

3-5.4 | PUBLICATION OF DISCIPLINE

(a) Nature of Sanctions. All disciplinary sanctions, as defined in rules 3-5.1 and 3-5.2, or their predecessors, of these Rules Regulating The Florida Bar in disciplinary cases opened after March 16, 1990 are public information. Admonishments for minor misconduct entered in disciplinary cases opened on or before March 16, 1990 are confidential.

(b) Disclosure on Inquiry. All public disciplinary sanctions will be disclosed on inquiry.

(c) Manner of Publication. Unless otherwise directed by the court, and subject to the exceptions set forth below, all public disciplinary sanctions may be published for public information in print or electronic media.

(d) Limited Exception for Admonishments Issued by the Supreme Court of Florida. All admonishments issued by the court containing the heading "Not to be Published" will not be published in the official court reporter and will not be published in The Florida Bar News.

"Not to be Published" does not have the same meaning as "confidential." The Florida Bar may post information regarding specific orders of admonishment on the bar's website. Further, The Florida Bar may provide information regarding an admonishment on inquiry.

(New rule November 19, 2009, effective February 1, 2010 (SC08-1890), (34 Fla.L.Weekly S628a), amended November 9, 2017, effective February 1, 2018 (234 So.3d 632).)

Comments

All disciplinary sanctions as defined in rules 3-5.1 and 3-5.2, or their predecessors, entered in cases opened on or after March 17, 1990 are public information. Therefore, an inquiry into the conduct of a member of the bar will result in a disclosure of all these sanctions.

The public policy of this state is to provide reasonable means of access to public information. In furtherance of this policy, this rule is enacted so that all persons may understand what public information concerning lawyer disciplinary sanctions is available and in what format. This rule does not alter current court procedure or other requirements.



Admonishments are issued for minor misconduct and are the lowest form of disciplinary sanction. An admonishment is often issued for technical rule violations or for rule violations that did not result in harm. The court's orders imposing admonishments contain the heading "Not to be Published" and this rule directs that those admonishments not be published in Southern Reporter and directs The Florida Bar not to publish those admonishments in its newspaper, The Florida Bar News. The court does so in order to maintain a tangible difference between the sanctions of admonishment and public reprimand.

This rule does not bar disclosure of admonishments in response to an inquiry, whether written, oral, or electronic, and does not bar publication of admonishments on any website of The Florida Bar.

