

Instructional Scenario

Confidentiality, Ethics, and the Law



Course/Duty Area: Legal Administration/Identifying Legal and Ethical Issues

Scenario:

As a paralegal in the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, you are tasked with working on a file in a violent crime case that has attracted intense media attention. The file contains enumerable details of the police investigation. The information is confidential and cannot be revealed to anyone outside of the office. However, many people are curious about the details surrounding the case, and media representatives and others have contacted your office for information.

Big Question: How must you handle the information from the case file?

Focused Questions:

- Can you engage in social media discussions about the case with the media, family, friends or other individuals?
- Can you reveal what you know about the case when you are around your family and friends?
- What steps must you take to maintain confidentiality?
- What are ethical and legal considerations for the Commonwealth Attorney's Office regarding interactions with the media and interested members of the public?

Student Project or Outcome:

For this scenario, the client is the Commonwealth of Virginia and the victim of the crime. Students will research legal ethics regarding confidential and/or sensitive information.

Project-Based Assessment:

Students will prepare a presentation of their decision-making processes, choices, and considerations involved in the decision.

Scenario submitted by Rhonda F. Moody, Hampton Commonwealth's Attorney's Office