

THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF PARALEGALS, INC.

CODE OF ETHICS

1. A paralegal shall not engage in the unauthorized practice of law.
2. A paralegal shall keep confidential any and all information, documents and other materials entrusted to him or her or acquired in some other way during the course of the legal representation of a client. The confidentiality shall be maintained before, during and after the legal representation unless the client has given consent or if disclosure is required by law or by court order.
3. A paralegal shall avoid conflicts of interest and shall immediately disclose any potential conflicts of interest to his or her employer.
4. A paralegal shall ensure that his or her status as a paralegal is disclosed at the beginning of any professional relationship with the attorney, client, personnel of a court, or the personnel of an administrative agency.
5. A paralegal shall follow all provisions of the rules of professional conduct for a paralegal of the state in which he or she is employed. If no such specific code for paralegals exists, then a paralegal shall follow the attorney's code of ethics as it applies to paralegals within that state.
6. A paralegal shall maintain personal and professional integrity.
7. A paralegal shall attain a high degree of competency through education, training and experience.
8. A paralegal shall maintain a high degree of competency by engaging in continuing paralegal education on an annual basis.

www.aapipara.org



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*American Alliance of Paralegals, Inc.
4023 Kennett Pike, Suite 146
Wilmington, DE 19807-2018*

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**Advancing the Paralegal Profession by
Focusing on the Individual Paralegal**



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WHAT IS THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE?

The American Alliance of Paralegals, Inc. ("American Alliance") was formed and incorporated in the State of Delaware on January 22, 2003. The American Alliance is a national paralegal organization which focuses on the individual paralegal and the advancement of the paralegal profession. American Alliance membership is nationally based, but has international members. The purpose of the national paralegal association is to promote and improve the profession of paralegals; to advance the educational and literary standard of such profession; and to foster, encourage and disseminate information concerning the profession.

MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA

In order to become a Member of the American Alliance, you must be a practicing paralegal and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- ▶ Bachelor's degree and two years paralegal experience
- ▶ Bachelor's degree and a two-year paralegal certificate
- ▶ An Associate's degree, a two-year paralegal certificate and two years paralegal experience
- ▶ An Associate's degree, and four years paralegal experience
- ▶ A paralegal certificate and six years current paralegal experience

If you do not meet the above criteria, you may join the American Alliance as an associate member/student member. Sustaining membership is also available (law firms, educators, corporations, etc.). Sponsors and vendors may also join the American Alliance.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

Member - \$35.00/year
Associate member - \$35.00/year
Sustaining member - \$50.00/year
Sponsor/vendor - \$200.00/year

ADVANTAGES OF MEMBERSHIP

- ▶ American Alliance publishes a quarterly newsletter, *The Alliance Echo*.
- ▶ The American Alliance advocates a Bachelor's Degree that includes, or is combined with, a paralegal studies program for persons entering the profession.
- ▶ The American Alliance has corporate bylaws and several Position Statements which include: Definition of a Paralegal, Paralegal Education, Paralegal Regulation, Unauthorized Practice of Law, Mission Statement and Goals, and most importantly, a Code of Ethics. The American Alliance also has an extensive website (www.aapipara.org).
- ▶ The American Alliance has the only certification program that requires the school from which a paralegal degree or certificate is earned be ABA approved or a voting institutional member of the American Association for Paralegal Education ("AAfPE").
- ▶ Criteria for the AACP certification is based on Department of Labor standards which do not require a testing mechanism.

- ▶ American Alliance recommends that its members participate in no less than six hours of continuing education annually, including at least one hour of ethics.
- ▶ American Alliance membership requirements do not exclude or discriminate because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, age or physical handicap.

AACP CERTIFICATION/CREDENTIAL

The American Alliance established a voluntary program for the certification of paralegals, the American Alliance Certified Paralegal ("AACP"). Every paralegal seeking American Alliance certification must meet educational requirements. In order to maintain American Alliance certification, every AACP shall renew his/her certification status every three (3) years and complete eighteen (18) hours of continuing legal education ("CLE"), with three (3) of the eighteen (18) hours being in ethics. Proof of completion of the requisite CLEs along with the three-year renewal fee in effect at the time of renewal shall be submitted to the Director of Education. At the time of renewal, an AACP must be employed as a paralegal. Every AACP will be bound by the American Alliance's Code of Ethics. Any AACP who violates any provision of the Code of Ethics, or who is convicted of a felony, crime of moral turpitude or engages in the unauthorized practice of law will have his/her American Alliance certification revoked.