Hiring a Lawyer
613-722-1500

Hiring a Lawyer
How it works

So you have come to the conclusion that you need a lawyer.

If you have never hired a lawyer for anything before (or even if you have) finding out the basics of the lawyer/client relationship might reduce some of the anxiety that can come along with this unfamiliar territory.

It is as easy as taking these three steps:

- Contacting Us
- Setting up a meeting
- Retaining us as your lawyers

STEP 1: CONTACT

You need to connect with the lawyer who has the right mix of skills for your task. This can be done by phone or e-mail.

• TELEPHONE

By phone, simply call 613-722-1500 with a very brief description of your issue.

Examples of this description might be:

- “I am thinking of a separation from my spouse, and need to talk to a family law lawyer”
- “I need to incorporate my business and would like to talk to someone about that”
- “I just got a letter from my boss, and they seem to be laying me off. I need some advice”
- “I have just been served with a Statement of Claim and I need some help from a litigation lawyer”
- “I just put an offer in on a house. Do you have a real estate lawyer I can speak to?”

Our receptionist will connect you quickly to someone—in some cases, directly with a lawyer, in others, with a legal assistant—who can take down some more specific details and get you in touch with to the most appropriate lawyer as soon as possible.

This second person will have time to get more detail from you in order to establish what kind of lawyer you might need.

• E-MAIL

If you want to contact us by e-mail, there are two ways you can direct your inquiry.

You may navigate to the type of law — or practice area — you believe your issue falls under (click here for a list of types of law we handle at Mann & Partners, LLP). Choose one of the lawyers listed that service that area, as listed at the bottom of the page. Clicking on the lawyer’s name will bring you to their biography page, and a link to e-mail them directly.

If you are not sure about who would be best to assist you with your issue or transaction, or if you aren’t sure what practice area your issue falls into, you can click here and send an e-mail to our general e-mail inbox. This will be reviewed by one of our senior staff, who will ensure it gets directed on appropriately for response.

In your e-mail, give a brief outline of the task, transaction or problem you need help with. This is not the time to go into great detail about the people involved or the entire history of the matter. At this stage we are still just trying to direct you to the right professional — so we need just a paragraph or two saying what your issue is about and what kind of help you are seeking.

STEP 2 – SET UP A MEETING

Once you have made contact with the appropriate lawyer at our firm, both you and the lawyer will need to answer a very important question.

The lawyer needs to establish if this matter is something that we can help you with.

And you will need to determine if this lawyer and this law firm are the ones you want to hire to assist you in achieving your objectives.

This step is all about setting up a meeting with that lawyer so you can exchange the information both of you will need to answer those questions. The lawyer will want some more detail to analyze your objectives and determine if we are in a position to help. You will want some more information about our services and what the process ahead looks like, and perhaps exactly how we propose to move you towards your goals.

That meeting can be conducted in person, or by phone. It can be brief, or long. It can be free, or depending on the complexity of the matter, we may require payment in order to do the detailed analysis necessary to determine if your matter is worthy of pursuit.

• WHEN DOES IT START COSTING YOU MONEY?

It is our commitment to you that you will know when we are "turning on the meter".

Let's take a moment to review how law firms charge their clients.

Some of the things we do (transactions such as real estate purchases or sales, preparation of a will, and some incorporations) are done at a fixed price. Unless something unexpected takes it off-track (closing problems, etc.) the fee will be as quoted. If there are problems, we will tell you when we have to go off-quote.

For everything else, where you are retaining us to achieve a goal or objective (such as defending a law suit, negotiating a dispute or a complicated business deal with another party, or obtaining relief for a loss through litigation) your account will be directly related to several concrete factors, including how time the lawyer expends on your behalf moving you towards that goal.

Legal fees are based primarily on the time spent on the file, and the regular hourly rate of the person on the file. Depending on the degree of experience and specialization required on the matter, different lawyers, students and paralegal assistants within the firm will be involved in the handling of the file. The time spent (expressed in hours, broken down to units of 0.1 of an hour — or six minutes) is then multiplied by the hourly rate of the lawyer or legal professional providing the services.

In addition to time spent, however, the following matters may be taken into account in fixing the final fee:

- the difficulty and importance of the matter;
- whether special skills or services have been required or provided;
- the amount involved or the value of the subject matter;
- the results obtained;
- the certainty of the compensation; and
- the urgency of the matter.

It doesn’t cost anything to make your initial call to us, and it isn’t going to cost anything for those first brief phone chats with the receptionist, or the legal assistant, or even the lawyer — if we are trying to clarify what your issue is, and whether or not we have the lawyers who can help you with it.

Once the lawyer has spent the initial time discussing your matter with you, and they have determined that we can help you — and you have determined that you want to hire Mann & Partners, LLP — the conversation will then shift into discussion of the terms upon which you will retain us.

STEP 3 – RETAINER

“Retainer” is a word used by lawyers in two ways.

It refers to the Retainer Agreement. This is a contract between you and this firm, whereby we agree to the terms which will govern the relationship.

Those terms relate to what you want us to do or what you want to achieve, what we charge for, how much we charge, payment and billing terms, and how and when the relationship might end.

It also refers to the Retainer Deposit, which is a sum of money that we require be deposited with us to secure payment of future accounts. The money is deposited into our Trust Account, and stays there until an account is rendered, when, at the lawyer’s discretion, it can be applied to the account owing, or kept as continuing security.

Generally, we need to “be retained”, which means complete and sign a written Retainer Agreement as well as receive and process a Retainer Deposit before we can do any work for you (detailed information gathering, analysis, strategy, recommendations, or advice).
In some circumstances, such as emergencies, we will render billable services to you before we are retained. This is the exception.

WORKING WITH YOUR LAWYER

There are other lists of tips about how to work efficiently with your lawyer — depending on what type of legal task or issue you have brought to us — elsewhere in this section, and on this site.

We hope that these notes have helped you understand the basics of contacting and hiring one of lawyers. If you have questions or wish to know more, please contact us at any time.