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Clients' Security Trust Fund  
of the  
Bar of Iowa

(Chapter 39  
Client Security Commission  
Rule 39.1 et seq.)

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**CHAPTER 39**  
**CLIENT SECURITY COMMISSION**

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## CHAPTER 39 CLIENT SECURITY COMMISSION

### **Rule 39.1 Client Security Commission.**

**39.1(1) *Commission.*** There is hereby created a Client Security Commission, hereinafter referred to as “commission,” which shall have the duties and powers provided in this chapter.

**39.1(2) *Duties of commission.*** The commission shall have the following duties and powers as limited and defined in this chapter:

*a.* To examine lawyer defalcations and breaches of Iowa Rules of Professional Conduct, the rules relating to the discipline of members of the Iowa bar, and to make recommendations to the supreme court concerning rule changes deemed necessary or desirable in this area.

*b.* To assist the court in administering both preventive and remedial attorney disciplinary procedures contained in these rules or other court rules.

*c.* To administer and operate the Clients’ Security Trust Fund of the Bar of Iowa, as hereinafter created, designated as the “fund.”

**39.1(3) *Appointment of commissioners.*** The supreme court shall appoint five members of the Iowa bar and two laypersons who are residents of this state to the commission. The original appointment shall be two commissioners for a one-year term, two for a two-year term, one for a three-year term, one for a four-year term and one for a five-year term. At the expiration of such terms, all subsequent appointments shall be for a term of four years, and any commissioner who has served two full terms shall not be eligible for reappointment. A vacancy occurring during a term shall be filled by the supreme court for the unexpired portion thereof.

**39.1(4) *Organization and meetings.*** The commissioners shall organize annually and shall then elect from among their number a chair and a treasurer to serve for a one-year term and such other officers for such terms as they deem necessary or appropriate. Meetings thereafter shall be held at the call of the chair or of the majority of the commissioners. Five commissioners shall constitute a quorum and may transact all business except as may be otherwise provided by this chapter and chapter 40 of the Iowa Court Rules.

**39.1(5) *Regulations.*** The commission shall adopt regulations, consistent with this chapter and subject to the approval of the supreme court, concerning all of the powers and duties granted to and imposed upon the commission by this chapter.

**39.1(6) *Reimbursement.*** The commissioners shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement from the fund for their expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

[Court Order December 5, 1973; December 15, 1994, effective January 3, 1995; November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; May 25, 2004; April 20, 2005, and July 1, 2005, effective July 1, 2005]

### **Rule 39.2 Principal executive officer.**

**39.2(1) *Appointment.*** The director of the office of professional regulation shall serve as the principal executive officer of the client security commission. Wherever in this chapter a reference to the “director” appears, it shall refer to the director of the office of professional regulation. The director shall file a bond annually with the commission with such surety as may be approved by it and in such amount as it may fix. Premiums on said bond shall be paid by the fund.

**39.2(2) *Duties of director.*** Subject to the supervision of the supreme court and the commission, the director shall do the following:

*a.* Collect attorney fees and assessments for the fund and report to the commission the names and addresses of all attorneys who fail to pay the fee and assessment.

*b.* Serve as executive secretary to the commission and assist in the operation and administration of the fund.

*c.* Conduct investigations and audits of attorneys’ accounts and office procedures to determine compliance with this chapter, Iowa Rule of Professional Conduct 32:1.15, and chapter 45 of the Iowa Court Rules and report violations to the commission.

*d.* Maintain an office in such place as the supreme court shall designate, act as a liaison between the court, the commission, and other commissions, committees, boards, and personnel serving a function in the disciplinary system, and maintain for the court records of disciplinary proceedings and such other information and data as the court shall require.

e. Upon request of the commission, institute disciplinary proceedings before the grievance commission pursuant to chapter 35 of the Iowa Court Rules.

f. Perform such other functions and duties as may be directed by the supreme court.  
[Court Order December 5, 1973; December 15, 1994, effective January 3, 1995; November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; April 20, 2005, effective July 1, 2005; December 5, 2007]

**Rule 39.3 Clients' security trust fund of the bar of Iowa.**

**39.3(1) *Creation, operation and purpose.*** A trust fund, to be known as the "Clients' Security Trust Fund of the Bar of Iowa" (hereinafter, the "fund") is hereby authorized and created.

