RULE 8.
GUARDIAN AD LITEM DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

(1) Guardian ad Litem Advisory Committee. The Court's Guardian ad Litem Advisory Committee hereinafter referred to as the "Committee," will administer complaints about guardians ad litem.

(2) Submission of Complaints All complaints must be in writing and must be submitted to the Superior Court Administrator. All complaints must bear the signature, name and address of the person filing the complaint.

(3) Review of Complaint Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Court Administrator shall convene the Committee to review the complaint. Upon review of the complaint, the Committee shall either:

(a) Make a finding that the complaint is with regard to a case then pending in the court and decline to review the complaint and so inform the complainant. In such instances the Committee shall advise the complainant that the complaint may only be addressed in the context of the case at bar, either by seeking the removal of the guardian ad litem or by contesting the information or recommendation contained in the guardian ad litem's report or testimony. In such cases the Committee and its members shall perform its role in such a manner as to assure that the trial judge remains uninformed as to the complaint; or

(b) Make a finding that the complaint has no merit on its face, and decline to review the complaint and so inform the complainant; or

(c) Make a finding that the complaint appears to have merit and request a written response from the Guardian ad Litem within 10 business days, detailing the specific issues in the complaint to which the Committee desires a response. The Committee shall provide the Guardian ad Litem with a copy of the original complaint. In considering whether the complaint has merit, the Committee shall consider whether the complaint alleges the Guardian ad Litem has:

(1) Violated a code of conduct;

(2) Misrepresented his or her qualifications to serve as a Guardian ad Litem;

(3) Breached the confidentiality of the parties;

(4) Falsified information in a report to the court or in testimony before the court;

(5) Failed, when required, to report abuse of a child;

(6) Communicated with a judicial officer ex-parte concerning a case for which he or she is serving as a guardian ad litem;

(7) Violated state or local laws or court rules; or,

(8) Taken or failed to take any other action which would reasonably place the suitability of the person to serve as a Guardian ad Litem in question.

(4) Response and Findings.

(a) Upon receipt of a written response to a complaint from the Guardian ad Litem, the Committee shall make a finding as to each of the specific issues in the complaint to which the Committee desires a response, as delineated in the Committee's letter to the Guardian ad Litem. Such findings shall state that either there is no merit to the issue based upon the Guardian ad Litem's response or that there is merit to the issue.

(b) The Committee shall have the authority to issue a written admonishment, a written reprimand, refer the Guardian ad Litem to additional training, or recommend to the Presiding Judge that the Court suspend or remove the Guardian ad Litem from the registry. In considering a response, the Committee shall take into consideration any prior complaints that resulted in an admonishment, reprimand, referral to training, or suspension or removal from a registry. If a Guardian ad Litem is listed on more than one registry, the suspension or removal may apply to each registry the Guardian ad Litem is listed on, at the discretion of the Committee.

(c) The complainant and the Guardian ad Litem shall be notified in writing of the Committee's decision following receipt of the Guardian ad Litem's response.

(5) Confidentiality.

(a) A complaint shall be deemed confidential for all purposes unless the committee has determined that it has merit under LGAL 8(4) above.

(b) Any record of complaints filed which are not deemed by the committee to have merit shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except by court order.

(6) Complaint Processing Time Standards

(a) Complaints shall be resolved within twenty-five (25) days of the date of receipt of the written complaint if a case is pending.

(b) Complaints shall be resolved within sixty (60) days of the date of receipt of the written complaint if the complaint is filed subsequent to the conclusion of a case.

(7) Removal from Registry.

(a) When a guardian ad litem is removed from the court's registry pursuant to the disposition of a grievance hereunder, the Court Administrator shall send a notice of such removal to the Office of the Administrator for the Courts.

(b) When the Court Administrator receives notice from the Office of the Administrator for the Courts that a guardian ad litem on the court's registry has been removed from the registry of any other Washington Superior Court the Administrator shall advise the Presiding Judge of such removal.