



The State Bar
of California

Moral Character Determination Guidelines

This document reflects the methodology typically utilized by the State Bar of California in completing an analysis of issues relevant to the determination of whether an applicant possesses the requisite moral character for licensure to practice law. The guidelines are intended to reflect standards set forth by the California Supreme Court and other governing law.

The utility of the guidelines is predicated on the complete and accurate disclosure of relevant facts and the provision of necessary documentation by the applicant.

The document does not contain all moral character values, acts of misconduct, mitigating and aggravating factors, or rehabilitation factors that are relevant to a moral character determination.

Applicants are unique and will be considered on their individual merits. Accordingly, these guidelines neither bind nor limit the discretion of the decision-makers.

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Felony Conviction

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- One conviction, expunged pursuant to a statute listed in the Convictions section of the Application for Determination of Moral Character, no aggravating factors
- Nonviolent, more than five years ago, no subsequent convictions, no aggravating factors

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Not expunged pursuant to a statute listed in the Convictions section of the Application for Determination of Moral Character
- Violent

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances
- Involving moral turpitude¹

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since a conviction, the severity of the criminal conduct, and the number and frequency of convictions are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| • Role of applicant | • Honorable discharge from military | • Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations | • Pattern of misconduct |
| • Age of applicant at time of offense | • Successful completion of parole, probation, community supervision | • Conviction for conduct that has been legalized | • Attempt to conceal or mislead |
| • Social factors of applicant | • Completion of education, vocation, rehabilitation programs while incarcerated | • Rehabilitation related to factors that contributed to the offense | • Type of offense (for example, offenses involving a breach of trust, great bodily harm, cruelty, or abuse of authority may be particularly relevant to moral character) |
| • Time since offense | • Community service beyond what is required by court | • Record sealed, expunged, dismissed | • Number and type of victims |
| • Intent | | | |
| • Remorse, insight, accountability | | | |
| • Completion of restorative justice | | | |

¹“Criminal conduct not committed in the practice of law or against a client reveals moral turpitude if it shows a deficiency in any character trait necessary for the practice of law (such as trustworthiness, honesty, fairness, candor, and fidelity to fiduciary duties) or if it involves such a serious breach of a duty owed to another or to society, or such a flagrant disrespect for the law or for societal norms, that knowledge of the attorney’s conduct would be likely to undermine public confidence in and respect for the legal profession.” (*In re Lesansky* (2001) 25 Cal.4th 11, 16.)



Conviction for Drug Sales or Possession

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Sealed via deferred entry of judgment for first time drug user under Cal. Penal Code § 1001 no aggravating factors
- Dismissed and expunged under Cal. Penal Code § 1210.1 (codifying Prop. 36) or a similar statute that permits nondisclosure to a state bar, no aggravating factors

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Drug Sales, one or more convictions
- Possession, multiple convictions

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since a conviction, the severity of the criminal conduct, and the number and frequency of convictions are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of offense
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Completion of restorative justice
- Honorable discharge from military
- Successful completion of parole, probation, community supervision
- Completion of education, vocation, rehabilitation programs while incarcerated
- Community service beyond what is required by court
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Conviction for conduct that has been legalized
- Rehabilitation related to factors that contributed to the offense
- Record sealed, expunged, dismissed
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Type of offense (for example, offenses involving a breach of trust, great bodily harm, cruelty, or abuse of authority may be particularly relevant to moral character)
- Number and type of victims



Alcohol-Related or Drug-Related Misdemeanor Conviction

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- One conviction, no aggravating factors

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- One conviction, aggravating factors
- Multiple convictions

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances
- Aggravating factors

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since a conviction, the severity of the criminal conduct, and the number and frequency of convictions are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of offense
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Completion of restorative justice
- Honorable discharge from military
- Successful completion of parole, probation, community supervision
- Completion of education, vocation, rehabilitation programs while incarcerated
- Community service beyond what is required by court
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Conviction for conduct that has been legalized
- Rehabilitation related to factors that contributed to the offense
- Record sealed, expunged, dismissed
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Type of offense (for example, offenses involving a breach of trust, great bodily harm, cruelty, or abuse of authority may be particularly relevant to moral character)
- Number and type of victims



Adult Misdemeanor Conviction

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Expunged, dismissed, or sealed pursuant to a statute listed in the Convictions section of the Application for Determination of Moral Character, no aggravating factors