**39.3(2) *Administration.*** The fund shall be operated and administered by the commission in accordance with this chapter.

**39.3(3) *Purpose.*** The purpose of the fund shall be to prevent defalcations by members of the Iowa bar, and insofar as practicable, to provide for the indemnification by the profession for losses caused to the public by the dishonest conduct of members of the bar of this state, and to provide funding for the administration of the lawyer disciplinary system and other programs which impact the disciplinary system including, but not limited to, the Iowa Lawyer's Assistance Program.

**39.3(4) *Powers and duties of commission relating to the fund.*** The commission, in addition to the powers granted elsewhere in this chapter, shall have the following powers and duties:

a. To receive, hold, manage, and distribute, pursuant to the direction of the supreme court and this chapter, the moneys raised hereunder, and any other amounts that may be received by the fund through voluntary contributions or otherwise.

b. To adopt, subject to the approval of the supreme court, regulations for the administration of the fund and the procedures for presentation, consideration, recognition, rejection and payment of claims, and for conducting business. A copy of such regulations shall be filed with the clerk of the supreme court.

c. To enforce claims for restitution, arising by subrogation or assignment or otherwise.

d. To invest the fund, or any portion thereof, in those investments and in the percentages authorized by Iowa Code section 97B.7, (investments for Iowa public employees' retirement system); provided, however, the commission shall not be required to invest such portions of the fund as it may deem necessary to be currently available for payment of claims and other expenses required by this chapter. All interest or other income received in the operation of the fund shall become a part of the fund.

e. To employ and compensate consultants, agents, legal counsel and employees.

f. To delegate the power to perform routine acts which may be necessary or desirable for the operation of the fund, including the power to authorize disbursements for routine operating expenses of the fund, and all necessary expenses of the assistant administrator and staff in the performance of their duties; but authorization for payment of claims shall be made only by the commission under the provisions of this chapter.

g. To sue in the name of the commission without joining any or all individual commissioners.

h. To purchase complementary fidelity coverage for the fund in such amount and with such limitations or deductible limits as in its discretion it determines proper.

i. To pay reasonable and necessary attorney fees incurred by the commissioners of the supreme court in implementing chapter 35 of the Iowa Court Rules in disciplinary proceedings based on attorney defalcations or which are initiated pursuant to rule 39.2(3)(e).

j. To fund programs which the commission believes will assist in preventing defalcations by attorneys. The annual allocation for any such program shall not exceed two and one-half percent of the fund value as of the beginning of the fiscal year in which the funding is to occur. No such funding may be provided unless there is at least twice the minimum balance required by rule 39.6(4) in the fund at the beginning of the fiscal year in which the funding is to occur.

**39.3(5) *Applications to the supreme court.*** The commission may apply to the supreme court for interpretations of this chapter and of the extent of the commission's powers thereunder and for advice regarding the proper administration of the fund. Interpretations of the supreme court shall be obligatory when rendered.

[Court Order November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002]

**Rule 39.4 Audit — treasurer's duties — budget.**

**39.4(1) *Audit and report.*** On March 1 of each year, and at such additional times as the supreme court may order, the commission shall file with the supreme court a written report reviewing in detail

the administration of the fund during the preceding calendar year together with an audit of the fund certified by a certified public accountant licensed to practice in Iowa.

**39.4(2) Treasurer's duties.** The treasurer elected by the commission shall maintain the assets of the fund in a separate account and shall disburse moneys from the fund only at the direction of the supreme court or upon the action of the commission pursuant to this chapter. The treasurer shall file a bond annually with the commission with such surety as may be approved by it and in such amount as it may fix. Premiums on said bond shall be paid by the fund. A separate bookkeeping account designated as the disciplinary fund account shall be maintained within the fund for moneys derived from the annual disciplinary fee set out in rule 39.5. Fees, penalties, or investment income derived from the investment of the income from annual disciplinary fees and penalties shall be placed in the disciplinary fund account.

