

Client Sample Letter

Date

[Attorney Name]

[Attorney Address]

RE: [Client Name]

I am writing in reference to my [type of case] case you are handling for me. I have concerns about: [list and describe your questions or concerns here]

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

I would like the opportunity to discuss these concerns with you [in person, by phone] *or* [I would like a response in writing]. I can be reached at [your name, address, and telephone #].

[I look forward to hearing from you] or [I would appreciate hearing from you] by [reasonable date]. Thank you in advance for your attention to this request.

Yours truly,
[Client Name]

TO REACH CAAP AND THE
GRIEVANCE INFORMATION HOT LINE CALL:

1-800-932-1900
OR
1-800-204-2222, EXT. 1790
(from anywhere in Texas or out-of-state)

— CAAP —

CLIENT—ATTORNEY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS



CAAP mailing address:
P.O. Box 12487
Austin, TX 78711-2487
Fax: (512) 427-4122

State Bar of Texas website: www.texasbar.com

CAAP Mission Statement:

To assist the public and attorneys in resolving disputes with Texas attorneys and facilitate and improve communications between clients and attorneys.

Two Distinct Options

When a client contacts CAAP on the grievance hotline or in writing, CAAP explains the following two distinct options:

I. Dispute Resolution Process

Clients may elect to participate in dispute resolution with their attorney-of-record in order to address concerns or requests they may have. While attorney participation in CAAP's alternative dispute resolution process is not mandatory, our program provides a confidential alternative to the formal grievance process. Many issues regarding misunderstandings over communication, fees, documentation, and other requests are normally resolved to the satisfaction of the parties.

II. Formal Grievance Process

Clients may release their attorney and file a grievance. A grievance form will be sent to the client and will need to be returned to the Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel. Upon review of the grievance a letter will be mailed to the client indicating the status of their grievance. Please review the *Attorney Grievance Information* brochure for more details.

When a grievance is filed, CAAP may not be able to provide assistance that involves contacting the attorney.

Step 1 Documenting a Client's Need

The most common reason a client contacts CAAP is because an attorney is not returning phone calls. If an attorney does not return telephone calls for extended periods of time, it is often effective to send a letter to the attorney. Written correspondence accomplishes two important objectives:

- (1) the attorney has the client's concerns in writing so there is no misunderstanding about the client's concerns and;
- (2) the letter documents the communication problems that are occurring.

Many clients have used these letters successfully to request an appointment with their attorney, ask questions regarding the case, request information or a copy of their file, etc. Sending letters by certified mail also documents when the attorney received the client's letter. Emails and faxes are also effective in documenting client concerns.

Step 2 Requesting Assistance from CAAP

Should an attorney not respond to their client's letter, the client may contact CAAP and obtain a Request for Assistance Form (RFA). The client must complete the RFA and return it with a copy of the letter the client previously sent to their attorney and a copy of the signed certified receipt if available.

Step 3 CAAP Contacts the Attorney

A CAAP attorney will send the client's attorney-of-record a letter reviewing the dispute resolution process and request that the attorney contact the client. A copy of the client's letter sent to the attorney will also be enclosed.

Should CAAP's initial letter be unsuccessful CAAP will place a phone call to the attorney and/or send another letter. In most instances, issues are resolved to the satisfaction of the parties.

Step 4 Closing the Dispute Resolution Process

In some instances an attorney may not respond to CAAP or a client may determine that their attorney's response is unsatisfactory. A client can request a grievance form at the closing of the dispute resolution process. All grievances are reviewed by the Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel and not by CAAP.

Please keep in mind the following suggestions when preparing a written grievance:

- Prepare a timeline as a guide.
- Give information on any and all events, provide dates, facts, and explain behavior issues related to the alleged misconduct.
- Organize documents related to your grievance. Give documents reference or exhibit numbers to assist investigators in evaluating the alleged misconduct.