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Not expunged, dismissed, or sealed pursuant to a statute listed in the Convictions section of the Application for Determination of Moral Character

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances
- Within five years, aggravating factors
- Involving moral turpitude [see footnote 2]

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since a conviction, the severity of the criminal conduct, and the number and frequency of convictions are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| • Role of applicant | • Honorable discharge from military | • Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations | • Pattern of misconduct |
| • Age of applicant at time of offense | • Successful completion of parole, probation, community supervision | • Conviction for conduct that has been legalized | • Attempt to conceal or mislead |
| • Social factors of applicant | • Completion of education, vocation, rehabilitation programs while incarcerated | • Rehabilitation related to factors that contributed to the offense | • Type of offense (for example, offenses involving a breach of trust, great bodily harm, cruelty, or abuse of authority may be particularly relevant to moral character) |
| • Time since offense | • Community service beyond what is required by court | • Record sealed, expunged, dismissed | • Number and type of victims |
| • Intent | | | |
| • Remorse, insight, accountability | | | |
| • Completion of restorative justice | | | |

²“Criminal conduct not committed in the practice of law or against a client reveals moral turpitude if it shows a deficiency in any character trait necessary for the practice of law (such as trustworthiness, honesty, fairness, candor, and fidelity to fiduciary duties) or if it involves such a serious breach of a duty owed to another or to society, or such a flagrant disrespect for the law or for societal norms, that knowledge of the attorney’s conduct would be likely to undermine public confidence in and respect for the legal profession.” (*In re Lesansky* (2001) 25 Cal.4th 11, 16.)



Vehicle Code Misdemeanor Conviction

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Reckless driving that was not drug-related or alcohol-related, or failure to appear, more than five years ago
- Driving without a license, driving with a suspended license, or speeding; no aggravating factors

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Hit and run
- Occurred during or after law school
- Aggravating factors

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since a conviction, the severity of the criminal conduct, and the number and frequency of convictions are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| • Role of applicant | • Honorable discharge from military | • Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations | • Pattern of misconduct |
| • Age of applicant at time of offense | • Successful completion of parole, probation, community supervision | • Conviction for conduct that has been legalized | • Attempt to conceal or mislead |
| • Social factors of applicant | • Completion of education, vocation, rehabilitation programs while incarcerated | • Rehabilitation related to factors that contributed to the offense | • Type of offense (for example, offenses involving a breach of trust, great bodily harm, cruelty, or abuse of authority may be particularly relevant to moral character) |
| • Time since offense | • Community service beyond what is required by court | • Record sealed, expunged, dismissed | • Number and type of victims |
| • Intent | | | |
| • Remorse, insight, accountability | | | |
| • Completion of restorative justice | | | |



Juvenile Misdemeanor or Felony Conviction

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Occurred at age fifteen or younger, no aggravating factors

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Occurred between ages sixteen and eighteen
- Theft-related or gun-related
- Convictions for conduct including, but not limited to, joyriding, vandalism, stalking

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since a conviction, the severity of the criminal conduct, and the number and frequency of convictions are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of offense
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Completion of restorative justice
- Honorable discharge from military
- Successful completion of parole, probation, community supervision
- Completion of education, vocation, rehabilitation programs while incarcerated
- Community service beyond what is required by court
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Conviction for conduct that has been legalized
- Rehabilitation related to factors that contributed to the offense
- Record sealed, expunged, dismissed
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Type of offense (for example, offenses involving a breach of trust, great bodily harm, cruelty, or abuse of authority may be particularly relevant to moral character)
- Number and type of victims



Vehicle Code Infraction

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Seldom relevant if no aggravating factors exist

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Seldom relevant if no aggravating factors exist

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since a conviction, the severity of the criminal conduct, and the number and frequency of convictions are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of offense
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Completion of restorative justice
- Honorable discharge from military
- Successful completion of parole, probation, community supervision
- Completion of education, vocation, rehabilitation programs while incarcerated
- Community service beyond what is required by court
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Conviction for conduct that has been legalized
- Rehabilitation related to factors that contributed to the offense
- Record sealed, expunged, dismissed
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Type of offense (for example, offenses involving a breach of trust, great bodily harm, cruelty, or abuse of authority may be particularly relevant to moral character)
- Number and type of victims



Municipal Code Violation

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Seldom relevant if no aggravating factors
- Violations including, but not limited to excessive garbage, overgrown weeds

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Seldom relevant if no aggravating factors
- Violations including, but not limited to indecent exposure, possession of open container of alcohol