**39.4(3) Budget.** At least 60 days prior to the commencement of each fiscal year, the commission shall submit to the supreme court its budget of operations of such year, which may be amended thereafter as necessity dictates.

[Court Order November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; December 5, 2007]

**Rule 39.5 Annual disciplinary fee.** As a condition to continuing membership in the bar of the supreme court, including the right to practice law before Iowa courts, every bar member, unless exempted, shall pay to the commission through the office of professional regulation an annual fee as determined by the supreme court to finance the disciplinary system. The annual fee shall be due on or before March 1 of each year, for that calendar year. A calendar year is defined as the period of time from January 1 through December 31. Members of the bar of the supreme court who certify in writing to the commission that they are a justice, judge, associate judge, or full-time magistrate of any court, spend full time in the military service of the United States following admission to the Iowa bar, are admitted on examination to the bar of Iowa during the current calendar year, or are issued a certificate of exemption pursuant to the provisions of rule 39.7 shall be exempt from payment of this fee.

[Court Order November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; December 5, 2007; December 2, 2011]

**Rule 39.6 Fund assessments.**

**39.6(1) Assessments.** As a condition to continuing membership in the bar of the supreme court, including the right to practice law before Iowa courts, every bar member, except one to whom a certificate of exemption has been issued pursuant to the provisions of rule 39.7, shall pay to the commission through the office of professional regulation the assessment specified in rule 39.6(2), or assessments provided by court order, [subject to rules 39.6(3), 39.6(4), and 39.6(5)] annually to prevent defalcations and insofar as practicable to provide indemnification for losses caused to the public by dishonest conduct of members of the Iowa bar. Assessments shall be due on or before March 1 of each year, for that calendar year. A calendar year is defined as the period of time from January 1 through December 31.

**39.6(2) Assessment schedule.**

For the calendar year of the member's admission on examination to the bar of Iowa, and for the calendar year thereafter. . . . . None.

For the calendar year of the member's admission on motion to the bar of Iowa . . . . . \$50.

For the years other than those heretofore exempted, up to and including the fifth calendar year of admission to the bar of Iowa . . . . . \$50 annually.

For the years after the fifth calendar year of admission to the bar of Iowa . . . . . \$100 annually.

In making any of the above calculations, time spent full-time in the military service of the United States following admission to the Iowa bar and during the years under consideration shall be excluded.

[Court Order June 13, 1979; November 13, 1984; November 15, 1985; November 11, 1986; November 19, 1987; October 20, 1988; November 16, 1989; December 15, 1994, effective January 3, 1995; November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; December 5, 2007]

**39.6(3) Alternative to fixed assessment.** Members of the bar of the supreme court may, at their election, instead of the fixed assessment set forth in rule 39.6(2), pay to the commission, as their assessment for any particular calendar year, an amount equal to one percent of their net income derived from the practice of law in Iowa for the preceding calendar year, but in no event less than \$25. Net income from the practice of law shall be for the purposes of this rule that amount shown on the federal income tax return of such members for the appropriate year as "profit or loss from business or

profession.” The commission may require members so electing to submit to the commission a copy of their federal income tax return for the appropriate year to substantiate the amount due hereunder.

**39.6(4) Certificate of sufficiency.** The commission shall determine the net value of the cash and securities in the fund for the purpose of preventing defalcation as of December 1 of each year. Whenever the value of such assets shall equal \$600,000 after deducting all claims and requests for reimbursement against the fund, not disposed of at the date of valuation, and all expenses properly chargeable against the fund, the commission shall file with the supreme court prior to December 31 of such year a certificate to that effect which shall be known as a certificate of sufficiency. When a certificate of sufficiency is filed with the supreme court, the annual assessment set forth in rule 39.6(2) for the next calendar year after the date of evaluation in said certificate shall be waived for each member of the bar obligated under the above schedule to pay any amount and who has paid assessments to the fund in the total sum of \$200 in prior years notwithstanding anything heretofore or hereinafter provided.

