Closing a Case File Checklist

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NATIONAL CRIME VICTIM LAW INSTITUTE

	Draft a brief closing file memo to provide a quick summary of your involvement in the case to create a permanent record of your representation.
	Make sure the file closing date is reflected in the client/adverse party index for purposes of conflicts of interest.
	Return original documents or some or all of the case file to the client (client is NOT responsible for copying costs if you make a copy for yourself).
	Strip the file of unnecessary or duplicate paperwork, including removing tabs, paper clips, & binders
	Save any briefs, pleadings and research that might be useful in future cases into your brief/form bank.
	Verify that all amounts owed by the client or to the client have been paid and that any remaining client monies in the client trust fund account are handled in accordance with state bar guidelines
	Close the client's account in the bookkeeping system
	Transfer electronic and hard-copy files from active file spaces to archives or inactive file spaces.*
	Send out a closing letter to the client.**

*Ensure file is managed to maintain the duty of client confidentiality.

**The closing letter serves to confirm with the client that the case is completed and that you are no longer representing the client in the matter. The closing letter's goal is to prevent any misunderstandings between you and the client. You may wish to have the client countersign the closing letter or send via certified mail to prove receipt.

Consider including the following in a closing letter:

- Restate what you were engaged to do on the case and confirm that you completed those tasks.
- Give the client a deadline for contacting you if the client believes that there is more for you to do in the case, and inform the client that if you do not hear him/her/them by that date you will close the case.
- Inform the client that once the case is closed all future communications will not be covered by attorney-client privilege.
- List all documents you returned to the client and include an acknowledgment of receipt for the client to return to you.
- For any issues that were unexpected, diverged from standard practice, or that had a negative result for the client (or may result in something negative in the future) provide an explanation of what/why you did or did not do in the case in regards to those issues.