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since a conviction, the severity of the criminal conduct, and the number and frequency of convictions are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of offense
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Completion of restorative justice
- Honorable discharge from military
- Successful completion of parole, probation, community supervision
- Completion of education, vocation, rehabilitation programs while incarcerated
- Community service beyond what is required by court
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Conviction for conduct that has been legalized
- Rehabilitation related to factors that contributed to the offense
- Record sealed, expunged, dismissed
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Type of offense (for example, offenses involving a breach of trust, great bodily harm, cruelty, or abuse of authority may be particularly relevant to moral character)
- Number and type of victims



Fraudulent Activity

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Allegations of fraud

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances
- Amount of financial loss considered

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of misconduct
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since misconduct
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Job termination due to severe or pervasive behavior
- Financial or emotional impact on victim
- Misconduct involving abuse of authority
- Number and type of victims



Omission or Mischaracterization on Application to the State Bar, Law School, Other Licensing Agency

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Mistake or error

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Minor omission

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Material omission

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of misconduct
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since misconduct
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Job termination due to severe or pervasive behavior
- Financial or emotional impact on victim
- Misconduct involving abuse of authority
- Number and type of victims



Denial of Admission to the Practice of Law

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Any denial

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Based on substantive factors or moral character considerations
- Due to an adverse moral character determination in California

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of misconduct
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since misconduct
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Job termination due to severe or pervasive behavior
- Financial or emotional impact on victim
- Misconduct involving abuse of authority
- Number and type of victims



Admission or License Denial for a Nonlegal Profession

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Any denial

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Based on substantive factors or moral character considerations
- Contingent on the outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of misconduct
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since misconduct
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Job termination due to severe or pervasive behavior
- Financial or emotional impact on victim
- Misconduct involving abuse of authority
- Number and type of victims



Honor Code or Conduct Code Violation in Law School

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Academic dismissal due to low GPA

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Minor violation as defined by the school

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Serious violation as defined by the school
- Serious sanction or punishment imposed

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of misconduct
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since misconduct
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Job termination due to severe or pervasive behavior
- Financial or emotional impact on victim
- Misconduct involving abuse of authority
- Number and type of victims



Honor Code or Conduct Code Violation in Undergraduate or Post-Graduate Institution

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Academic dismissal due to low GPA

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Minor violation as defined by the school

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Serious violation as defined by the school

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of misconduct
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since misconduct
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Job termination due to severe or pervasive behavior
- Financial or emotional impact on victim
- Misconduct involving abuse of authority
- Number and type of victims



Job Termination

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Layoff
- Without cause

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- With cause for conduct including, but not limited to, violation of company policy

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- With cause for conduct including, but not limited to, violation of law

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of misconduct
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since misconduct
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Job termination due to severe or pervasive behavior
- Financial or emotional impact on victim
- Misconduct involving abuse of authority
- Number and type of victims



Breach of Fiduciary Duty

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Complaint deemed unsubstantiated, not sustained

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Sustained or pending complaint

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Sustained or pending complaint, aggravating factors

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of misconduct
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since misconduct
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Nature of past due debt (for example, a debt incurred to pay for needed medical care may not reflect on moral character as a debt incurred for another reason)
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Payment plan in place
- Compliance with payment agreement
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Currently financially responsible
- Adverse judgment presently on appeal
- Failure to address debt or judgment
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Number and type of victims
- Finding of contempt of court
- Misconduct involving abuse of authority



Unpaid, Past Due State or Federal Income Taxes

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Mistake or error
- Old, not outstanding for a sustained period of time, now in compliance

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Civil penalty or financial settlement

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Criminal conviction for fraud or tax evasion

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| • Role of applicant | • Nature of past due debt (for example, a debt incurred to pay for needed medical care may not reflect on moral character as a debt incurred for another reason) | • Compliance with payment agreement | • Failure to address debt or judgment |
| • Age of applicant at time of misconduct | • Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations | • Rehabilitation related to misconduct | • Pattern of misconduct |
| • Social factors of applicant | • Payment plan in place | • Currently financially responsible | • Attempt to conceal or mislead |
| • Time since misconduct | | • Adverse judgment presently on appeal | • Number and type of victims |
| • Intent | | | • Finding of contempt of court |
| • Remorse, insight, accountability | | | • Misconduct involving abuse of authority |



Bankruptcy

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- No objections, discharged

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Objections that were dismissed

