resigned, or involuntary inactive lawyer, the employing lawyer shall promptly serve upon the Clerk of the Supreme Court and Disciplinary Counsel written notice of the termination.

**SOURCE:** California Rule of Professional Conduct 1-311

**Rule 28. Appointment of Counsel to Protect Clients' Interests when Respondent is Transferred to Disability Inactive Status, Suspended, Disbarred, Disappears, or Dies.**

(a) Inventory of Lawyer Files. If a respondent has been transferred to disability inactive status, or has disappeared or died, or has been suspended or disbarred and there is evidence that he or she has not

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complied with Rule 27, and no partner, executor or other responsible party capable of conducting the respondent's affairs is known to exist, the Court, upon proper proof of the fact, shall appoint a lawyer or lawyers to inventory the files of the respondent, and to take such action as seems indicated to protect the interests of the respondent and his or her clients.

(b) Protection for Records Subject to Inventory. Any lawyer so appointed shall not be permitted to disclose any information contained in any files inventoried without the consent of the client to whom the file relates, except as necessary to carry out the Court order appointing the lawyer to make the inventory.

(c) In addition to the assessment of costs under Rule 10(a), the Court may assess against a respondent any reasonable costs incurred by a lawyer appointed under this rule that were incurred because of the suspension, disbarment, disability, or resignation of the respondent.

SOURCE: MRLDE 28

**Rule 29. [RESERVED].**

**Rule 30. Maintenance of Trust Funds in an Insured Financial Institution; Overdraft Notification; Verification of Bank Accounts.**

(a) Clearly Identified Trust Accounts in an Insured Financial Institution Required.

(1) Lawyers who practice law in Guam shall deposit all funds held in trust in this jurisdiction in accordance with Guam Rule of Professional Conduct 1.15(a) in accounts clearly identified as "trust" or "escrow" accounts, referred to herein as "trust accounts," and shall take all steps necessary to inform the depository institution of the purpose and identity of the accounts. Funds held in trust include funds held in any fiduciary capacity in connection with a representation, whether as trustee, agent, guardian, executor or otherwise. Lawyer trust accounts shall be maintained only in an insured financial institution.

(2) Every lawyer practicing or admitted to practice in Guam shall, within ten (10) days of receiving notice of any overdraft relative to any trust account, provide a copy of the notice to Disciplinary Counsel.

(3) Every lawyer practicing or admitted to practice in Guam shall, as a condition thereof, be conclusively deemed to have consented to the Investigative Committee and Disciplinary Counsel being provided, upon request, with a copy of any overdraft notification relative to any trust account maintained by the lawyer directly from the financial institution.

(4) Every lawyer engaged in the practice of law in Guam shall maintain and preserve for a period of at least five years, after final disposition of the underlying matter, the records of the accounts, including checkbooks, cancelled checks, check stubs, vouchers, ledgers, journals, closing statements, accountings, or other statements of disbursements rendered to clients or other parties with regard to trust funds or similar equivalent records clearly and expressly reflecting the date, amount, source, and explanation for all receipts, withdrawals, deliveries, and disbursements of the funds or other property of a client.

(b) Generally.

Whenever the Investigative Committee has probable cause to believe that bank accounts of a lawyer that contain, should contain, or have contained funds belonging to clients have not been properly

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maintained or that the funds have not been properly handled, the Investigative Committee may authorize an investigation by Disciplinary Counsel for the purpose of verifying the accuracy and integrity of all bank accounts maintained by the lawyer.

(c) Confidentiality.

Investigations, examinations, and verifications shall be conducted so as to preserve the private and confidential nature of the lawyer's records insofar as is consistent with these rules and the lawyer-client privilege.

SOURCE: MRLDE 29 & 30.

**Rule 31. [RESERVED]**

**Rule 32. Statute of Limitations.**

A complaint against a lawyer shall be filed within six years of the time that the complainant discovers or reasonably should have discovered the misconduct. There shall be no statute of limitations for misconduct alleging fraud, conversion, or conviction of a serious crime, or for an offense the discovery of which has been prevented by concealment on the part of the lawyer.

SOURCE: MRLDE 32; Committee Rule 7.

**Rule 33. Failure to Answer/Failure to Appear.**

(a) Failure to Answer.

(1) If respondent fails to answer, the Hearing Panel shall enter a default of the respondent in the same manner as in civil actions, and thereafter, notwithstanding any other provisions of these rules, respondent shall not be entitled to further notice or to appear and be heard at subsequent proceedings. Thereafter, the sole issue to be determined by the Hearing Panel shall be the nature of its recommendation of discipline to the Court after consideration of any facts in aggravation or mitigation of the respondent's fault.

(2) For good cause shown within a reasonable time, the Hearing Panel or the Court may set aside respondent's default, with or without conditions, and make such orders as to further proceedings as appropriate.

(b) Failure to Appear.

If respondent should fail to appear when specifically so ordered by the Hearing Panel, the respondent shall be deemed to have admitted the factual allegations that were to be the subject of such appearance and/or a concession to any motion or recommendations to be considered at such appearance. The Hearing Panel shall not, absent good cause, continue or delay proceedings due to the respondent's failure to appear.

SOURCE: MRLDE 33; Committee Rule 21 (subsection (a))

**Rule 34. [Reserved]**

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