**39.6(5) Judges, government attorneys, corporate counsel.** In lieu of the assessment set forth in rule 39.6(2), any member of the bar of the supreme court who certifies in writing to the commission that the member is a justice, judge, associate judge, or full-time magistrate of any court, or one who performs legal services only for a governmental unit, or one who performs legal services only for a particular person, firm, or corporation (other than a professional legal corporation or a law firm) and stands in the legal capacity with such person, firm, or corporation as an employee, shall pay to the commission an assessment of \$25 annually while so engaged, provided that if under rule 39.6(4) the commission has filed a certificate of sufficiency with the court then the annual assessment for each bar member referred to herein who has paid to the commission a total of \$200 in assessments shall be waived each year that the certificate of sufficiency is filed by the commission. Provided, however, that a retired judge or justice recalled for temporary service shall not be required to pay an assessment or surrender their certificate of exemption.

[Court Order November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; December 5, 2007]

**Rule 39.7 Certificate of exemption — required statement.** A member of the bar of the supreme court who is not engaged in the practice of law in the state of Iowa may be granted a certificate of exemption by the commission, and thereafter no fee or assessment shall be required from such member unless the member thereafter engages in the practice of law in the state of Iowa, in which case the certificate of exemption shall without further order of court stand revoked and the member shall file at once the statement required by rule 39.8(1), and the questionnaire required by rule 39.11 and pay the fee and assessment due under rules 39.5 and 39.6. A member of the bar requesting a certificate of exemption shall file with the director the statement required by rule 39.8(1), and such part of the rule 39.11 questionnaire as the director may deem necessary to determine the member’s status. The practice of law as that term is employed in this chapter includes the examination of abstracts, consummation of real estate transactions, preparation of legal briefs, deeds, buy and sell agreements, contracts, wills, and tax returns as well as the representation of others in any Iowa courts, the right to represent others in any Iowa courts, or to regularly prepare legal instruments, secure legal rights, advise others as to their legal rights or the effect of contemplated actions upon their legal rights, or to hold oneself out to so do; or to be one who instructs others in legal rights; or to be a judge or one who rules upon the legal rights of others unless neither the state nor federal law requires the person so judging or ruling to hold a license to practice law.

[Court Order November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; December 5, 2007]

**Rule 39.8 Enforcement.**

**39.8(1)** To facilitate the collection of the annual fee and assessment provided for in rules 39.5 and 39.6, all members of the Iowa bar required to pay the fee and assessment, and those exempted other than by rule 39.7, shall, on or before March 1 of each year, file a statement, on a form prescribed by the director, setting forth their date of admission to practice before the supreme court, their current residence and office addresses, and such other information as the director may from time to time direct. In addition to such statement, every bar member shall file a supplemental statement of any change in the information previously submitted within 30 days of such change. All persons admitted to practice before the supreme court shall file the statement required by this rule at the time of admission but no annual fee or assessment shall be payable until the time above provided. All attorneys failing to file the required statement by March 1 of each year shall, in addition to the annual fee and assessment

provided for above, pay a penalty<sup>1</sup> as set forth in the following schedule if the statement is filed after March 1. The penalty fees collected shall be used to pay the costs of administering the fund, or for such other purposes within the Office of Professional Regulation as the supreme court may direct.

<sup>2</sup>Penalty Schedule:

If Filed:	Penalty:
After March 1 but before April 2	\$100
After April 1 but before May 2	\$150
After May 1	\$200

**39.8(2)** Attorneys who fail to timely pay the fee and assessment required under rules 39.5 and 39.6, or fail to file the statement or supplement thereto provided in rule 39.8(1), may have their right to practice law suspended by the supreme court, provided that at least 15 days prior to such suspension, a notice of delinquency has been served upon them in the manner provided for the service of original notices in Iowa R. Civ. P. 1.305, or has been forwarded to them by restricted certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to them at their last-known address. Such attorneys shall be given the opportunity during said 15 days to file in duplicate in the office of professional regulation an affidavit disclosing facts demonstrating the noncompliance was not willful and tendering such documents and sums and penalties which, if accepted, would cure the delinquency, or to file in duplicate in the office of the clerk of the supreme court a request for hearing to show cause why their license to practice law should not be suspended. A hearing shall be granted if requested. If, after hearing, or failure to cure the delinquency by satisfactory affidavit and compliance, an attorney is suspended, the attorney shall be notified thereof by either of the two methods above provided for notice of delinquency.

