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## *Letters of Engagement Rules*

### **Joint Order Of The Appellate Divisions**

The Appellate Divisions of the Supreme Court, pursuant to the authority invested in them, do hereby add, effective March 4, 2002, Part 1215 to Title 22 of the Official Compilations of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York, entitled "Written Letter of Engagement," as follows:

#### **Part 1215 Written Letter of Engagement**

##### §1215.1 Requirements

- a. Effective March 4, 2002, an attorney who undertakes to represent a client and enters into an arrangement for, charges or collects any fee from a client shall provide to the client a written letter of engagement before commencing the representation, or within a reasonable time thereafter (i) if otherwise impracticable or (ii) if the scope of services to be provided cannot be determined at the time of the commencement of representation. For purposes of this rule, where an entity (such as an insurance carrier) engages an attorney to represent a third party, the term "client" shall mean the entity that engages the attorney. Where there is a significant change in the scope of services or the fee to be charged, an updated letter of engagement shall be provided to the client.
- b. The letter of engagement shall address the following matters:
  1. Explanation of the scope of the legal services to be provided;
  2. Explanation of attorney's fees to be charged, expenses and billing practices; and, where applicable, shall provide that the client may have a right to arbitrate fee disputes under Part 137 of the Rules of the Chief Administrator.
- c. Instead of providing the client with a written letter of engagement, an attorney may comply with the provisions of subdivision (a) by entering into a signed written retainer agreement with the client, before or within a reasonable time after commencing the representation, provided that the agreement addresses the matters set forth in subdivision (b).

##### §1215.2 Exceptions

This section shall not apply to:

1. representation of a client where the fee to be charged is expected to be less than \$3000,
2. representation where the attorney's services are of the same general kind as previously rendered to and paid for by the client, or
3. representation in domestic relations matters subject to Part 1400 of the Joint Rules of the Appellate Division (22 NYCRR), or
4. representation where the attorney is admitted to practice in another jurisdiction and maintains no office in the State of New

York, or where no material portion of the services are to be rendered in New York.

As amended April 3, 2002

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