

What if my attorney and I don't agree?

You and your attorney should work as a team – but this is your case. While your attorney has much more experience in legal matters, the ultimate decisions are yours. If your attorney feels strongly about a recommendation, you should listen carefully to his/her reasons. If you decide not to follow your attorney's advice, you must be willing to accept the responsibility and consequences for your decision.

How do I find an attorney willing to help with limited scope representation?

Call the State Bar of Texas Lawyer Referral Information Service at 1-800-252-9690. Tell them you want an attorney that can help you with just one part of your case when asking for a referral.

For a referral to an attorney, call:
**State Bar of Texas
Lawyer Referral
Information Service
Phone: 1.800.252.9690**



This pamphlet was prepared by:



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**Limited Scope
Representation**

Frequently Asked Questions

**For a lawyer referral, call:
Toll Free 1.800.252.9690**

When you are willing and able to represent yourself (pro se) in your legal matter but need advice and guidance from a lawyer on a limited basis, Limited Scope Representation may work for you.

What is limited scope representation?

Limited scope representation is when a lawyer helps you with part of your case while you do part on your own.

A lawyer can help you with the following:

- Review documents and correspondence
- Help you prepare documents or review documents you have drafted to make sure that the court will accept them
- Coach you on how to handle going to court by yourself
- Help with negotiations
- Teach you about court procedures

In limited scope representation arrangements, you and your attorney work as a team. The attorney only bills you for the parts of the case that the attorney handles.

What is the benefit to me?

There may be things that you can do for yourself – such as create your own documents, gather information, and handle routine court hearings. But there may be other things that you need an attorney to handle, such as help preparing your information in a way that will be most useful in court. It can save you money on legal fees yet you still get the benefit of the attorney's legal expertise.

Some situations and areas of the law are extremely technical (business interests, stocks, pensions), and you will probably need help from a lawyer if you have these issues.

REPRESENTING YOURSELF AT A COURT HEARINGS IS VERY DIFFICULT AND IS NOT ENCOURAGED.

What about the cost?

Ask the lawyer if s/he will meet with you for 30-minutes at an inexpensive rate. At this meeting, explain your legal needs. You and the attorney should decide if you will work together and who will handle specific parts of your case. Discuss legal fees at this first consultation. Be sure you understand how much the lawyer will charge for the work that the lawyer will do. Find out when the lawyer needs to be paid. Get the fee agreement in writing.

What happens when I meet with my lawyer?

When making an appointment with the lawyer's office, ask what information you should bring. Write out questions ahead of time that you want to discuss with the lawyer. Be prepared to talk about legal fees. Find a lawyer you are comfortable with. Call the State Bar Lawyer Referral and Information Service at 1-800-252-9690 for another referral if the first lawyer cannot help you.

Should I share every detail of information with my attorney?

Yes. It is very important that you tell your attorney about new issues that pop up after your case is started so you know the legal consequences. There may be issues that arise that you don't realize are important – your attorney can help you only if you provide complete information. Tell your attorney everything, even if you think it may not be important.

What kinds of questions should I be asking?

You and your attorney need to talk about every part of your case and agree what parts you will do and what parts the attorney will do. You should ask your attorney questions like:

- Who will set the strategy?
- Who will gather information?
- Who will prepare information for the court?
- Who will draft documents for the court?
- Who will appear at court and settlement conferences?
- Who will negotiate with the other side to try to settle the case out of court?

Why shouldn't I just go to a paralegal service or document preparer?

By law, paralegal work must be closely supervised by an attorney. Paralegals are not allowed to practice law and cannot accept clients or give legal advice.

Even cases that seem simple often have hidden complications that lawyers are trained to catch. If you don't talk with an attorney, you won't know if potentially serious complications have been overlooked.

What if I decide I want the attorney to handle the entire case?

If you decide it is too difficult to represent yourself, you may want to hire a lawyer to represent you. If there is an attorney representing the other side, you will be at a disadvantage and you should strongly consider hiring an attorney full-time. Consider hiring the attorney you have been working with – it will be less expensive for you to hire the attorney who already knows your case.

When is my arrangement finished?

Because this is *limited* representation, you should clearly understand what part of your case your attorney is handling, and exactly when that part will be completed. After the attorney's part is completed, s/he is no longer working on your case with you.

Your attorney should provide you with a detailed checklist and an agreement outlining what each of you will be doing while working on your case.