**39.8(3)** Any attorney suspended pursuant to this chapter shall do all of the following:

- a. Within 15 days in the absence of co-counsel, notify clients in all pending matters to seek legal advice elsewhere, calling attention to any urgency in seeking the substitution of another lawyer.
- b. Within 15 days deliver to all clients being represented in pending matters any papers or other property to which they are entitled or notify them and any co-counsel of a suitable time and place where the papers and other property may be obtained, calling attention to any urgency for obtaining the papers or other property.
- c. Within 30 days refund any part of any fees paid in advance that have not been earned.
- d. Within 15 days notify opposing counsel in pending litigation or, in the absence of such counsel, the adverse parties, of the suspension and consequent disqualification to act as a lawyer after the effective date of such discipline.
- e. Within 15 days file with the court, agency, or tribunal before which the litigation is pending a copy of the notice to opposing counsel or adverse parties.
- f. Keep and maintain records of the steps taken to accomplish the foregoing.
- g. Within 30 days file proof with the supreme court and with the Iowa Supreme Court Attorney Disciplinary Board of complete performance of the foregoing, and this shall be a condition for application for readmission to practice.

**39.8(4)** Any attorney suspended pursuant to this chapter shall refrain, during such suspension, from all facets of the ordinary law practice including, but not limited to, the examination of abstracts; consummation of real estate transactions; preparation of legal briefs, deeds, buy and sell agreements, contracts, wills, and tax returns; and acting as a fiduciary. Such suspended attorney may, however, act as a fiduciary for the estate, including a conservatorship or guardianship, of any person related to the suspended attorney within the second degree of affinity or consanguinity.

**39.8(5)** Attorneys who have been suspended pursuant to this chapter or who currently hold a certificate of exemption and who practice law or who hold themselves out as being authorized to practice law in this state are engaged in the unauthorized practice of law and may also be held in

1. The penalty prior to January 1, 2009, is \$25.

2. Penalty schedule effective January 1, 2009.

contempt of the court or may be subject to disciplinary action as provided by chapter 35 of the Iowa Court Rules.

[Court Order November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; April 20, 2005, effective July 1, 2005; December 5, 2007; April 25, 2008<sup>3</sup>; June 5, 2008, effective July 1, 2008; January 19, 2010]

**Rule 39.9 Claims.**

**39.9(1)** The commission shall consider for payment all claims resulting from the dishonest conduct of a member of the bar of this state acting either as an attorney or fiduciary, provided that all of the following are established:

*a.* Said conduct was engaged in while the attorney was a practicing member of the bar of this state and the claim arises out of the practice of law in this state. The commission shall not consider any claim resulting from conduct engaged in after an attorney's license to practice in Iowa has been revoked. For purposes of this rule, a practicing member of the bar of this state is:

(1) A member of the bar of Iowa whose license is active and in good standing at the time of the dishonest conduct giving rise to the claim, or

(2) A member of the bar of Iowa whose license has been suspended and whom the client reasonably believes to be licensed, active, and in good standing at the time of the dishonest conduct giving rise to the claim. If the attorney has been suspended more than six months prior to the time of the dishonest conduct giving rise to the claim, it shall be presumed that the client was unreasonable in believing that the attorney was licensed, active, and in good standing at the time of the dishonest conduct.

*b.* Such defalcation or dishonest conduct occurred after January 1, 1974.

*c.* The claim is made within one year after the client's discovery of the loss; provided, however, such time limitation in unusual circumstances may be extended by the commission in its discretion for good cause shown.

*d.* The claim is made directly by or on behalf of the injured client or the client's personal representative or, if a corporation, by or on behalf of itself or its successors in interest.

*e.* The commission is satisfied that there is no other source or collateral source for the reimbursement of the loss.

*f.* Claims shall not be paid which arise out of an employer-employee relationship as distinguished from a lawyer-client relationship or a fiduciary relationship.