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Findings of fraud, revocation of discharge, objections that were sustained

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Role of applicant
- Age of applicant at time of misconduct
- Social factors of applicant
- Time since misconduct
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Nature of past due debt (for example, a debt incurred to pay for needed medical care may not reflect on moral character as a debt incurred for another reason)
- Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations
- Payment plan in place
- Compliance with payment agreement
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Currently financially responsible
- Adverse judgment presently on appeal
- Failure to address debt or judgment
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Number and type of victims
- Finding of contempt of court
- Misconduct involving abuse of authority



Past Due Debt, Debt in Collections

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Current debt, not past due

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- In collections
- Default on loans
- One or more unsatisfied judgments

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Numerous suits filed to recover significant debts
- One or more significant unsatisfied judgments, no attempts to satisfy

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| • Role of applicant | • Nature of past due debt (for example, a debt incurred to pay for needed medical care may not reflect on moral character as a debt incurred for another reason) | • Compliance with payment agreement | • Failure to address debt or judgment |
| • Age of applicant at time of misconduct | • Payment of fines, restitution, other financial obligations | • Rehabilitation related to misconduct | • Pattern of misconduct |
| • Social factors of applicant | • Payment plan in place | • Currently financially responsible | • Attempt to conceal or mislead |
| • Time since misconduct | | • Adverse judgment presently on appeal | • Number and type of victims |
| • Intent | | | • Finding of contempt of court |
| • Remorse, insight, accountability | | | • Misconduct involving abuse of authority |



Unauthorized Practice of Law

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Any allegation

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action
- Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action
- Prior record
- Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Number and type of victims
- Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant
- Finding of contempt of court
- Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation
- Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous
- Judicial finding of malpractice
- Imposition of punitive damages against applicant
- Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1]
- Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions
- Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law
- Financial impact on victim



Malpractice (Attorney)

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Any allegation

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Multiple allegations

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action
- Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action
- Prior record
- Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Number and type of victims
- Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant
- Finding of contempt of court
- Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation
- Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous
- Judicial finding of malpractice
- Imposition of punitive damages against applicant
- Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1]
- Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions
- Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law
- Financial impact on victim



Professional Discipline (Attorney)

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Discipline imposed

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Public reproof, reprimand, admonishment, suspension, disbarment

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action
- Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action
- Prior record
- Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Number and type of victims
- Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant
- Finding of contempt of court
- Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation
- Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous
- Judicial finding of malpractice
- Imposition of punitive damages against applicant
- Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1]
- Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions
- Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law
- Financial impact on victim



Professional Complaint (Attorney)

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- No action taken by agency

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Adverse action against the attorney taken by the licensing agency
- One or more complaints

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Multiple complaints
- Finding of malpractice or other wrongful conduct [see Malpractice, page 24]

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action
- Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action
- Prior record
- Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Number and type of victims
- Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant
- Finding of contempt of court
- Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation
- Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous
- Judicial finding of malpractice
- Imposition of punitive damages against applicant
- Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1]
- Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions
- Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law
- Financial impact on victim



Court Sanctions

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Any

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Multiple instances
- For conduct involving dishonesty

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action
- Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action
- Prior record
- Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Number and type of victims
- Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant
- Finding of contempt of court
- Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation
- Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous
- Judicial finding of malpractice
- Imposition of punitive damages against applicant
- Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1]
- Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions
- Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law
- Financial impact on victim



Malpractice (Nonlegal Profession)

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Any allegation

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Multiple allegations

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action
- Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action
- Prior record
- Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Number and type of victims
- Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant
- Finding of contempt of court
- Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation
- Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous
- Judicial finding of malpractice
- Imposition of punitive damages against applicant
- Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1]
- Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions
- Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law
- Financial impact on victim



Professional Discipline (Nonlegal Profession)

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Any disciplinary action imposed

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Public reproof, reprimand, admonishment, suspension, disbarment

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- Time since offense
- Intent
- Remorse, insight, accountability
- Rehabilitation related to misconduct
- Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action
- Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action
- Prior record
- Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation
- Pattern of misconduct
- Attempt to conceal or mislead
- Number and type of victims
- Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant
- Finding of contempt of court
- Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation
- Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous
- Judicial finding of malpractice
- Imposition of punitive damages against applicant
- Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1]
- Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions
- Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law
- Financial impact on victim



Professional Complaint (Nonlegal Profession)

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- No action taken by agency

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Adverse action against the professional taken by licensing agency
- Multiple complaints

