

COMMENCEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS

(a) Formal Complaint.

(1) *Filing.* After a matter is ordered to hearing, disciplinary counsel files a formal complaint with the Clerk.

(2) *Service.* After the formal complaint is filed, it must be personally served on the respondent lawyer, with a notice to answer.

(3) *Content.* The formal complaint must state the respondent's acts or omissions in sufficient detail to inform the respondent of the nature of the allegations of misconduct. Disciplinary counsel must sign the formal complaint, but it need not be verified.

(4) *Prior Discipline.* Prior disciplinary action against the respondent may be described in a separate count of the formal complaint if the respondent is charged with conduct demonstrating unfitness to practice law.

(b) Filing Commences Proceedings. A disciplinary proceeding commences when the formal complaint is filed.

(c) Consolidation and Joinder. A review committee ordering a hearing on alleged misconduct, or the chief hearing officer after consultation with any assigned hearing officer, has discretion to consolidate for hearing two or more matters against the same respondent, or to join matters against two or more respondents. A consolidation or joinder ordered under this provision serves as authorization to combine multiple matters in one formal complaint or to amend the formal complaint to the extent necessary to implement the joinder or consolidation.

(d) Severance. On motion of a party, the hearing officer, in furtherance of convenience or to avoid prejudice, or when severance will promote a fair determination of the issues, may order a severance and separate hearing of any matter joined or consolidated for hearing under subsection (c) of this rule.

[Adopted effective October 1, 2002; Amended effective January 1, 2014.]