**39.9(2)** The commission is invested with the power, which it shall exercise in its sole discretion, to determine whether a claim merits reimbursement from the fund, and if so, the amount of such reimbursement, the time, place and manner of its payment, the conditions upon which payment shall be made, and the order in which payment shall be made. The commission's powers in this respect may be exercised only by the affirmative vote of at least four commissioners. In making such determinations, the commission shall consider among other appropriate factors, the following:

*a.* The amounts available and likely to become available to the fund for the payment of claims and the size and number of claims which are likely to be presented.

*b.* The total amount of reimbursable losses in previous years for which total reimbursement has not been made, if any, and the total assets of the fund.

*c.* The amount of the claimant's loss as compared to the amount of losses sustained by other eligible claimants.

*d.* The degree of hardship suffered by the claimant as a result of the loss.

*e.* The degree of negligence, if any, of the claimant which may have contributed to the loss.

*f.* The total amount of losses caused by defalcations of any one attorney or associated group of attorneys.

**39.9(3)** The commission shall, by regulation approved by the supreme court, fix the maximum amount which any one claimant may recover from the fund and the aggregate maximum amount which may be recovered because of the dishonest conduct of any one attorney.

**39.9(4)** No claimant or any other person or organization shall have any right in the fund as third-party beneficiary or otherwise. Reimbursement by claim on the fund shall be a matter of grace and not of right.

**39.9(5)** The commission may require as a condition to payment that the claimant execute an assignment of claimant's right against the defaulting lawyer.

3. Penalty schedule in 39.8(1) effective January 1, 2009

**39.9(6)** No claimant need be represented by counsel before the commission. No attorney representing a claimant shall receive a fee for services from the fund. Any agreement for compensation between a claimant and any attorney retained for prosecution of the claim shall be subject to the approval of the commission.

**39.9(7)** The commission may request individual lawyers, bar associations, and other organizations of lawyers to assist the commission in the investigation of claims.

**39.9(8)** The payment or denial of any claim filed under the provisions of this rule shall be inadmissible as evidence in any disciplinary or contempt proceeding.

[Court Order December 5, 1973; April 22, 1974; October 16, 1974; April 9, 1975; April 10, 1975; August 29, 1975; October 28, 1976; November 21, 1977; January 15, 1979; June 20, 1980; April 21, 1982; November 13, 1984; April 25, 1985; February 16, 1990, effective March 15, 1990; December 15, 1994, effective January 3, 1995; March 6, 1995; January 24, 2000; November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; February 20, 2012]

#### **Rule 39.10 Investigations and audits.**

**39.10(1)** Each member of the bar of Iowa, in filing the statement required by rule 39.8(1), shall authorize the director to investigate, audit, and verify all funds, securities, and other property held in trust by the member, and all related accounts, safe deposit boxes, and any other forms of maintaining trust property as required by Iowa Rule of Professional Conduct 32:1.15 and chapter 45 of the Iowa Court Rules, together with deposit slips, canceled checks, and all other records pertaining to transactions concerning such property.

**39.10(2)** Each member of the bar of Iowa shall comply promptly with any request by the director to execute and deliver to the director a written authorization, directed to any bank or depository, for the director to audit and inspect such accounts, safe deposit boxes, securities, and other forms of maintaining trust property by the member in such bank or other depository.

**39.10(3)** Each member of the bar of Iowa shall do all of the following:

*a.* Cooperate fully with the director in any investigation, audit, or verification of any funds, securities, or property held in trust by that lawyer.

*b.* Answer all questions posed by the director which relate to any investigation, audit, or verification, unless claiming the privilege against self-incrimination.

*c.* Retain complete records of all trust fund transactions for a period of not less than six years following completion of the matter to which they relate, in accordance with Iowa Rule of Professional Conduct 32:1.15 and Iowa Ct. R. 45.2(2).

**39.10(4)** The commission with the approval of the supreme court may retain, compensate from the fund, and furnish as staff for the director, such public or certified accountants, investigators, or attorneys as may be deemed necessary to carry out the duties and functions imposed upon the director. When acting under the director's supervision and direction, such staff personnel shall have all the powers granted to the director by this chapter.

