

Colorado Court Rules
Colorado Rules of Professional Conduct
Information about Legal Services

As amended through Rule Change 2020(29), effective October 2020.

- (a) A lawyer may communicate information regarding the lawyer's services through any media.
- (b) A lawyer shall not compensate, give or promise anything of value to a person for recommending the lawyer's services except that a lawyer may:
- (1) pay the reasonable costs of advertisements or communications permitted by this Rule;
 - (2) pay the usual charges of a legal service plan or a not-for-profit or qualified lawyer referral service;
 - (3) pay for a law practice in accordance with Rule 1.17;
 - (4) refer clients to another lawyer or a nonlawyer professional pursuant to an agreement not otherwise prohibited under these Rules that provides for the other person to refer clients or customers to the lawyer, if: (i) the reciprocal referral agreement is not exclusive; and (ii) the client is informed of the existence and nature of the agreement; and
 - (5) give nominal gifts as an expression of appreciation that are neither intended nor reasonably expected to be a form of compensation for recommending a lawyer's services.
- (c) A lawyer shall not state or imply that a lawyer is certified as a specialist in a particular field of law, unless:
- (1) the lawyer has been certified as a specialist by an organization that has been approved by an appropriate authority of the state or the District of Columbia or a U.S. Territory or that has been accredited by the American Bar Association; and
 - (2) the name of the certifying organization is clearly identified in the communication.
- (d) Any communication made under this Rule must include the name and contact information of

at least one lawyer or law firm responsible for its content.

Comment

[1] This Rule permits public dissemination of information concerning a lawyer's or law firm's

name, address, email address, website, and telephone number; the kinds of services the lawyer

will undertake; the basis on which the lawyer's fees are determined, including prices for specific

services and payment and credit arrangements; a lawyer's foreign language ability; names of references and, with their consent, names of clients regularly represented; and other information

that might invite the attention of those seeking legal assistance.

Paying Others to Recommend a Lawyer

[2] Except as permitted under paragraphs (b)(1) through (b)(5), lawyers are not permitted to pay

others for recommending the lawyer's services. A communication contains a recommendation if

it endorses or vouches for a lawyer's credentials, abilities, competence, character, or other professional qualities. Directory listings and group advertisements that list lawyers by practice

area, without more, do not constitute impermissible "recommendations."

[3] Paragraph (b)(1) allows a lawyer to pay for advertising and communications permitted by this Rule, including the costs of print directory listings, on-line directory listings, newspaper ads,

television and radio airtime, domain-name registrations, sponsorship fees, Internet-based advertisements, and group advertising. A lawyer may compensate employees, agents and vendors who are engaged to provide marketing or client-development services, such as publicists, public-relations personnel, business-development staff, television and radio station employees or spokespersons and website designers.

[4] Paragraph (b)(5) permits lawyers to give nominal gifts as an expression of appreciation to a

person for recommending the lawyer's services or referring a prospective client. The gift may not be more than a token item as might be given for holidays, or other ordinary social hospitality.

A gift is prohibited if offered or given in consideration of any promise, agreement or understanding that such a gift would be forthcoming or that referrals would be made or encouraged in the future.

[5] A lawyer may pay others for generating client leads, such as Internet-based client leads, as

long as the lead generator does not recommend the lawyer, any payment to the lead generator is

consistent with Rules 1.5(d) (division of fees) and 5.4 (professional independence of the lawyer),

and the lead generator's communications are consistent with Rule 7.1 (communications concerning a lawyer's services). To comply with Rule 7.1, a lawyer must not pay a lead generator that states, implies, or creates a reasonable impression that it is recommending the lawyer, is making the referral without payment from the lawyer, or has analyzed a person's legal

problems when determining which lawyer should receive the referral. See Comment [2] (definition of “recommendation”). See also Rule 5.3 (duties of lawyers and law firms with respect to the conduct of nonlawyers); Rule 8.4 (a) (duty to avoid violating the Rules through the acts of another).

