

Cruel and Unusual Sentences: Tips for Improving Your Ordinance Drafting

U.T. Land Use Conference
April 20, 2023
Austin, TX

Chris Bowers
The Suster Law Group, PLLC

1

1



2

Attorney Disclaimers



- Strictly my views
- Consult your attorney
- Use at your own risk

3

Drafting is important

An American Bar Foundation survey of practicing lawyers concluded: “[o]ral and written communication skills are deemed to be the very most important skills necessary for beginning lawyers.”

Bryant G. Garth & Joanne Martin, “Law Schools and the Construction of Competence,” 43 J. Legal Educ. 469, 508-09 (1993).

4

4

Drafting is important

The ABF survey also concluded: “[Law firm] partners expect those skills to be possessed by the associates..., even though they are not much taught in the law schools.”

Bryant G. Garth & Joanne Martin, “Law Schools and the Construction of Competence,” 43 J. Legal Educ. 469, 508-09 (1993).

5

5

Many lawyers draft poorly

94% of federal and state judges surveyed reported that basic writing problems routinely marred the briefs they read.

Susan H. Kosse & David T. ButleRitchie, “How Judges, Practitioners, and Legal Writing Teachers Assess the Writing Skills of New Law Graduates: A Comparative Study,” 53 J. Legal Educ. 80, 85–86 (2003).

6

6

Find the full text of this and thousands of other resources from leading experts in dozens of legal practice areas in the [UT Law CLE eLibrary \(utcle.org/elibrary\)](http://utcle.org/elibrary)

Title search: Cruel and Unusual Sentences: Tips for Improving Your Ordinance Drafting

Also available as part of the eCourse

[Cruel and Unusual Sentences: Tips for Improving Your Ordinance Drafting](#)

First appeared as part of the conference materials for the
27th Annual Land Use Conference session

"Cruel and Unusual Sentences: Tips for Improving Your Ordinance Drafting"