**39.10(5)** When the investigation, audit, or verification provisions of this chapter disclose, in the opinion of the director, a violation of the Iowa Rules of Professional Conduct, or when the member of the bar of Iowa affected by the investigation, audit, or verification has refused to comply with the provisions of this chapter, the director shall promptly report such circumstances to the commission. A copy of such report shall be furnished to the member affected.

**39.10(6)** However, client trust funds and property held by an Iowa licensed attorney whose law office is situated in another state shall not be subject to investigation, audit, or verification except to the extent such funds and property are related to matters affecting Iowa clients. State or federal funds or property subject to state or federal auditing procedures and in control of an Iowa licensed attorney employed full- or part-time by a state or the United States shall not be subject to investigation, audit, or verification under the provisions of this chapter.

[Court Order November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; April 20, 2005, effective July 1, 2005; December 5, 2007]

#### **Rule 39.11 Annual questionnaire.**

**39.11(1)** The director under the supervision of the supreme court and the commission shall prepare a questionnaire to be annually submitted to and completed by each member of the bar of Iowa except those who have been issued a certificate of exemption pursuant to rule 39.7. Said questionnaire may be (but is not required to be) incorporated as a part of the annual statement provided in rule 39.8(1). This questionnaire shall elicit information to determine whether the member is complying with the Iowa Court Rules, including but not restricted to, Iowa Rule of Professional Conduct 32:1.15 and

chapter 45 of the rules. The commission may prescribe an electronic format for the questionnaire and annual statement and require submission of the questionnaire and annual statement in that form.

**39.11(2)** A failure to complete and return a questionnaire shall be addressed as provided in rule 39.12.

[Court Order November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; April 20, 2005, effective July 1, 2005; December 5, 2007; June 5, 2008, effective July 1, 2008]

**Rule 39.12 Investigations, audits, and annual questionnaire — enforcement.**

**39.12(1)** *Failure of bar members to cooperate.*

*a.* The continued right of a member of the Iowa bar to practice law in this state is conditioned upon the member executing and delivering the authorization provided in rule 39.10(2), furnishing the cooperation required in rule 39.10(3), and completing and returning the annual questionnaire described in rule 39.11. Upon failure of a member of the Iowa bar to comply with any of the rules specified in this paragraph, the member's right to practice law before Iowa courts may be suspended, following the procedure specified in rule 39.8(2).

*b.* A member of the bar of Iowa who willfully fails to comply with those rules enumerated in rule 39.12(1)(a) may be held in contempt of the supreme court or may be subject to disciplinary action as provided in chapter 35 of the Iowa Court Rules.

**39.12(2)** *Violation of the Iowa Rules of Professional Conduct.*

*a.* When the audit, investigation, or verification of funds, securities, or other property held in trust by any member of the bar of Iowa, or a return of any member on the annual questionnaire, discloses an apparent violation of the Iowa Rules of Professional Conduct, the director upon request of the commission, or the commission, may institute disciplinary proceedings under chapter 35 of the Iowa Court Rules for the suspension or revocation of the member's license to practice law in this state.

*b.* All information obtained by the director and staff by virtue of the audits, investigations and verifications, and annual questionnaire, shall be held in strict confidence by them and by the supreme court and the commission unless otherwise directed by the supreme court or unless proceedings are initiated pursuant to chapter 35 of the Iowa Court Rules or Iowa Code section 602.10123. If proceedings are initiated pursuant to chapter 35 of the Iowa Court Rules, such information relating to the named respondent may be released only to the respondent, the disciplinary board, and the grievance commission. If proceedings are initiated pursuant to Iowa Code section 602.10123, such information relating to the named accused may be released only to the accused and the attorney general or the special assistant attorney general designated pursuant to Iowa Code section 602.10127, to prosecute the charges.

**39.12(3)** *Commission subpoena authority.*

*a.* The commission shall have subpoena power during any investigation conducted on its behalf to compel the appearance of witnesses or the production of documents before the person designated to conduct the investigation on behalf of the commission.

*b.* The commission chair, or other commission member in the absence of the chair, shall have authority to issue a subpoena.

*c.* The district court for the county in which the investigation is being conducted shall have jurisdiction over any objection or motion relating to a subpoena and authority to punish disobedience of a subpoena in a contempt proceeding.

