

## VLRS Rules

*effective through June 30, 2020*

The rules of service of the VLRS are intended to offer consumer protection to the public in its obtainment of legal services.

1. Any active member in good standing with the Virginia State Bar (VSB) may qualify as a VLRS panel member.
  2. Panel members will be grouped by judicial circuit and arranged by geographically convenient areas within such groups.
  3. Panel members may choose up to 35 areas of the law to list as areas of competency.
  4. Panel members agree to the following:
    - a. Pre-paid callers will be referred to panel members who then must provide the callers with 30-minutes of legal consultation. An appointment should be granted within three business days of the referral date, or as soon as practicable after a request is made. Immediately following the up to 30-minute initial consultation or within ten days of the referral notice date, e-mail the completed referral notice back to VLRS indicating the outcome of the consult. Any charges for further service will be as agreed upon between the lawyer and the referral.
    - b. Panel members will accept an initial interview for any referred caller in the areas of practice preference indicated on the application. Should any referral give rise to a conflict of interest, the lawyer panel member should direct the referred caller to contact VLRS to receive a new referral. A panel member rejecting two consecutive initial referrals for reasons other than those set forth here will be moved to the bottom of referral rotation list. Panel members are not required to accept employment beyond the initial consultation.
    - c. Panel members must carry professional liability insurance as of the date of the application and for as long as the applicant is a VLRS member and be in good standing with the VSB Member Compliance Department.
    - d. To follow all of the rules of the service and in no event hold the State Bar or any of its officers, members, or employees liable in connection with the operation of, or use of, the information contained in the application.
- Note: Administrative Hold**—If a panel member charged with misconduct has been referred to a District Committee, the Disciplinary Board, or any circuit court, or agrees to or is placed under disciplinary terms, the service will not make referrals to that panel member until a) completion of the disciplinary proceedings without limitations having been placed on the panel member's license to practice law or terms having been imposed, or b) following removal of such limitations and/or successful compliance with the terms imposed. Membership fees are non-refundable regardless of whether the panel member is under administrative hold or suspension.
5. Once accepted for panel membership, it is the responsibility of the attorney (panel member) to notify VLRS of the following:
    - Address changes

- Departure from your current firm or office
- Panel selection changes
- Any disciplinary action with the VSB

## **How do I withdraw from VLRS?**

A panel member may withdraw his or her name from VLRS participation five days after submitting written notice to the VLRS. Membership fees are neither refundable nor transferable. At the time of written withdrawal, please also advise the VLRS in writing as to the consultation outcome of all outstanding pre-paid referral notices.

## **Suspension from VLRS**

1. Failure to comply with the rules will result in a written notice of proposed suspension from the VLRS from the chair of the Virginia State Bar Lawyer Referral Committee, or his or her designee. Service is deemed effective when sent to the member's e-mail address of record with the VSB, or mailed to the member's address of record by certified mail, return receipt requested.
2. Upon notice of proposed suspension or service of suspension, the panel member may submit a written response within thirty days stating the reasons for noncompliance. The mailing of a notice of suspension to the panel member at his or her last address of record with the Virginia State Bar constitutes adequate service for the purposes of these rules.
3. Failure to respond in writing within thirty days of the date of the mailing of the notice of suspension to the panel member will result in a final action of suspension that will run until such time as the panel member furnishes evidence of compliance with the rules and regulations of the service.
4. Upon receipt of a response to the notice of proposed suspension by the panel member, the VSB-VLRS Committee or its designee will review and recommend to the committee the following actions:
  - a. Final action of suspension;
  - b. Withdrawal of the notice of proposed suspension; or
  - c. Conditional participation on the panel.
 Any such action will be by majority vote of the committee at any regularly scheduled meeting or by telephone poll or other communication deemed appropriate.
5. Any such action may be appealed within thirty days of the service of the notice of the committee's action by written notice of appeal to the chair of the VSB-VLRS Committee giving reasons for appeal of the committee's action. Upon receipt of the notice of appeal, the chair of the VSB-VLRS Committee or his or her designees will convene a three-member panel of current Bar Council members to review the committee's action and the written notice of appeal within thirty days of its receipt.
6. If the review panel finds the committee's action to be supported by substantial evidence, it will notify the panel member of its decision in writing. If the review panel finds the committee's

action to be unsupported by substantial evidence, or otherwise finds evidence of compliance with rules and regulations cited for alleged noncompliance or violation, the review panel will notify the panel member, withdraw the committee's decision, and reinstate the panel member.

7. The filing of any notice for appeal by the panel member does not stay the VSB-VLRS Committee's action.

8. Complaints from members of the public or attorneys regarding conduct allegedly constituting noncompliance with disciplinary provisions of the Code of Professional Responsibility will be referred for such other action as is necessary according to the disciplinary procedures defined by the Code of Virginia and the Rules of Professional Conduct.