

# The Ethics of Practicing Law Remotely: How to Ethically Navigate the Remote Practice of Law Post-Covid

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## ABA Formal Opinion 498

- Virtual Practice = Beyond the traditional brick & mortar law firm
- Competence
- Diligence
- Communications (especially when using technology)
- Confidentiality
- Supervision

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## ABA Formal Opinion 498

- In general, same ethical rules apply to both traditional and virtual practice
- If you are prohibited from doing it in person, you are still prohibited if virtual
- Are your technology and work environment consistent with your ethical obligations?
- In some instances, ethical obligations may be more, not less

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## Competence & Diligence

- ABA Formal Opinion 482 (2018)
  - Ethical Obligations Related to Disasters
  - Business Continuation Plan
    - Keep clients informed
    - Keep matters moving forward
    - Safeguard client information and property
    - Preparing for business interruption

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## Competence & Diligence

- ABA Model Rule 1.1
  - Must keep abreast of changes in the law and practice, including benefits and risks associated with technology
  - Comment 8 to Rule 1.1
  - Basic technology competence
  - Wisconsin Formal Ethics Opinion EF-21-02

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## Competence & Diligence

- ABA Model Rule 1.3
  - Comment 1 to Rule 1.3
  - A lawyer must pursue a matter on behalf of a client despite opposition, obstruction, or personal inconvenience to the lawyer
  - Client obligations trump personal obligations

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[First Friday Ethics \(July 2023\)](#)

First appeared as part of the conference materials for the  
56<sup>th</sup> Annual William W. Gibson, Jr. Mortgage Lending and Servicing Institute session  
"The Ethics of Practicing Law Remotely"