*d.* Counsel for the commission, the director, or any other person authorized to administer oaths shall have authority to administer an oath or affirmation to a witness.

[Court Order December 5, 1973; September 19, 1974; October 16, 1974; April 9, 1975; April 30, 1982; August 14, 1986, and August 18, 1986, effective September 2, 1986; May 10, 1990, effective July 2, 1990; December 15, 1994, effective January 3, 1995; November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; April 9, 2003; April 20, 2005, effective July 1, 2005; December 5, 2007]

**Rule 39.13 Attorneys acting as fiduciaries.**

**39.13(1)** After January 1, 1974, unless a lawyer is the spouse of or is the son-in-law or daughter-in-law of or is related by consanguinity or affinity, within the third degree, to the decedent in an estate, the ward in a conservatorship, the settlor or beneficiary of a trust, or unless such attorney is coexecutor, cotrustee, or coconservator with another party or parties and such other party or parties will receive and pay out any of the funds, securities or other property of the estate, trust, or conservatorship, such lawyer shall not be appointed by a court in any fiduciary capacity for an estate, trust, or conservatorship until the lawyer has posted a bond in an amount to be determined by the

court with sureties approved by the court, and no waiver of such bond shall be recognized by any court of this state. In the event the surety on the bond posted by the lawyer is not a corporate surety, the surety thereon shall not be the ward, any beneficiary or distributee or be related to the lawyer, the ward, or any beneficiary or distributee within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity.

**39.13(2)** A lawyer who willfully fails to comply with the provisions of this rule may be held in contempt of the supreme court, or may be subject to disciplinary action as provided in chapter 35 of the Iowa Court Rules.

[Court Order November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002]

See Iowa Code §§633.173, 633.175.

**Rule 39.14 Reinstatement from exemption or suspension.**

**39.14(1)** An attorney who has been suspended for failure to pay the annual fee or assessment or for failure to file the statement, supplement, or questionnaire required by these rules may be reinstated upon a showing that such failure was not willful and by filing the statement required by rule 39.8(1) and the questionnaire required by rule 39.11. An attorney seeking reinstatement after suspension for failure to comply with the provisions of this rule shall pay all delinquent fees, assessments and late filing penalties due under rules 39.5, 39.6 and 39.8, and a reinstatement fee of \$100.

**39.14(2)** An attorney who applies for reinstatement from suspension under the provisions of chapter 35 shall first file the statement required by rule 39.8(1) and the questionnaire required by rule 39.11, pay all fees, assessments and late filing penalties due and unpaid under rules 39.5, 39.6 and 39.8 at the time of the suspension, pay the current fee and assessment required by rules 39.5 and 39.8, and a reinstatement fee of \$100.

**39.14(3)** An attorney who has been granted a certificate of exemption under the provisions of rule 39.7 may be reinstated after filing the statement required by rule 39.8(1) and the questionnaire required by rule 39.11, paying all late filing penalties due at the time the exemption was granted, and paying the current fee and assessment required by rules 39.5 and 39.6.

[Court Order April 25, 2008; August 10, 2009]

**Rule 39.15 Denial of reinstatement for failure to comply with certain obligations.**

**39.15(1)** *Denial of reinstatement for failure to comply with an obligation owed to or collected by the Centralized Collection Unit of the Department of Revenue.* The supreme court may deny an attorney's application for reinstatement under rule 39.14 for failure to comply with an obligation owed to or collected by the Centralized Collection Unit of the Department of Revenue. The procedure shall be governed by rule 35.22.

**39.15(2)** *Denial of reinstatement for failure to comply with an obligation owed to or collected by the College Student Aid Commission.* The supreme court may deny an attorney's application for reinstatement under rule 39.14 for failure to comply with an obligation owed to or collected by the College Student Aid Commission. The procedure shall be governed by rule 35.21.

**39.15(3)** *Denial of reinstatement for failure to comply with a support order.* The supreme court may deny an attorney's application for reinstatement under rule 39.14 for failure to comply with a support order. The procedure shall be governed by rule 35.20.

[Court Order June 5, 2008, effective July 1, 2008; February 20, 2012]