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Numerous professional complaints
- Finding of malpractice or other wrongful conduct [see Malpractice, page 28]

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| • Time since offense | • Prior record | • Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation | • Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1] |
| • Intent | • Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation | • Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous | • Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions |
| • Remorse, insight, accountability | • Pattern of misconduct | • Judicial finding of malpractice | • Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law |
| • Rehabilitation related to misconduct | • Attempt to conceal or mislead | • Imposition of punitive damages against applicant | • Financial impact on victim |
| • Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action | • Number and type of victims | | |
| • Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action | • Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant | | |
| | • Finding of contempt of court | | |



Military Discipline

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Conduct did not result in nonjudicial punishment, court-martial determination of guilt, or administrative discharge

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Conduct resulted in nonjudicial punishment, court-martial determination of guilt, or administrative discharge

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Contingent on outcome of additional inquiry and totality of the circumstances

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| • Time since offense | • Prior record | • Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation | • Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1] |
| • Intent | • Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation | • Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous | • Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions |
| • Remorse, insight, accountability | • Pattern of misconduct | • Judicial finding of malpractice | • Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law |
| • Rehabilitation related to misconduct | • Attempt to conceal or mislead | • Imposition of punitive damages against applicant | • Financial impact on victim |
| • Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action | • Number and type of victims | | |
| • Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action | • Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant | | |
| | • Finding of contempt of court | | |



Civil Action

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- Family Law case including, but not limited to, a dissolution with no support or aggravating factors
- Other civil case including, but not limited to contract, landlord/tenant, personal injury; applicant is plaintiff; no aggravating factors
- Party to fewer than five cases

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Family Law ongoing support orders, ongoing restraining orders
- Other civil case, applicant is defendant or respondent, no aggravating factors
- Applicant is plaintiff, aggravating factors
- Party to more than five cases

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Claims of violation of court orders or nonpayment, unsatisfied judgments [see Past Due Debt, page 22]
- Excessive number of cases or numerous adverse judgments
- Entry of judgment for serious misconduct
- Finding of malpractice or other wrongful conduct [see Malpractice, page 24 and 28]

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| • Time since offense | • Prior record | • Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation | • Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1] |
| • Intent | • Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation | • Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous | • Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions |
| • Remorse, insight, accountability | • Pattern of misconduct | • Judicial finding of malpractice | • Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law |
| • Rehabilitation related to misconduct | • Attempt to conceal or mislead | • Imposition of punitive damages against applicant | • Financial impact on victim |
| • Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action | • Number and type of victims | | |
| • Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action | • Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant | | |
| | • Finding of contempt of court | | |



Administrative Proceeding, Adjudication, Action

Additional Inquiry Seldom Needed

- One administrative action, four or more years ago, with the Department of Motor Vehicles or state unemployment insurance appeals board
- Other administrative action, fewer than five actions, no aggravating factors

Additional Inquiry May Be Needed

- Multiple actions, less than four years ago, with the Department of Motor Vehicles or state unemployment insurance appeals board
- Other administrative action, more than five actions

Informal Conference May Be Needed

- Occurred less than one year ago with the Department of Motor Vehicles or state unemployment insurance appeals board
- Excessive number of other administrative actions
- Adverse administrative determination against the applicant for serious misconduct

Mitigation, Aggravation, Rehabilitation

The length of time since an act of misconduct, the severity of the misconduct, and the number and frequency of acts of misconduct are given significant consideration. The following are additional factors that may mitigate or aggravate an act of misconduct, or demonstrate rehabilitation:

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| • Time since offense | • Prior record | • Official finding of serious misconduct, grossly incompetent practice or representation, or willful wrongdoing or misrepresentation | • Misconduct involving moral turpitude [see footnote 1] |
| • Intent | • Engagement in a type of business or enterprise that typically experiences recurrent litigation | • Judicial designation of administrative claim as frivolous | • Omission or failure to notify other regulatory agencies or jurisdictions |
| • Remorse, insight, accountability | • Pattern of misconduct | • Judicial finding of malpractice | • Determination of the complaint, allegation of malpractice, or allegation of unauthorized practice of law |
| • Rehabilitation related to misconduct | • Attempt to conceal or mislead | • Imposition of punitive damages against applicant | • Financial impact on victim |
| • Meritorious nature of applicant's involvement in litigation or administrative action | • Number and type of victims | | |
| • Favorable termination of litigation or administrative action | • Designation of applicant as vexatious litigant | | |
| | • Finding of contempt of court | | |