[6] A lawyer may pay the usual charges of a legal service plan or a not-for-profit or qualified lawyer referral service. A legal service plan is a prepaid or group legal service plan or a similar

delivery system that assists people who seek to secure legal representation. A lawyer referral service, on the other hand, is any organization that holds itself out to the public as a lawyer referral service. Qualified referral services are consumer-oriented organizations that provide unbiased referrals to lawyers with appropriate experience in the subject matter of the representation and afford other client protections, such as complaint procedures or malpractice

insurance requirements. Consequently, this Rule only permits a lawyer to pay the usual charges

of a not-for-profit or qualified lawyer referral service. A qualified lawyer referral service is one

that is approved by an appropriate regulatory authority as affording adequate protections for the

public. See, e.g., the American Bar Association’s Model Supreme Court Rules Governing Lawyer Referral Services and Model Lawyer Referral and Information Service Quality

Assurance Act.

[7] A lawyer who accepts assignments or referrals from a legal service plan or referrals from a

lawyer referral service must act reasonably to assure that the activities of the plan or service are

compatible with the lawyer's professional obligations. Legal service plans and lawyer referral

services may communicate with the public, but such communication must be in conformity with

these Rules. Thus, advertising must not be false or misleading, as would be the case if the

communications of a group advertising program or a group legal services plan would mislead the

public to think that it was a lawyer referral service sponsored by a state agency or bar association.

[8] A lawyer also may agree to refer clients to another lawyer or a nonlawyer professional, in

return for the undertaking of that person to refer clients or customers to the lawyer. Such

reciprocal referral arrangements must not interfere with the lawyer's professional judgment as to

making referrals or as to providing substantive legal services. See Rules 2.1 and 5.4(c). Except as

provided in Rule 1.5(d), a lawyer who receives referrals from a lawyer or nonlawyer professional

must not pay anything solely for the referral, but the lawyer does not violate paragraph (b) of this

Rule by agreeing to refer clients to the other lawyer or nonlawyer professional, so long as the

reciprocal referral agreement is not exclusive and the client is informed of the referral agreement.

Conflicts of interest created by such arrangements are governed by Rule 1.7. Reciprocal referral

agreements should not be of indefinite duration and should be reviewed periodically to determine

whether they comply with these Rules. This Rule does not restrict referrals or divisions of revenues or net income among lawyers within firms comprised of multiple entities.

Communications about Fields of Practice

[9] Paragraph (c) of this Rule permits a lawyer to communicate that the lawyer does or does not

practice in particular areas of law. A lawyer is generally permitted to state that the lawyer “concentrates in” or is a “specialist,” practices a “specialty,” or “specializes in” particular fields

based on the lawyer’s experience, specialized training or education, but such communications are

subject to the “false and misleading” standard applied in Rule 7.1 to communications concerning

a lawyer’s services.

[10] The Patent and Trademark Office has a long-established policy of designating lawyers practicing before the Office. The designation of Admiralty practice also has a long historical tradition associated with maritime commerce and the federal courts. A lawyer’s communications

about these practice areas are not prohibited by this Rule.

[11] This Rule permits a lawyer to state that the lawyer is certified as a specialist in a field of law if such certification is granted by an organization approved by an appropriate authority of a

state, the District of Columbia or a U.S. Territory or accredited by the American Bar Association

or another organization, such as a state supreme court or a state bar association, that has been

approved by the authority of the state, the District of Columbia or a U.S. Territory to accredit organizations that certify lawyers as specialists. Certification signifies that an objective entity has recognized an advanced degree of knowledge and experience in the specialty area greater than is suggested by general licensure to practice law. Certifying organizations may be expected to apply standards of experience, knowledge and proficiency to ensure that a lawyer's recognition as a specialist is meaningful and reliable. To ensure that consumers can obtain access to useful information about an organization granting certification, the name of the certifying organization must be included in any communication regarding the certification.

[11A] In any advertisement in which a lawyer affirmatively claims to be certified as a specialist in any area of the law, such advertisement shall contain the following disclosure: "Colorado does not certify lawyers as specialists in any field." This disclaimer is not required where the information concerning the lawyer's services is contained in a law list, law directory or a publication intended primarily for use of the legal profession.

Required Contact Information

[12] This Rule requires that any communication about a lawyer or law firm's services include the name of, and contact information for, the lawyer or law firm. Contact information includes a website address, a telephone number, an email address or a physical office location.

Cite as RPC 7.2

History. (c)(1), (2), and (3) amended and adopted June 12, 1997, effective July 1, 1997; entire rule and comment amended and adopted June 12, 1997, effective January 1, 1998; entire Appendix repealed and readopted April 12, 2007, effective January 1, 2008; Comment [8] amended and effective November 6, 2008. **Amended and Adopted by the Court, En Banc, September 10, 2020, effective immediately**